

Canada's spy agency gone rogue: Prime Minister Harper couldn't care less

Roderick Russell

Dr. Arthur Porter, the former chair of Canada's spy watchdog, the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), is in prison in Panama awaiting extradition to Canada where he faces multiple charges that include allegations of bribe taking, money laundering and conspiracy.

Two years ago I formally complained to the SIRC, which was then chaired by Dr. Porter. My complaint was about Canada's spy agency's (CSIS) illegal campaign of threats, intimidation, and harassment against my wife and I. I provided a significant body of evidence, yet Dr. Porter's SIRC dismissed my complaint without any investigation.

Dr. Porter and foreign aid money

At that time, Dr. Porter was also operating as Ambassador Plenipotentiary for Sierra Leone – famed for blood diamonds, nasty civil wars and child soldiers. But this is not why Porter resigned from the SIRC just a few weeks after my complaint was so unjustly dismissed. There were also disclosures coming about foreign aid money that Porter was trying to get the Russians to provide for Sierra Leone. Then the story gets even more complicated. In November 2011 several Canadian papers reported that one of Porter's *confreres*, a Mr. Ari Ben-Menashe,¹ stated that the deal had been nixed after he became concerned that 'the money would end up in private hands'.² This was totally denied by Porter.

CSIS has said that they did not vet Dr. Porter prior to his appointments to the SIRC and Privy Council – this is not credible. A strong-minded SIRC chair could be a check on CSIS.

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ari_Ben-Menashe>

2 <www2.canada.com/windsorstar/news/story.html?id=4c91afa5-bbd4-4eed-8405-e73172695b55>

Is it possible that CSIS wanted someone who wouldn't rock the boat? CSIS's occasional abuse of innocent citizens with Stasi-style tactics is not a new story in Canada. Nor, regrettably, is the SIRC's propensity to whitewash CSIS.

CSIS and its terror tactics

Years ago a former CSIS officer, W. J. Baltruweit, wrote, 'CSIS management willingly and deliberately coerced by intimidation (hence "terrorize"), and gained submission by inducing fear (hence "terrorism").'³

Mr. Baltruweit is not the only former Canadian spook to refer to CSIS's well-known illegal use of 'counter intelligence tactics used for surveillance, intimidation and harassment'. In an article in *Lobster* 61, 'CSIS and the Canadian Stasi',⁴ Gareth Llewellyn, another former senior Canadian intelligence officer, describes his own persecution by CSIS. Indeed Wikileaks unearthed a US diplomatic cable which stated that the former CSIS Chief, Mr. Judd, admitted to a US State Department Official that CSIS has been (illegally) 'vigorously harassing' people in Canada.

Vigorous harassment: that's just the sort of Stasi-style behaviour that I and others have complained about? Call it what you want – *Zersetzen*,⁵ Cointelpro – it is all the same beast. CSIS even have their own name ('D & D') for the persecution programme that they and their tame review body, the SIRC, pretend doesn't exist. It's hard to believe that Dr. Porter and the SIRC Committee were not aware of this. But then the Canadian Prime Minister's Office also seems to be subservient to CSIS, so perhaps it is not surprising that Porter's SIRC was such a joke.

Oversight of CSIS – a joke

So, true to form, Dr. Porter's SIRC dismissed my complaint without any investigation, on grounds that the types of

³ William Baltruweit, *Down and Out In Canada's Intelligence Service*, Commoners Publishing, Kindle edition (Kindle Locations 3832-3834).

⁴ <<http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster61/lobster61.pdf>>

⁵ <<http://zersetzen.wikispaces.com/>>

activities I have complained about are not carried out by CSIS. Indeed Porter told CBC radio in an interview that CSIS wouldn't do such things. Whether you credit my complaint or not, this absurd denial is contradicted not only by former intelligence operatives, but also by the Canadian press. For example, in May, 2006 the *Globe and Mail* published an article headlined 'Lacking a case CSIS disrupted suspect's life' – the headline says it all.

The SIRC made no attempt to investigate my case – it was a straight cover-up. Indeed the CSIS was so contemptuous of Porter's SIRC that we were being intimidated to try and stop us from complaining to the SIRC about CSIS.

This SIRC/CSIS related intimidation included: being gang stalked by Calgary police vehicles; weird telephone calls about our security; a computer annihilated by viruses; my cell phone completely stopped working and so did its new replacement phone (store assistants said they had never seen anything like this before); smearing: a hood shouting sexual slanders at me on the street and much more.

This flippant dismissal of our complaint and the further threats is a serious violation of rule of law in Canada. Even the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, knows people who have witnessed our intimidation – and we still don't have justice. Indeed all Mr. Harper would have to do to check my story is lean over his garden fence.

PM Harper's neighbours have seen intimidation

My wife and I have been friends with the Prime Minister's next door neighbours, at his private house in Calgary, for over 30 years. Not only have they met with several of our witnesses, but they have seen some of the (minor) intimidation for themselves. At one point when the woman tried to phone my wife she kept getting messages that said (wrongly) that our telephone was permanently discontinued. This is a likely CSIS trick to stop her communicating with us and has happened before. Subsequently she took my wife out to lunch and then drove her to the Crowfoot LRT Station so that my wife could get a train home. When they got to Crowfoot, the woman

remarked that they were being openly watched (i.e. stalked), telling my wife not to get out of the car, but to stay in and lock her door until the stalker went away.

We have had a car rammed into our house; vehicles driven at us; shots fired; threatening phone calls to our children; illegal surveillance; stalking; phone taps.....the list goes on. We have made every attempt to resolve this through normal channels – police, politicians.

Some years ago it became obvious to us that it was the Prime Minister's Office/Privy Council Office that was stopping an investigation of our complaints. I met with Sandra Frass, Mr. Harper's constituency office manager, explained the situation of cover-up to her, and she agreed to get a letter I had written on the subject to Mr. Harper personally. When later I queried why nothing was happening, I got a telephone message saying that the delay was because 'Ottawa is so slow'. I never heard from her again.

How ironic it is that a man with huge apparent conflicts of interest is entrusted by Prime Minister Stephen Harper with Canada's intelligence secrets; whereas a decent family like ours can't get even basic justice from Mr. Harper's people.