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STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF SECURITY CLEARANCES

GENERAL

1. The threat created by granting any person access to sensitive information is rarely specific. Each security clearance is no more than a considered estimate that a favourable balance exists between:

- a. the assessed risk to national interests which is implicit in the individual's access to classified information; and
- b. the perceived value to the attainment of departmental objectives of granting that individual access to classified information.

2. Appendix G of the Government Security Policy, 1986, provides the federal criteria for the granting and denial of security clearances. However, because any assessment of the two sides of the security clearance decision equation must be subjective in nature, the Department of National Defence has established a more detailed statement of these criteria to serve as a guide to personnel and recruiting staffs, security investigators and analysts and members of the Security Clearance Review Board. These criteria aim at satisfying the security requirement of the Department and Canadian Forces while applying the provisions of the Government Security policy in a manner which guarantees actual and prospective employees and members a fair and consistent security clearance assessment. It should be noted that clearances are seldom denied on the basis of one criterion alone. Adverse recommendations will usually result from information which indicates that the subject fails to meet a combination of the norms established by clearance adjudication guidelines.

3. This guideline facilitates the early assessment of an applicant's eligibility for clearance and the eventual approval of routine clearances. Nevertheless, the authority to deny a member of the Canadian Forces or a civilian employee of the Department a required clearance remains exclusively with the Chief of Defence Staff or the Deputy Minister respectively. As these standards can neither be all-encompassing nor cater to the full variety of circumstances which may arise, these authorities will occasionally establish precedents in deciding special or unique cases.

4. The elements established by the Government Security Policy for a security clearance are stated in terms of requirements for adequate information regarding the candidate, reasonable grounds to believe in the candidate's loyalty, and sufficient indication that the candidate can be relied upon to protect classified information. This order provides security clearance standards in the same sequence.

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ADEQUATE INFORMATION

5. Federal Policy. "A decision to grant or deny a security clearance must be based on adequate information. Where such information does not exist or cannot be obtained, then a security clearance cannot be given" (Para (d) of Appendix G to the Government Security Policy)

6. Departmental Standards. Security clearance requests cannot normally be considered unless the subject of the assessment has established a sufficient period of residence in Canada or a country from which reliable records and reports can be obtained to provide an unbroken history establishing:

- a. Identity: Certification extending to a minimum age of twelve that the subject is the person named on the birth certificate and has not assumed another's identity;
- b. Conduct: Within legal limits, the existence of any record concerning criminal or subversive behaviour, including convictions, of the subject, close associates or relatives, over a ten-year period from the present or from age sixteen, whichever is the shorter; and
- c. Character: For clearance inquiries requiring a field investigation, sufficient corroborated information concerning continuing behaviour patterns to permit adequate assessment of those character traits which indicate reliability to protect classified information.

LOYALTY

7. Federal Policy. "Persons should be denied a security clearance if there are reasonable grounds to believe (that) they are engaged in, or may engage in activities that constitute a 'threat to the security of Canada' as that term is defined in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, (or that) because of personal beliefs ... (or) association with persons or groups considered a security threat ... they may act or may be induced to act in such a way as to constitute a 'threat to the security of Canada' as defined" - (Para (c) of Appendix G to the Government Security Policy).

8. "Threat to the security of Canada" is defined as:

- "a. Espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or activities directed toward or in support of such espionage or sabotage;

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- "b. Foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person;
- "c. activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political objective within Canada or a foreign state; and
- "d. activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts, or directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of the constitutionally established system of government of Canada.

"But does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities referred to in (sub) paragraphs (a) to (d)."

9. Departmental Standards. A favourable assessment of the subject's loyalty will normally require:

a. Citizenship: Certification of the following citizenship status is required for the security clearance level indicated:

- (1) LEVEL I - Canadian citizenship or landed immigrant status having taken verifiable steps to become a Canadian citizen,
- (2) LEVELS II and III - Canadian citizenship

NOTE: While the holder of a clearance up to and including LEVEL III may, in addition to being a Canadian, hold dual citizenship of a nationality which is considered not to have hostile intelligence aims, a dual citizenship will not be acceptable for Special

Activity (SA) clearances unless the second nation is acceptable, in terms of security, to those authorities originating the classified information included within the requested compartmented category;

b. Ideology: Indication that the subject does not:

- (1) hold political or other fundamental beliefs which advocate or support action that could constitute a "threat" to security" as defined at paragraph 6, or

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- (2) support any group, movement, cult or organization which is assessed as having potential to induce the subject to take disloyal or illegal action whether knowingly or unwittingly.

RELIABILITY

10. Federal Policy: "Persons should be denied a security clearance if there are reasonable grounds to believe because of ... features of character ... or family or other close ties of affection to persons living in oppressive or hostile countries ... they may disclose, may be induced to disclose or may cause to be disclosed in an unauthorized way, government information classified in the national interest"; (Para (c) of Appendix G to the Government Security Policy)

11. Departmental Standards: A favourable assessment of the subject's reliability to protect classified material will normally require a satisfactory evaluation of the following factors:

- a. Influence by Relatives or Associates: When a subject has family or other close ties of affection, or significant association, with persons who can be influenced by a hostile intelligence service or who, for other reasons, may be disposed to bring pressure to influence the subject to act in a disloyal manner the security assessment must judge the possibility that these persons may be actual or potential, direct or indirect, agents of a hostile intelligence service, whether for ideological, coerced, or mercenary reasons. Where this possibility exists the security assessment must include an estimate of the effect which such influence could have on the subject;
- b. Financial Stress: When a subject faces an immediate or potentially desperate need for extra income or financial relief due to debts, obligations, addiction to drugs, compulsive gambling or irresponsible spending the security assessment will consider:
 - (1) the degree of desperation,
 - (2) whether the situation is stable, improving, or deteriorating, and
 - (3) the subject's probable reaction to such stress.

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- c. Vulnerability to Coercion or Blackmail: When a subject feels compelled to hide knowledge of personal behaviour, history, or an existing situation, whether to protect employment, reputation, ego or a relationship, a favourable assessment of the subject's suitability for clearance will normally only be possible if there is a strong indication that the subject would report any attempts at coercion or blackmail;
- d. Lack of Stability, Care or Discretion:
The security assessment must judge that the subject can be depended upon to exercise the sound judgement and care necessary to safeguard classified information and apply appropriate discretion in handling classified material and knowledge. Lack of this reliability may be indicated by repeated security violations and the security assessment will consider the frequency and circumstances of such violations and the subject's reaction to consequential counselling or disciplinary action. The ability to safeguard information may also be affected by:
- (1) Impairment: a clearance should not be approved for a subject whose behaviour in the past two or three years indicates a potential risk that he or she may be impaired by a drug or alcohol while handling classified material,
 - (2) Indiscreet Behaviour: a clearance should not be approved for a subject who is deemed prone to be indiscreet in the handling of information in the work or social milieu whether due to impairment, mental disorder or lack of judgement, forethought, or adequate sense of duty and responsibility, and
- e. Criminal Conduct: Criminal or anti-social behaviour may not, in itself, demonstrate a significant risk that an individual will engage in disloyal activity but when behaviour indicates a willingness to subordinate the rights or welfare of others to the pursuit of selfish conduct or goals the security assessment must consider whether the individual might take disloyal action out of mercenary or vindictive motives. Such an assessment will review:
- (1) the nature and severity of the behaviour,
 - (2) the frequency of the incidents,

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- (3) the elapsed period since the activity was last reported,
- (4) the possibility that only a portion of the activity has been detected or reported, and
- (5) any indication that the individual has reformed since the last reported incidence of the activity.

PROTECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

12. Information bearing on the clearance suitability of members and employees is classified information and the identity of the sources of this information will be protected in accordance with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

13. While the interests of the national security must take precedence where there is reasonable doubt, the safeguarding of the interests of the individual is also essential to the preservation of the society we wish to protect. In exercising any discretion permitted in rendering clearance decisions, every effort must be made to strike a proper balance between these sometimes competing requirements. Before any steps are taken towards denial of a clearance based on adverse information, analysts, investigators and adjudicators are to ensure that every reasonable effort has been made to corroborate or confirm adverse allegations and that the individual has had an opportunity to provide any explanation, counter-arguments, or mitigating evidence which he or she wishes to have considered as part of the final decision-making process.

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