



Research Guide to Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000

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Structure and Scope of Guide

The research guide consists of three reference documents and a collection of finding aids:

- Research Guide to Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000
([link](#))
- List of Finding Aids for Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000
([link](#))
- Subject / Finding Aid Matrix for Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000
([link](#))
- Collection of Finding Aids for Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000
([link](#))

Period Covered. This research guide focuses on government records from the period 1945 to 2000. Some of the finding aids described in the guide also list records created prior to 1945, but the guide does not include finding aids that only list records from prior to 1945. Some of the finding aids described in the guide list a small number of records created after 2000, but for practical purposes the year 2000 marks the effective extent of this guide. The intention is to expand this coverage in the future as additional historic records and finding aids become available.

Foreign Intelligence. The aim of this research guide is to assist in the study of “foreign intelligence” in Canada. For the purpose of the guide, “foreign intelligence” relates to all aspects of the intelligence function intended to support Canadian government decisions on foreign policy and defence matters. The guide does not attempt to describe the large volume of records related to “security intelligence” in Canada, i.e. intelligence dealing with domestic security matters. The guide deals primarily with matters related to the bodies involved in directing the foreign intelligence function in Canada, the departments and agencies involved in this work, and the process and products of foreign intelligence assessment. Currently, the guide describes only a small number of records dealing with aspects of the collection of foreign intelligence by Canada.

National Intelligence. The guide focuses on records dealing with national-level intelligence, that is, intelligence supporting decisions on foreign and defence matters by Cabinet or individual departments. With some exceptions, it does not describe records dealing with intelligence supporting operational activities (e.g. in-theatre decisions concerning peace-keeping missions, military operations in the Gulf and the former Yugoslavia, etc.) or tactical intelligence.

General Information

Creation of Records. The records described in the guide were created as part of the operation of the interdepartmental process which guides and conducts foreign intelligence activities in Canada. Many of these records—such as committee minutes and interdepartmental memoranda—were copied to several of these bodies. Therefore copies of many records are now held by a number of departments, and not just by the agency that created them.

Departmental File References. The records described in the guide are currently held by a number of Canadian Government departments and agencies (see below). Each department catalogues its holdings in a different manner, and even within departments filing systems are often inconsistent or have changed over time. Therefore the guide is not able to use a common system of archival references, unlike some other archival research guides which describe the holdings of a single agency with a consistent file reference system. The file references used in the guide are as complete as possible, based on the system in use by the department holding the records. In some cases archival

references are not available because the records released in response to ATI requests did not contain such information.

Accessing Records. Only a small proportion of the records identified in the guide are currently open to researchers. Access to the vast majority is still restricted and requires a formal Access to Information (ATI) request. Researchers can access those records which have been released in response to previous ATI requests through the mechanisms provided by the Access to Information Act; this usually involves submitting an “informal request” for previously released records.

Declassification of Records. Canada currently does not have a mechanism for the systematic declassification of historic records after a given period of time. Therefore, the only means of accessing records on foreign intelligence is the ATI process, which was never intended to deal with significant volumes of historical records.

Previous Canadian government security policy stipulated that classified records should be reviewed periodically and, where the sensitivity of the records had diminished, the classification should be downgraded or the records should be completely declassified (see <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12333>). At various times some departments established programs to review and declassify records, but this only affected a small proportion of government records. As resources were shifted from declassification work to the ATI process, the effort to declassify historic records largely ceased. Most historic government records on intelligence therefore retain their initial high classification, even many decades after they were created. Recent revisions to government security policy removed the previous requirement to review the classification of records and dropped the earlier language regarding the reduced sensitivity of records with the passage of time, a key principle in the declassification of records (see <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32611>).

In 2021-22 Public Safety Canada carried out a pilot project to review records produced by the JIC up to 1960 with the view to downgrading the classification of these records and possibly declassifying them entirely. This may ultimately result in the release of some or all of these records, and may possibly lead to moves by departments to declassify other historic records on intelligence.

CFIHP. Researchers working under the aegis of the Canadian Foreign Intelligence History Project (CFIHP) are seeking to promote greater access to historic records on foreign intelligence in Canada. CFIHP is a collaborative effort of researchers to maximize the benefits of working together to address the challenges of studying foreign intelligence in Canada (see: <https://www.csids.ca/canadian-foreign-intelligence-policy-project>). To this end CFIHP is conducting a comprehensive campaign of ATI requests for a number of the records described in this guide. Curated copies of records released through this process are available to CFIHP research partners.

Background Information. The study of foreign intelligence in Canada is complicated by the changing names of the key interdepartmental committees guiding this work as well as changes in the organizations involved in the collection and assessment of foreign intelligence. A glossary at the end of this guide provides a list of the most frequently encountered organizational acronyms related to foreign intelligence. It is not possible in this guide to provide an overview of the historical evolution of these committees and organizations; this background information can be found in the following works:

- Alan Barnes, “A Confusion, not a System: The Organizational Evolution of Strategic Intelligence Assessment in Canada, 1943 to 2003,” *Intelligence and National Security*, 34:4, 464-479 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2019.1578043>).
- Kurt F. Jensen, *Cautious Beginnings: Canadian Foreign Intelligence, 1939-51*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008)

Overview of Departmental Record Holdings

Government records dealing with foreign intelligence in Canada are held by a number of departments and agencies, including Library and Archives Canada (LAC), the Privy Council Office (PCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Communication Security Establishment (CSE).

LAC. LAC holds the largest collection of historic records dealing with foreign intelligence. All of these records originated with other departments. The Library and Archives Canada Act stipulates that records of historic value cannot be disposed of without LAC's approval, but there is no statutory requirement for departments to transfer records to LAC after a specific period of time. The transfer of historic records to LAC is therefore based on agreements negotiated between individual departments and LAC. Departments have transferred varying amounts of historic records on foreign intelligence to LAC, as noted in the sections on each department below.

Government records held by LAC are generally designated as either "open" to researchers, or "restricted." Access to restricted records requires an ATI request. Such requests are administered by LAC as the holder of the records, but LAC will frequently have to consult with the originating department before responding to the request.

Only a small number of foreign intelligence records held by LAC, largely dating from before 1950, are currently open to researchers. The designation of records from this period as either open or restricted is not consistent. This has resulted in a situation where some copies of certain records are open while other copies of the same records are still restricted. For example the DMI and DNI copies of JIC minutes from the 1940s held by LAC are open while the DAI copies of the same minutes are still restricted.

Historic government records held by LAC are assigned to collections (or "fonds") corresponding to the department or agency of origin. Until 1996 these fonds were designated "Record Groups." New fonds created after that time were assigned an "R" number (rather than an RG number), although the previous RG designations were retained for existing fonds. Foreign intelligence records are found primarily in the following fonds:

- RG2 Privy Council Office
- RG24 National Defence
- RG25 External Affairs (now Global Affairs Canada)
- RG73 Solicitor General (now Public Safety Canada)
- RG146 RCMP Security Service / CSIS
- R13760 Communication Security Establishment

Records transferred to LAC go through several stages of processing before they are incorporated into the LAC's permanent holdings. When LAC receives a shipment of records, it assigns a Registration Number, serving as point of entry acknowledgement. Registration Numbers are formatted with the year followed by a four-digit number, e.g. 2016-0123. The responsible archivist will receive a copy of the finding aid for the shipment from the sending department. LAC policy calls for shipments to be formally accessioned into the holdings of LAC within 60 days, but given the volume of transfers this may or may not occur. The process of formally accessioning the records includes the verification of the file contents against the finding aid, the removal records of no historic value, and the identification of any issues regarding preservation, such as the presence of diskettes, thumb drives, etc. The verification of the record also allows the archivist to collect enough information to write a brief description of the accession. When that is complete, a Branch Accession Number (BAN) is assigned. Currently, BANs are formatted with the year followed by a five-digit number followed by a random check digit, e.g. 2019-

00039-3; earlier BANs may have a different format. Once the records are fully arranged and described they are taken into the LAC's permanent holdings and assigned an archival reference number consisting of a Record Group number, Volume number, and File number and title. The "volume" refers to the LAC archival container holding a number of individual file folders; this is a unique number within each record group (during the BAN stage of processing, the archival containers are called "boxes" and are numbered sequentially within the BAN). Many files come in several parts (i.e. there are multiple file folders with the same file number). LAC generally distinguishes these by assigning a "part number" to each unique file folder. The originating department may have already assigned a "volume number" to each of these unique file folders, but LAC does not use this terminology in order to avoid confusion with the LAC volume number (i.e. the archival container). Regardless of the step in the process—Registration, BAN, or Permanent Volume—the archival file retains the file number assigned to it by the originating department or agency. Therefore, researchers may identify early parts of a file at LAC and the remaining parts still in the possession of the department or agency.

PCO. PCO retains all of the historic records on foreign intelligence held by the PCO National Security Branch's "Special Registry" (the formal name for this repository is not known). Some of these records date from the early 1940s. LAC has sought to encourage PCO to transfer these historic files, but PCO management has so far decided to retain control of the records. In dealing with ATI requests for these records, PCO has a very restrictive interpretation of what can be released, which has frequently delayed responses for prolonged periods and resulted in heavily redacted releases. PCO's handling of historic records on intelligence and security has been the subject of media reporting (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/government-records-archives-history-1.4129935>).

The files in the PCO "Special Registry" are held separately from the main departmental information management system (the PCO "Central Registry"). A small quantity of records dealing with intelligence matters was also circulated to PCO officials outside the National Security Branch, including the Secretary to the Cabinet, and were subsequently held in the PCO Central Registry. The PCO Central Registry has transferred many of these records to LAC as part of its regular disposition of records that are no longer of operational value. Such records are listed in the LAC RG2 finding aids.

GAC. GAC retains a quantity of historic records on foreign intelligence, some dating from the 1940s. These records are under the control of the GAC Intelligence Bureau. The records in the GAC "Special Registry" are held separately from the files in the main departmental information management system. GAC has been proactive in transferring historic records on foreign intelligence to LAC, including the transfer of several sizable batches of records in 2016. More records may be transferred in the future. These records are listed in the LAC RG25 finding aids. GAC has assigned an archivist to oversee the holdings in the Special Registry and to assist the GAC ATIP staff in responding to requests. The GAC Historical Section does not appear to play any role in managing the historical records held by the GAC Special Registry.

DND. DND's Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) maintains an archive of historical records to support its research and publication programs. These records are transferred to LAC when they are no longer required by DHH. DHH does not hold a significant quantity of records dealing with foreign and defence intelligence. For example, the records of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which originally reported to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, are held by PCO rather than DHH. Most of the records dealing with foreign intelligence held by DHH are scattered throughout the collection in subject files that do not deal specifically with intelligence. For example, many JIC assessments from prior to 1960 can be found in the files related to the agenda items of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (see DND DHH FA 2002/17 and DND DHH FA 73/1223; these files are mostly open to researchers). DHH has a much smaller number of files dealing specifically with intelligence subjects, which are generally "restricted." DND has been very slow to respond to ATI requests for these records, but in many cases other copies of the same records are available from other departments.

The DND intelligence branch (CFINTCOM and its predecessors) retains historic records on foreign and defence intelligence, but little is known about the extent of these holdings and the dates covered. DND has transferred some intelligence-related records to LAC dating from the 1990s and earlier. These records are listed in the LAC RG24 finding aids.

CSE. CSE still retains most of its historical records. Only a very small quantity of CSE records has been transferred to LAC; most of these relate to communications security rather than its signals intelligence activities. CSE has little experience in dealing with ATI requests and has been very slow in responding to such requests.

CFIHP Considerations. The copies of the archival files and individual records contained in the CFIHP database have been annotated with the source details (the LAC archival reference or the departmental file number when available) and the ATI request number. The computer file names of the individual pdf documents in the CFIHP database are broadly descriptive and consistent within the database, but they have no relation to the original document file numbers and have no permanent archival significance.

The annotation of archival source is accurate as of the time the records were added to the CFIHP database. This is generally not an issue, since the source reference does not change. Problems do arise, however, for records that are progressing through the LAC accession process, since there is sometimes a considerable delay between each step in the process. Therefore, records may have been added to the CFIHP database when they were still at the Registration or BAN stage but which are subsequently assigned a permanent LAC archival reference. For example, in 2016 GAC transferred several batches of historic foreign intelligence records to LAC. They were originally given a Registration Control Number and subsequently assigned a BAN, as follows:

- RCN 2016-0150 -- BAN 2016-00628-5
- RCN 2016-0036 -- BAN 2017-00440-5
- RCN 2016-0148 -- BAN 2017-00434-0
- RCN 2016-0149 -- BAN 2017-00437-5

These records have not yet been assigned a permanent LAC archival reference. In the CFIHP database, the archival references for the archival files from these collections have been converted to the BAN reference, but the hundreds of individual documents extracted from these archival files are still annotated with the initial Registration Control Number. As noted above, the original departmental file number for each of these files remains unchanged throughout this process.

Overview of Departmental Finding Aids

A major challenge facing researchers in the field of foreign intelligence in Canada is the difficulty in identifying records of interest scattered across a number of departments. There is no comprehensive finding aid (FA, i.e. a list of file titles and archival references) covering these records. A principle purpose of this research guide is therefore to consolidate the available information on FAs covering all departments and agencies holding records on foreign intelligence.

CFIHP has collected over 70 FAs dealing in whole or in part with foreign intelligence matters. The second part of this research guide, "List of Finding Aids for Records on Foreign Intelligence in Canada, 1945-2000," summarizes information on these FAs ([link](#)). The collection of FAs is available here: ([link](#)). The following section provides an overview description of the available FAs for each department holding foreign intelligence records.

LAC. The main research tool for identifying files of interest is the LAC on-line "Collection Search" function (<https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Search>). However, not all LAC's archival holdings are covered by this search engine; in particular, it does not cover records that are still going through the accession process. Paper FAs for records not covered by the LAC Collection Search (and which are not restricted) are held in the Reference Room of LAC's facility at 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa. Some, but not all, are also available in digital format from the LAC reference archivists.

Some of the LAC paper (or digital) FAs describe records that are also searchable via the Collection Search function. Nevertheless, it may be useful to refer to the paper FA because an on-line search might not identify files with unusual file names. In the paper FAs related files are usually listed together, which may make it easier to identify files of interest.

In the List of Finding Aids for Foreign Intelligence Records, the LAC FAs are organized by Record Group. Each FA has a short entry which includes the following information:

- LAC FA number: This is the number on the actual paper or digital copy of the FA available to CFIHP; often this is an ink annotation.
- CFIHP suffix: Where LAC has assigned the same number to several FAs (which usually deal with the same subject) CFIHP has assigned a suffix to differentiate these FAs.
- LAC availability: Indicates whether a paper or digital copy of the FA is available at LAC. The notation "on-line FA" indicates that the records in this finding aid can also be identified via the LAC on-line Collection Search function.
- BAN: if applicable.
- CFIHP file name: Indicates the CFIHP identifier for the FA.
- Subject matter: Brief description of the records listed in the FA, particularly noting intelligence-related records.
- FA Description: Brief comments on the structure of the FA.
- CFIHP Link: Internet link to the copy of the FA on the CFIHP website.

A small number of these LAC FAs have redactions (i.e. the sensitive portions have been "severed"), but these are generally very minor, except as noted below.

The collection of LAC FAs includes six FAs from RG146 describing files originally held by the RCMP Security Service and CSIS. Most of the records listed in these FAs deal with security intelligence matters rather than foreign intelligence. However, there are a number of records, primarily related to the work of the JIC and IAC, that are of interest to researchers dealing with foreign intelligence. The problem is that the RG146 FAs are confusing, fragmentary, incomplete and heavily redacted. There are

many parts to the RG146 FAs and LAC has not assigned systematic names to differentiate them. CFIHP has therefore assigned suffixes to several of these FAs.

PCO. In response to ATI requests, PCO has released two partially duplicated FAs for records held by the PCO Special Registry dealing with the JIC and IAC. However, they are 50% and 80% redacted, respectively. These redactions are being challenged, and additional portions of these FAs may be available in the future.

GAC. In response to an ATI request, GAC has released a 36-page FA for records held in the GAC Special Registry. It has a number of minor redactions but this only has a limited effect on the usefulness of the FA.

DND. DHH uses several indexing systems for its holdings which were adopted at various times and which suited their internal requirements. Over time, DHH has also transferred some of these records from older to newer index systems, which means that the current archival reference may be different from earlier published citations that researchers may see elsewhere. All of this means that locating records in the DHH holdings can be challenging.

Most DHH records are now organized into a number of “fonds” (collections of related documents). A fonds-level description of the archival holdings of DHH is available on the ARCHEION website: <https://www.archeion.ca/national-defence-directorate-of-history-heritage-library>. This on-line fonds description listing does not go down to the file level, but it will indicate whether a FA is available in the DHH reading room. CFIHP has collected a number of DHH FAs which list files of intelligence interest. These fonds break down into two groups: large fonds which deal primarily with other issues, but have some records of intelligence interest, and smaller fonds which deal with files of specific intelligence interest.

There are two large fonds of particular interest. These are 73/1223 – Raymont Fonds and 2002/17 – Joint Staff Fonds, which contain records produced by the NDHQ Joint Staff (the group responsible for supporting the Chiefs of Staff Committee), primarily dating from 1945 to 1960. Many of the files in these fonds contain records of intelligence interest. For example, a number of JIC assessments are in the files of material prepared for specific CSC meetings, but they are often not mentioned specifically in the FAs (copies of many of these documents have been included in the CFIHP database). The FAs for these fonds list a small number of individual files of intelligence interest, which are normally classified.

A number of other DHH fonds contain files of intelligence interest. Some deal specifically with intelligence matters, but they are often quite small, sometimes comprising only one or two documents. Others are larger fonds which only list a few files of intelligence interest. FAs for these fonds are included in the collection of FAs. It does not appear that any of the other DHH fonds contain files of intelligence interest.

DHH has two other file index systems: a computer document index and the paper-based KARDEX index. There are about 30 files of intelligence interest in each of these indexes. A list of these files of intelligence interest is included in the document “DND DHH FA – Other DHH Records” in the collection of FAs. Many of the records that were previously listed in the KARDEX index have been incorporated into one of the DHH fonds, in particular 2002/17 – Joint Staff Fonds

CSE. In response to an ATI request, CSE has released a 763-page FA of archival files. It is about 50% redacted, but nevertheless still provides useful research leads.

Glossary

ACAI	America/Canada Agreed Intelligence [threat to North America]
CANUS	Canada/US Joint Intelligence Assessment [threat to North America]
CCSI	Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence
Cda/US BSP	Canada/US Basic Security Plan
CDI	Chief of Defence Intelligence [DND]
CDC	Cabinet Defence Committee
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff [DND]
CFINTCOM	Canadian Forces Intelligence Command [DND]
CIALO(O)	CIA Liaison Officer (Ottawa) [US]
CIS	Chief Intelligence and Security [DND]
CJS(L)	Canadian Joint Staff (London)
CJS(W)	Canadian Joint Staff (Washington)
CSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee [DND]
CSE	Communication Security Establishment
DCDS ISO	Deputy Chief of Defence Staff – Intelligence, Security and Operations [DND]
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DDI	Director of Defence Intelligence [DND]
DGDR	Director General of Defence Research [DND]
DG Int, DGI	Director General Intelligence [DND]
DGIS	Director General Intelligence and Security [DND]
DIA	Director of Intelligence-Air, Director of Air Intelligence [DND]
DINTP	Director of Intelligence Production [at times abbreviated DIP] [DND]
DINWP	Director of Intelligence-Non-Warsaw Pact [DND]
DIP	see DINTP
DIWP	Director of Intelligence-Warsaw Pact [DND]
DL (2)	Defence Liaison (2) Division [DEA]
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence [DND]
DM	Deputy Minister
DND Int	DND/CF post-1964 intelligence groups, including CIS, CDI, DG Int DGI, DGIS, DDI, DSTI, DIWP, DINWP, DTI, DRA
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence, Director of Naval Plans and Intelligence [DND]
DRB	Defence Research Board [DND]
DRBLO	Defence Research Board LO Washington, London [also Defence Research Member]
DRA; DRI	Director of Regional Analysis; Director of Regional Intelligence [DND]
DSI	Director of Scientific Intelligence [DND]
DSTI	Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence [DND]

DTNI	Director of Trans-National Intelligence [DND]
EIC	Economic Intelligence Committee
EIP	Bureau of Economic Intelligence [DEA]
EIWG	Electronic Intelligence Working Group [JIC working group]
FICOP	Foreign Intelligence Collection Priorities
FIB	see IND
FIP	Foreign Intelligence Program
GMIWG (P&O)	Guided Missile Intelligence Working Group (Production and Order of Battle)
GMIWG (S&T)	Guided Missile Intelligence Working Group (Scientific and Technical)
IAC	Intelligence Advisory Committee, Intelligence Assessment Committee
IAS	Intelligence Assessment Secretariat, International Assessment Staff [PCO]
ICSI	Inter-departmental Committee on Security and Intelligence
IND	Foreign Intelligence Bureau [sometimes also abbreviated FIB], Foreign Assessment Bureau [DEA]
INE	Economic Intelligence Division, Economic Assessment Division [DEA]
INP	Political Intelligence Division, Political Assessment Division [DEA]
IPC	Intelligence Policy Committee
ISD	Security and Intelligence Bureau [DEA]
ISLD	Intelligence and Security Liaison Division [DEA]
ISTS	Inter-Service Topographical Section [DND]
ISX	Intelligence and Security Complex [DND computer automation program]
JAWG	Joint Arms Working Group (Sino-Soviet Traffic in Arms) [JIC working group]
JIB	Joint Intelligence Bureau [DND]
JIB LO	JIB Liaison Officer
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JICLO(L)	JIC Liaison Officer (London)
JICLO(W)	JIC Liaison Officer (Washington)
JIC Int SC	JIC Intelligence Sub-Committee [WWII subcommittee of the JIC]
JIR	Joint Intelligence Review [also Joint Indications Room]
JIS	Joint Intelligence Staff
JIS-C	Joint Intelligence Sub-committee [various groups created post-1945]
MC	memorandum to cabinet
MMSI	Ministers Meeting on Security and Intelligence
NDIC	National Defence Intelligence Centre [DND current intelligence watch centre]
NIAU, NFIAU	National Intelligence Assessment Unit; National Foreign Intelligence Assessment Unit [alternate names for the same proposed unit]
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate [US]
NIS	National Intelligence Survey [US]
NORACT	Highlights of Northern Activities [JIC product in 1950s]

NSA; NSIA	National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister; National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister
PCO	Privy Council Office
PCO S&I	PCO bodies involved in security and intelligence policy matters, including S&I Coordinator, S&I Secretariat, NSA
PFZ	Security and Intelligence Branch [later IFB] [DEA]
PIB	Political Intelligence Bulletin [DEA periodic]
PSI	Intelligence and Security Liaison Division [DEA]
PSP	Bureau of Security and Intelligence Liaison, Bureau of Intelligence Analysis and Security [DEA]
RPRG	Requirements, Production and Resources Group [IAC sub-committee]
SICM	Security and Intelligence Consultative Meeting [ICSI sub-committee]
SIR	Special Intelligence Report [IAC product]
SIS	Special Intelligence Section [DEA wartime unit working with Discrimination Unit]
SRB	Special Research Bureau [DEA]
TB; TBS	Treasury Board; Treasury Board Secretariat
WIR	Weekly Indications Report [JIC product]; Weekly Intelligence Report [IAC product]
ZEP	Bureau of Economic Intelligence, Economic Intelligence Division [DEA]
ZSP	Bureau of Intelligence Analysis and Security [DEA]
ZSI	Intelligence Analysis Division [DEA]