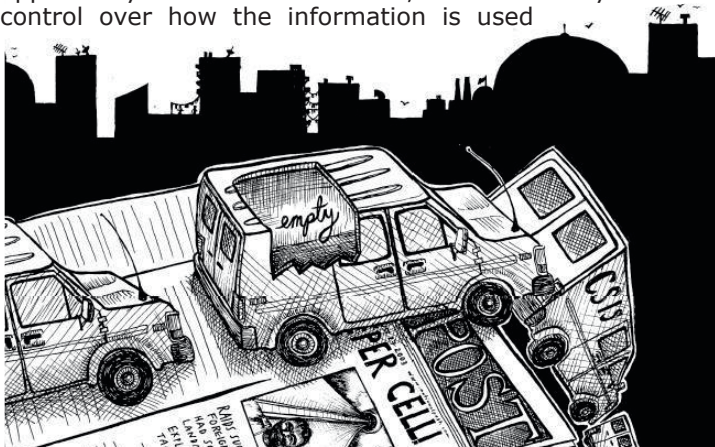


WHY NOT TALK – OR LISTEN - TO CSIS?

"I have nothing to hide"

Many of us are taken aback when we receive a visit from CSIS. We know we have done nothing wrong. So why not simply talk to the CSIS agents so they can see that we have nothing to hide?

As people arrested under security certificates, put on no fly lists or arrested abroad have learned, innocent comments you make to CSIS agents can be misinterpreted, misrecorded, taken out of context, or even misrepresented. They can also be passed on to foreign intelligence agencies; CSIS has intelligence-sharing agreements with 147 other agencies. You will have no opportunity to correct mistakes, nor have any control over how the information is used

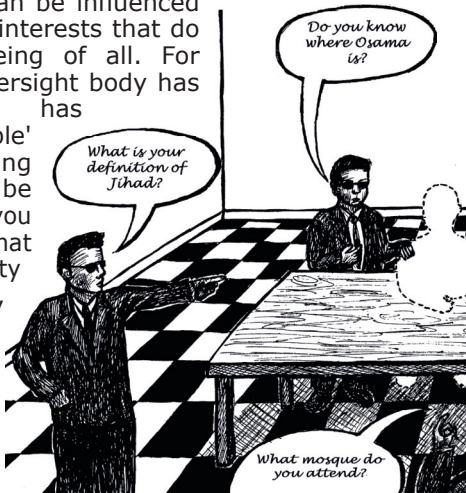


against you or others. The consequences can be serious.

Moreover, you have the right to privacy, to be free from surveillance, harassment, intimidation, and suspicion. Refusing to speak with CSIS is one way of asserting these basic rights, which people have fought long and hard to achieve.

"It is my duty as a Canadian to help CSIS"

CSIS gathers intelligence on any person or group who, in its opinion, might constitute a threat to the security of Canada or to Canadian interests. But what is a "threat" and what constitutes "security" can be seen and interpreted in different ways. Those who make decisions about what is harmful can be influenced by limited priorities and interests that do not include the well-being of all. For example, CSIS's own oversight body has found that CSIS has "displayed a 'regrettable' attitude that supporting Arab causes can be suspicious." So, while you might believe that governments have a duty to protect their countries, the record shows that CSIS has a history of harassing certain groups in Canada, including indigenous peoples, labour unions, queers, and immigrants.



"I want to protect public safety"

We do not want random violence in the streets, nor innocent people getting hurt for no reason. But it is a mistake to think that talking to CSIS helps protect us and our communities from such violence.

In fact, CSIS played a key role in bungling the Air India investigation, not only failing to prevent the bombing of an airplane, but subsequently destroying evidence so that no one was held accountable for killing 329 people. According to the *Globe and Mail*, a CSIS mole may have actually played a role in the bombing.



Moreover, CSIS surveillance is by no means limited to groups and individuals thought to pose a risk of violence. CSIS has a wide-ranging authority to collect intelligence and report on anyone whose activities may challenge or may be perceived to challenge the status quo in Canada or elsewhere. In practice, we have seen numerous examples of CSIS targeting social justice groups and activists. CSIS routinely engages in unethical tactics (visiting people at home and at work unannounced, offering money and favours for information, intimidating those with precarious immigration status, intrusive and irrelevant

questioning, etc.) and, since 9/11, it has been implicated in cases of rendition to torture overseas. This behaviour has had a dampening effect on public social and political engagement. Non-cooperation with CSIS is the best way to protect our various communities against such abuse and to support progressive social movements.

"I am interested in finding out why they are here"

People are often tempted to sit down with CSIS out of sheer curiosity. Why do they want to talk to me? However, CSIS agents are well trained. What they will let you know is what they want you to know; it is deliberate. They may also spread misinformation, either directly or through innuendo. You will have no way of knowing if what they're telling you or leading you to believe is true.

"I just want them to leave me alone"

Many people believe that, if they cooperate with CSIS, they will be left alone because they "have nothing to hide." The experience of those approached by CSIS suggests that the contrary is true. Once you have been identified as a collaborator, CSIS will continue to come back whenever it thinks you can provide information about acquaintances, community dynamics, rumours, prevalent opinions, organizations you may come in contact with, or other subjects. The best way to get CSIS to leave you alone is to refuse to collaborate.

www.peoplescommission.org/en/csis