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July 5, 2000

The Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms S. Scarlett

In reply to the Attorney General's request for public submission's, here is my submission to address the failure of ASIO in keeping up with the social context of our society the "information age"; something that can not only be garnered but facilitated to actually realise the trust that is placed within this organisation.

The first point that is "deserved" is that although there were good submissions put forward by various groups / organisations in this committee's proceedings of April of '99 there seems to be no recognition or at least redress of what some would call very "cutting edge" issues delving into civil privacy. The continued hunger of intelligence services to upgrade interceptive abilities at the moment far outways the citizens ability to both trust new technology and to also take it on board knowing that they can rely on that trust.

The second point is that although ASIO was set up by an agreement with the U.K there still seems to be a master servant role, it could well be that ASIO is destined to keep with-in a minor role of the exchange liaison agreements and therefore is relegated a lesser role in the overall picture or quite possibly a better role in identifying why it is not at the forefront. Will these arrangements require amending to allow ASIO a broader ability to report to the civilians they are there to serve and protect.

The third point is the lack of identifiable guidance it seems that although ASIO has been in operation since the pre-SUKARNO era it has failed dismally in telling Australians how it is assisting our neighbours post colonial struggles, (most of which have been tribal/ resource based issues) this failure to act has put Australia in the light of an intransigent neighbour who lack's "gumption" in "cooperatively addressing these issues". To list but a few Bouganville, Indonesia in Timor Loroe Sae, Irian Jaya? and now we look east to the Solomons (in disaster yet again), Fiji and in the past New Caledonia. This is not our responsibility but the fact remains that the post colonial make-up of our region is indigenous and predominantly non european in custom and will for the near future rely on our integrity to respect and not paternalise. We ; like our neighbours need to know that ASIO and by default you guys are on the job. Perhaps a quarterly wrap-up of regional stability issues could be an approach to look at.

The fourth point relates to the current lack of released documents (D_ Notices) it seems ironic that anyone can look into the U.S National Security Archives and find that Australia had two "FALSE FLAG OFFICERS" working in cohorts with the coup d'tante to overthrow A'llende in CHILE (A'llende was democratically elected). Yet 25 years later in Australia we can't find out anything about Timor Loroe Sae in the same period 73-76. (Please note the author is fully aware that ASIO's role in the exchange liaison agreements and "d-notice" releases is minor if not retracted somewhat post the J.P. Wispeleare and Arthur incident in U.S, but it still forms part of the overall operational resource information that needs public attention). So when is parliament and its presiding committees going to take the quantum leap and catch up with the "social now", global communications are now so advanced it seems that GLASNOST is here whether this committee or ASIO likes it or not ;the role of reporting of ASIO's duties will be noticed more if it is not there to compare with our exchange partners releases.

The fifth and final point is of course the nature of human relations, most people are curious by nature and gradually build trust as they receive more information. This is where ASIO has failed dismally in the past, a quick straw pole on ten citizens in Darwin in the last week Q 1: Do you know what ASIO's role is here in Australia, Q 2 Do you trust ASIO to serve and protect you.

All answers to these questions alluded yes I trust them but I don't know enough about them and why are you asking this question .

As Mr Chris Connolly (F.S.C.P.C) pointed to this committee on the 27/4/99 (page48) "In the minds of the general public ,I do not think that asio has the golden image which may have been expressed here today , because people do not know enough about asio..." Perhaps there could be a role for a public working group to adress these perceptions ,after all a fresh veiw from outside of the committee and ASIO could do no harm.I of course would be available for this task should the committee see any merit in this idea.

"Perceptions like beleifs form the basis upon which we all think"

YOURS SINCERELY

MATTHEW COFFEY