

# Canadian military intelligence seeks greater integration with domestic security agencies

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Canada's military has formulated plans to become a "main player" in the security-intelligence apparatus of the Canadian government and its international allies, according to a planning document obtained and published by the *Toronto Star* through the Access to Information Act.

Pledging to "maximize" the intelligence capabilities of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) intelligence branch, the document presents a five-year plan to harness "all of [the] strengths and capabilities" of the larger intelligence community. This would entail closer integration between CJOC intelligence, Canada's two premier spy agencies—the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE)—and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with a view to ultimately making CJOC Intelligence the government's intelligence nexus.

CJOC serves as the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) central command and control hub, directing both foreign and domestic missions. It is also involved in "space operations" and "cyber support" for all three branches of the military.

The document is directed at guiding "CJOC relationships with ... organizations within and beyond the Department of National Defense (DND)." As part of this mandate, CJOC is already tasked with providing "aid to Civil Power" (i.e. the government) and "assistance to LEA" (law enforcement agencies).

The document emphasizes CJOC's importance in supporting the CAF Command in fulfilling its six "Canada First Defence Strategy" core missions. Among these are "domestic and continental operations, including in the Arctic and throughout NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command)."

The document also highlights CJOC Intelligence's

role in supporting "civilian authorities during a crisis in Canada such as a natural disaster."

Although worded in such a way as to imply that the intelligence branch conducts routine logistical operations during emergencies such as floods or blizzards, both the government's expansive definitions of "crisis" and "national security" and CJOC's recent conduct make clear that it is being equipped to track and suppress political opposition to the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and more generally opposition to the Canadian ruling class and its state.

CJOC is known to have monitored political dissent on at least three separate occasions in recent years. It was involved in security operations during the G8 and G20 meetings in 2010 in Huntsville and Toronto, as well as the Vancouver Winter Olympics earlier that year. All three events witnessed significant demonstrations from left-wing, aboriginal, and environmentalist groups.

CJOC Intelligence is moving to arm itself with all of the electronic espionage and mass spying tools of the government's better-known spy agencies, CSE and CSIS. These spy agencies continue to carry out mass surveillance operations which violate the constitutional rights of millions of Canadians and others around the world, and are implicated in carrying out espionage activities against foreign countries and their leaders, in concert with their fellow spy agencies in the US National Security Agency-led Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

This process of inter-agency integration is clearly spelled out across several sections in the document. It calls for CJOC Intelligence to be "integrated with joint, interagency, multinational and public partners at all levels," ultimately becoming "recognized as a leader for operational intelligence."

Commenting on the document, Christopher Parsons, an intelligence and security researcher at Citizen Lab in Toronto, said that the plan could make CJOC Intelligence a “clearing house” for the intelligence agencies.

In response to the *Star*’s inquiries, CJOC has released a statement claiming that the plan outlined in the document has yet to be approved and “does not reflect current intelligence planning or operations.” But as the *Star* noted, CJOC failed to provide any detail as to how current CJOC practice differs from the plan outlined in the document.

CJOC spokesman Lt. Kirk Sullivan further attempted to downplay the significance of the document by claiming that his department did not have a mandate to conduct defence intelligence operations domestically. Nevertheless, he subsequently refuted his own claims by noting that CJOC can contribute to domestic operations when a formal request is made through the Department of National Defence.

Any official declarations to the effect that CJOC Intelligence does not spy on the Canadian population should be regarded with the deepest skepticism. When its sister agency CSE was exposed in 2013 as having conducted mass surveillance on the Canadian population, the Conservative government denied the allegations for months before finally admitting, in February 2014 and under a mountain of evidence, that it had lied. It then went on to justify its mass collection of telecommunications “metadata” by advancing a fraudulent pseudo-legal argument. (See: CSEC and Harper government assert right to spy on Canadians)

The activities and very existence of CJOC Intelligence remain shrouded in mystery. It is monitored by the chief of defence staff and top military brass, and its operations are subject to review by the auditor general and the privacy commissioner (government oversight bodies that have vast other responsibilities). However, like CSE and CSIS, its operations are not subject to parliamentary oversight, let alone genuine public scrutiny, allowing it to function as part of a shadowy state-within-the-state involved in imperialist wars and conspiracies abroad and spying and preparations to quell dissent at home.

According to military officials, the CJOC Intelligence document was spurred into being by the recognition that it had failed to remain “relevant” to current

intelligence requirements, and thus needed to catch up to an agency like CSE.

All of Canada’s spy agencies, including CSE, have used this ploy, portraying their organizations as woefully lacking in the powers and funds needed to wage the phony “war on terror.” These same agencies have gone on to use their new surveillance powers to spy upon the entire population, while failing to prevent attacks from individuals whom they had been monitoring, such as the perpetrators of the recent attacks in Ottawa and St-Jean-sur-Richelieu. CJOC Intelligence is now making similar arguments.

Preventing embarrassing intelligence leaks has served as an additional pretext for CJOC Intelligence to press for an expansion of its role and reach. In 2012, former Navy Sub-Lieutenant Jeffrey Delisle pleaded guilty to selling secret information to the Russian military. The Department of National Defence and CSIS framed Delisle’s crime as “exceptionally grave” and “irreparable.”

Since 2001, the powers and budgets of Canada’s military-intelligence apparatus have been vastly expanded. This is being sold to the public as a means of protecting “national security” and “the lives of Canadians” from “terrorism” and “aggressive” rival nations such as Russia or China. In reality, the greatest threat to Canadian workers and their democratic rights is their own government and the big business interests it serves.



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