



INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

MANDATE

The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence has the mandate to examine legislation and study issues related to national defence, security and veterans affairs.

The Senate created the committee during the 1st Session of the 37th Parliament, on March 15, 2001, with the first organization meeting taking place on May 10, 2001.

HISTORY

While the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence has been in existence for ten years, the idea of studying military and defence issues in the Senate began even earlier. Starting in the early 1980's, a variety of special committees and subcommittees were established for limited periods of time to study particular issues and prepare reports related to this area of study.

In 1982, the Senate Subcommittee on National Defence tabled a report that called for troops stationed in Europe to carry out major exercises at home and abroad with NATO allies. The following year, the subcommittee focused on maritime defence issues.

From 1985 to 1989, the Special Committee on National Defence tabled three reports, dealing with territorial air defence, military air transport and land forces.

After some terrorist incidents in Canada, two special committees were convened in 1987 and 1989. Some fifteen years later, the Senate Special Committee on Security and Intelligence was set up to examine the progress made in combating terrorism.

In 1993, a joint Senate-House of Commons committee was established to review Canada's defence policy.

This committee's first order of reference, or mandate, after it was created in 2001 "[a]uthorized [the committee] to conduct an introductory survey of the major security and defence issues facing Canada with a view to preparing a detailed work plan for future comprehensive studies" (May 31, 2001).

Through its work related to its first mandate, the committee concluded that there was an urgent need for a national security policy, which became the basis for its next order of reference: to "[e]xamine and report on the need for a national security policy for Canada" (April 16, 2002).



Over time, the committee recognized four broad areas of study: the capabilities of the departments of National Defence and Public Safety Canada, the working relationships between various agencies involved in intelligence-gathering and analysis, the mechanisms to review the agencies involved in intelligence-gathering, and the security of borders and critical infrastructure. These areas of study have formed the basis of subsequent orders of reference that have been reintroduced from session to session, since 2002.

Since its conception, the committee has studied many important issues and recommended measures to improve Canadians' security and allow Canada to contribute to global security.

Routinely, the committee forms a subcommittee on Veterans affairs to study related matters in depth.

SELECTED STUDIES

In the last years, the committee has heard a variety of witnesses on Canada's national security and defence policies, practices, circumstances and capabilities.

The committee continually touches on a variety of issues: the usage of dual-use technology by Iran; lessons learned from the Afghanistan mission; the transformations of the Canadian Forces; the state of the Reserves; the state of the Military in general; Canada-United States relationship, etc.

In June 2013, the committee tabled a report on the issue of harassment in the RCMP entitled: *Conduct Becoming: why the Canadian Royal Mounted Police Must Transform its Culture*. The report included 15 recommendations on how the RCMP can build a more respectful workplace, and better address ongoing issues of harassment. The committee indicated how the RCMP must continue improving its practices through strong leadership, clear lines of accountability, guidance, ongoing education, and greater transparency.

SELECTED LEGISLATIVE WORK

While conducting a study on the harassment issue within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Bill C-42, *An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts*, was referred to the committee. Parts of the Bill were also targeting the issue of harassment and introducing changes to the law to better address the issue.

In February 2013, the committee examined a private member's public bill. Bill S-213, *An Act respecting a national day of remembrance to honour Canadian veterans of the Korean War*. The bill was adopted without amendment.

In the spring of 2012, the committee examined the subject-matter of some elements contained in Division 12 of Part 4 of Bill C-38, *An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget*. This section referred to the shipriders and an Integrated Cross-Border Maritime Law Enforcement Policy. Canada-U.S. Shiprider involves vessels jointly crewed by specially trained and designated Canadian and U.S. law enforcement officers.

CURRENT WORK



For information on the current work of the committee, you may wish to review the orders of reference the committee has received from the Senate, or review the committee proceedings. Detailed information on current work of the committee can be found on the parliamentary website at <http://senate-senat.ca/secd.asp> .