



## 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 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 37<sup>th</sup> 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 almost fifteen 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. A decade 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 the Second Session of the Forty-first Parliament, the committee tabled reports on ballistic missile defence; security at Canada's borders; and an interim report on countering the security threat in Canada.

### SELECTED LEGISLATIVE WORK

Over the course of the Second Session of the Forty-first Parliament, the committee considered legislation related to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service; enhanced hiring opportunities in the federal Public Service for veterans; and changes to Canada's anti-terrorism regime. The committee also considered the subject matter of security and defence related provisions of various budget implementation bills, including elements related to: benefits for veterans; the historic names of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian Army and Royal Canadian Navy; and the prevention of terrorist travel.

### 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>.