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Cold War Counter-Terrorism:

The Evolution of Canadian Domestic Counter-Terrorism in the RCMP Security Service, 1972-1984

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Biography: Steve Hewitt is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. He has published a number of articles and books related to security and intelligence in the past and present, including *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997* and *Snitch: A History of the Modern Intelligence Informer*. Currently, he is working on a history of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Canada.

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Abstract: This piece provides a detailed case study of the evolution of counter-terrorism within a specific domestic security agency of a liberal-democratic state in the context of the Cold War. It does so by examining the creation of domestic counter-terrorism unit within Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and how it responded to international terrorism. This occurred in between major terrorist attacks in Canada in 1970 and 1985 and included a growing focus on counter-terrorism even as counter-subversion remained a top priority within a still dominant Cold War domestic security framework. Ultimately, the article, based on thousands of pages of previously secret documents, argues that the Security Service could conceive of in a broader strategic sense the threat of terrorism but found it more challenging, for a variety of reasons, including the dominance of the Cold War and the difficulties around infiltrating ethnic communities, to collect intelligence.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, domestic security agencies in a number of liberal-democratic countries have had one key national security priority: counter-terrorism.[2] Questions remain, however, about whether such agencies created during or even prior to the Cold War are fit for counter-terrorist purposes in a post-Cold War era.[3] After all, terrorism did not suddenly appear once the Cold War had finished. Rather, domestic security agencies, in the 1960s and 1970s, found themselves having to adjust to new security concerns with the emergence of terrorism, or re-emergence in some cases, even while espionage and subversion

associated with communism remained their top priority. This was true in the United Kingdom

with the Security Service (MI5) and the violence in Northern Ireland plus some Middle Eastern

terrorism, and in the United States with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and threats

posed by far-left violence from the Weather Underground and the far right through the Ku Klux

Klan.[4]

The threat of terrorism, particularly international terrorism, also had an impact on

Canadian domestic security. In a 1973 speech, John Starnes, the first civilian head of its

domestic intelligence agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Security Service,

warned of the increasing threat of international terrorism to Canada and what its implications

might be over the coming decades.[5] Underlying his comments was disquiet framed in security

terms about an increasingly diverse Canada that had ended official racial discrimination in its

immigration policy in 1962. [6]

> Canada and Canadians are no more immune to international terrorist activity than
>
> any other country or people. Indeed, for various reasons, Canada offers a more than
>
> usually attractive target. Canada has a wealthy post-industrial society
>
> indistinguishable from its powerful southern neighbour. We have at least one
>
> revolutionary cause important enough to attract outside support and our travel and
>
> immigration controls are almost non-existent.[7]

In this passage, Starnes alluded to Canada's recent experience of terrorism, the battle with the

Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) across the 1960s that culminated in the 'October Crisis' of

1970 when the British Trade Commissioner to Canada, James Cross, and a Quebec provincial

cabinet minister, Pierre Laporte, were kidnapped by different FLQ cells. Laporte's kidnappers

later murdered him while Cross was rescued.[8] Although the FLQ reflected international trends in

in relation to a broad movement of decolonization and other intellectual and terrorism currents, it was perceived by the Canadian state as a domestic terrorist threat.[9] In the aftermath of the 1970 violence in Quebec, which effectively marked the end of the FLQ as a serious terrorism threat, Starnes' speech instead focused on the new international terrorism landscape dominated at the time by the Palestinians in the aftermath of the notorious killing of 11 Israeli Olympic team members by Black September at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Terrorism would become a much discussed phenomenon for the remainder of the 1970s and into the decade that followed. Eventually, a second major terrorism attack involving Canada occurred. On 23 June 1985, Sikh extremists based in Canada but with international links blew up Air India Flight 182 travelling from Toronto to Montreal to London to Delhi to Mumbai. All on board--329 people including 268 Canadians--died off the coast of Ireland. It remains the worst ever terrorist attack on an airline and the deadliest mass murder in Canadian history.[10]

This paper will offer a unique and detailed case study of the evolution of a specific domestic security agency in a liberal-democratic state during the Cold War in response to the rise of international terrorism as a threat. Details of similar transformations in the United Kingdom and the United States can be found in various places but not as the centre of the works in question.[11] Nor have questions around the linkage between subversion and terrorism and multiculturalism during the Cold War been historicized within a study of counter-terrorism. This paper will analyse the beginnings of a movement of a domestic intelligence agency away from what it had done for decades toward what has become the main security priority in the 21st century. Ultimately, the RCMP Security Service succeeded in terms of imagining accurately what an era of international terrorism might consist of and in describing what problems those engaged in counter-terrorism might face but experienced difficulties for a variety of structural

reasons, including the impact of the Cold War on domestic security priorities, when it came to the practical aspect of generating and acting on intelligence related to such threats. And, in echoes of the domestic security landscape after 9/11, the RCMP Security Service expressed growing concerns about non-Western European immigration to Canada in security terms around the threat of terrorism. This process of 'securitizing' these communities would remain relevant after 9/11 and equally reflected an on-going Cold War mentality in which security state 'othered' subversive threats as foreign.[12]

COUNTER-TERRORISM HISTORY

This study is neither a history of the RCMP Security Service nor a comprehensive account of counter-terrorism across the broader Canadian state. The definitive history of the Security Service and domestic intelligence in Canada appeared in 2012 with Reg Whitaker, Gregory Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby's superb *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada From the Fenians to Fortress America*.[13] That work is a macro history of Canadian domestic intelligence including how it responded to major terrorist incidents such as the October Crisis and the Air India bombing. It does not provide an account of the rise of counter-terrorism in the Security Service in response to the threat of international terrorism in the 1970s. The same point applies to the excellent *False Security: The Radicalization of Canadian Anti-Terrorism* by two legal scholars, Craig Forcese and Kent Roach. It spends part of one page discussing the Security Service's counter-terrorism in the 1970s in the context of its disruption operations against suspected Quebec separatists.[14] Another relevant study, an article published in 1993, looks at counter-terrorism at an elite level in terms of government responses to acts of violence. Finally, J.I. Ross, offers a fascinating examination of the bureaucratic evolution of Canadian counter-terrorism policy between 1977 and 1999.[15]

This study, in contrast, is a micro study of the development of a counter-terrorism role in Canada's domestic intelligence agency in the 1970s and early 1980s. It is based on thousands of pages of previously secret RCMP Security Service records, including organizational charts, acquired by the author through over 40 requests under the Canadian *Access to Information Act*. The material, however, was not released uncensored. When the Security Service records were transferred to the National Archives of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada) in the 1980s, the RCMP Security Service's successor, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) retains final control over what gets released through an *Access to Information* request. Documents are frequently heavily censored for a variety of reasons, including to protect the identities of human sources and intelligence-gathering methods. Assistance, including through supplied intelligence, from foreign governments and their agencies is almost always censored in its entirety. Some material in relation to living individuals or those who have been deceased for less than 20 years is additionally removed under the *Privacy Act*. For those who have worked with records of Canadian intelligence agencies obtained through *Access*, even in relation to materials that are decades old, the end result is inevitably a partial picture, frequently lacking in intimate details, as demonstrated by censored passages elsewhere in this article. Nevertheless, the documents released do demonstrate wider trends and developments.[16]

This article emphasises the importance of historical research as a tool for historicizing debates and discussion around terrorism and responses to terrorism. It is also about addressing issues within terrorism research of the type identified by others. For instance, Martha Crenshaw has written about the ahistorical and event driven quality to some terrorism research and Andrew Silke points out the dominance of certain disciplines when it comes to publications about terrorism.[17] Indirectly addressing these points, there has been a growing amount of scholarship

exploring terrorism in an historical context, witness Martin Miller's *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism* and the Randall Law edited *Routledge History of Terrorism*, although this is less true of counter-terrorism in general and more specifically examinations of Canadian counter-terrorism.[18] In turn, there have been a number of important critiques from historians of some of the dominant trends in scholarship and ideas about terrorism and counter-terrorism, including the premise of 'new terrorism'.[19] In another recent book, *Disciplining Terror*, sociologist Lisa Stampnitzky illustrates the importance of the 1970s in determining future perceptions of terrorism and dominant trends in terrorism studies as a discipline.[20] There is some evidence of change around interpreting terrorism during this period in public comments by senior Mounted Policemen. Starnes' successor as Director General of the RCMP Security Service, Michael Dare, observed in a 1974 speech that 'international terrorism like aggression or subversion, is not a precise concept which lends itself to definition…. [there] is no internationally-accepted [sic] definitions of international terrorism'.[21] Six years later, in talking points prepared for the then RCMP Commissioner, such definitional hesitation had vanished: 'Terrorism may be defined as the threat or use of violence by any individual or group, indiscriminately or against selected targets, to achieve a political objective'.[22]

THE RCMP SECURITY SERVICE AND COUNTER-SUBVERSION

The roots of the RCMP Security Service lie in the First World War when the Royal North-West Mounted Police, a paramilitary police force that originated as the Northwest Mounted Police in 1873, was charged with carrying out surveillance of 'enemy alien' populations across western Canada. That surveillance expanded before the end of the war to target left-wing radicals and by 1920 the renamed Royal Canadian Mounted Police had taken over the domestic security role for all of Canada. In 1921, its main target for the next several

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decades, the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), appeared on the scene. During the interwar period, the RCMP mixed a variety of duties including domestic intelligence. A fledgling intelligence branch began to develop but it would not become formalized until the Second World War. It would expand rapidly in the aftermath of the war with the dominance of the Cold War. Members were primarily drawn from the regular policing side of the RCMP although in the 1950s the Security Service began to take on civilian members.[23]

The Security Service's centre of attention into the 1960s remained the CPC. It targeted the CPC because of both its real and imagined ties to the Soviet Union and because of the involvement of a small number of Communists in espionage. Also, of great concern was the possibility that Communists were subverting Canadian society from within.[24] Counter-subversion was a key role of those involved in domestic intelligence for the RCMP from its birth during the First World War through to the 1980s. The RCMP Security Service shared this trait with the FBI and MI5. Hence, the creation of a massive paper trail connected to Canadians, non-Canadians and their groups and organizations that had little or nothing to do with exposing espionage. From 1919 to 1977, the RCMP accumulated 1,300,000 security file entries including on over 800,000 individuals.[25] To provide a snapshot from a particular year, the RCMP Security Service held active files in 1967 on 48,000 individuals and 6,000 organizations with a broad definition of what constituted a subversive that included 'CP of C [Communist Party of Canada] member, suspected Trotskyist, self-admitted Marxist, black nationalist, student agitator, anarchist, red power advocate, or an associate of communists'.[26]

Subversion is also an important concept for understanding the development of counter-terrorism in the 1970s and represents a transition between the security milieu of the Cold War and that which would follow the end of the Cold War. It was no coincidence that in his 1974

speech about terrorism, Michael Dare, the head of the Security Service, linked subversion and terrorism. There are several historic reasons for this that stretch beyond Canada. First, there was a perceived overlap between subversion, Communism, insurgency, and terrorism in an era when definitions of the latter were contested and fluid, not only among academics but among governments as well.[27] Thus subversion, and terrorism for that matter, could be a tactic of Communists or terrorists or insurgents. In his influential *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peacekeeping*, British general Frank Kitson, who served in Kenya during the Mau Mau conflict and in Northern Ireland during 'The Troubles,' broadly defines subversion as

> all measures short of the use of armed force taken by one section of the people of a
> country to overthrow those governing the country at the time, or to force them to do
> things which they do not want to do. It can involve the use of political and economic
> pressure, strikes, protest marches, and propaganda, and can also include the use of
> small-scale violence for the purpose of coercing recalcitrant members of the
> population into giving support.[28]

The emergence of counter-terrorism within Cold War Canadian domestic security would see a strong connection to its traditional role of countering real and imagined Communist subversion. When it came to the structures of Canadian security, the model followed was a British one. The formal organization of the RCMP Security Service, which did not carry out arrests despite its members being largely drawn from the regular police, was modeled organizationally after MI5 which had considerable input into Canadian domestic security during World War Two and in its aftermath.[29] Until 1984 in the UK, MI5, which in a Cold War context viewed terrorism as 'the violent side of subversion', placed counter-terrorism within counter-subversion.[30] Similarly, into the 1980s, responsibility for non-Quebec nationalism related

terrorism lay within the RCMP Security Service's existing counter-subversion branch, known in the 1970s as 'D' Operations or 'D' Ops for short.

THE BIRTH OF COUNTER-TERRORISM IN THE SECURITY SERVICE

The emergence of counter-terrorism within the Security Service began with the FLQ and the 1970 October Crisis. This development forced a new stress on the threat of domestic politically motivated violence and the Security Service set up a separate branch to concentrate on violence related to the cause of Quebec nationalism. Then, in September 1972, the RCMP Security Service established the first unit within its counter-subversion branch to respond to the threat of international terrorism. The terrorist attack at Munich in the same month appears to have been a key element in emphasising international terrorism as a serious threat to Canada particularly since in 1970 Montreal had been selected by the International Olympic Committee to host the 1976 Olympic Games. In 1975, due to concerns over the appropriateness of some of its activities, particularly in relation to Quebec separatists, which later in the 1970s would lead to an official inquiry known popularly as the McDonald Commission, the Security Service received its first ever formal mandate from the Canadian government through a cabinet directive although it did not carry, in the words of the definitive history of the Security Service, 'the authority of law'.[31] The directive listed counter-terrorism among the Security Service's core functions:

(a) The preventive function involves the timely use of intelligence to anticipate and prevent acts of violence by Terrorists.

(b) In the event of terrorists planning or committing an act of violence within Canada, the RCMP Security Service provides a support/advisory function to Law Enforcement Departments. This includes a rapid exchange of intelligence to deal with the situation at hand.[32]

The security around the Montreal Olympics has been studied in its own right but, as Dominique Clément illustrates, the policing of this global mega event forced greater emphasis on domestic counter-terrorism capabilities on the part of the police along with recognition of the threat posed by international terrorism.[33]

How did the RCMP Security Service understand terrorism and the threat from terrorism in this period? In his 1974 speech, Michael Dare explicitly linked terrorism to legitimate grievances on the part of those carrying out attacks, a view that perhaps seems extraordinary today but one that, as Lisa Stampnitzky points out in *Disciplining Terror*, was more common in the 1960s and 1970s.[34] 'There is an element of truth ... in the assertion that political violence is the product of "just grievances," of social deprivations and intolerable oppression', noted Dare, although he added that these grievances did not justify a resort to violence. He went on to outline six implications or threats to Canada from international terrorism:

(1) The general danger to Canada and Canadian interest by Canada's support for a party involved in a conflict;

(2) The specific threat to Canadians related to a conflict by reason of ethnic background;

(3) The threat to foreign officials and premises in Canada and to Canadian officials abroad;

(4) The participation of Canadians in terrorist attacks and/or support for such attacks;

(5) The possibility of relations within Canada to terrorist activity;

(6) Concern over the possible use of Canada as a base or place of convenience for subversive, espionage or terrorist activity directed against other countries.[35]

All six have remained relevant over the nearly 40 years since he listed them.

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Behind Dare's speech was the changing domestic security landscape that began in the 1960s with the rise of Black Power and Red Power movements in the United States but with real and imagined spillovers into Canada.[36] Indeed, famously, the RCMP Security Service burned a barn to the ground in 1972 in order to stop a meeting between FLQ and Black Panther members.[37] Equally, however, through immigration Canada was becoming increasingly diverse and the views of Dare and the RCMP Security Service reflected more broadly wider Euro-Canadian anxiety about such change that dated from at least the First World War.[38] Dare warned of the possibility of 'racially-motivated violence-oriented elements' specifically referencing 'Serb, Croat, African and Caribbean groups' because of a 'capacity for violence and social disruptions, and their solidarity with international extremist movements and national liberation groups. This is particularly true of a small group of black extremists in Canada which has assumed a strong support role for Black revolutionaries in Africa and the Caribbean'.[39] He added Chilean and Irish groups in Canada were also of 'specific concern', presumably for their support for terrorism elsewhere not as a risk to carry out attacks in Canada. In terminology that reflected the counter-subversion and counter-terrorism linkage, he advised that the way to address the threat of violence was to have proper intelligence in order 'to keep track of possible subversive activity and combat it effectively…'.[40] There was a clear parallel between the two that represented a transition between the Cold War and the post 9/11 concentration on terrorism. Counter-subversion involved identifying and monitoring Communists and their efforts to influence others. It also meant discovering and monitoring those who were Communist sympathizers and supporters. Similarly, counter-terrorism required discovering and tracking terrorists along with their sympathizers and supporters. Linking the two as well was the notion of a foreign 'other'. The RCMP had historically viewed Communists in Canada, even when the

party leadership was dominated by British immigrants such as long-time party leader Tim Buck, as associated with ethnic minorities and, of course, the Soviet Union;[41] international terrorism was likewise viewed as concomitant with minority communities.

COUNTER-TERRORISM GROWING PAINS

Several obstacles lay in the path of acquiring intelligence related to terrorism. The Cold War continued to dominate the domestic security scene through the 1970s and 1980s meaning that the chief priority of 'D' Ops of the Security Service, home of counter-terrorism, remained left-wing subversion. Separate desks were established by the Security Service in Ottawa in September 1972 to concentrate on Middle Eastern terrorism, undoubtedly as a result of Munich. An organizational chart dating from 1974-75 shows several categories related to terrorism. There was an Irish Republican Army section on its own and then there was 'C-1 INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST/GUERRILLA SECTION' with categories such as 'Arabs' in Canada as diplomats, 'International Terrorism', 'Hijackings and Letterbombs [sic]', and 'Special projects'. A second section, 'C-2 National Extremists and V.I.P. Security Section' covered the security of diplomats and visiting dignitaries, far-right terrorism, 'Ethnic Extremists (Yugoslavs etc.)', 'Greek and Hungarian Extremists', and research.[42] In March 1976, the focus expanded to include Japanese, Latin American, and Western European terrorism reflecting the era of left-wing terrorist groups such as the Japanese Red Army and the Red Army Faction in West Germany.[43] In January 1979, the Security Service created 'Regional Desks' to cover along geographical as opposed to ideological lines the international and national dimensions of a particular terrorist threat (this restructuring was still in place two years later--see Figure 1.1, 'D' OPERATIONS Organizational Chart from April 1981). Some confusion plainly emerged as a result of the restructuring and personnel changes and the Security Service subsequently organized

conferences to address key issues such as source recruitment and handling, 'technical source applications', and liaising with federal government agencies and foreign allies. The number of personnel dedicated to international terrorism directly remained small with 30 (18 from the field and 12 from headquarters) invited to attend the gathering.[44]

FIGURE 1.1 'D' OPERATIONS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, 24 APRIL 1981[45]

Other problems involved questions of jurisdiction: Canada was a federal state with three levels of government. Policing at the provincial level in Quebec and Ontario, Canada's two most populous provinces, and to a lesser extent Newfoundland, was under the control of their governments and in several provinces municipal governments held sway over civic police forces. The potential for this to become an issue with regard to future terrorism incidents emerged in 1977 when a non-terrorist hostage taking occurred at a bank in Toronto and the RCMP and federal government had no choice but to allow the province of Ontario and the Toronto police deal with the incident that eventually ended peacefully. In the end, a memorandum agreed between the provinces and federal government before the Montreal Olympics was adhered to successfully, although there was clear anxiety in some quarters over the federal government having to be subservient in such cases.[46] As a senior civil servant from the Department of the Solicitor General noted in a 1978 article, this was also a legacy of the terrorist kidnappings of October 1970 when consideration had to be given to political responsibility for internal crises whereas prior to this event emergency planning had been focused on responding to a nuclear attack.[47]

Practical obstacles existed for the Security Service when it came to investigating terrorism inspired from abroad. As during the First World War and the interwar period, the Mounted Police found it difficult to collect intelligence about minority communities that it had little expertise about in as in this example from 1978.[48]

> Montreal have conducted extensive investigation into the [deleted under the *Access to Information Act* and *Privacy Act* (ATIP)] communities within Montreal. Due to the difficulties in penetrating these ethnic communities, there have been problems in identifying key individuals. However, Montreal have identified [deleted under ATIP] as a key figure [deleted under ATIP] with numerous links in Montreal and Toronto.[49]

Accordingly, the Security Service relied on informants recruited from within the communities, including what was referred to in 1979 as 'casual sources in various ethnic areas,'[50] to supply information; this is a pattern seen previously during the First World War and its aftermath when the Canadian state constructed some minority ethnic communities as threats in relation to Bolshevism; it is a pattern equally evident since the attacks of 11 September 2001, such as in the United States where the FBI and New York Police Department have relied heavily on informants as part of counter-terrorism investigations.[51] As the work of Gary T. Marx and others demonstrates, the use of informants in intelligence investigations has long generated controversy and criticism because of the perception of 'fishing expeditions' and the potential for informants to act as *agents provocateurs*.[52] Elements of the former appeared in a report in which the field was 'directed to have casual sources before anything serious occurs - i.e. don't wait until something drastic takes place before you try to develop sources'.[53] The Security Service would also emphasize the need to discover 'individuals who have the capability or will to participate in or support a terrorist act' instead of taking a blanket approach to 'a suspect ethnic group'.[54] The

reports at conferences often offered brief ethnic profiling of communities across Canada, the sort

of forerunner to a sophisticated programme now run by the FBI in the United States involving

census material known as 'domain management'.[55] There is a taste of this from the Security

Service office in the province of Nova Scotia:

> Investigations into the [deleted under ATIP] ethnic community has progressed well
>
> during the past year. Out of [deleted under ATIP] in Nova Scotia, [deleted under
>
> ATIP] reside in the Halifax area. New immigration [deleted under ATIP] appear to
>
> centre in Halifax and, due to their strong cultural ties, many do not speak English.
>
> For the most part, acculturation has been slow [deleted under ATIP].[56]

Interest in some minority communities became more widespread in 1982 in a period of

heightened concern about the Middle East after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In a file entitled

'General Conditions and Subversive Activities- Census Re: Immigration Statistics', the then

Director General of the Security Service, J.B. Giroux, asked at a briefing about the 'population

of the various Arab nationalities in Canada' including how many there were and where were they

located.[57] The Security Service soon assembled statistics covering from 1971, the date of a

Canadian census, to 1980 for the number of immigrants from 22 countries to Canada. The

countries listed were all Middle Eastern and North African: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran,

Iraq, Libya, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Oman, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan,

United Arab Emirates, Qatar, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Arab Republic of

Yemen, Bahrain, and Cyprus. The immigration figures for Syria, Lebanon, and Israel were then

added to the 1971 census results for Syrian-Lebanese, which the Security Service inexplicably

linked, and Jewish ethnic groups to arrive at a clearer idea of the total size of those communities

in Canada. The police broke the immigration numbers down further for all 22 countries by the Canadian province and city.[58]

Through the 1970s, at various points, the Security Service discussed proactive tools for dealing with targeted individuals from ethnic communities that again have resonance with a post 9/11 environment. One was using Canada's *Immigration Act* to remove those deemed to be security threats. Under the legislation at the time, specifically Section 39 of the Immigration Act, individuals deemed a threat to the security of Canada could be deported without an opportunity to appeal and without any evidence being given at a hearing simply if two federal cabinet ministers signed an authorization to do so.[59] Six 'individuals of interest' were deported from Quebec in the late 1970s using Section 39 warrants although it was stressed by the Solicitor General that these should only be used as last resort.[60] Additionally, the Security Service enjoyed, according to an RCMP memorandum, a strong relationship with the Department of Immigration when it came to being able to access records.[61]

By 1977 the RCMP was discussing at internal meetings topics still relevant to counter-terrorism in the 21st century:

a) Contingency Plans - explanation of Security Service functions in the event of a terrorist attack;

(b) Computerization- discussions and explanations of all efforts will be made to provide a viable program;

(c) Annual Work Plans- clearer identification of national priorities and requirements;

(d) Nuclear, Chemical or Biological Threat- explanation of our responsibilities and position within this community.[62]

In the case of annual work plans, these were in response to a belief in headquarters that Divisions 'still do not fully understand or appreciate the requirements and ultimate objectives of investigation into terrorism'. As a result, they were encouraged to discuss 'trends, priorities and procedures prior to … ensure a co-ordinated national program outlining national priorities and objectives and a unified co-ordination thrust in dealing with terrorism in Canada'.[63]

Part of the trend of reorienting toward terrorism involved expanding the expertise levels of Security Service personnel with regards to international terrorism. Conferences, seminars, and workshops were regularly organized in the latter half of the 1970s by the Security Service when resources permitted. These events involved RCMP counter-terrorism personnel but also frequently included guests from intelligence partners outside of Canada; the Security Service lacked an overseas branch and thus depended on receiving foreign intelligence from allies. [64] At an RCMP-organized conference in 1975 in the lead up to the Montreal Olympics, according to a heavily censored document, at least five allied western intelligence agencies sent representatives.[65] In 1978 an International Terrorist Conference was organized for Security Service personnel involved in counter-terrorism. It was an opportunity to discuss familiar problems with allied American agencies.[66]

These events also yield an understanding of the Security Service's approach to counter-terrorism as its desks each gave presentations to colleagues; these generally involved two components: the nature of the terrorism threat in their respective areas and what they were doing in response both directly but indirectly. Reflecting the nature of terrorist events in the 1970s, the focus centred on responding to hijackings and hostage takings while the terrorist threat was deemed to be from individuals entering Canada from abroad or existing minority ethnic and immigrant communities.[67]

Of particular interest is the 'D' Ops International Terrorism Workshop of March 1980 in relation to the Security Service's perception of changing nature of political violence. A list of potential threats contained the usual ones associated with the 1970s, including transnational terrorism, and an additional one: 'Religious Group Terrorism: A new threat, which has become more apparent since about 1977, arises from international terrorism on behalf of religious groups. The inter-factional struggle currently being waged by Muslim extremists, however, will pose only an indirect threat to the internal security of Canada'. Canada was viewed as a potential 'soft' or 'alternate target' for those with the United States in their crosshairs.[68]

Across these years the Security Service made efforts to interact with the academic world. In one instance, the Mounties encountered an early guru of terrorism studies, Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corporation; they circulated transcripts of a talk he gave in Calgary.[69] In a sign, however, that such exchanges with academics were not always deemed beneficial, members of the Security Service's Research and Briefing Section found a terrorism seminar at Carleton University in Ottawa only partially useful:

> Our experience generally has been that the information of the academic community, being confined to the public domain, tends to be dated. Thus, they are weak in the area of short term projections; their longer term scenarios and forecasting abilities are better, but even here their thinking, disappointingly, rarely ventures beyond conventional wisdoms. The strength of the academic community in the terrorist field is the development of new analytical techniques. The academic community is in the forefront of data evaluation, comparative analysis and contributions to policy related discussions which affect the government response and contingency planning.[70]

SECURITY SERVICE COUNTER-TERRORISM IN THE 1980S

At the end of the 1970s, the Security Service offered a forecast of the terrorism landscape

for the 1980s. It expected levels of political violence 'to remain constant using methods' from

the 1970s with a similar list of targets as well. India was notably absent from the list of countries

projected to be affected and south Asia never appears to have been a geographic section in the

counter-terrorism section in 'D' Ops. One note did predict the possibility of the arrival of '[n]ew

groups, motivated by hitherto unpublicized goals' and the Security Service mentioned 'the recent

upsurge in nationalism and religion consciousness', undoubtedly a reference to the Islamic

Revolution in Iran and the seizure by Islamic extremists of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi

Arabia in December 1979 although, conceivably, they could also have had in mind Sikhs in

India.[71]

By the early 1980s, the Security Service's non-Quebec nationalist counter-terrorism

section had existed for roughly a decade. In 1982 it had to respond to small-scale terrorist attacks

in Canada. One incident resembled nothing that the RCMP had anticipated even though it was

similar to the Weather Underground attacks in the United States in the late 1960s and early

1970s. A domestic anarchist group called Direct Action carried out a bombing in Toronto at

Litton Industries, a company involved in the design of the guidance system for American

Tomahawk cruise missiles.[72]

Other violence was more anticipated at least in terms of the RCMP's focus on

international terrorism and ethnic groups within Canada. Armenian nationalists launched a series

of attacks in Canada, including a bombing in Toronto. The most significant Armenia-related

terrorist attack, however, occurred in Ottawa on 23 August 1982 when Colonel Atilla Altikat, the

Turkish Military Attaché to Canada, was shot and killed while stopped at a traffic light. Clearly,

a professional and well-planned attack, the act, responsibility for which was claimed by the

Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide, remains unsolved.[73] The murder had an important impact on the evolution of Canadian domestic counter-terrorism between the October Crisis of 1970 and the Air India bombing of 1985. The assassination of a foreign diplomat on Canadian soil embarrassed the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and led to event-driven change in the organization of RCMP counter-terrorism. The month after the shooting, the Security Service Director General ordered that Armenia-related terrorism 'be given priority over all other Security Service investigations'. In October 1982, a reorganization of the Security Service's counter-terrorism section still within 'D' Ops took place as it expanded in size (see Figure 1.2). Finally, in the only example of directions from the political level in relation to international counter-terrorism found in the Security Service records, Trudeau requested directly that a briefing paper on terrorism be prepared for him and his cabinet.[74] The RCMP was one of 11 different contributors to the document (External Affairs, Solicitor General, RCMP, Privy Council Office, Defence, Immigration, Customs, Transport, Atomic Energy, Control Board and Communications) that went through a number of drafts over a two-year period.

In a contradictory and, at times, self-serving contribution from the RCMP Security Service, some of which External Affairs, the lead agency in drafting the report, edited, it warned of limited resources that required the police to 'prioritize the targets which will receive the major thrust of Security Service attention relegating lower priorities to a passive collation or monitoring mode'. A lack of resources is a common refrain from intelligence agencies. The major problem from the perspective of the Security Service, however, did not relate to resources but democracy: 'In a liberal democratic society where legitimate dissent is recognized in law and practice, one must recognize the sensitivity of investigating ethnic or other interest groups on the premise that there could be, within these groups, elements sympathetic to a terrorist cause,

whatever it may be'. As a result of these perceived obstacles, the Security Service claimed difficulty in discovering, in somewhat loaded terminology, 'the identity of the small core of Canadians and neo-Canadians who are violence prone and would render active support to foreign terrorists intent on perpetrating a terrorist act in Canada'. This coupled with the reality that 'new terrorist groups may suddenly appear or established ones may alter their tactics to include violent activities' meant that, in again echoes of the present, 'it is not possible to assure total protection against terrorism'.[75]

In addition, the RCMP produced an *aide memoire* detailing what it called the ''Limitations on the capability of Security Service Counter-Terrorism operations'.[76] The first six points contained within that document retain some relevance to the present and demonstrate the complex nature of counter-terrorism investigations, particularly within liberal-democratic states:

(i) limited manpower resources, which necessitates the prioritization of targeting efforts;

(ii) the sensitivity of investigation ethnic and issue-orientated groups;

(iii) the difficulty in determining the line that distinguishes legitimate dissent from terrorist sympathy and support;

(iv) the problem of balancing the rights of the individual with the security requirements of the State;

(v) the lack of coordinated analytical resources within the Security and Intelligence community;

(vi) the different interpretation and definitions that various States apply to the field of terrorism which makes it difficult for the Security Service to verify information and threat assessments;

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(vii) problems of a legal nature in the conduct of some types of Counter-Terrorism

investigations, these have been identified by the McDonald Commission [Royal

Commission of Inquiry into Certain Activities of the RCMP].[77]

In spite of these limitations, as of 1983-1984, counter-terrorism had become for the

Security Service its top priority, with 199 'person-years' allocated which, despite complaints

about limited resources, it listed as adequate.[78] As Figure 1.2 demonstrates, in organizational

terms, the changeover occurred in October 1982, in the aftermath of the murder of the Turkish

diplomat.[79] Even with its new prioritization, counter-terrorism remained part of the counter-

subversion branch.[80] Only at the end of the 1980s and the closing years of the Cold War would

counter-subversion be disbanded although not by the RCMP but by its 1984 successor, CSIS,

after e negative publicity associated with the practice and a recommendation to the government

by a special panel.[81]

Ultimately, argued the RCMP Security Service in its May 1983 *aide memoire*, counter-

terrorism intelligence had two key elements: '(i) the production of long range, strategic

intelligence on emerging trends, issues, and threats; and, (ii) the time sensitive production of

current intelligence for the purpose of providing an advisory and support role to government and

operation field or law enforcement bodies'. Its institutional perception was that it covered point

two 'adequately' whereas point one needed improvement.[82] History contained in these

documents and the terrorism in the 1980s suggest the exact opposite that whereas the Security

Service appeared in many respects to

Figure 1.2, 'D' Ops Organizational Chart, October 1982[83]

accurately forecast longer term trends in terrorism, or at least recognize potential developments, it fell short over the much more difficult task of generating actionable intelligence needed to prevent terrorism. That had to do with some of the obstacles the Security Service identified at various points. However, it was also about a domestic intelligence agency still in the Cold War battling Communist subversion while operating in a Canada changing demographically and through urbanization. That skill at collecting intelligence about subversives over decades undoubtedly led to an inflated sense of the Security Service's ability to do the same with those engaged in politically motivated violence even as it identified the difficulty of such a task. The *aide memoire*, perhaps emboldened by a perceived success in Quebec at dealing with violent separatists, concluded with an assessment that the Security Service's counter-terrorism operations were adequate 'to meet our present Security and Intelligence community commitments'.[84] Just over two years later, the Air India bombing would suggest that they were not.

CONCLUSION

The RCMP Security Service involvement in the cabinet briefing paper was its last hurrah in relation to counter-terrorism. In 1984, the Security Service, due to its involvement in illegal and ethically dubious activities in the 1970s in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, was replaced by CSIS, a new civilian intelligence agency. In practical terms, the change was less dramatic: many of the new agency's first employees joined from the now defunct RCMP Security Service.[85] It would be CSIS that had primary responsibility for counter-terrorism when the Air India attack occurred. The RCMP, however, continues to this day to have a role in counter-terrorism, particularly since CSIS lacks the power of arrest.

Between 1973 when Starnes gave his speech on the threat of international terrorism and the creation of CSIS in 1984, the RCMP Security Service had evolved within a Cold-War context to deal with terrorism as a security threat. Despite its own perception, the police showed strength in terms of strategic intelligence, with an understanding in a broad sense of the nature of the terrorism threat in the 1980s. This forecasting included by 1982 the potential for Canada to be a 'staging ground' for a terrorist attack and the possibility that politically motivated violence in relation to Sikh nationalism could be affected by events in India. This was a prophetic take considering that the Air India bombing was revenge for the Indian government's assault on the Golden Temple, the holiest site in Sikhism, in June 1984 and the killing of thousands of Sikhs in the aftermath of the October 1984 assassination of Indira Ghandi by two of her Sikh bodyguards.[86] Ultimately, the Security Service was a Cold War institution that while recognizing the growing threat of terrorism found it difficult to evolve to deal effectively with this new threat through intelligence gathering on the ground. Also in parallel to the Cold War, the Security Service viewed certain ethnic communities as effectively an 'other' and thus responded by interpreting them as potential threats. Such impediments and issues remain relevant to domestic counter-terrorism since 11 September 2001 and not just in Canada.

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[2]'The FBI's Top Priority'; 'MI5 to focus on terrorism threat'; 'Role of CSIS'. For more on domestic counter-terrorism, see Foley, *Countering Terrorism in Britain and France*; Donohue, *The Cost of Counterterrorism*; Alexander, *Counterterrorism Strategies*.
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[3]See, for example, Tembo, *US-UK Counter-Terrorism after 9/11*, p.14; Zegart, 'September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of U.S. Intelligence Agencies', pp.78–111; Zegart, *Spying Blind*, pp.1-14.

[4]Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, locations 13327-13939, 14332-14593; Rimington, *Open Secret*, locations 1825-1833; Eckstein, *Bad Moon Rising*, locations 2642-3214; Burrough, *Days of Rage*; Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here*.

[5]Over a number of decades, the RCMP security service went by a number of names before becoming formally known as the RCMP Security Service in the 1970s. For the sake of consistency, it will be referred to as the RCMP Security Service or Security Service throughout the paper.

[6]Canada introduced its immigration points system in 1967. Friesen, *Citizens and Nation*, p.242.

[7]Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Manuscript Group (MG) 31 E56, Papers of John Starnes, vol. 5, file 5-5 International Terrorism, Speech by John Starnes, 1973. For more on Starnes, see Starnes, *Closely Guarded*.

[8]The best study of the FLQ remains Fournier, *F.L.Q*.

[9]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, Secret Service, p.271.
[10]Mulgrew, *Unholy Terror*; Bolan, *Loss of Faith*. A second bomb placed on another Canadian flight killed two baggage handlers in Tokyo. For more on the history of terrorism in Canada, see Kellett, 'Terrorism in Canada'.

[11]See, for example, Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*; Weiner, *Enemies;* Naftali, *Blind Spot*.

[12]For more on securitization and terrorism, see Vultee, 'Securitization', pp.33-47.

[13]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*.

[14]Forcese and Roach, *False Security*, p.39.

[15]Ross, 'From the McDonald Report to the Kelly Committees'.

[16]Hewitt, 'He who controls the present, controls the past', pp.194-208.

[17]Crenshaw, 'The Psychology of Terrorism', p.405; Silke, 'The Road Less Travelled', p.195. Silke's 2004 survey found that 48.6 percent of terrorism related scholarship he examined was written by Political Scientists. The next category on his list, 'government departments,' came in at 9.6 percent. In contrast, historians generated 4.2 percent.

[18]Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*. See also Law, *The Routledge History of Terrorism* and Townshend, *Terrorism*.

[19]Duyvesteyn, 'How new is the new terrorism'? pp.439-454.

[20]Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*, location 150-156; Schmid, 'Terrorism', pp.375-419.

[21]LAC, RG146, access request A2011-00060, Mike Dare, 'International Terrorism--The Canadian Viewpoint,' 5 December 1974. For more on subversion in a Canadian context, see Grace and Leys, 'The Concept of Subversion and its Implications'.

[22]Ibid., Briefing Note on International Terrorism Prepared for RCMP Commissioner speaking to Canadian Bar Association, 26 August 1980.

[23]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, pp.93-217.

[24]Ibid., pp.218-268

[25]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, p.9.

[26]Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), access request 88-A-18, Key Sectors-Canada, Memorandum of Supt. Draper for D.S.I., 7 November 1967. Counter-subversion then, as in the United Kingdom, represented a major activity of Canadian state security into the 1980s. Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, pp.394-6; Whitaker, 'Apprehended Insurrection', pp.383-406; Hewitt, *Spying 101*, pp.119-170.

[27]In 1959, the Canadian Minister of Justice, Davie Fulton, stated that because of deviousness of Communists it was impossible to 'get a single, over-all, standard definition of what is a subversive or security risk'. Betke and Horrall, *Canada's Security Service*, p.756; Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*, locations 245-54; Naftali, *Blind Spot*, pp.25-7.

[28]Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p.3.

[29]Kealey, 'After Gouzenko'.

[30]Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, locations 13328-13333.

[31]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, p.303.

[32]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00060, Briefing Note on International Terrorism Prepared for RCMP Commissioner speaking to Canadian Bar Association, 26 August 1980. For a history of the 'dirty tricks' operations carried out by the security service, see Sallot, *Nobody Said No*.

[33]Clément, 'The Transformation of Security Planning for the Olympics', pp.1-25.

[34]Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*, locations 245-54, 973-985.

[35]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00060, Speech by Director General Mike Dare, 5 December 1974.

[36]For the background to these movements, see Austen, *Fear of a Black Nation*; 'Our Native Land'.

[37]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 309.

[38]Robin, *Shades of Right*; Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*.

[39]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00060, Speech by Director General Mike Dare, 5 December 1974. For more on the attention paid to 'black extremists', see Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation*.

[40]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00060, Speech by Director General Mike Dare, 5 December 1974.

[41]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 88, 106.

[42]LAC, RG 146, access request A-2015-00291, Organizational Charts- 'D' Ops, 'Organizational Chart Depicting Span of Control and Chain of Command', no date [1974-75], pp.000097-98.

[43]Alexander and Pluchinsky, *Europe's Red Terrorists*.

[44]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, Memorandum, 12 December 1979, p.000180.

[45]LAC, RG 146, access request A-2015-00291, Organizational Charts- 'D' Ops, 'Organizational Chart Depicting Span of Control and Chain of Command', 24 April 1981, p.000054.

[46]LAC, RG 146, access request A2013-00212, Terrorism International-Hostage incident- Bank Canadian National, 21 March 1977; ibid., Memorandum from Assistant Deputy Minister (Police and Security) to Roger Tasse, Deputy Solicitor General, 5 May 1975, p.000009; LAC, RG 1184, vol. 903, file RCMP-Terrorism pt. 2, Robin Bourne, Assistant Deputy Minister, Police and Security Branch, Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, 'Terrorism Incident Management in a Federal State', 29-31 January 1979.

[47]Ibid., Robin Bourne, Assistant Deputy Minister, Police and Security Branch, Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, 'Terrorism Incident Management in a Federal State', 29-31 January 1979. For more on ramifications of the Canadian federal system for counter-terrorism, see Smith, 'Canada's Counter-Terrorism Experience', pp. 83-105.

[48]In part, this difficulty may have related to a lack of diversity on the part of the Mounted Police. Unfortunately, I am unaware of numbers showing the diversity of the RCMP in the 1970s. A study of the RCMP in the interwar period found the force to be almost exclusively of Anglo-Irish background. Hewitt, *Riding to the Rescue*, pp.31-36. More recently, problems around diversity in the Mounted Police have received public attention. In 2012, 8.1% of Regular Members of the RCMP were members of visible minorities compared to 20.6% of Canada's population in 2011. 'Results and Respect in the RCMP Workplace'; 'Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada'; see also 'Police diversity fails to keep pace with Canadian populations'.

[49]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, security service Operational Conference 'D' Operations, Letter, 26 July 1978, pp.000004-000008.

[50]Ibid., RCMP Memorandum, 12 March 1979, p.000088.

[51]Apuzzo and Goldman, *Enemies Within*.

[52]Marx, 'Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant'; Marx, *Undercover*; Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*; Hewitt, *Snitch*.

[53]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, security service Operational Conference 'D' Operations, Memorandum of Understanding, p.000095.

[54]Ibid., Cpl. [name deleted under ATIP] to Officer i/c 'D' Ops, 9 February 1978, p.000147.

[55]Aaronson, 'The Informants'.

[56]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, security service 'D' Ops- Conference on International Terrorism, Cpl. to S/Sgt, 26 July 1978, pp.000004-000008.

[57]LAC, RG 146, access request A2016-00189, 'General Conditions and Subversive Activities- Census Re: Immigration Statistics,' 22 September 1982, p.000032.

[58]Ibid., pp.000033-000052.

[59]Ibid., security service Operational Conference 'D' Operations, 7 March 1979, p.000096.

[60]Ibid., p.000089; Whitaker, *Double Standards*.

[61]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, RCMP Memorandum, 5 March 1980, p.000165.

[62]Ibid., security service 'D' Ops- Conference on International Terrorism, RCMP to Officer i/c 'D' Ops, 9 December 1977, p.000052.

[63]Ibid., p.000052; ibid., RCMP Memorandum, 21 March 1977, p.000075.

[64]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, p.207.

[65]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00057, security service 'D' Ops- Conference on International Terrorism, Asst/Commr Murray Sexsmith to [deleted under Access], 31 December 1975, p.18.

[66]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00054, security service 'D' Ops- Conference on International Terrorism, Cpl. [named deleted under ATIP] to S/Sgt. [name deleted under ATIP], 26 July 1978, pp.000004-000008.

[67]Ibid. For more on these methods, see Alexander and Pluchinsky, *Europe's Red Terrorists*.

[68]LAC, RG 146, Conference/Conventions, Terrorism-General, access request A2011-00056, AIDE MEMOIRE Re: 'D' Operations International Terrorism Workshop- Notes for the DDG (OPS), March 1980, pp.000171-3.

[69]Ibid., Insp. J.A.G. Synnett to Calgary District Commander, security service, 24 February 1981, p.000025.

[70]Ibid., Cpl. [name deleted under Access to Information], Research and Briefing Section, to Insp. J.A.G. Synnett, i/c International Terrorist Section, 28 April 1981, pp.000007-8, p.000010. This problem of primary source material for those researching terrorism, would be echoed by Marc Sageman 35 years later. Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism*, locations 289-296.

[71]LAC, RG 146, access request A2011-00060, Briefing Note on International Terrorism Prepared for RCMP Commissioner speaking to Canadian Bar Association, Briefing Notes from C. Yule, C/Supt Office i/c D Operations, July 1980.

[72]Hansen, *Direct Action*.

[73]'Ottawa unveils monument to slain Turkish diplomat'. For more on Armenian terrorism, see Gunter, 'Armenian Terrorism', pp.109-128.

[74]LAC, RG 146, access request A2012-00613, 'Terrorism and Its Implications for Canada', 28 October 1982, p.58; ibid., Robert Fowler, Privy Council Office, to De Motigny Marchand, 24 September 1982, p.186.

[75]LAC, RG 146, access request A2012-00613, Federal Cabinet Briefing on Terrorism,

22 November 1982, pp.13, 14, 16.

[76]LAC, RG 146, access request A2012-00615, Cabinet Paper on Terrorism and its Implications

for Canada, C/Supt J.A. Venner, Officer i/c 'D' Operations, to A/Commr F.J. Bosse D.D.G.

(Ops), no date, p.40; ibid., *Aide-Memoire*, 17 May 1983, pp.44-5.

[77]Ibid. For a reflection on some of these issues, see Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy*.

[78]Ibid., p.40; ibid., pp.44-5

[79]LAC, RG 146, access request A2015-00291, Organizational Charts- 'D' Ops, '"D"

OPERATIONS', 4 October 1982, p.000019.

[80]LAC, RG 146, access request A2012-00615, Cabinet Paper on Terrorism and its Implications

for Canada, *Aide-Memoire*, 17 May 1983, p.40; ibid., p.44.

[81]Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, p.393.

[82]LAC, RG 146, access request A2012-00615, Cabinet Paper on Terrorism and its Implications

for Canada, *Aide-Memoire*, 17 May 1983, p.45.

[83]LAC, RG 146, access request A-2015-00291, Organizational Charts- 'D' Ops, '"D"

OPERATIONS', 4 October 1982, p.000019.

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