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Predictive Failure? Intelligence-gathering and the FLQ

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Predictive Failure? Intelligence-gathering and the FLQ

Ronald Benjamin St. Clair

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA Degree in History

Department of History
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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*Dedicated to my Mother,
Lorraine M. Gorn
Whose unwavering support has more often than not gone unrecognized.*

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R. Benjamin St. Clair,
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ABSTRACT

It has been the Canadian federal government's consistent position that the decision to invoke the War Measures Act had been arrived at due to a lack of available intelligence on the FLQ. They contend that sufficient advance warning of the FLQ's intentions to kidnap political officials before the October Crisis of 1970 had not been provided, and they were not given adequate intelligence on the nature and capabilities of the threat during the crisis. Essentially, the argument asserts that there had been a failure on the part of the intelligence-community in Canada to *predict* the FLQ's future actions. This thesis challenges the assumption of predictive failure through a critical analysis of the available primary source material on the subject. The analysis is accomplished in part by drawing upon the classical works in intelligence-gathering in order to identify the problems that have historically hampered intelligence-gathering efforts and to determine whether or not they were evident in the present case. Ultimately, this model of analysis contradicts the assumption of predictive failure by demonstrating that serious problems of intelligence-gathering had existed long before the October Crisis began. These problems compounded over time to ensure that, although adequate intelligence on the FLQ did exist, its transmission from intelligence-gatherers to decision-makers was severely hampered.

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INTRODUCTION

In early October 1970, Canada was gripped by the kidnapping of two political officials in Montreal by a Quebec Separatist group calling themselves the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ). The events, which would come to be known as the October Crisis, “where the biggest domestic news stories in Canada’s history.”¹ Although the Crisis extended into December 1970, it reached its climax with the Declaration of the War Measures Act and subsequent murder of one of the prisoners, Deputy Premier of Quebec, Pierre Laporte. In the aftermath of the Crisis, the federal government’s decision to use the harsh provisions of the War Measures Act to stop the FLQ came under increasing criticism as it was learned that the group was not nearly as large, well-organized, and capable as media reports and the government had indicated. In defence of their decision, key decision-makers within the federal government asserted that they had not been provided with adequate intelligence on the FLQ. Not only had the intelligence community failed to provide adequate hard information on the FLQ during the crisis, the government argued that they had also failed to predict the kidnappings. This *predictive failure* argument has been the consistent position of the government in the thirty-five years since the Crisis.

As time has passed, the events of the October Crisis have faded from the popular consciousness and many believed that the kidnappings represented an isolated incident, an aberration from the norm that would not occur again. Following the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, however, western democracies have re-evaluated their domestic security and intelligence provisions. Thus, a detailed

¹ John T. Saywell, “October 70,” The Canadian Annual Review (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1971) 3.

examination of Canada's only serious domestic terrorist incident may help us understand how to prevent these types of incidents from occurring in the future.

This thesis will explore the validity of the predictive failure argument through an analysis of intelligence-gathering on the FLQ. In order to accomplish this, available primary source documents will be examined in relation to the classical theoretical problems of intelligence-gathering to determine whether they were evident in relation to the FLQ situation. Any study of the history of intelligence gathering poses particular problems with regard to research and the types of sources available. In this case, information is additionally restricted due to the controversial nature of the subject and its relative recentness. As such, this study will examine only the openly available primary sources available in an effort to create a foundation of knowledge on the subject suitable for future researchers. This study can also be understood to be functionalist in nature as it will attempt to address a very narrow breadth of source material in an attempt to answer a similarly narrow question regarding the invocation of the War Measures Act, namely: what role did intelligence-gathering play in the decision?

Before a comprehensive analysis can be conducted, however, certain prerequisites must be satisfied. Thus, the first chapter will provide a historical background of the events of the October Crisis, as well an account of the birth and evolution of the FLQ. In addition, a detailed description of the organizational structure of the intelligence-gathering community in Canada will be provided. The overall purpose of this chapter will be to provide the reader with a historical background of the FLQ and the intelligence-gathering community in order to facilitate the analysis to follow.

The second chapter will then provide the intelligence-gathering theory necessary to conduct a proper analysis. This section will draw upon the classical works in intelligence-gathering, in order to identify the theoretical problems that have historically hampered intelligence-gathering efforts and to determine whether or not they were evident in the present case.

With knowledge of intelligence-gathering theory, as well as a historical background of the participants and events of the Crisis, a detailed analysis of intelligence-gathering and the FLQ will be undertaken. The entire period of intelligence-gathering on the FLQ will be examined, not simply the events of the October Crisis, in an effort to identify endemic problems that may have existed before the Crisis and which may have had an impact on the decision to invoke the War Measures Act.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Part 1: Historiography

The historiography on the FLQ and the October Crisis is extensive, however, few authors deal directly with the issue of intelligence-gathering directly. The body of literature on the subject can be roughly broken down into several categories.

First, there are the popular literature books. These works, which are often written by journalists, frequently possess a good understanding of the events of the crisis, but do not provide a scholarly thesis. For the most part, their arguments gravitate towards issues of civil rights and they often assert that the Trudeau Government should have known that the FLQ did not pose a serious danger. At times, they also support the popular conspiracy theories concerning the crisis. One of the more popular and enduring of these are that the events were either manipulated by a fiercely nationalist Prime Minister who wanted to send a strong message to Quebec separatists, or a crafty election tactic by a civic administration in Montreal who would stop at nothing to get re-elected. Within the popular literature genre, some of the more important works include The FLQ, the anatomy of an underground movement, by Louis Fournier¹, a French journalist working in Montreal during the crisis. Although his account is undeniably in favour of the separatist cause and is critical of the government in general, his grasp of the basic events of FLQ history is comprehensive. Overall, the work represents one of the most complete accounts of FLQ history.

Second, there are the scholarly or academic works that explore the FLQ and the October Crisis. As with the popular works, many also present the thesis that the

¹ Louis Fournier, The FLQ, the anatomy of an underground movement (Toronto: NC Press, 1984).

government's actions were unwarranted in relation to the threat posed by the FLQ. However, they tend not to go as far as the popular works in making assumptions on the reasons for which the government made its decisions and often avoid conspiracy theories altogether. The line separating these two categories is sometimes thin as established academic authors have written works with a more popular flavour, and authors of popular literature have written books of scholarly merit on the FLQ. Some of the more noteworthy scholarly works on the FLQ are: Desmond Morton's article "Bayonets in the Streets: the Canadian Experience of Aid to the Civil Power 1867-1990"² as well as Ronald D. Crelinsten's, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ During the October Crisis of 1970."³ Books of note include Ronald Haggart's Rumours of war⁴ and "The Amateur Revolutionaries: A Reassessment of the FLQ," by David A. Charters.⁵ Only a very few scholarly articles deal with intelligence gathering and the FLQ, however. Significant in this body of work is Apprehended Insurrection? RCMP Intelligence and the October Crisis by Reg Whitaker.⁶ The purpose of Whitaker's essay was to examine the RCMP Security Intelligence Service's available intelligence in an attempt to ascertain whether or not there had been a failure in intelligence gathering. Although the importance of this work cannot be underestimated, it is somewhat limited in that its focus was on the specific sources of information available to the RCMP. This type of approach resulted in obvious problems as the vast majority of this information remains highly classified.

² Desmond Morton, "Bayonets in the Streets: the Canadian Experience of Aid to the Civil Power 1867-1990," Canadian Defence Quarterly, 20/5 (April 1991).

³ Ronald D. Crelinsten, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ During the October Crisis of 1970," Inside Terrorist Organizations, ed. David C. Rappaport (Portland: Frank Class, 2001).

⁴ Ronald Bernard Haggart, Rumours of war (Toronto: New Press, 1971).

⁵ David A. Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries: A Reassessment of the FLQ," Terrorism and Political Violence, 1997 9(1): 133-169.

⁶ Reg Whitaker, "Apprehended Insurrection? RCMP Intelligence and the October Crisis," Queen's Quarterly, 100/2 (Summer 1993).

In addition to the scholarly works on the FLQ and October Crisis, there are a great number of political bibliographies and accounts written by officials, or in some cases, FLQ members, who had been involved in the events of the October Crisis. Some notable political memoirs include Memoirs by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Rene Levesque's autobiography by the same name.⁷ There are also accounts of the Crisis written by individuals involved such as Gerard Pelletier's The October Crisis and FLQ leader Pierre Vallières's The Assassination of Pierre Laporte: Behind the October '70 Scenario.⁸ Although these works can provide valuable insights into the perceptions of the various participants, they are naturally limited in the bias held by their authors.

There are also the government inquiries that explored the FLQ and intelligence gathering in Canada. Although they include a great deal of relevant information, they fail to deal directly with the role intelligence gathering played in the October Crisis. In fact, they were not given the appropriate mandate to investigate that very question. Although the federal McKenzie Report, published in 1969, made important recommendations intended to improve the nature of intelligence and security in Canada, it came too early to examine the events of the October Crisis. The next Federal examination of intelligence and security in Canada came at the end of the 1970s. The McDonald Commissions, whose successive four volumes were published during the first years of the 1980s, did not deal with the sensitive issue of intelligence gathering and the October Crisis by establishing terms of reference that would examine the decade of activity since the last Commission. In so doing, it placed the events of the October Crisis at the very periphery

⁷ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Memoirs (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) and Rene Levesque, Memoirs (McClelland and Stewart, 1995).

⁸ Pelletier, Gerard, The October Crisis (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971) and Pierre Vallières, The Assassination of Pierre Laporte: Behind the October '70 Scenario (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1977).

of its mandate and chose to investigate the allegations of misconduct that took place in the aftermath of the crisis. Thus the two commissions effectively straddled the crisis, while neither adequately dealt with it. In fact, the McDonald Commission went so far as to explicitly state that issues of intelligence gathering and the October Crisis were inexplicably outside its terms of reference. The Report stated:

It is clearly not within our terms of reference to judge whether or not there was sufficient grounds for invoking the War Measures Act. The matters relevant to our mandate are the adequacy of the Act, the extent to which the government looked to the Security Intelligence Service for intelligence before deciding to invoke the Act and the extent to which the R.C.M.P. was later involved in dealing with this national crisis.⁹

The primary provincial commission on the crisis, undertaken by the Province of Quebec, was ill equipped to deal with this issue. Undertaken by the Parti Québécois, the separatist leaning provincial government of Quebec that replaced the Liberal Party following the crisis, the Duchaine Inquiry focused on issues of infringement of civil rights.¹⁰ Furthermore, as a provincial inquiry, its terms of reference would clearly have a provincial focus. Given the tense relations between the Trudeau and Levesque Governments at the time, federal cooperation was minimal and the RCMP refused to cooperate altogether.

Finally, as this work will attempt to analyze intelligence gathering on the FLQ in light of the classical problems of intelligence, it is important to briefly mention some of the works that have provided a theoretical basis for intelligence-gathering history in the post-war era. First and foremost, there is Sherman Kent's Strategic Intelligence: For

⁹ Canada, Second Report of the Commission of Inquiry Concerning Certain Activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981) 916. Herein after referred to as The MacDonald Report.

¹⁰ Jean-François Duchaine, Rapport sur les événements d'octobre 1970 (Québec: Direction de l'édition, Direction générale des publications gouvernementales, Ministère des communications, 1981).

American World Policy that represents one of the most important works in the field. Written immediately following the Second World War, Kent identified the shift in emphasis occurring at the time from the collection of secret information to analysis. His work outlines the basic theories and principles on which intelligence gathering in the modern era would be based.¹¹ In addition, Roberta Wohlstetter's book Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision remains one of the great examples of an analysis of intelligence-failure.¹² More recent works such as Abram N. Shulsky's Silent Warfare: Understanding The World Of Intelligence, build upon the principles outlined by authors like Sherman Kent and update our knowledge of intelligence gathering in relation to changes in the global environment.¹³

Overall, certain elements of the FLQ and the October Crisis have not been adequately examined. Specifically, there has been a distinct lack of investigation into the nature of intelligence-gathering on the FLQ in particular, and on domestic intelligence-gathering in general. The importance of this subject cannot be underestimated, as an understanding of the intelligence process is a necessary element to an understanding of why federal decision-makers were so surprised by the FLQ's kidnappings, and how they arrived at their decision to invoke the War Measures Act in response to the situation.

Part 2: A Recapitulation of the Events

It has now been thirty-five years since the October Crisis, and inevitably, over time, popular consciousness regarding the events has faded. If asked, most Canadians

¹¹ Sherman Kent, Strategic Intelligence: For American World Policy (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965).

¹² Roberta Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1962).

¹³ Abram N. Shulsky, Silent Warfare: Understanding The World Of Intelligence (New York: Brassey's, 1991).

would probably remember little of the events that led to the fateful decision to invoke the War Measures Act, and know even less of the threat that precipitated it. For many, the enduring image of the FLQ is that of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, responding defiantly to reporters questions concerning what measures he was prepared to take in response to the FLQ with the words: “Just watch me.”¹⁴ For those who were old enough to remember the events first hand, the October Crisis represented a troubling few months that once over, faded into distant memory as terrorism in Canada became once again a distinctly “unnatural event.” For these Canadians, the FLQ represented a troubling footnote in Canadian history, one for which little background information is known. Nevertheless, the FLQ remains an important event in Canadian history, and the renewed importance placed on preventing terrorism in the post-9/11 world brings the events of the October Crisis back to the forefront. There is a great deal to be learned as to how Canada dealt with this terrorist threat, and how it should deal with similar threats in the future.

Thus, this chapter will cover several areas. First, it will provide the reader with the necessary background information on the events of the October Crisis and on the FLQ violence that followed as a foundation for the analysis to follow. Second, it will examine the threat posed by the FLQ and will examine the degree of capability it possessed. Finally, it will help the reader understand how background noise – the long period of FLQ violence leading up to the decision to invoke the War Measures Act, and the turbulent social unrest evident in Quebec and in North America at large – would play a key role in shaping the perceptions of those who produced intelligence and those who

¹⁴ John T. Saywell, “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970, ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 70.

consumed it, both before and during the crisis. Consequently, this chapter will briefly outline the development of the FLQ and will discuss the external factors that led to its birth. The evolution of the FLQ will then be discussed, and important events in the history of the FLQ will be identified. Basic information on key FLQ members as well as the organization and capabilities of the FLQ will be identified. Lastly, the specific events of the October Crisis, as well as its immediate aftermath will be outlined.

The origins of the FLQ lay in the fermenting dissent of the Quebec public who had endured the oppressive Duplessis government since the end of the Second World War.¹⁵ With the end of the Duplessis government on 22 June 1960, this political unrest erupted as a wide range of political movements across the political spectrum rapidly emerged.¹⁶ Nationalism fuelled in part by the global trend of decolonisation was felt in all spheres of Quebec life.¹⁷ The Liberal Government of Jean Lesage embraced this new thought, and attempted to bring about changes in the longstanding status quo in Quebec. Nationalization of the power sector, modernization of education, improvement to the health system and labour reform were some of the major achievements of the Lesage government. During this period, however, relations between Quebec and Ottawa became tense as the Lesage government attempted to expand provincial control over the institutions of Quebec.¹⁸ It clashed with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, a westerner and fierce Canadian nationalist. As a consequence, he was unpopular among the liberal

¹⁵ Saywell, "Parliament and Politics," Canadian Annual Review for 1960, ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961) 28.

¹⁶ Paul Sauvé immediately succeeded Duplessis after his death on September 7th, 1959 and injected new life into the Union Nationale. He died suddenly on January 2nd, 1960 and was replaced by the less popular Antonio Barrette. The Liberals led by Jean Lesage defeated Barrette and began a period of reforms in Quebec. For more, see Saywell "Parliament and Politics," Canadian Annual Review for 1960 28.

¹⁷ "Memories of October," The Fifth Estate, produced by Julian Sher (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1990).

¹⁸ Saywell, "Parliament and Politics," Canadian Annual Review for 1960 43-44.

Quebecois who wanted to win back greater economic and political control from the English minority and Ottawa bureaucrats.

Despite the reforms brought about by the Lesage government, there were those who believed that change was occurring too slowly and the only solution was Quebec independence. As a consequence, legal political parties espousing the cause of separatism began to emerge that would eventually form the foundation for the FLQ. The two most important were the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN) and the Action socialiste pour l'indépendance du Québec (ASIQ). Members of the public service and other educated areas of society founded the RIN just months after the Lesage government took power. Aside from Quebec independence, the RIN petitioned for "large-scale state intervention; some degree of nationalization; and separation of Church and State."¹⁹

Nationalism in Quebec continued to grow through 1962 as the Liberals won a major victory with a campaign platform of nationalization of the Quebec hydroelectric industry.²⁰ Tensions increased following inflammatory remarks by the President of the Canadian National Railway in November 1962 who maintained that there were no French-speaking people qualified for management positions.²¹

There were those in the RIN and the ASIQ that believed that violence was necessary to achieve Quebec independence however, and on 31 October 1962, four members of the RIN formed the forerunner of the FLQ, the Comité de libération

¹⁹ Fournier 16.

²⁰ Saywell, "Parliament and Politics," *The Canadian Annual Review for 1962*, ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963) 51.

²¹ Fournier 20.

nationale.²² The purpose of this organization was to create a foundation for armed struggle that could spring into action when the time came. It was primarily concerned with organizing underground cells and training its members on the political theory of revolution.²³

While the FLQ evolved from the philosophical roots of the Comité, its initial members were not from this group rather, they were members of the larger and more well established RIN. As with the Comité, they believed that the revolutionary movement was moving too slowly, but felt action had to be taken immediately. Thus, the FLQ was formed in February 1963.

There has been a great deal of controversy concerning the nature of the FLQ's organization over the years. Some historians have described the FLQ in terms that place it in the same category as many of the world's most insidious terrorist organizations. For example, historian Albert Parry has described the FLQ as being organized in cells of five to seven members with 22 cells consisting of a total of 130 people being in existence at the time of the October Crisis. According to Parry, the members of the individual cells knew members of their own cells but not of others. These cells were "tightly interconnected and thoroughly managed from one principal underground directorate."²⁴ Similar to this view is that of Dan Loomis, a development planning officer intimately involved with military action during the October Crisis, who stated that:

²² Fournier 25.

²³ Fournier 25.

²⁴ Albert Parry, Terrorism: From Robespierre to Arafat (New York: Vanguard Press, 1976) 368.

the FLQ, like communist terrorists in Malaya, the FLN in Algeria, the Viet Minh and later the Viet Cong in Indo-China and dozens of similar organizations the world over, was organized to seize power using revolutionary violence. Like other such organizations it involved the duality of political activists and military cadres, some operating legally above ground, others operating illegally underground.²⁵

Insinuating a pervasive nature in Quebec, Loomis went on to describe the FLQ as:

an infrastructure of newspaper commentators, television personalities, university professors, CEGEP teachers, union leaders and political authorities to explain the significance of these violent actions to the people. It was this duality, this powerful combination of military cadres and political activists that posed such a threat.²⁶

This description creates a powerful picture of a highly organized and competent terrorist movement that had infiltrated many areas of Canadian society and was organized with militaristic precision. According to this classical view of the FLQ, the government had to take action against a highly dangerous “convergence of power.”²⁷

More recently, however, attempts have been made to understand the FLQ in a more balanced manner as a far more complex and unpredictable entity. The most accurate description of this modern model of the FLQ comes from author Donald Crelinsten who asserted that the FLQ “was more like the centrifugal model minus the hub of the wheel. Successive groups of friends would decide to form a ‘cell’ and call themselves the FLQ.”²⁸ Furthermore, as Crelinsten correctly points out, the terminology of “cells” is somewhat misleading in that it alluded to a classic underground model in which cells are groups of individuals who operate autonomously of one another and have no knowledge of members of other cells. Coordination was exerted through a central

²⁵ Dan G. Loomis, “Preface,” *Not Much Glory: Quelling the F.L.Q.* (Toronto: Deneau, 1984).

²⁶ Loomis “Preface.”

²⁷ Loomis “Preface.”

²⁸ Crelinsten 59.

authority. In the case of the FLQ, members of various cells often knew each other very well and realignments of members often took place as circumstances warranted.

Essentially, the FLQ represented an example of the modern model of terrorist organization in which

terrorist groups are not monolithic entities that remain constant over time, divorced from the political life in which they exist, impervious to the actions of those who combat them. They evolve and transform in response to internal and external pressures. Like any social organization, they adapt to their changing environment in a variety of ways, often splintering into different entities or merging with other groups. Members move in and out, from clandestine activity to overt activity and back, sometimes engaging in a mix of legal and illegal action.²⁹

Thus, during the seven years leading up to the October Crisis, the FLQ was not a single unified entity. Rather, it was composed of many different groups, each working toward a more or less common aim, but with little coordination. The looseness of the organization was not due to attempts to exert an over riding control, but rather, was often due to the pre-existing relationships and friendships between members of different cells.

Essentially, cells:

had contact through friendship or mutual acquaintances and some individuals were even in successive cells. Strict compartmentalization was more the result of independent initiatives taken by individuals separated by geography or everyday life than a conscious policy emanating from a central command structure.³⁰

As well, many cells fell within a common framework of the FLQ as their members had pre-existing relations that often stemmed from previous involvement in legitimate social institutions. In contrast to this, other cells operated completely independently of this loose framework. Finally, as one generation of the FLQ ended, another would take its place, thus changing the nature of the movement significantly. The FLQ evolved initially

²⁹ Crelinsten 61.

³⁰ Crelinsten 59.

from a largely nationalist movement to a separatist movement in the early 1960s that espoused Marxist and socialist values by the end of the decade.

The first attack by the FLQ occurred on March 7th, 1963 when 3 Canadian Army Reserve installations were firebombed. Thus began a pattern of FLQ violence that would continue nearly uninterrupted throughout the 1960s. A little over a month later, the FLQ claimed its first victim on April 20th, 1963 when a bomb planted by the FLQ killed Wilfred O'Neil, an elderly night watchman at the CAF Recruiting Centre in Montreal. O'Neil had been a member of the working class and thus supposedly the kind of person the socialist FLQ was attempting to liberate.

Firebombing of military installations continued until the FLQ chose a new target that immediately brought their cause national attention in what has been termed a "rein of terror in Montreal."³¹ On May 19th, 1963, the FLQ struck in Westmount, the symbolic heart of English speaking Quebec, when they set off 5 mailbox bombs. Authorities soon discovered 5 others that were quickly disarmed, however, a Canadian Armed Forces Sergeant Major attempting to defuse a bomb was severely wounded when a bomb detonated.

The Quebec public received a short reprieve from the violence when authorities arrested four FLQ members June 1st, 1963. Soon thereafter, authorities uncovered FLQ members and large-scale arrests followed. New members soon filled the void left by the previous generation of terrorists and the violence soon resumed in 1964. By this point, the FLQ had expanded their activities from firebombing to the use of large explosive devices. In an effort to sustain these operations, they undertook large-scale thefts of

³¹ Saywell, "Parliament and Politics," The Canadian Annual Review for 1963, ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964) 58.

dynamite from construction sites and military equipment from army facilities. The violent network of the FLQ during this period was the Quebec Liberation Army (ALQ). Also at this time, an FLQ cell dedicated to the production of separatist propaganda, was established called *La Cognée*. This new cell proved to be one of the most enduring, and continued until April 1967 when its' members were arrested by police.

During its early stages, the FLQ was considered by Ottawa as largely a criminal organization and was dealt with in that manner.³² As the violence continued, however, it became evident that new organizational structures would need to be established to facilitate the collection of information.

At the Federal level, intelligence-gathering organizations, or *producers*, established a joint operation between the RCMP Security Intelligence Service and the RCMP Criminal Investigations Bureau to deal with the rising threat. At the municipal level, Montreal Police created an anti-terror task force.³³ During 1964, producers at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels took the decision to pool their resources to combat the FLQ. The Combined Anti-Terrorist Squad (CATS) was established and was comprised of members of the RCMP, QPP, and Montreal Police.³⁴ The CATS was successful in arresting many of those involved with the ALQ violence during the period following a robbery on April 9th, 1964.³⁵ From this initial arrest, the police quickly tracked down other members of the ALQ network along with other cells of the FLQ. As

³² The term "criminal" in this instance is used to refer to the methods by which the government investigated the FLQ. During this period authorities utilized criminal investigative procedures as opposed to intelligence-gathering procedures. Essentially, as time progressed, the FLQ was seen not as a criminal threat but as a security threat. For more, see Chapter 2 of this thesis, "Intelligence-gathering: Theories and Problems."

³³ Fournier 32.

³⁴ For more on the creation of CATS see: -----, "Terrorism in Quebec – Assistance of R.C.M.P.," Cabinet Conclusion, National Archives, RG 2, Vol. 6253, Series A-5-a (20 May 1963) 5, and Canada, The McDonald Report, Third Report, 202.

³⁵ Fournier 56.

before, however, new members quickly filled the void, this time calling themselves the Quebec Revolutionary Army (ARQ), and violence resumed during May 1964.

It was during this period that one of the more notorious acts of terrorism occurred when an FLQ cell led by François Schirm, a former Sergeant in the French Foreign Legion, attempted to rob a gun store on August 29th, 1964. The robbery went badly as an employee was killed, and police arrested the whole cell.

It was during the mid-1960s that the FLQ entered its most important developmental stage when two new, highly influential leaders, Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon entered its ranks. The two new leaders provided an intellectual and philosophical context for FLQ violence. According to authors Haggart and Golden:

it was a tactic of propagandists such as Pierre Vallières to lump together all the criminal activities over a seven-year period, as if all had been centrally directed to a common cause. . . . Vallières was adept at romanticizing the past and creating the illusion of a continuing, underground, political-terrorist movement. He was successful in inspiring his followers and in frightening his enemies.³⁶

The violence Vallières spoke of had been conducted during pre-existing phases of the FLQ whose members were all in jail by 1965 and which possessed little or no ideological conviction. With Vallières, the FLQ took on a political philosophy that was decidedly left of centre and, according to historian Donald Crelinsten, represented a distinct shift in focus. By the October Crisis, the enemy had shifted towards the political, capitalist institutions of Quebec that were controlled by the English power elites. The call was no longer for French Canadians to rise up against their English oppressors, but rather, for the workers of Quebec to rise up against their capitalist oppressors.³⁷ The propaganda efforts

³⁶ Haggart 127.

³⁷ Crelinsten 60.

of these two new leaders of the FLQ created a powerful illusion of international cooperation and support that did not exist in reality.

Soon after Vallières and Gagnon joined the FLQ, in the early spring on 1965, the La Grenade shoe factory, which was currently in a dispute with its workers, was bombed. The only victim was a 64-year-old secretary, Thérèse Morin. Like most of the FLQ's victims, she was French Canadian and working class. Following the La Grenade attack, violence continued and included a sensational bombing at the Montreal Stock Exchange at the end of April 1965 as well as another at the US Consulate in Montreal a few days later. In July, FLQ member Jean Carbo, was killed while attempting to plant a bomb. The FLQ of Vallières and Gagnon phase was crushed at the end of the summer of 1965 when authorities foiled an armed robbery. By the end of the summer, all those involved with the Vallières and Gagnon Cells were in custody except for the two leaders, who had escaped to the United States and were in hiding. The two were not able to evade US authorities, however, and were deported back to Canada in 1967, where they stood trial and were sentenced to prison for their crimes.³⁸

By the later half of the 1960s, the FLQ was only a small part of the social unrest that was growing throughout North America. In the next few years, Canada and the world would experience unparalleled social unrest as citizens rose up against perceived inequalities. In the United States, the civil rights movement grew in popularity, as many Americans believed the government was unwilling to address widespread existing economic and social injustices. Although the vast majority of civil rights activists

³⁸ The imprisonment of Vallières and Gagnon transformed the two into martyrs for the separatist cause in Quebec. While in prison, Vallières wrote what would become the philosophical bible for separatism, White Niggers of America (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971). A new separatist groups, Comité d'aide au groupe Vallières-Gagnon, was formed with the purpose of freeing Gagnon and Vallières.

espoused a philosophy of peaceful action, the more radical elements such as the Black Panthers and Weathermen turned to violence as a means of achieving their aims. As well, there was the rapidly growing anti-war movement that opposed the US involvement in Vietnam. This social unrest was not confined to the United States, however, as its internationalist spirit contributed to its global popularity. Around the world, demonstrations, civil unrest, and violence occurred as individuals and groups attempted to change the status quo in a conflict that was increasingly viewed as a struggle between the common man and established authority.

Canada, as with the rest of the Western world, had its own share of social unrest as trade unions and social groups began to rebel against the established authority. Nowhere was this more evident than in Quebec where demonstrations and worker's strikes enjoyed massive public support and often became violent. The widespread violence led some to believe that the FLQ was part of a larger global revolutionary movement.³⁹

Despite the imprisonment of Vallières and Gagnon, FLQ violence continued with many bombings in 1967 while social unrest and demonstrations by activists and disgruntled trade workers continued to increase. In addition, a visit to Quebec by French

³⁹ This perception was fuelled in part by separatist leaders and FLQ members Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon. Upon his release from prison in 1969, Gagnon reaffirmed his membership in the FLQ and began a highly inflammatory speaking tour in which he appealed to foreign terrorist organizations such as the PLO and Black Panthers for support. He was joined by leaders from other Quebec separatist groups such as the President of the Front de libération populaire and the head of the St Henri Workers. From Saywell, "Quebec 70," *The Canadian Annual Review for 1970* 30. See also Fournier 208. Primary source documents which attest to foreign support for the FLQ include: W.P. Heckendorn, memorandum, "Rising Up Angry," *National Archives*, RG 146, Vol. 31 (21 Nov 70) and Tremblay, PDS Dept. of Ext. Affairs, "Possible FLQ Action Outside of Canada," *National Archives*, RG 146, Vol. 31 (9 November 1970).

President Charles de Gaulle in July 1967 caused nationalism in the province to surge when he gave a highly inflammatory speech.⁴⁰

1968 marked the height of social agitation in North America as civil rights activists, anti-war demonstrators and other groups, including Quebec separatist, took to the streets to protest the status quo.⁴¹ This period of prolonged instability served to heighten the trepidation of information-gatherers and decision-makers regarding their environment. Several events would become particularly important in minds of decision-makers, and would affect perceptions during the October Crisis.

During 1969, FLQ violence continued unabated and became even more provocative as attacks were carried out on government installations as well as the private homes of key officials. A bomb exploded on January 8th, 1969 at the home of Montreal Police Chief Jean-Paul Gilbert. The Montreal Stock Exchange was struck again when a FLQ bomb exploded on February 13th, 1969 and caused extensive damage.

Demonstrations during the summer of 1969 were frequent as the Front de liberation populaire (FLP), the Movement de Liberation du Taxi (MLT) and other groups attempt to create political instability through massive, often violent rallies. Some of the demonstrators were FLQ members, or became FLQ members.⁴²

In Montreal, police and municipal officials were faced with an almost unrelenting wave of violence. FLQ attacks combined with union strikes and massive demonstrations to create an explosive atmosphere. To the decision-makers of the Montreal civic

⁴⁰ Jean-Charles Bonenfant, "Parliament and Politics," *The Canadian Annual Review for 1967*, ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968) 125-129.

⁴¹ For more on campus unrest, see: Ralph Mitchener, *Canadian Annual Review for 1968* ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) 371.

⁴² Fournier 139.

administration, the perception was that the situation was rapidly moving toward chaos.⁴³

Primarily, the Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, his CEO, Lucien Saulnier, and the city's chief lawyer, Michel Côté, made important decisions in Montreal.

First of all, contract negotiations between the city and its emergency service providers were going poorly and they took the unprecedented action of going on strike at midnight on October 7th, 1969. The MLT and FLP capitalized upon the situation to launch a demonstration that grew into a huge citywide riot.⁴⁴ At the Murray Hill garage, buses were destroyed and a QPP undercover officer in the crowd was killed when a Murray Hill Company guard opened fire. The military was called in to restore order and the police went back on duty at midnight. Rioters then moved from the garage and proceeded to loot over 150 stores in downtown Montreal.

According to authors Haggart:

the genesis of official attitudes and official responses to the Quebec crisis of October, 1970 is to be found in the greater violence of almost exactly a year before, when Montreal's 3,700 policemen staged their one day strike.⁴⁵

This was the beginning of a perception by important decision-makers within the Montreal civic administration, that events were moving toward open revolt.

In summer 1969, two new FLQ cells came into being and were led by Jacques Lanctôt and Paul Rose. These two cells would later be responsible for the kidnappings during the October Crisis. Jacques Lanctôt has been described as "idealist who was orientated to dramatic acts which would make a statement."⁴⁶ Psychologist Morf Gustav who interviewed many FLQ terrorists in prison maintained that Lanctôt's personality was

⁴³ Haggart 34.

⁴⁴ Haggart 153.

⁴⁵ Haggart 153.

⁴⁶ Crelinsten 66.

highly representative of many FLQ members who were often young, middle or lower class individuals who sought out adventure and attributed highly romantic ideals to the FLQ.⁴⁷ In contrast, Paul Rose was “an organizer with a keen sense of leadership.”⁴⁸ Unlike Lanctôt who advocated immediate action, Rose was in favour of substantial preparation in order to set the conditions for revolution.⁴⁹

The birth of these two new cells marked the beginning of a new phase of FLQ terrorism: kidnapping. Although it would not be until October 1970 that the FLQ would commit its first successful kidnapping, there had been earlier attempts. Police discovered the first attempt on February 26th, 1970 during a routine traffic stop.⁵⁰ In the van, police found an illegal firearm and immediately arrested its occupants, Jacques Lanctôt and Pierre Marcel. A search resulted in suspicious evidence that was turned over to the Anti-Terrorist Section for further investigation. The kidnapping plot was pieced together, and authorities arrested Marcel at the end of March but Lanctôt had gone into hiding after being released on bail a month earlier. It was soon determined that the target had been Israeli Consul Moshe Golan.⁵¹

Despite having been unsuccessful in their first attempt at political kidnapping, the FLQ began planning and preparation for a second attempt in June 1970. In this case, Harrison W. Burgess, the American Consul in Montreal was chosen. The prospective operation was called, “Opération Libération.”⁵² A manifesto was written that was

⁴⁷ Morf Gustav, Terror in Quebec: case studies of the FLQ. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1970.

⁴⁸ Crelinsten 66.

⁴⁹ Crelinsten 66.

⁵⁰ Saywell, “October 70,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 30.

⁵¹ Ibid 30.

⁵² Fournier 215.

virtually identical to the one that would be submitted during the October Crisis.⁵³

Surveillance and tips by informants led police to the cottage where the FLQ members were preparing the kidnapping, and the attempt was thwarted.⁵⁴ Although several members were arrested, the network's leaders, Lanctôt and Rose narrowly escaped along with several other key members.

Violence continued into the summer of 1970, and at the end of June, the FLQ successfully detonated a bomb at the Department of National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. The device killed a DND employee, Jeanne d'arc Saint-Germain, who was both French-speaking and working class.

Despite this, the FLQ pressed on with its plan to kidnap a foreign diplomat. The October Crisis began at 8:15am on Monday, October 5th, 1970, when the Liberation Cell of the FLQ, led by Jacques Lanctôt, abducted British Trade Commissioner James Cross from his home in Montreal. Cross was taken to a small apartment on Redpath Crescent in Montreal North. He would spend the next 59 days in captivity as a hostage of the FLQ.

Following the abduction, the Liberation Cell quickly moved Cross to an apartment on Avenue des Recollets, where he would remain for the duration of the crisis. By the afternoon of October 5th, 1970, authorities had received the first of the communiqués written by the kidnappers that represented the only form of communication between the terrorists and the government. Among the FLQ's demands were a stop to the police investigation of the kidnapping, wide press and T.V. publicity for the FLQ

⁵³ Saywell, "October 70," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 31-32.

⁵⁴ Ibid 31-32.

political manifesto, and the release of imprisoned FLQ members. In addition, they demanded transport to Cuba or Algeria, and \$500,000.00 in gold.⁵⁵

Federal decision-makers have consistently argued that they did not have the intelligence necessary to properly assess the situation and that they were caught completely by surprise.⁵⁶ Despite the lack of clear understanding of the FLQ on the part of decision-makers, they were none the less forced to act in response to the kidnapping. Although overall responsibility lay with the Premier of Quebec, Trudeau and Bourassa agreed that efforts would be coordinated and that important decisions would be taken at the Federal level. They decided that the government could not capitulate to the FLQ's demands, lest they open the door for further attacks.⁵⁷

On Wednesday, the original 48-hour deadline for compliance to the FLQ's demands expired but was extended another 24 hours in return for the reading of the FLQ Manifesto on a local Montreal Radio station. On October 7th, the first series of 30 arrests were made, including Robert Lemieux, a Montreal lawyer who had previously handled FLQ trial cases. None of those arrested would be found to have been involved with the kidnappings, however, and Lemieux was later released to act as negotiator for the FLQ during the Crisis. Speaking for decision-makers, Quebec Minister of Justice, Jérôme Choquette declared that the government remained open to negotiations. The existing

⁵⁵ See Saywell, "October 1970," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 35-38 for the original text.

⁵⁶ Statements to this affect have been made by many key Trudeau decision-makers. Pierre Trudeau presented these sentiments to the House of Commons in the months following the invocation of the War Measures Act. Mitchell Sharp has consistently upheld this assertion in public interviews and Gerard Pelletier has also supported this assertion in his book, The October Crisis. Finally, decision-makers upheld that they were caught by surprise by the Cross kidnapping during testimony given before the McDonald Commission.

⁵⁷ Saywell, "October 1970," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 39.

demands, however, were unacceptable, as the government would go only so far as to give the terrorists passage to Cuba.⁵⁸

On Saturday, Premiere Bourassa, returned home from a trip to New York where he had been attempting to promote Quebec trade and investment. At the 6:00 pm deadline, Choquette maintained the government's existing stance and announced that the government would not capitulate to the terrorist demands and would only offer safe conduct for the kidnappers out of Canada.

To the Chénier Cell of the FLQ, the choice of Cross as a target had been ill chosen, and would not bring about the desired results.⁵⁹ Thus, led by Paul Rose, the cell had been travelling in Texas when they decided to return to Quebec to prepare to aid their comrades. Upon hearing Choquette's refusal of the "final" Saturday deadline for the release of Cross, the Chernier Cell decided to act.⁶⁰

On October 10th, 1970, less than an hour after the expiration of the 6:00 pm deadline and the Quebec Minister of Justice's refusal to meet FLQ demands, the Chénier Cell sprung into action kidnapping Deputy Premiere of Quebec, Pierre Laporte. When the second kidnapping occurred, however, this preconceived notion of an amateurish movement changed radically in the eyes of both the government and people of Canada "as it now appeared that the FLQ could kidnap at will."⁶¹ Now, confronted with what appeared to be a well-organized and ambitious terrorist organization, the amateurish previous acts of violence could be reinterpreted to fit the present scenario.

⁵⁸ Ibid 40.

⁵⁹ Haggart 36.

⁶⁰ For the original deposition given by Paul Rose see Saywell, "October 1970," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 56.

⁶¹ Saywell, "October 1970," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 58.

The public now perceived that what had once been an single act of violence by a small, isolated group of disenfranchised separatists might actually be the beginning of a full-scale revolt lead by a well-equipped organized group of militant terrorists. The next evening, Bourassa went on the air to address Quebec and the nation regarding Laporte's abduction. The speech clearly illustrated his perception of the situation as “he was choked on the radio as he had been in his distraught and seemingly aimless telephone calls.”⁶² Bourassa, addressed the kidnapers on radio and requested that the provisions for negotiations be set up. Faced with increasing public pressure, the Quebec government began to soften its position and broke with the hard line agreed upon with the federal government.⁶³ Robert Demers was appointed as the government intermediary and Robert Lemieux was released from jail on Tuesday, as he had been one of the 30 who had been initially arrested in the police dragnet.

At the Federal Level, the Trudeau Government was also showing signs of stress as the decision was taken to send individual warnings to prominent private citizens who appeared to be likely targets for FLQ violence. The notes claimed that the Government could no longer guarantee their safety.⁶⁴

On the 11th, Quebec Government received the famous “Mon Cher Robert” written by Pierre Laporte in which he pleaded for his life. The events of the crisis reached a fever pitch on Wednesday October 14th, 1970 as public demonstrations, FLQ communiqués, and media reports of dynamite and weapons caches came together to present a picture to Federal decision-makers of a Quebec spiralling out of control.

⁶² Haggart 17.

⁶³ Saywell, “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 65.

⁶⁴ Haggart 15 and Saywell “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 58.

According to one account, “the pressure in Montreal became almost unbearable.”⁶⁵ That evening, Bourassa responded to the communiqué on air by repeating the safe conduct offer and also promising parole for 5 FLQ prisoners of the list of 23 outlined in their demands. As well, feeling that nothing more could be done, and with little new information from information-gatherers, with the approval of the Federal government, Bourassa announced a 3 AM deadline for a response by the kidnappers to the government position.

The government deadline was also influenced by public signals of a “provisional government plot.”⁶⁶ On October 14th, 1970, 16 influential Quebecois including Claude Ryan, put out a statement urging negotiation despite Ottawa’s hard line. The speech seemed to confirm the fears of decision-makers, especially at municipal level, who believed that there was an apprehended insurrection beginning. Author Ronald Haggart has asserted that the perception of a provisional government plot originated on October 11th following a telephone conversation between Claude Ryan and Lucien Saulnier. Newspapers reports soon followed, including an article in the Toronto Star by renowned journalist Peter C. Newman in which he described a plot by Quebecois to replace the Provincial government in order to restore order.⁶⁷ Despite this, Saulnier already had preconceptions stemming from violence the year before during the police riots. For him, the provisional government plot and the October Crisis were just confirmation of the escalating process of revolution in Quebec. Confusion was also spread by the massive public support the FLQ enjoyed in Quebec. Demonstrations occurred on university

⁶⁵ Saywell, “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 79. See also 76-77.

⁶⁶ Haggart 173-176. For a more complete explanation, see also Saywell, “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 52, 63.

⁶⁷ Haggart 173.

campuses, and on October 15th there was a major rally at the Paul Sauvé Arena in which many prominent social activists spoke on behalf of the FLQ. Newspaper stories spread panic with inflated and distorted articles on the size and capabilities of the FLQ.

Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, has also upheld the view that the situation in Quebec was out of control. The second kidnapping precipitated the marked change in public and Government perception as Sharp later stated during a 1990 interview: “I just wish we knew then what we know now. We didn’t know.”⁶⁸ In fact, despite a seven year history of escalating FLQ violence Sharp asserts that the Cross kidnapping came as “a great surprise to me . . . and to the Cabinet.”⁶⁹ These statements were contrary to those made by John Starnes, head of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service during the crisis who has since stated that a report was prepared outlining the nature and capabilities of the FLQ. According to Starnes, this information was given to “senior officials” in the Trudeau Cabinet and stated: “I’m assuming that cabinet ministers read it, and assuming it went to the Prime Minister’s Office.”⁷⁰ Despite this, Sharp has asserted that these important private signals were not available at the time of the crisis, stating that “I [Sharp] certainly hadn’t read it, and as subsequent events were to show, we were very uncertain about what might be termed the conspiracy.”⁷¹ These public statements seem to indicate that the flow of information between the RCMP Security Intelligence Service and the PM’s Cabinet may have been impeded. If this were the case, these decision-makers would have made important choices based primarily upon open information without the benefit of intelligence based upon secret information. Defending

⁶⁸ “Memories of October.”

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

government actions, Sharp stated; “Have you seen those pictures that carry you back 20 years as to the atmosphere, the great public meetings in support of the FLQ?”⁷² The recollection of this perception is reinforced by recordings in which the Deputy Solicitor General, during a meeting with officials at the RCMP Montreal headquarters, asserted that: “there was no concrete evidence which led to the invoking of the War Measures Act.”⁷³ Essentially, key government decision-makers “didn’t know how far it went.”⁷⁴

On October 15th, 1970, as the early morning deadline approached and it became evident that the FLQ would not capitulate, Municipal and Provincial information-gatherers and decision-makers sent three letters to the federal government requesting assistance.⁷⁵ Prime Minister Trudeau has stated in the House of Commons that the decision to invoke the War Measures Act, “was taken after consideration of all the facts, and particularly of letters received from the Prime Minister of Quebec and the authorities of the city of Montreal reporting a state of apprehended insurrection.”⁷⁶ The statements seem to indicate that the government had taken the decision based on open sources. If true, do they constitute a stinging indictment of the intelligence community? This is one of the questions this thesis will address.

The Director of the Quebec Provincial Police, Maurice St. Pierre, sent a letter to Mayor Drapeau warning that an “extremely dangerous subversive organization” existed in Quebec and intended to overthrow the government “by seditious means and eventually armed insurrection.”⁷⁷ St. Pierre went on to declare that the resources of the police had

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ For a complete text of the original letters see: Saywell, “October 1970,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 84-86.

⁷⁶ Haggart 58.

⁷⁷ Ibid 58.

been exhausted and they required additional powers to deal with the Crisis. Without stating any facts, the letter concluded that if the crisis were not averted now, a full-scale insurrection would occur in Quebec. Mayor Drapeau sent his “insurrection” letter to the PM and confirmed the police view. The final letter came from Premier Bourassa on October 15th in which he stated that:

According to information we have and which is available to you, we are facing a concerted effort to intimidate and overthrow the government and the democratic institutions of this province through planned and systematic illegal action, including insurrection.⁷⁸

Bourassa never stated what the information was, and it has remained a mystery since. Prime Minister Trudeau made vague references to secret intelligence on which the decision was based, but it still has not been made available to the public. In any case, at early dawn on October 16th, 1970, the Government of Canada invoked the War Measures Act, suspending many rights and freedoms. As a consequence, protests and demonstrations were stopped immediately. However, of the 22000 homes searched under the authority of WMA, no evidence of insurrection was found.”⁷⁹ Although the invocation of the War Measures Act was successful in dampening public support for the FLQ in Quebec, it did not bring about the rapid capture of the terrorists responsible for the kidnappings and the situation continued to drag on. In the end, a combination of solid police investigative techniques, surveillance, and informants led to the discovery of the two cells and the resolution of the crisis

Events took a sombre turn on Sunday when the body of Pierre Laporte was found in the trunk of an abandoned car near the St-Hubert airport. The murder of Laporte

⁷⁸ Saywell, “October 70,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 84.

⁷⁹ “Memories of October.”

brought about widespread shock, revulsion and disbelief among the public and served to dramatically reduce public support for the FLQ.⁸⁰

The identity of Rose as a member of the Chernier Cell had been determined through analysis of the communiqués that had revealed his fingerprint. When neighbours recognized the photograph of Rose, they notified authorities of the Armstrong Street hideout of the Chénier Cell. Now on the run, the Chénier Cell kidnappers, Jacque and Paul Rose and Francis Simard met up with Bernard Lortie and moved to his apartment on Queen Mary Road. On the 19th, based upon the tip received the day before, police raided the Armstrong Street hideout.

On October 23rd, as information-gatherers continued to close in on the FLQ and warrants for the arrest of Francis Simard, Jacques Rose, and Bernard Lortie were issued, the Prime Minister publicly outlined the governments reasons for invoking the War Measures Act, declaring:

We have at various times explained why the War Measures Act was brought in at the time it was. The first fact was that there had been kidnappings of two very important people in Canada and that they were being held ransom under threat of death. The second was that the government of the province of Quebec and the authorities of the City of Montreal asked the federal government to permit the use of exceptional measures because, in their own words, a state of apprehended insurrection existed. The third reason was our assessment of all the surrounding facts, which are known to the country by know – the state of confusion that existed in the province of Quebec in regard to these matters.⁸¹

Trudeau went on to state that the existence of dynamite and weapons caches also played a part in the decision.⁸² Further, he alluded to other, secret facts stating that: “I am not

⁸⁰ -----, “Chronology of the October Crisis, 1970, and its Aftermath.” Quebec History. <http://www2.marianopolis.edu/quebechistory/chronos/october.htm>, 10 September 2003.

⁸¹ Haggart 62.

⁸² For more, see the original text of the speech by Minister of Justice John Turner in Saywell, “October 70,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 91. In the speech, Turner cited previous bombings, dynamite

saying that beyond that there are not other facts which may or may not be known to the public. It is a matter that will be left to the police as far as I am concerned.”⁸³ Based on the Cabinet Conclusions held in the days just preceding this statement, however, no “other facts” seemed to be apparent and we now know that estimates of dynamite and membership given in newspapers were wildly exaggerated. Two days later, on the 25th, during one of the heaviest voter turnouts in Montreal history, the Drapeau administration won a landslide victory in municipal elections.⁸⁴

Police continued to search for the FLQ kidnappers into November and, desperate for information, offered a \$150,000 reward for any information that would lead to the arrest of the kidnappers. Authorities discovered the Chénier Cell hideout when they investigated a phone number found in the raid on the Armstrong Street apartment on November 6th. However, the Rose brothers and Francis Simard had had time to construct an ingenious hiding place behind a false wall in a closet. When the police arrived, they had hid in the cupboard but Bernard Lortie could not get in time and was arrested along with the two women. Police guards were posted at the apartment, but the three men were still able to escape. The fugitive terrorists then moved to a hideout outside Montreal near the village of St. Luc. A farmhouse had been rented by Michael Viger, who despite being arrested under the War Measures Act, was not believed to be connected to the FLQ and was released after questioning. The St. Luc Chief of Police became suspicious of the farmhouse when he saw that it was now lit despite being abandoned for quite some time

thefts, the present kidnappings, popular support from universities and unions, and the inflammatory actions of separatist leaders such as Vallières and Gagnon as justification for the invocation of the War Measures Act.

⁸³ Haggart 62.

⁸⁴ For more on the public support for the War Measures Act, see Saywell, “October 70,” The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 93-95.

before the crisis. He reported it to the RCMP on October 23rd and was instructed to maintain surveillance.

As the Chénier Cell was evading police at the St. Luc farmhouse, police closed in on the Liberation Cell. On December 2nd, the police arrested Jacques and Louise Cossette-Trudel on their way to the store. A stand off between the remaining kidnappers ensued but police wisely refused to storm the apartment, fearing for Cross's life.

Montreal Lawyer Bernard Mergler was appointed by Montreal Police as a negotiator and successfully exchanged Cross's safe release for the kidnappers safe conduct to Cuba.

Although police visited the farmhouse Viger had rented, the Chénier cell had created a secret tunnel in the basement and evaded capture. Authorities placed surveillance on the house, and on December 27th saw a light on. After confronting Viger they existence of the secret tunnel was discovered. Following a short standoff, the Chénier Cell surrendered to police quietly.

Thus, the October Crisis, ended quietly with the surrender of the remaining terrorists. In the months and years that would follow, the Intelligence-gathering community in Canada took ever more controversial action to stop terrorists in Canada in an effort to prevent a repetition of the events of October 1970.

Part 3: The Intelligence-gathering Community in Canada

This section will briefly outline the evolution of the Security-Intelligence system in Canada prior to and during the October Crisis. Although there were several governmental departments that possessed intelligence-gathering capability, the primary

organization was the RCMP Security Intelligence Service⁸⁵ which handled the majority of intelligence production, and into which all information and intelligence from the other departments should have theoretically have flowed.⁸⁶ In its role as the primary intelligence producer, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, was responsible for providing the government with the intelligence estimates necessary for effective decision-making. On the other side of this relationship were the consumers of intelligence, or those government organizations that were tasked with making-decision based on intelligence collected by the RCMP Security Intelligence Service. The primary consumers of intelligence at the federal level were the Prime Minister's Cabinet, the highest decision-making body in Canada, and the Security Panel, an advisory body which was responsible for creating security and intelligence policy and which was tasked with keeping the PM and his Cabinet informed on intelligence matters.

The primary organization responsible for the collection of information on the FLQ was the RCMP Security Intelligence Service. In order to fully understand the central role played by the RCMP Security Intelligence Service during the October Crisis, it is important to have a cursory understanding of the history of the organizations itself. Founded in 1873 as a territorial police force, the RCMP continues to serve in this capacity to the present day but has had its mandate expanded substantially throughout its history. Founded as the North West Mounted Police, it merged with the Dominion Police on 1 February 1920 to become Canada's national, federal police force. During this early

⁸⁵ Initially referred to as the RCMP Security Investigations Branch, it was renamed the RCMP Security Intelligence Service during the mid-1960s. In 1970, as part of minor restructuring, the RCMP's security intelligence branch was renamed the RCMP Security Service and a civilian director was appointed.

⁸⁶ Although many other departments carried out intelligence-gathering functions, the Report of the Royal Commission on Security clearly states that the RCMP was "the main federal operational and investigative body in the field of security. Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Security (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1969) 14.

period, the North-West Mounted Police was considered largely a military force, and deployed its members in this capacity overseas during the South African War in 1899 and again during the First World War. Although the RCMP no longer takes on military roles per se, it does still retain a highly paramilitary atmosphere to the present day.

By the 1950s the RCMP's jurisdiction had expanded significantly as many Canadian Provinces disbanded their provincial police forces in favour of "contracting" with the RCMP to provide law enforcement services.⁸⁷ Essentially, the role of the RCMP became to enforce all Federal Law outside the scope of the Criminal Code of Canada throughout Canada. In those provinces that contracted RCMP law enforcement services, the force also undertook law enforcement of Criminal Code violations, which under the Canadian Constitution Act fall within the sphere of provincial rights.⁸⁸

As the sole federal law enforcement organization in Canada, it was logical that the RCMP undertook the majority of responsibility in providing for Canadian Security. To paraphrase The McDonald Report, where the Canadian military has provided for the defence of Canada, the RCMP has traditionally provided for its security. Although it can be argued that the RCMP has undertaken security roles from its outset⁸⁹, the first law enforcement organization in Canada to undertake security related tasks was the Western Frontier Constabulary, which was tasked with collecting information on possible threats to the Crown. It was followed by the Dominion Police, founded in 1868, and the NWMP, which gathered intelligence, generally on the US, through often dubious means.

⁸⁷ Canada, The McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 50. Ontario and Quebec have retained Provincial Police forces to this day, however, the RCMP does still enforce federal law in these areas.

⁸⁸ See Section 92 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

⁸⁹ John, Sawatsky, Men in the Shadows: the RCMP Security Intelligence Service (Toronto: Double Day, 1980).

During this period, intelligence gathering in Canada was “intermittent” and “there was no explicit statutory authorization for these secret surveillance activities.”⁹⁰ Despite considerable threats to Canadian security, intelligence gathering in Canada continued in this piece-meal, decentralized, and highly disorganized fashion until the amalgamation of the NWMP and the Dominion Police Force in 1920. Despite a unified Federal police force with a clear mandate to provide for Canadian security, intelligence gathering in Canada was still handled in a somewhat *ad hoc* fashion and lacked any government oversight or direction.⁹¹ From 1920 on, Security related investigations were carried out by the Criminal Investigations Branch of the RCMP. In addition, regular meetings were held between the RCMP Commissioner and the Minister of Justice in which *ad hoc* policies for the gathering of intelligence were arrived at.⁹² In 1936, a specific section within the Criminal Investigations branch was created to deal specifically with issues of Canadian Security. Until the Second World War, RCMP security related investigations often centred on labour groups and communism. During the War, however, attention was increasingly drawn to investigating fascism in Canada. Canadian participation in the Second World War brought a wholesale expansion of industries and organizations related to defence and security, the RCMP notwithstanding. By this period, the RCMP’s intelligence gathering capabilities had increased markedly, as it began to achieve a degree of specialization in methods and undertook a wider degree of activity especially related to security concerns stemming from the war. In 1945, the unsolicited and unwanted defection of a Russian Cipher clerk resulted in the accidental discovery of an extensive Soviet espionage ring operating in Canada that served to shift RCMP Security

⁹⁰ Canada, The McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 55.

⁹¹ Ibid 58.

⁹² Ibid 58.

Intelligence Service focus back toward the threat of communism in Canada. This focus would remain throughout the Cold War Period, and was evident during the early years of investigation of the FLQ, when it was initially believed that the FLQ was related to the communist threat. The organizational structure of the RCMP continued to evolve as, beginning in 1946 the Intelligence Section was renamed the Special Branch and came to be regarded as its own branch until it was eventually repositioned outside of the Criminal Investigations Branch altogether as the Directorate of Security and Intelligence.⁹³ This was the status and positioning of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service on the eve of the October Crisis. In 1970, shortly before the Crisis, the Directorate of Security and Intelligence was renamed the RCMP Security Intelligence Service and its head was given the title Director General (a rank with the same status as Deputy Commissioner).

Headed by a Commissioner appointed by the Governor in Council, the RCMP was organized in a hierarchical and centralized fashion and employed both “regular” and civilian members. Central command of the RCMP under the Commissioner came from Headquarters. Beneath HQ there were four major subdivisions: Criminal Operations, Canadian Police Services, the Security Intelligence Service, and Administration, each of which was headed by a Deputy Commissioner. Below these Deputy Commissioners, were Divisional Commanding Officers which head the 15 divisions of the RCMP under the four broad sections outlined above. In the case of the RCMP Security Intelligence Services and Canadian Police Services however, the Central Headquarters, not Divisional Commanding Officers, provided command.⁹⁴

⁹³ Ibid 63.

⁹⁴ Ibid 52-53.

Within the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, which until 1970 was called the Directorate of Security and Intelligence, or “I Branch,” there were four classes of employee: Regular members who were RCMP Officers; Special Constables with limited law enforcement powers who were specifically enlisted for specialized tasks; Public Servants who were primarily responsible for support and administrative functions; and, Civilian members who represented the technical expertise of the Security Intelligence Service.⁹⁵ It was the latter group, the Civilian members, who although they served a vital role within the Security Intelligence Service by providing analytical expertise, also presented a particular challenge. According to The McDonald Report,

it is the effective melding of this component into the security intelligence team that has created a severe organizational challenge. . . . as outsiders their career prospects were dim. This was soon identified as a serious organizational problem.⁹⁶

Thus, by the time the FLQ began operations in 1963, although no provision for direction by government had been created to provide policy for the RCMP’s intelligence-gathering branch, it had reached division status, with its head, the Director General, having identical authority as the Deputy Commissioners that ran the other divisions of the RCMP. Like the three Deputy Commissioners, the Director General, reported directly to the Commissioner who in turn was under the supervision of the Solicitor General. Within the Security Intelligence Service, there were three categories, each headed by a Deputy Director General, and they were: Administration, Services, and Operations. The Administration category, logically, was responsible for the overall administrative operation of the Security Intelligence Service. The Services branch directly supported operations through the provision of technical expertise through various branches such as:

⁹⁵ Ibid 63.

⁹⁶ Ibid 63-64.

records management, physical surveillance, and electronic surveillance. The operational category was responsible for the intelligence gathering. Divided into three sections, two sections undertook the tasks of counter-intelligence, and the third focused on domestic subversion. Although not active during the October Crisis, "G" branch was in the process of being created as part of domestic subversion section and would later be tasked with collecting information on Quebec separatists.⁹⁷ According to the report, there were also three additional branches that undertook operational tasks. They were: Security Screenings, Human Sources, and Intelligence Co-ordination.⁹⁸

Aside from the security and intelligence functions carried out by the RCMP, every Federal Department had Security Officers who were responsible for the physical security of their respective department or agency. In addition to this role, certain departments Security Officers also undertook an intelligence function. These included the Department of National Defence, the Department of External Affairs, the Communications Security Establishment, the Department of Supply and Services, and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission.⁹⁹ It must be stressed, however, that these organizations did not hold intelligence gathering as a primary function and their capabilities largely served the internal needs of their respective departments.

The relationship between the RCMP Security Intelligence Service and the Department of External Affairs (DEA), before and during the crisis was frosty, with both groups rarely communicating and cooperating.¹⁰⁰ The DEA's security intelligence capability was undertaken by two agencies under the guidance of a Deputy Under-

⁹⁷ Organizational structure from The McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 72.

⁹⁸ Ibid 73.

⁹⁹ Ibid 85.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid 650.

Secretary of State (Security and Intelligence). The Bureau of Economic Intelligence and the Bureau of Intelligence and Security was responsible for gathering intelligence on economic matters. The Bureau of Intelligence Analysis and Security was further divided into two groups; the Security Division and the Intelligence Division. The Security Division had “responsibilities which are closely related to the R.C.M.P. Security Intelligence Service”¹⁰¹ but was primarily concerned with activities involving Canadian missions throughout the world. As such, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a great deal of attention was paid to preventing espionage activities of foreign governments on Canadian establishments abroad. Within the Security Division, the National Security section had “the most extensive links with the R.C.M.P. Security Intelligence Service”¹⁰² as it had the task of identifying foreign diplomats who were conducting espionage related activities against Canada. The Intelligence Analysis Division was responsible for gathering intelligence on foreign nations from its existing Diplomatic infrastructure abroad through solely open sources.

Although the relationship with the Department of National Defence (DND) was better, however, The McDonald Report contended that the flow of information was largely “one way.” Under the National Defence Act, the DND has a responsibility to provide manpower in aid of civil power. In order to facilitate this task, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service provided intelligence on domestic threats to DND.

The Department of National Defence was also responsible for the physical security of its establishments which necessitated cooperation with other Departments such as the RCMP, DEA and Supply and Services on such matters as background checks,

¹⁰¹ Ibid 85.

¹⁰² Ibid 85.

electronic security, and control of security issues relating to private sector employees working on classified or restricted projects on DND property.¹⁰³ Also, the National Defence Act also allowed for the military to undertake certain actions to maintain internal security. Although it did not have a mandate to collect intelligence through clandestine means, its Special Investigations Unit, which was tasked with collecting intelligence on threats to defence installations and personnel, did operate a “Police and Security Liaison Programme”¹⁰⁴ which exchanged information with civilian security forces.

Before the crisis began, a major realignment of defence goals occurred with the White Paper on Defence in 1970. With a shift towards national sovereignty issues and domestic defence initiatives, the military began contingency planning for a possible future revolutionary conflict in Quebec. At the helm of this planning was General Jean Victor Allard, who had “the understanding that they were entering a long period of training and preparation to deal with a prolonged revolutionary war.”¹⁰⁵ During the summer of 1969, units, including 1 Royal Canadian Regiment, began training for low-intensity counter-insurgency operations¹⁰⁶ which would be required if the FLQ were successful in attaining a full-scale rebellion in Quebec.

The Communications Security Establishment was primarily concerned with preventing foreign nations from gaining access to Canadian secrets by means of the Canadian communications infrastructure. As such, its mandate did not allow for an important role in the October Crisis. Under the authority of the Minister of National Defence, the CSE is a civilian organization.

¹⁰³ Ibid 87.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid 88.

¹⁰⁵ Loomis 123.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid 130.

The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission was primarily concerned with security and intelligence relating to illegal immigration. In order to accomplish this, it received information from Canadian law enforcement and maintains an Enforcement Branch. It had an Intelligence Division as well as a Foreign Branch that investigated potential Canadian Immigrants who posed a security risk.

The Department of Supply and Services dealt primarily with industrial security of Canadian economic interests and maintained cooperative information programs with the RCMP, DEA and DND. Within the Department of Supply and Services, there was also the Industrial Security Division, which dealt with information security, personal security clearances, electronic data processing security, training, and field and industrial security officers.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the Emergency Supply Planning Division was responsible for resource management in relation to national emergencies.

On the other side of the intelligence-gathering equation in Canada were those groups who consumed intelligence at the federal level, and were responsible for creating policy and giving guidance to the producers. According to the Report of the Royal Commission on Security, these committees were tasked with providing “a machinery whereby security strategy can be devised, policies and priorities determined, and resources allocated to various measures” and to “which coordinates and enforces the application of these regulations.”¹⁰⁸ Headed by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, various interdepartmental committees filled this function. According to The McDonald Report, “Since the end of the Second World War, interdepartmental committees

¹⁰⁷ Canada, The McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 88.

¹⁰⁸ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Security 17.

composed of senior civil servants have been the main centres for developing and monitoring policy in relation to security and intelligence.”¹⁰⁹

The most important of these was Security Panel, which was responsible for creating security policies for the PM’s Cabinet. According to The McDonald Report, “the most active body [in intelligence planning] was the Security Panel.”¹¹⁰ Founded in 1946, it was reconstituted in 1963 and “its terms of reference ‘to advise on the coordination on the planning, coordination of the planning, organization and execution of security measures which affect government departments, and to advise on such other security questions as might be referred to it.’”¹¹¹ Falling under the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, the Security Panel was chaired by the Secretary of the Cabinet. In the early 1960s, its members included the Directors of Intelligence of each branch of the military, the Director General of the Defence Research Board, officials from the RCMP and the Department of External Affairs or DEA. During the mid sixties, there was significant governmental reorganization, including the creation of the office of the Solicitor General in 1966, and the unification of the armed forces in 1968. As well, a changing global environment necessitated expansion of the membership of the Security Panel. Included were officials from the Solicitor General’s office, the Deputy Minister of Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff, and officials of deputy minister rank from the Department of Manpower and Immigration, and the Department of Supply and Services. Concerned primarily with policies relating to the physical and personal security of government departments, the Security Panel “had relatively little direct impact on the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid 89.

¹¹⁰ Ibid 89.

¹¹¹ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Security (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1969) 14.

security intelligence collection activities of the R.C.M.P.”¹¹² Moreover, the Report of the Royal Commission on Security asserted that the Security Panel carried out its functions without “executive authority or adequate resources.”¹¹³ This resulted in a situation where decision-makers adopted “an approach which is necessarily permissive rather than compelling.”¹¹⁴ The Security Panel answered directly to the Prime Minister’s Office and Cabinet.

The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs headed the Intelligence Policy Committee, formed in 1960. Its members included the Secretary of the Cabinet, the Commissioner of the RCMP, the Chairman of the Defence Research Board, and the Deputy Ministers of National Defence and Finance and Communications. According to The McDonald Report, this interdepartmental committee was responsible for “general policy direction of the Canadian intelligence programme.”¹¹⁵ There was also the Joint Intelligence Committee, which was primarily concerned with the evaluation of intelligence from allied countries in order to provide other government departments with intelligence on the global environment. As such, it was not concerned with intelligence gathering within Quebec.

In 1963, the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence was formed, and all of the above interdepartmental committees came under its control. Thus, in theory, the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence was the premiere decision-making organization on the eve of the October Crisis, and was tasked with considering the policy judgements made by the interdepartmental committees under its authority. Of all the

¹¹² Canada, The McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 90.

¹¹³ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Security 17.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* 17.

¹¹⁵ McDonald Report (Second Report, Vol. 1) 90.

decision-making bodies listed above, it was the Security Panel and, to a lesser extent, the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence which were most directly involved in policy making and for giving advise to the Prime Minister's Cabinet both during and before the October Crisis.

This was the structure of intelligence gathering in Canada during the period in which the FLQ was active. The primary intelligence gathering organization in Canada, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, was tasked with collecting information, analyzing it, and then passing it on to federal decision-making bodies to facilitate their ability to formulate policy and make decisions.

CHAPTER 2: INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, THEORIES AND PROBLEMS

This section will discuss the basic intelligence gathering theories and problems that are relevant to the subsequent analysis of government efforts to gather information on the FLQ. It will give the reader both an understanding of the basic principles that have guided intelligence gathering in the post-war period, as well as an understanding of some of the classic problems faced by intelligence gatherers in their efforts to prevent surprise attacks.

Part 1: Intelligence gathering Theory

Many historians of intelligence history would agree that, since the Second World War, there has been a distinct change in the focus of intelligence gathering. According to historian Abram N. Shulsky, before and during the Second World War, intelligence gathering was generally perceived to be concerned with obtaining secrets from the enemy. This is very much the classic view of intelligence gathering, and the view that has had the greatest impact upon the public psyche. It is essentially the intelligence gathering of James Bond and popular culture but it is not the intelligence gathering of the present day.

Immediately following the Second World War, a marked change occurred in intelligence gathering away from the collection of secret information. Since then, the focus has leaned heavily toward analysis of information. Although secret information would continue to play a crucial role in intelligence gathering, greater emphasis was

placed on the analysis of open information and its synthesis with secret information.¹¹⁶

There were many factors that brought about this change, but three seem to have been pivotal. First, there now existed a large body of highly trained intelligence experts who had honed their skills during the Second World War and now began to create a body of knowledge on intelligence-gathering theory that challenged the existing views. Second, the new realities of the Cold War era necessitated a new approach to the way in which information was collected and managed. In the new static world of the Cold War, in which the superpowers did not engage in open conflict, analysis of open-source materials naturally took precedence over the difficult, dangerous, and politically volatile process of collecting secret information. Further, great technological advances, which aided the collection of both secret and open information, required greater and more varied levels of analysis than ever before.

Although debate continues as to which view provides the best foundation for a sound intelligence gathering capability, it is generally not disputed that the intelligence agencies of western democracies during the post-war period have favoured the analysis driven view of intelligence gathering.¹¹⁷ However, since the end of the Cold War, the rise in domestic and foreign terrorism has led to new challenges to the existing view that favoured analysis. Since the events of 9/11, intelligence gatherers have been faced with the new threat of terrorism, it has become evident that the established structures necessary for analysis of open information, do not exist. During the Cold War Era, it was possible to glean a great deal of information from an enemy state's political, economic, military, and social institutions solely through the analysis of open source information.

¹¹⁶ Abram N. Shulsky, Silent Warfare (New York: Brassey's, 1991) 159-162.

¹¹⁷ Shulsky 162.

In contrast, as terrorist organizations operate primarily underground, intelligence gatherers, were required to rely to a larger extent upon the collection of secret information. This does not however, negate the importance of good analysis as “collection activity immediately generates the need for some analysis.”¹¹⁸ As it will be seen, the intelligence gathering system in Canada, both during and before the October Crisis was organized in favour of the classical view, and thus represented somewhat of an anomaly when compared to other western intelligence gathering organizations of this period.

The analytical view of intelligence gathering is composed of the collection of different types of information. Sherman Kent’s pioneering book, Strategic Intelligence: For American World Policy provides a breakdown that is still recognized today. Kent outlined three basic areas of investigation that were required for the successful analysis of a threat: the basic descriptive form, the current reportorial form, and the speculative-evaluative form.¹¹⁹ Kent first identified the most elemental form of information, which he referred to as “the basic descriptive form.”¹²⁰ It is essentially the collection of vast quantities of data from largely open sources of all manner of mundane and seemingly trivial subjects, which as mundane as they may appear, are crucial to an understanding of one’s opponent. Vast amounts of valuable intelligence can be gleaned from this process. For Kent, the basic descriptive form is “It is the groundwork which gives meaning to day-to-day change and the groundwork without which speculation into the future is likely to be

¹¹⁸ Shulsky 163.

¹¹⁹ Shulsky uses the headings: information, activities, and organizations to identify essentially the same types of information as Kent. As Kent is the originator of these groupings, his terminology has been used.

¹²⁰ Sherman Kent, Strategic Intelligence: For American World Policy (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965) 11.

meaningless.”¹²¹ This includes everything from broad surveys of the threat that include mundane statistics such as nation’s Gross National Product or Gross Domestic Product to more specific and focused studies that describe the strengths and capabilities of the threat. In the case of the FLQ, this may take the names of members of the organization, and its organizational structure. The second element of information is “the current reportorial form”¹²² which compliments the basic descriptive form by attempting to gather the information necessary to keep it up to date.¹²³ By keeping info up to date, it functions as “a bridge between the descriptive and what I have called the speculative-evaluative elements – a bridge between the past and the future.”¹²⁴ A major problem lies in identifying “what specific areas of human activity must it observe and report change?”¹²⁵ The difficulties associated with the current reportorial form generally focus around the immense resources that are required to keep all spheres of knowledge up to date. Inevitably, one must decide what areas will be studied, and which will not as well as some kind of logical process to guide this. Thus, the current reportorial form illuminates one of the classical problems of intelligence gathering: what to study, and how one determines its importance.¹²⁶ Finally, there is “the speculative-evaluative form.” This is the predictive element of intelligence, for many proponents of the analytical view; it is the fundamental purpose of an intelligence agency. According to Shulsky, the speculative-evaluative form is required because:

¹²¹ Kent 11.

¹²² Kent 29

¹²³ Kent 30.

¹²⁴ Kent 38.

¹²⁵ Kent 31.

¹²⁶ Kent 31.

We should be prepared for the future; we should put every effort into being well-girded for its contingencies; we must not be caught off balance by an unsuspected happening. In the perfect grand strategy nothing that happens can have been unexpected.¹²⁷

This, the most complex type of the three forms of information, is the most analysis intensive and, more than any other requires accurate and complete information. It is heavily reliant on the accuracy of the first two forms of information.¹²⁸ Also, an enduring problem has been “What knowledge should [an intelligence agency] have about the future of other states in order to have the requisite foresight?”¹²⁹ Once this has been determined, theoretically, prediction can be achieved by weighing the capabilities of a threat against its known weaknesses.¹³⁰

Apart from the ability to collect information, the most basic requirement of any intelligence agency is expertise.¹³¹ Without an adequate ability to analyze and make sense of the data collected, an intelligence-agency is little more than a database for vast amounts of largely useless information. This vital human element is required to sift through information, determine what is relevant, analyze it, and provide an explanation and prediction of what will occur. The ability to analyze, and a human analytical capability, is also tied to the organization of an intelligence-agency. The classical model, which was primarily concerned with the collection of secrets, was often organized around paramilitary or police lines. Generally, intelligence gathering capabilities were run by the militaries of nations, and answered directly to the Head of State.

¹²⁷ Kent 39.

¹²⁸ Kent 44.

¹²⁹ Kent 40

¹³⁰ Kent 9, 56-57.

¹³¹ Kent 69.

In the more recent analytical model, however, preference is given to civilian run intelligence gathering organizations that can remain independent of government and objective in their analysis.¹³² This civilian orientated structure also allows for a greater degree of analysis in that it can recruit members from the larger pool of expertise in the civilian world. According to Kent, an intelligence organization must possess many of the capabilities found in the civilian world. It must have the analytical abilities of universities, it must be able to investigate like journalists, and must be able to sell its information like the business community.¹³³ The last point is of particular importance as it illustrates a key reality of intelligence: that it is a product that must be sold. If the intelligence that is provided is not believed by those decision-makers who must utilize it, then it is useless. Thus, “it must be packaged in a multitude of ways to suit the diversities of consumer demand...Like many a producer of consumers’ goods, intelligence will have its greatest marketing success when its product bears the unmistakable signs of superior research, cautious development, sound design, and careful production.”¹³⁴

The process by which information is transformed into intelligence – the end product to be consumed – is important in itself. Although there have been many variations, the basic process outlined by Sherman Kent still endures. The process begins with the appearance of a substantive problem.¹³⁵ Essentially, a threat presents itself, or is identified. In western democracies, however, this process begins with the establishment of a policy to direct the efforts of intelligence agencies and identify the substantive problem. Following the formulation of policy, the intelligence-community then analyses

¹³² Kent also identifies the different views for and against centralization of an intelligence organization, 80-82. Shulsky also explores the issue, 142-143.

¹³³ Kent 74-76.

¹³⁴ Kent 76.

¹³⁵ Kent 159.

the problem in order to determine what action must be taken to satisfy the policy, or as Kent refers to it: the analysis of the substantive problem.¹³⁶ This step¹³⁷ includes both an analysis of the policy and a determination, through logical processes, of what areas of information will be investigated.

Once this has been determined, data can be collected. It is during this stage that the vast quantities of information within the three main forms are collected. Both open sources, information in the public domain, and secret sources, information that is obtained through surreptitious means, are important to the process. According to Kent: “One of the most continuously vexing problems in the administration of intelligence is deciding which particular subjects shall be watched, reported upon, or made the objects of descriptive or speculative research.”¹³⁸ Although arguments have been made in favour of the utilization of a social sciences approach that can aid in the prediction of human behaviour. The optimism of the early post war period, in which the social science became highly popular, has declined as time and history have demonstrated that the direct application of science on nature is not as feasible as once hoped. Thus, no real method for determining what to study has been arrived at, lest the analytical abilities of highly trained human experts.¹³⁹

The methods by which data is collected can be broken down into several categories including: information from human sources, information from technical means, and information derived from open sources. With the rise in popularity of the analytical view of intelligence gathering, the use of technical means for information

¹³⁶ Kent 162.

¹³⁷ Kent 164.

¹³⁸ Kent 9.

¹³⁹ Shulsky 70. Harold L. Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry (New York: Basic Books, 1967) 38-39.

collection has gained far greater popularity – some argue to the detriment of the other forms.¹⁴⁰

Technical sources refer to all types of information that can be gained only through technological sources and include activities such as the surveillance of communications, various forms of photography, and electronic surveillance. Although there have undoubtedly been significant advances in the ability to collect technical information since the end of the Second World War, the method is limited by its own success in that vast amounts of information can be collected but only a small portion can be feasibly analysed. Thus, the second method, human intelligence, can be a useful tool in determining what technological means should collect information on.¹⁴¹

These methods are most well suited to the surveillance of an established threat, such as a nation-state, with its easily identifiable governmental, commercial, and scientific sectors. When facing a domestic security threat, technical means are often restricted when investigating terrorist organizations due to the absence of these open, well-established structures. Instead, terrorist threats generally operate in a clandestine fashion and employ rudimentary but effective communication methods and at times lack clear and well-defined organization. Thus, human intelligence, or the use of informants and spies, becomes more important. Although this method may allow intelligence producers access to terrorist organizations not afforded to it by technical means, human intelligence holds its own unique set of challenges. There can often be problems in assessing the validity of the information gained from informants who may in fact be providing false information because they are intentionally trying to deceive authorities

¹⁴⁰ Shulsky 166.

¹⁴¹ Shulsky 32.

(commonly referred to as disinformation).¹⁴² Further, for an informant to gain valid information, he must win the confidence of the other members of the terrorist organization and this often necessitates the commission of illegal acts¹⁴³ – a state of affairs that may conflict with the laws restricting the freedom of action of an intelligence community operating within the borders of its own country. Finally, there will always be a reluctance to share reliable information provided by an undercover informant or agent for fear that it may expose the individual's true identity to the threat and compromise the source.¹⁴⁴

However, there is open source collection, which in the analytical school of intelligence will always play an important role. In fact, for Kent, this method is by far the most important.¹⁴⁵ While this may be true intelligence gathering against a foreign nation-state, the utility of open-source collection is somewhat restricted when attempting to gather information on domestic terrorism (with its independent, clandestine cell-type structure and operation) that often operates outside the public sphere.¹⁴⁶

The collection of data is then followed by the analysis phase in which expertise and opinion, along with logical processes, are applied to the vast quantities of data. It is essentially, “the process of transforming the bits and pieces of information that are collected in whatever fashion into something that is usable by policy makers and military

¹⁴² Shulsky 17-18.

¹⁴³ Shulsky 19.

¹⁴⁴ Shulsky 19.

¹⁴⁵ Shulsky 33.

¹⁴⁶ Shulsky 34.

commanders.”¹⁴⁷ The relevant important pieces are culled, and a hypothesis is arrived at.¹⁴⁸

Finally, these predictions based on reliable data and sound analysis is presented to policy-makers. In this way, the process can be seen as being cyclical in nature in that policy-makers drive the process by formulating policy and law which dictates what will be studied and how it will be undertaken, but is in return dependant on intelligence to arrive at that policy. The basic product of analysis is the intelligence estimate. This estimate is a form of predictive analysis that attempts to determine the probable courses of action of a threat.¹⁴⁹ The estimate, however, is not the sole form of product. Other types of assessment are often requested by consumers in their efforts to formulate policy or foil a domestic security threat. In particular, current intelligence¹⁵⁰, a description of the state of affairs of a threat at a given moment, is often requested by consumers at times when they are attempting to understand a threat. This form differs greatly from an estimate in that it is completely devoid of any prediction of what may occur in the future. For current intelligence to be effective, producers must be intimately aware of the requirements of decision-makers, in order for that information to be available upon demand.¹⁵¹ The demand for current intelligence can be problematic, however, in that the demand for such information can cause producers to become overly preoccupied with its collection and production to the detriment of the greater predictive task. Shulsky refers to the phenomenon that is at times prevalent in modern western intelligence gathering

¹⁴⁷ Shulsky 37.

¹⁴⁸ Kent 164, 174. Although Kent presents these as two distinct phases, today, they are generally regarded as one stage of the process.

¹⁴⁹ Kent 58, Shulsky 57.

¹⁵⁰ Shulsky 56.

¹⁵¹ Shulsky 54.

organizations as “The ‘Current Events’ Syndrome”.¹⁵² This is particularly troublesome in that it can result in the loss of the ability of an intelligence organization to fulfil its primary task of warning of future attack. Thus it can at times become a contributing factor to a specific intelligence failure.

An important element of the intelligence cycle is the relationship between producers and consumers of intelligence. Producers are those organizations that collect, analyze, and disseminate information. Consumers are the end users of the product of intelligence. Although there were many minor groups, the key producer of intelligence was the RCMP Security Intelligence Service (later re-named the Security Intelligence Service). The key consumer, was the federal government, specifically the Prime Minister’s Cabinet and its advisory bodies on security intelligence matters. There were, however, numerous other more minor entities, which collected and used information of different types. All police agencies at all levels both produced and consumed intelligence. But this intelligence, which can be referred to as “short term intelligence”¹⁵³ deals with specific problems and is used at a tactical level. For example, it is the intelligence that directly helps police apprehend terrorists. According to Sherman Kent, “medium range intelligence”¹⁵⁴ is that information that is used to help the military carry out its tasks. In the domestic context, however, it can be used as the information to help federal intelligence producers gain an understanding of the threat that is not directly related to the eradication of that threat. It can include the types of information that are used to gain an understanding of the capabilities and organization of a specific threat.

¹⁵² Shulsky 55.

¹⁵³ Kent 213.

¹⁵⁴ Kent 212-213.

Lastly, there is “long-range intelligence,”¹⁵⁵ or the intelligence that is used in relation to issues of the national security and welfare as a whole – the so-called issues of grand strategy. Essentially, it is the intelligence on which policy should be based. Very often, it is also the type of intelligence that includes a predictive element, and attempts to determine what a threat will do in the future. It was the RCMP Security Intelligence Service that was primarily responsible for producing this type of intelligence in the form of detailed estimates – the predictive analysis that was used to warn of an impending threat and was intended specifically for the Federal Government. The analytical chapter to follow will closely examine these estimates in an effort to determine their accuracy.

With regard to the relationship between producers and consumers, “there is no phase of the intelligence business which is more important.”¹⁵⁶ In fact, policy cannot be formulated without adequate intelligence, and intelligence will not know what to study and how to study it without adequate policy. The same can be said of guidance, or the instructions that consumers give to the intelligence community in order to define what their tasks will be. Ultimately, the producers of intelligence “should be close enough to policy, plans, and operations to have the greatest amount of guidance, and must not be so close that it loses its objectivity and integrity of judgement.”¹⁵⁷ As we will see, both a relationship that is too detached carries specific problems for intelligence, as does a relationship that is too intimate. If too close, intelligence producers risk losing their objectivity. If too far, they risk losing direction and focus and may begin producing products for issues that consumers are not concerned with.¹⁵⁸ For Shulsky;

¹⁵⁵ Kent 212.

¹⁵⁶ Kent 164.

¹⁵⁷ Shulsky 180.

¹⁵⁸ Shulsky 180.

the need for guidance is evident, for if the intelligence staff is sealed off from the world in which action is planned and carried out the knowledge which it produces will not fit the bill.¹⁵⁹

Ultimately, the relationship between producers and consumers has always been a tense one. Many factors contribute to this, but the end result is almost always the same, perceptions on both sides are altered to contribute to a sense of distrust of the other. In the worst-case scenario, it can lead consumers of intelligence to ignore the accurate estimates of producers in favour of their own assessment of a situation based on public signals. This important phenomenon of intelligence gathering will be more fully discussed in the upcoming section that deals with the causes of intelligence failure.

Driven largely by the realities of the cold war, most of the literature on intelligence was concerned with the intelligence gathering of nations against other nations, the intelligence gathering of high policy. Thus, the body of knowledge on intelligence gathering during the last half century has understandably been concerned with establishing workable theories on how to collect intelligence on external threats. However, there are also specific considerations that are relevant only to that intelligence which is collected in the domestic arena. This area of intelligence gathering has obviously grown dramatically in importance since the end of the cold war with the proliferation of foreign and domestic terrorism around the world. Different rules apply to this intelligence function, especially in democratic countries, where the rule of law and constitutional law may restrict the ability of intelligence organizations to gather information.¹⁶⁰ While it may be deemed reasonable to utilize highly intrusive surveillance methods against foreign threats operation in foreign nations, these actions

¹⁵⁹ Shulsky 181.

¹⁶⁰ Shulsky 4.

cannot be taken domestically unless specific legal considerations have been satisfied. The chief problem is “defining the circumstances under which a government agency may legitimately conduct surveillance of a citizen and determining the limits, if any, on the amount on that kind of such surveillance.”¹⁶¹ Essentially, the standard for collecting domestic intelligence is higher than collecting foreign intelligence because, in a democracy, a nation’s own citizens. As such, intelligence gatherers are restricted in that they cannot conduct highly invasive investigations unless certain legal criteria are met. In these instances they can be restricted by their obligations to adhere to the rule of law. The potential problem is that, in an effort to protect a nations physical security, an intelligence agency may compromise its political, moral, and ethical security. A democracy is defined by more than its physical security, its political institutions. In a democracy, civil rights provide the foundation on which legal authority is based. Thus, the protection of civil rights and democracy becomes as important as providing for the physical security of a nation’s citizens. This reality has typically provided a challenge for intelligence gathering and security organizations as they are faced with a paradox in that protecting physical security can often require infringing upon individual freedom. Knowing this, terrorist organizations, have often conducted acts of violence in an effort to encourage the target nation to destroy its own democracy in an attempt to eradicate the threat.

The criteria for collecting information on domestic security threats is often what Shulsky terms; “the criminal standard”¹⁶² which holds that “domestic intelligence investigations would be strictly limited to situations where a violation of the law has

¹⁶¹ Shulsky 148.

¹⁶² Shulsky 155.

occurred or is about to occur.”¹⁶³ Thus, producers of intelligence must strive to differentiate which acts are purely criminal in nature and which constitute a real danger to national security.¹⁶⁴ This, however, can present a paradox in that producers require information on the threat to determine if it is a national security threat, but cannot collect information on it unless it is already known to be a national security threat. Essentially, a security-intelligence organization must distinguish between a possible threat, a probable threat, and a certain threat without any foreknowledge. According to Shulsky, “the criminal standard is something of a catch-22: one cannot know about the support group’s additional activities because one may not look, and one may not look as one does not know.”¹⁶⁵ Ultimately, however,

because of the potential seriousness of a single [terrorist] incident, there is a strong desire to prevent crime and not merely to punish it; this implies a requirement to collect intelligence about individuals or groups who, although they have not yet done so, are likely either to engage in such activities or to maintain close ties with those that do.¹⁶⁶

Essentially, Shulsky is speaking of the requirement for producers of intelligence to be able to *predict* future acts of violence that terrorist organizations will undertake in an effort to both *warn* consumers of the event, and to *prevent* the event from occurring altogether.

At another level, the issue is organizational. Domestically, any threat is first and foremost treated as a criminal one, and as such, a police approach is often employed. Essentially, the police approach “typically involves waiting until a specific crime has been, or is about to be, committed and then attempting to solve that particular crime

¹⁶³ Shulsky 149.

¹⁶⁴ Shulsky 149.

¹⁶⁵ Shulsky 155.

¹⁶⁶ Shulsky 156.

arrest the perpetrators.”¹⁶⁷ This approach may not be particularly effective when gathering information on domestic terrorists threats, where the risk of violence they pose may be far greater than with conventional criminal acts. In this way, the standard police approach has the potential to limit the predictive abilities of intelligence.

Finally, the criminal standard “inhibits the penetration of support groups since they typically present themselves to the public as political or charitable groups.”¹⁶⁸ This presents a unique challenge in that criminal law does not allow for the surveillance or investigation of legitimate political movements. Thus, in this respect, the criminal standard can inhibit effective information collection.¹⁶⁹

Part 2: Classic Problems of Intelligence-gathering

This section will explore the nature, causation, and meaning of intelligence failure. The ultimate purpose will be to identify the types of failure that specifically relate to the October Crisis experience in order to establish the specific criteria for further analysis in the subsequent Chapter.

First and foremost, any discussion of the problems faced by the intelligence community must begin with an understanding of what constitutes a failure of intelligence gathering. This is often a controversial task as many outside the intelligence community, including many consumers believe that “intelligence performance should be measured against an ideal of clairvoyance.”¹⁷⁰ Although prediction plays an important role in the overall intelligence function, such a high level of precision is not reasonable as not all

¹⁶⁷ Shulsky 5.

¹⁶⁸ Shulsky 155.

¹⁶⁹ Shulsky 154.

¹⁷⁰ Shulsky 67.

knowledge of any subject can be discovered. Rather, “determining whether such situations constitute intelligence failures requires a standard against which it is reasonable to measure intelligence achievements.”¹⁷¹ A more temperate view, is provided by author Harold L. Wilensky who defines intelligence failure as:

the inability to muster the intelligence needed for successful pursuit of organizational goals. When the relevant information is not in the organizational system as a result of the lack of appropriate search procedures, we can speak of intelligence failure.¹⁷²

Although similar to the general perception of the function of intelligence, Wilensky makes the crucial distinction between the knowledge of possessing *all* information on a threat and of possessing *the necessary* information to achieve ones’ goals in relation to a threat. Although many consumers many desire an omnipotent understanding of a threat, it is certainly not required to successfully make decisions regarding that threat.

What then are some of the specific types of failure? First, there is the failure to predict an event; this is the classic type of intelligence failure – the surprise attack or other event¹⁷³. It is the failure that has been most studied, and has led to the greatest reforms in intelligence organizations. It is often seen as the most common type of failure, and has consistently been the stance of the Canadian federal government when justifying their decision to invoke the War Measures Act. “The Security Intelligence Service . . . had been severely criticized for failing to provide government with adequate intelligence on the F.L.Q.” In 1977, the Solicitor General, Hon. Francis Fox, stated in the House of Commons that: “when the October Crisis of 1970 struck, there was an immediate realization that information on groups responsible for the crisis had been wholly

¹⁷¹ Shulsky, 67.

¹⁷² Wilensky “Preface” ix.

¹⁷³ Shulsky 60.

inadequate.”¹⁷⁴ In addition, public statements made by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and his key advisors, Gerard Pelletier, Jean Marchand, Mitchell Sharp support this assertion.¹⁷⁵

However, it is not the only type of failure, as many different problems of intelligence gathering may contribute to a failure. In this way, there may not be a failure of prediction, but other problems may exist which contribute to errors in decision-making. Other types of failure may involve surprise that stems from a “mistaken view of the external world”¹⁷⁶ – a failure of perception – that may be caused by any number of reasons. At times, a “misunderstanding of the situation”¹⁷⁷ can be the result of a lack of good, accurate intelligence. This state of affairs is the result of misconception of the perceptions of either producers or consumer or both, and represented a major factor in the ultimate failure of the intelligence-gathering apparatus in dealing with the FLQ in Canada. This specific problem will be more fully discussed later in this section.

Related to the issue of perception are failures that stem from “the misestimation [sic] of a continuing process or condition in which, because nothing occurs to reveal the situation, it is possible to remain in error for a longer time.”¹⁷⁸ Within the context of the October Crisis, there is evidence of a perpetual lack of understanding by consumers of intelligence at the Federal level that was caused by organizational problems including a

¹⁷⁴ Canada, Second Report of the Commission of Inquiry Concerning Certain Activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981) 919. Herein after this source will be referred to as The MacDonald Report.

¹⁷⁵ See Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Memoirs (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) and Rene Levesque, Memoirs (McClelland and Stewart, 1995), Pelletier, Gerard, The October Crisis (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971). Also see the interview given by Mitchell Sharpe in “Memories of October,” The Fifth Estate, produced by Julian Sher (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1990).

¹⁷⁶ Shulsky 60.

¹⁷⁷ Shulsky 61.

¹⁷⁸ Shulsky 61.

poor relationship between producers and consumers, a lack of clear policy, and little or no guidance from consumers.

There is also the failure that is derived from “a disorder of the analytic process, which causes data to be ignored or misinterpreted.”¹⁷⁹ The McDonald Report clearly identified a lack of analytical ability within the RCMP Security Intelligence Service that played a minor role in limiting the predicative abilities of the situation. As it will be seen, however, it was not a primary cause of intelligence failure in the FLQ experience.

Organizational problems can pose serious difficulties in the collection and transmission of intelligence from producers to consumers. For the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, there were several organizational problems that were evident. First, the RCMP was, and has always been, a paramilitary organization with a long tradition of secrecy. It has also always been a federal police agency. As a consequence, The McDonald Report readily identified that the RCMP Security Intelligence Service lacked analytical expertise and this is keenly evident in the estimates it produced which will be examined in the subsequent chapter. As Sherman Kent points out, without a product that is well conceived, with excellent analysis, it can lose its veracity in the eyes of consumers.¹⁸⁰ Shulsky has also pointed out the importance of solid analytical capability within the intelligence gathering organizations and has asserted that it is the *only* sure cure for intelligence failures.¹⁸¹

The RCMP Security Intelligence Service’s police orientation, ensured that, in the early stages, the FLQ was viewed as a criminal threat, not necessarily as a security threat. In essence, the issue of defining a threat by “the criminal standard” was a problem due to

¹⁷⁹ Shulskly 62.

¹⁸⁰ Kent 76.

¹⁸¹ Shulsky 70.

the existing organizational structure of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service.

Although by 1970 limited steps had been taken to rectify the lack of expertise and the rigid thought processes common to any paramilitary organization, problems still existed. Aside from the appointment of John Starnes as the first civilian head of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, many of the old prejudices and practices endured. RCMP officers, most without college or university education handled virtually all of the intelligence gathering tasks, however, their police training may have left them ill-equipped for the task. Although civilian experts were employed to provide analytical capability, they were difficult to recruit and retain due to the lack of prospect for advancement within the Security Intelligence Service.

Finally, the antiquated, paramilitary structure of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service was not well suited to the new post-war era of analytical intelligence gathering. Rather, it had been structured according to the classical style in which discovering secret information was the highest priority. Ironically, this may have had a limited benefit with regard to the FLQ situation as terrorist organization's operating cells have represented a unique challenge to analytical style intelligence-organizations due to the lack of their established structure and above ground organization. Thus, the classical orientation of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, which favoured the use of informants instead of open sources and technical methods, may have helped them gain some intelligence on the FLQ. However, the benefit provided by the Security Intelligence Service's seemingly antiquated structure did not exceed the benefits that would have been gained had they possessed the predictive abilities of a more modern intelligence organization.

First and foremost, the lack of analytical capability severely limited the legitimacy of estimates in the minds of consumers and ensured that even accurate intelligence was ignored in favour of unreliable open-source information.¹⁸²

The problem can be understood in terms of the important, but almost universally uneasy, relationship between producers and consumers in democratic countries.¹⁸³ In a democratic system, the production of intelligence must always be subordinate to the wishes of consumers of intelligence. Although there is some disagreement on what role expertise should play in the analysis of information, it is generally agreed that analysis is a necessary step and is crucial to the relationship between producers and consumers.

Shulsky explains the relationship between the two groups by stating:

Clearly, we want policy to be guided by the best information available; we would be very critical of a policymaker who ignored the available facts and based his actions on his unsupported views of what the world was like. At the same time, we want policy to be made by those to whom the political system (via election or appointment) gives the leadership authority; in any case, they must take ultimate responsibility for their policies, regardless, of the information on which the policies were based.¹⁸⁴

Thus, if we can accept that the production of intelligence must be driven by the guidance of consumers, in this case by the democratically elected federal government and its appointed underlings, what is the specific role of producers in this relationship? As Sherman Kent states;

¹⁸² For an example of an early intelligence estimate that lacked good analysis, see Bordeleau, "Quebec Liberation Front," memorandum, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 33 (19 April 1963)

¹⁸³ Shulsky 131, 136.

¹⁸⁴ Shulsky 136.

Intelligence is not the formulator of objectives; it is not the carrier out of operation. Intelligence is ancillary to these; to use the dreadful cliché, it performs a service function. Its job is to see that the doers are generally well-informed; its job is to stand between them with the book opened at the right page, to call to their attention to the stubborn fact they may be neglecting, and – at their request – to analyze alternative courses without indicating choice. Intelligence cannot serve if it does not know the doers' minds; it cannot serve if it has not their confidence; it cannot serve unless it can have the kind of guidance any professional man must have from his client.¹⁸⁵

If it can be accepted that production must be subordinate to consumption, how then should this relationship be expressed? In the case of the RCMP SIS and the Federal Government, it would seem that relationship was very loose, with little contact between the two groups and almost no established policy or guidance on how intelligence should be collected or what areas should be studied. In fact, the Security Panel, met only twice to discuss intelligence matters in the seven years of FLQ violence leading up to the October Crisis. When it did meet, little concrete policy was developed and virtually no specific guidance was given. This “too far apart” relationship had two primary effects; the RCMP Security Intelligence Service was unable to provide the kind of intelligence consumers wanted; and consumers were not well apprised of the intelligence matters.

There are also dangers when the relationship becomes too close. Although there had been little contact between producers and consumers of intelligence before the October Crisis, when the kidnappings occurred in October 1970, demands from the government for information on the FLQ rapidly brought the two groups together into a much closer relationship. This state of affairs is a classical problem of intelligence gathering, in which,

¹⁸⁵ Kent 182.

In a moment of intense exasperation, intelligence producers and consumers might agree that the administrative barriers between them should be knocked down and that intelligence should be moved piecemeal into the policy section or the plans section or operations section, or that intelligence should be broken up into its regional and functional unit and dispersed among appropriate parts of the total organization. If this were done, intelligence would very likely acquire all the guidance it could possibly ask for – perhaps even more than it could legitimately stomach.¹⁸⁶

This phenomenon is driven by a demand from consumers for specific information quickly. During the October Crisis, it had been brought about by a long-standing relationship in which producers and consumers rarely communicated. Very little intelligence was passed on to consumers, and conversely, very little guidance and policy was handed down to producers. Thus, when the October Crisis began, there was a high demand by consumers for information on the FLQ. This type of information can be referred to as “information please”¹⁸⁷ intelligence, or “the current events syndrome,”¹⁸⁸ and is caused by faulty perceptions on the part of consumers of intelligence of the actual role of producers.

Demands for immediate intelligence can have a highly detrimental effect on the intelligence gathering process as it forces producers to spend a disproportionate amount of time attempting to fulfill this ultimately futile task to the detriment of its more important predictive function. Intelligence producers will be “diverted from its essential task.”¹⁸⁹ Failure to provide this type of clairvoyant information can cause consumers to lose trust in the producers of intelligence.

¹⁸⁶ Kent 196.

¹⁸⁷ Kent 28.

¹⁸⁸ Shulsky 55.

¹⁸⁹ Kent 196.

By bringing producers too close to consumers, often in an environment of crisis, there is a tendency to skip many of the vital tasks of intelligence production, including analysis, and to provide information in its raw form. It then falls upon consumers, who do not possess the same levels of expertise in intelligence analysis, to interpret the information. This, “off-the-cuff solution”¹⁹⁰ can cause consumers to “arrive at a solution in ignorance of many relevant and important facts.”¹⁹¹ It can ultimately cause consumers to arrive at a faulty course of action. This situation was evident during the October Crisis, where a “too close” relationship quickly evolved. It was largely the consequence of the preceding environment, where both groups communicated very little. The demands for intelligence brought about by the Crisis brought the two groups together very rapidly, without the time to formulate policy and guidance on how that relationship ought to be properly governed. The result was an intelligence gathering process where the crucial task of analysis was largely taken over by consumers. It would also seem that these decisions were largely based on open signals as opposed to intelligence estimates and secret information.

Ultimately, there is nothing that compels consumers of intelligence to use the estimates of producers in their formulation of policy and guidance directives.¹⁹² Often, if producers feel they are not being listened to, they will cease to provide intelligence that they feel will not be headed to and which does not conform to consumers existing preconceptions.¹⁹³ Ultimately,

¹⁹⁰ Kent 198.

¹⁹¹ Kent 198.

¹⁹² Kent 202.

¹⁹³ Kent 205.

When the findings of the intelligence arm are regularly ignored by the consumer, and this because of consumer intuition, he should recognize that he is turning his back on the two instruments by which western man has, since Aristotle, steadily enlarged his horizon of knowledge – the instruments of reason and scientific method.¹⁹⁴

A recurring theme evident in all the problems discussed above is the impact that perceptions have on the intelligence-gathering process. Overall, faulty perceptions brought about by a number of factors represented the primary failure of intelligence gathering on the FLQ before and during the October Crisis. Perception will now be briefly explored as a cause of failure.

A lack of understanding of the role of intelligence by consumers results in perceptions that contribute to failure. This lack of understanding can exist for several reasons. First, many key consumers of intelligence are elected officials and therefore, due to the limited time in which they are in power, can gain only a limited understanding of intelligence issues. As a consequence, there is often a ““certain amateurism”” of top officials due to the high turnover rate.”¹⁹⁵ This was the case for the Trudeau government, in which a relatively new Prime Minister’s Cabinet was tested during the October Crisis. Normally, in order to address this problem in democratic nations, appointed officials exist as advisory bodies to elected officials. In Canada, the key advisory body to the PM’s Cabinet was the Security Panel. These officials remain in their positions for longer periods, and therefore, are expected to gain a greater understanding of intelligence issues in order to advise elected officials. In Canada, however, the very loose relationship and limited contact between producers and consumers ensured that, although Security Panel may have had expertise on intelligence gathering, they were never up-to-date on the

¹⁹⁴ Kent 206.

¹⁹⁵ Shulsky 140.

various affairs of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service. Thus, without a clear understanding of what producers' tasks are, consumers can often have unreasonable expectations of their intelligence gathering organizations. Consumers "exaggerate the importance of blind collection of facts, [and] they also expect the experts to do things with the facts that cannot be done."¹⁹⁶ This was certainly the case during the October Crisis where the Prime Minister and his Cabinet demanded the notorious "information please" form of intelligence. According to Harold L. Wilensky, when

Intelligence users and operators, incongruously demanding from researchers "all" the "facts" and short, speedy, journalistic estimates of future developments, use the inevitable hedging and the frequent failures of prediction to justify their anti-intellectualism, their naïve separation of "facts" from "know-how," and their denigration of research...¹⁹⁷

When it could not be provided, consumers naturally lost trust in the authenticity of all intelligence provided by the RCMP Security Intelligence Service. Also, producers are often held to a higher standard, when they inevitably make a mistake, they are far more harshly judged and consumers immediately lose confidence.¹⁹⁸ As a result of the lack of understanding of the true role of producers, "policy-makers grossly exaggerate [or diminish] its [intelligence] importance and reliability."¹⁹⁹

The lack of understanding of the current state of the FLQ caused consumers to rely on their own preconceptions on the FLQ. These opinions were largely based upon open sources such as alarmist media reports and other irrelevant information such as public protests and rallies that were perceived to be a part of the FLQ violence. This

¹⁹⁶ Wilensky 64.

¹⁹⁷ Wilensky 65.

¹⁹⁸ Kent 194.

¹⁹⁹ Wilensky 66.

tendency to rely on prior perception²⁰⁰ is highly common within intelligence-gathering communities. It is evident in intelligence estimates in which, at times, a reworking of information, instead of a rethinking of information, can prevail. In an effort to streamline their work, analysts rely on previous assessments to make sense of new information instead of performing a complete analysis on the new information. Essentially, “if individuals economize on time and effort by not rethinking all their opinions all the time, the organization may be said to do the same.”²⁰¹ Shulsky refers to this phenomenon as “received opinion”²⁰² and it can as easily apply to producers and it can to consumers. In particular, “if an analyst has to write a report, he is likely first to review what was written the previous year and then merely update it as necessary. This not only saves labour but also offers a degree of security.”²⁰³

During the early years of FLQ violence, producers attempted to understand the FLQ in terms of a pre-existing threat. This had the effect of distorting the threat by assuming that the FLQ was related to the communist movement and this in turn resulted in a misjudgement of the group’s true nature and capability. It also led producers to believe for a long time that the FLQ was receiving support from international communist movements or foreign communist countries. This misinterpretation of the threat based on existing preconceptions, “creates a tremendous opportunity for error in situations involving gradual change.”²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ This phenomenon is more fully explained by Ernest May in his work, Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy (Oxford University Press: New York, 1973) 15.

²⁰¹ Shulsky 63.

²⁰² Shulsky 63.

²⁰³ Shulsky 64.

²⁰⁴ Shulsky 64.

The issue of secrecy can also affect perception. Often, consumers of intelligence will lose confidence in the authenticity of estimates because, due to valid security concerns, they cannot be permitted to know the sources that the estimates were based upon.²⁰⁵ Consumers are legitimately reluctant to make key decisions “on the basis of someone else’s say-so.”²⁰⁶ As a consequence, consumers of intelligence who are tasked with the formulations of policy may believe their own perceptions of a situation instead of estimates that do not reveal their sources.²⁰⁷

During the October Crisis, inaccurate perceptions among both groups, but in particular among consumers, played a pivotal role in contributing to the decision to invoke the War Measures Act despite the existence of clear warnings of an impending attack and accurate intelligence of the true nature of the FLQ and its capabilities.

²⁰⁵ Kent 191.

²⁰⁶ Kent 193.

²⁰⁷ Shulsky 139, Wilensky 66-69.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS

This section will attempt an analysis of intelligence gathering on the FLQ through an examination of the primary source documents currently available. It will explore how the intelligence gathering process functioned and attempt to identify classical problems of intelligence that may have been evident in the process. In order to understand how the decision-making process was affected during the October Crisis, intelligence gathering during the entire period of FLQ violence, from early 1963 through to October 1970 will be investigated. In each phase, the activities of producers of intelligence will be examined, followed by the reactions of consumers based on the information they received. Through an understanding of the classical problems of intelligence gathering, the validity of the assumption of predictive failure will be explored.

Part 1: The Initial Period of Intelligence gathering, 1963-65

Following the initial attacks by the FLQ in the spring of 1963, the intelligence community began collecting information on suspected FLQ members and the first rough estimates were created. Some of the perceptions that existed during this initial period would gradually change as hard intelligence on the FLQ grew. As we will see, however, others would remain the same until the October Crisis due to the existence of believable public and secret information that seemed to support misperceptions. Consumers played only a limited role during the early period and as such, there existed little federal guidance or policy for producers to aid them in accomplishing their task.

Initially, the bulk of information was collected by the non-security branches of Canadian law enforcement, such as the Criminal Investigations Branch (CIB) of the

RCMP and its counterparts at the Provincial and Municipal levels. Information was intended to aid in the capture of the suspected terrorists and did not provide the strategic predictive analysis that would eventually be required by decision-makers. This reliance on police investigation and procedures instead of security intelligence structures to gather information on the FLQ is evident in the primary source documents of this period. For example, a memorandum from the RCMP CIB, dated 19 April 1963, identified the FLQ as the group responsible for the 06 April 1963 attempt to destroy a CBC broadcasting tower.²⁰⁸ This early approach illustrated a typical failure of intelligence gathering, namely the restrictions that can be placed on producers when faced with a domestic terrorist threat. During this early period, the intelligence-community did not view the FLQ as a security threat, but as a criminal one, and as such, found itself restricted by the criminal standard in the type of activities they could legitimately carry out to gather information on the FLQ.

This initial state of affairs was quickly rectified, however, as by mid-April, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service became involved. It indicated that the intelligence-community now understood the FLQ was a specific security threat. Even though there had been a shift in understanding of the FLQ, during this period, hard information was thin. A report created by the RCMP SIS as a result of a combined investigation with the Montreal City Police, asserted that the FLQ was “not an organized movement but a very small minority of ‘cast off’ [sic] from the many separatist movements R.I.N., ‘Alliance

²⁰⁸ J.A.A. Thivierge Supt. CIB, memorandum, “Le Front de la Liberation Quebecoise (FLQ),” National Archives, RG 146 (19 April 1963).

Laurentienne' and other separatist movements."²⁰⁹ Another report described the very limited understanding of the FLQ the RCMP had at the time:

Apart from the acts of vandalism in the form of defacing public property by writing separatist slogans, damaging federal properties with the use of explosives and publication of news bulletins which publicly associate on their part a definite line of action in the form of terrorist actions and separatist sabotage directed to federal establishments and institutions and in particular the R.C.M.P., nothing is known as to how well organized and as to what extent the movement is prepared to carry on its acts of terrorism.²¹⁰

Due to the limited understanding of the FLQ during this period, the RCMP was unable to formulate detailed intelligence estimates, and prediction was impossible. The report went on to state that the membership in the FLQ "stems from the separatist movements in Quebec"²¹¹ and that they had "no information indicating that the Q.L.F. [FLQ] is directed by any known separatist groups in particular."²¹² Finally, the report concluded that, based on the level of proficiency with explosives, the FLQ might have "professional saboteurs or highly qualified personnel in the handling of explosives"²¹³ and that these professionals might be former members of the l'organisation de l'Armee Secrete (OAS). This report represents one of the earliest available documents that contains reference to foreign involvement, and indicates that this perception existed within the intelligence community from a very early stage.

Suppliers of intelligence, however, were able to collect information of some importance that would mark the end of the first phase of FLQ analysis. On April 12th, 1963, a joint surveillance operation by the Montreal City Police, the Quebec Provincial

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ W. Milligan, Supt. SIB, memorandum, "Quebec Liberation Front," National Archives, RG 146 (18 April 1963) 2.

²¹¹ Ibid 2.

²¹² Ibid 2.

²¹³ Ibid 2.

Police, resulted in the search of 14 residences of suspected FLQ members including Mario Bachand's apartment.²¹⁴ The searches resulted in the seizure of a typewriter that had been used to type the communiqués sent by the FLQ. Lab analysis of the typewriter, information gained through human sources, and surveillance of suspected FLQ member Mario Bachand, were vital in bringing the first FLQ terrorists to justice.²¹⁵ Records indicate that RCMP "S & I" (Security and Intelligence) surveillance teams kept tabs on an unknown FLQ terrorist as early as May 1963 and were responsible for ultimately finding and arresting him based on this surveillance of his residence.²¹⁶ This individual may have been Mario Bachand, as other documents identified him as a suspected terrorist. Intelligence-gatherers continued their surveillance of Bachand and an RCMP Surveillance Report dated May 6th, 1963 stated that he was "strongly suspected of being an F.L.Q. member"²¹⁷ due to his associations with certain individuals. Based on this intelligence, Bachand was arrested and admitted to placing two of the Westmount mailbox bombs on May 17th, 1963. In addition, Bachand admitted to being responsible for the attempted bombing of the CBC radio tower. The capture of Bachand as well as other FLQ terrorists ultimately led to the end of the first wave of FLQ violence. Yet, despite these successes, the RCMP asserted that the FLQ was "not an organized movement, but a very small minority of 'cast off' from the many separatist

²¹⁴ Ibid 2.

²¹⁵ J.P. Lecocq, report, "LE FRONT DE LA LIBERATION QUEBECOISE (F.L.Q.)," National Archives RG 146, Vol. 33 (29 April 1963) 10.

²¹⁶ -----, "Le Front de la Liberation Quebecoise (F.L.Q.)," National Archives, RG 146 (5 June 1963). The identity of this FLQ member remains classified and is censored in the document.

²¹⁷ -----, "Joseph Guy Francois Mario Bachand, Montreal Quebec," National Archives, RG 146.

movements”²¹⁸ and did not fully appreciate the threat the organization would eventually pose.

In the months following the arrests of first members of the FLQ, a great deal of information was collected through interrogations of captured terrorists. The RCMP began to believe the FLQ had possessed a hierarchical structure as one report stated that a specific individual was “named chief of the Montreal Cells.”²¹⁹ Intelligence suppliers also learned of the prospective plans of the FLQ, including the establishment of new cells in Chicoutimi, Rimouski, Quebec City, and Ottawa.²²⁰ These new cells, it was believed, would receive extensive “guerrilla training.” During interrogation, Mario Bachand asserted that authorities had been successful in capturing the majority of FLQ activists and only 3 or 4 had eluded police.²²¹ Thus, the RCMP may have been led to believe that the FLQ had been effectively ended. Furthermore, Bachand stated that all the current members of the FLQ had come from the RIN.

The possibility of foreign powers supporting the FLQ was also examined as the RCMP believed that the FLQ may have received support from Czechoslovakia or France. Bachand emphatically denied having received support from communist Czechoslovakia and evidence supported his claims.²²² On the other hand, there seemed to be evidence of French sympathy, if not open support, for the FLQ. Bachand asserted that, while they had denied his application for asylum, they had “been very co-operative in assisting them

²¹⁸ Lecocq, report, “Le Front De La Liberation Quebecoise,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 33 (19 April 1963) 7.

²¹⁹ G.H. Miller, “Report on Information Gained From Mario Bachand,” National Archives, RG 146 (11 Feb 1964).

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

in their departure for the U.S.A.”²²³ Also, Bachand stated that: “the Governor [presumably of St. Pierre or Miquelon] further assured them that France would not stand idle when it was clear that Quebec would have a chance for separation.”²²⁴ It seems that the idea of foreign influence in the FLQ originated during this period. In addition, an RCMP memo dated June 24th, 1963, advised that the RCMP would collect information to “determine if influence has been exerted on behalf of a foreign power.”²²⁵ Although Bachand’s testimony may have been disinformation in an attempt to confuse the RCMP, it seems that it was to some extent believed as, in the years to come, as some terrorists escaped to France, Cuba or Algeria, producers and consumers alike would begin to believe that the FLQ had been supported by foreign powers or organizations.

With the collection of preliminary information on the FLQ, producers also began to attempt to formulate some initial predictive estimates on the new threat. The branch of the RCMP responsible for strategic analysis, the Central Research Branch, submitted a report on April 19th, 1963 that represents the earliest known document of a predictive analysis the FLQ. The report was based on the short-term signals available to the RCMP’s security intelligence branch at that time and included information gleaned from “delicate sources, involved in sensitive investigations elsewhere.”²²⁶ Furthermore, the report admitted that RCMP intelligence on the subject at that point was “quite tenuous,” and that, in order to construct a workable picture of the FLQ, it was necessary to bring together “some seemingly irrelevant facts with which to establish at least a resemblance

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ J.P.W. Bordeleau, memorandum to the Officer Commanding “C” Division, National Archives, RG 146 (24 June 1963).

²²⁶ Bordeleau, “Quebec Liberation Front,” memorandum, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 33 (19 April 1963) 2.

of a pattern.”²²⁷ The report is revealing as it illustrates the many misconceptions information gatherers had at this early stage concerning the FLQ.

First, it was believed that “communists [were] endeavouring to exploit somewhat nationalistic sentiments of some French Canadians in an effort to further the rise of international communism.” As the primary threat to Canadian security was believed to have been domestic communism and related threats from foreign communist powers, early assessments assumed that the FLQ was in some way related to these existing threats. This perception may have in part been driven by the existing policy of the time.

According to The McDonald Report:

The only explicit government guidelines on security threats – the Cabinet Directives, regulations and legislation relating to security screening and internment in preparation for war – had been drawn up in the Cold War period. At the time threats to Canada’s internal security were identified basically in traditional ideological terms as espionage conducted by Communist regimes, Communist Groups on the far left of the ideological spectrum, and to a lesser extent, groups on the far right.²²⁸

This attempt to understand the FLQ in terms of a pre-existing understanding of an earlier threat represented one of the classical failures of intelligence. It was a failure that resulted from the influence of past perceptions on present reality.²²⁹ This phenomenon occurred because, at this early date, the Security and Intelligence Branch of the RCMP was restricted in its terms of reference in that it could only pursue “the investigation of Communist penetration into groups linked or suspected of being linked with the Quebec

²²⁷ Ibid 2.

²²⁸ Canada, Second Report of the Commission of Inquiry Concerning Certain Activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981) 73. Herein after referred to as The MacDonal Report.

²²⁹ For more refer back to Ernest May’s theory of the influence of past perception on present reality in Chapter 2, page 26 of this thesis.

Liberation Front.”²³⁰ Thus, their terms of reference influenced their perceptions by limiting what could be studied. The strict terms of reference further reinforced the perception that the FLQ was related to the communist threat. The report went so far as to assert that the FLQ as “purely a Communist front organization and which appears to be taking advantage of the separatist movement in Quebec to gain whatever value they can from it.”²³¹ This highly inaccurate assumption represented a serious deficiency in the RCMP’s ability to adequately provide predictive analysis during the period.

With respect to the communiqués and pamphlets that were disseminated, the report noted that the use of language such as “‘society commandos’, ‘Quebec Liberation Front’, ‘systematic sabotage’, and ‘Quebec Libre’”²³² was out of character for French separatists with the assumption being that they had been included due to communist influence. As well, the RCMP had no knowledge “as to its [the FLQ] membership, directors or to what extent it is organized.”²³³ They did know, however, that “there is no doubt that this extremist group of separatists stems from the separatist movements within the Province.”²³⁴

As trials of the first wave of FLQ terrorists were underway, in an effort to gain a greater understanding of the FLQ, the RCMP Commissioner requested a Report from the Officer-in-Charge CIB, Supt J.A.A. Thiverierge. The report was general in nature but stated that the FLQ had a mandate:

²³⁰ Bordeleau 2.

²³¹ Ibid 2.

²³² Ibid 2.

²³³ J.W.B. Boucher, memorandum, “Quebec Liberation Front,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 33 (18 April 1963) 3.

²³⁴ Ibid 3.

to eliminate persons collaborating with the Federal Government, and has promised to attack all commercial and cultural interests of 'American Colonialism' in the Province, which they [the FLQ] have described as the natural ally of 'English Colonialism.'²³⁵

An addendum brief dated 22 July 1963 again confirmed information-gatherers' preoccupation with communism and their belief that it was a major factor in the FLQ movement. At the same time, there were concerns that the various separatist groups in Quebec would become united. An RCMP from May 1963 asserted that signals indicated; "a National Council of the Quebec Revolution had been formed to bring various separatist and revolutionary groups in Quebec together and coordinate their activities."²³⁶ Among the revolutionary groups listed was the RIN. Although the plan to unite Quebec separatism did not come to fruition, the report illustrated a perception among information-gatherers at a very early stage, that the separatist movement in Quebec had the potential to be much more than it was – that at some point in the future it could develop the power to bring about apprehended insurrection. As with many of the assessments during this period, the report indicated that communist forces "appear to be playing a supporting role in the development of the F.L.Q."²³⁷ This report went even further to conclude that the FLQ was, in actuality, little more than a "front" organization for communist activity in Quebec.

On 18 September 1964, the RCMP completed one of the most important estimates of the FLQ during the initial phase of intelligence gathering. This comprehensive report was important for two reasons. First, it clearly reflected the level of understanding of

²³⁵ J.A.A. Thivierge, report on FLQ to RCMP Commissioner, National Archives, RG 146 (29 July 63).

²³⁶ RCMP Research Section, "Quebec Liberation Front (F.L.Q.)," National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (09 May 1963) 4.

²³⁷ *Ibid* 7.

producers concerning the FLQ at the time and second, it was the primary document presented to the Security Panel on the FLQ during its 76th meeting a month later.

The overall aim of the report was to determine “what organizations and individuals are able to exert some form of influence or control over the movement as a whole.”²³⁸ By this period, it would seem that the perception of communist control of Quebec separatist terrorism was beginning to dissolve as the report stated: “There is not much evidence that separatist leaders have openly cooperated with the Communist Party of Canada.”²³⁹ While the idea of domestic communist subversion through the FLQ was fading, however, the idea of international involvement seemed to be growing. In an effort to strengthen their argument, the report cited numerous Quebec separatists and revolutionaries from around the globe who had made comments such as: “the situation in Quebec was part of the ‘world-wide struggle between capitalist-imperialist oppressor and proletarian colonial victim.”²⁴⁰ As well, the report cited circumstantial information of terrorist training camps in rural Quebec as evidence for its assertion of foreign communist control. Finally, the report asserted that the creation of a permanent RIN liaison post in Paris indicated a desire to seek communist support.²⁴¹ This presumption was based on the assumption that the RIN was linked to separatist terrorism, for if it was not, the establishment of this foreign office would have been of little concern to information-gatherers. Thus, the predicative analysis during the period was relatively poor, as it could neither provide clear understanding of the organization and capabilities

²³⁸ RCMP Central Research Section, “Brief No. 39: The Development of Separatism in Quebec,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (18 September 1964) 2.

²³⁹ *Ibid* 9.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid* 11.

²⁴¹ *Ibid* 11.

of the FLQ or its future actions. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the strongly held perception of foreign involvement was based on little hard intelligence.

The estimate also demonstrated the challenges the RCMP Security and Intelligence Branch was having at the time, stating:

The problem has been made extremely complex by the formation, dissolution, or merger of separatist organizations, some of which have advocated separatism by constitutional means, and some of which have resorted to illegal, clandestine tactics to achieve their goal – the separation of Quebec from Canada. This formation of new separatist parties and dissolution of others has, in some instances, been a deliberate attempt to confuse the authorities and conceal the true identity of a clandestine group, and in other instances it has reflected a clash of personalities or a power struggle among leaders of a particular group.²⁴²

Thus, it can be seen that producers were facing some of the classical problems that are often associated with attempts to gather information on terrorist organizations. As author Erik J. Dahl points out,

terrorism presents a particularly difficult problem for intelligence (as well as for policy and operations). Because terrorist groups are often small, dispersed and do not rely on the large infrastructure of a conventional state-based threat, intelligence is limited in its ability to use traditional tools and techniques to gain insight on terrorist intentions and capabilities.²⁴³

With regard to political organizations advocating separatism, early assessments held that there was a close relationship with terrorist organizations. In particular, the report contended that the dominant separatist organization of the time, the RIN, was “the open organization and its terrorist underground...is nor more or less united.”²⁴⁴ With respect to the leadership of the RIN, the report stated:

²⁴² Ibid 2.

²⁴³ Erik L. Dahl, “Warning of Terror: Explaining the Failure of Intelligence Against Terrorism,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2005): 35.

²⁴⁴ RCMP Central Research Section, “Brief No. 39: The Development of Separatism in Quebec” 3.

it has become apparent that during the process of organization and consolidation which the movement has gone through the more moderate leaders have been supplanted by elements prepared to accept violence to achieve their objectives.²⁴⁵

Thus, the report suggested that the FLQ was an extension of the open, legal movement and effectively served to present an image of a threat that was larger than it really was.

Like other estimates during this period, the report failed to adequately identify the organizational structure of the FLQ. It assumed that the present terrorist groups in Quebec operated under a “central command,” and that “these underground groups...now fall under the leadership of the semi-secret Republican Front for Independence (FRI).”²⁴⁶ Finally, the report stated that the FRI, which constituted the central command for Quebec terrorism, “operated in close contact with the RIN.”²⁴⁷ Essentially, in its effort to give meaning to the intelligence it was receiving, the RCMP Central Research Section incorrectly assessed that a close link and organization existed between the various terrorist organizations, and with these terrorists groups and the legitimate, open separatist groups in Quebec. Overall, the estimate portrayed a highly inaccurate picture of the FLQ at the time as it assumed a highly centralized command structure for the FLQ that was well organized. In addition, the report incorrectly held that the FLQ was linked to the RIN. The significance of this estimate cannot be underestimated, as it would form the basis for important policy decisions by the Security Panel a month later.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Ibid 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid 6.

²⁴⁷ Ibid 6.

²⁴⁸ Referred to in the following document: D.F. Wall, Secretary, “Minutes of the 76th Meeting of the Security Panel,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7, 1025-9-91123 (27 October 1964) 6.

Before this point, producers had been using federal policy directives established in relation to cold war threats, and may explain the early preoccupation with communism as driving force for the FLQ. Based on the estimates provided by producers, consumers reacted to the new threat. There are currently only two primary source documents available which explain the actions taken by decision-makers. Both suggest that very little policy guidance was given to producers and that it too vague to be effective.

The earliest known meeting of key federal decision-makers on the FLQ occurred at a Cabinet Meeting on May 20th, 1963 and was the only occasion that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet met to formulate policy on the FLQ before the October Crisis. Interestingly, the Cabinet Conclusion discussed primarily specific issues but a few policy decisions were arrived at. First, although they had already unofficially become involved, the decision was taken to formally utilize the RCMP in order to help gain intelligence on terrorism in Quebec. At this time, newly elected Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and his Cabinet were apprised of the new cooperative measures between the RCMP, QPP, and Montreal City Police that would be put into effect and approved this decision. The tangible result of this cooperation would later become known as the Combined Anti-terrorism Section (CATS). The Cabinet also decided that, as the FLQ terrorism involved issues of “sabotage and security”, the RCMP should have overall control of the situation, but that responsibility for apprehending the FLQ would remain at the municipal level.²⁴⁹ Although some policy initiatives were decided upon, consumers did not provide any guidance as to how these new policies would be implemented. Essentially, consumers did not define how they would interact with producers, or what type of products suppliers

²⁴⁹ -----, “Terrorism in Quebec – Assistance of R.C.M.P.,” Cabinet Conclusion, National Archives, RG 2, Vol. 6253, Series A-5-a (20 May 1963) 5.

of intelligence should have provided. Without these questions, producers would find it difficult to produce useful intelligence for consumers, and it would be almost impossible to pass this information onto consumers.

I would seem that consumers also held the perception held by suppliers of intelligence of foreign support for the FLQ at this time. It was asserted that: “The FLQ was a rallying-point for various other movements, and had been infiltrated and engineered by subversive persons. It was known that some of separatist factions had included a number of Communists from Cuba.”²⁵⁰ The statement illustrates that the federal government believed that the FLQ was receiving foreign support at this time. It also strongly suggests that consumers’ belief in foreign support had originated from RCMP intelligence estimates that contain the same sentiments.

During this early period, the Prime Minister’s Cabinet issued its only policy statement on the issue of security and intelligence in Cabinet Directive No. 35. The Directive dealt with the issue of determining loyalty of public service and military personnel.²⁵¹ Specifically, it clearly defined the instances in which a person’s loyalty could be investigated and was deemed by The McDonald Report to overly restrictive in nature. The McDonald Report contended that Cabinet Directive No. 35 may have resulted in “a failure to carry out investigations of F.L.Q. terrorism – investigations which might have prevented some of the serious terrorist attacks before and during 1970” but did not provide specific details.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Ibid 5.

²⁵¹ For more see Canada, “Cabinet Directive No. 35: Security in the Public Service of Canada” (18 December 1963).

²⁵² The McDonald Report, Vol. 1, 449.

The other major meeting of consumers of intelligence occurred more than a year later, when on 27 October 1964, the Security Panel, the chief interdepartmental committee and advisory body to the Prime Minister, met to discuss security issues. A key topic on the agenda was the FLQ and Quebec Separatism.

One of the specific questions before the committee concerned a security screening a prospective government employee that had been conducted by the RCMP. It had been discovered that this individual was a member of the RIN, and as such, the RCMP sought specific policy advice on the reliability of such subjects. The relevance of the September 18th, 1964 estimate on Quebec Separatism now becomes apparent as the question before the Security Panel related directly to the RIN. The estimate had stated that the RIN worked closely with Quebec terrorists, and suggested that the RCMP had wanted greater latitude in investigating legitimate separatist movements.

In an attempt to receive advice “in that absence of policy instructions,” RCMP Commissioner McClellan reinforced the views made in the estimate and stated that: “some elements of the RIN were secretly condoning, if not supporting, acts of violence perpetuated by underground groups.”²⁵³ He went on to state that, despite the estimate’s assertion to the contrary, “there was evidence to indicate that Communist Party Members had been instructed to consider the separatist movement as a ‘National Liberation Movement.’”²⁵⁴ Finally, Commissioner McClellan made reference to “non-Canadians” who had been members of Quebec terrorist organizations and “the apparent attempt to endeavor [sic] to recruit more foreign terrorists in order to obtain technical skills.”²⁵⁵ Although the Security Panel did not entirely agree with the assertions put forth in the

²⁵³ Ibid 6.

²⁵⁴ Ibid 6.

²⁵⁵ Ibid 6.

estimate concerning a link between foreign communism and Quebec terrorism, it did agree that the report raised serious questions. As the discussion progressed, approval for an expansion of the terms of reference for RCMP intelligence gathering grew. It was ultimately decided that RIN membership constituted a degree of risk, although each case would have to be assessed.²⁵⁶ With this assumption, came the implied task of increased RCMP information gathering on open separatist movements. Thus, the decision significantly altered the existing methods by which the RCMP gathered information. The decision was vague and did not provide the precise policy and guidance necessary to producers to accomplish their tasks. In particular, no reference was made to the types of information that should be collected, and no provisions were established for the regular transfer of information from producers to consumers. In effect, the federal government did not create adequate policy on the new threat and also did not provide adequate guidance. This state of affairs would remain unchanged until the October Crisis in 1970. This illustrates that there existed very little contact between producers and consumers and thus intelligence would rarely be passed on to consumers. Overall, primary source documents suggested that consumers played a very limited role in the intelligence-gathering process during this early period, and this represented a key failure.

Overall, during the initial period of intelligence gathering on the FLQ, several classical problems were already evident. They would have long-reaching effects on the intelligence-gathering process and would ultimately impact decision-making during the October Crisis. First, it is evident that preexisting perceptions impacted early estimates on the FLQ. In particular, producers misinterpreted the FLQ due to their longstanding

²⁵⁶ Ibid 9.

focus on combating domestic and foreign communist threats. Furthermore, consumers failed to create sufficient policy and guidance to govern the intelligence gathering.

Part 2: The Intermediate Period of Intelligence Gathering, 1965-69

By the mid 1960s, both information-gatherers and decision-makers had acknowledged that the FLQ represented a new and serious threat to security in Canada. During this time, the process of intelligence gathering was complicated by the turbulent events in Canada, the United States, and abroad. In Quebec and around the world, unparalleled social agitation erupted as numerous groups sought to challenge the status quo. For some, the cumulative effect of these events suggested that the various groups were working together to bring about international revolution against the established order. According to The McDonald Report:

In the late 1960s the Security Intelligence Service found itself faced by what it perceived to be an evolving threat to Canadian internal security which was different from the Communist threat which had been posed in the past. The new threat was seen as being a world-wide confrontation with authority by various groups employing violence for political ends.²⁵⁷

By the end of the decade these views would eventually be tempered within the RCMP Security Intelligence Service as evidence did not support this theory. This becomes clearer in the strategic estimates created by the RCMP Central Research Branch by the end of the 1960s. These assessments, which represent a synthesis of the open and secret signals collected by the RCMP, indicate an improved level of understanding of Canada's premiere intelligence gathering organization on the FLQ.

During this intermediate phase of intelligence gathering, producers' perceptions

²⁵⁷ McDonald Report, Vol. 1, 268.

of an FLQ that was larger and more capable than it was continued to prevail. In particular, producers now began to believe that the FLQ had penetrated key sectors of government as well as important social institutions. This perception began as early as 1964 when the RCMP began investigating allegations of FLQ members within the Canadian Armed Forces, a suspicion that would continue until the October Crisis. As with the idea of widespread foreign influence and support, the belief in FLQ infiltration of the Canadian government seemed credible because of some isolated cases that were often highly publicized by the media.

One piece of evidence concerned an anonymous letter that had been received by a senior Canadian Navy Officer asserting that a major newspaper would soon run a story on separatists within the Canadian Navy. Specifically, the letter stated that certain junior officers currently undertaking basic training were separatists and belonged to groups such as the RIN.²⁵⁸ While the letter sparked an RCMP and DND investigation, RCMP records do not reflect the outcome. Nevertheless, the fear of FLQ infiltration of government continued.²⁵⁹ In the years leading up to the Crisis, suspicions of FLQ members within the CAF would continue, and on certain occasions, CAF members were discharged for fear of separatist sympathies. Although it was initially felt that cooperation between the RCMP and DND in these matters could not occur as there were “no terms of reference for handling security screening cases ... on terrorist organizations,”²⁶⁰ records indicate that by mid 1965 information was being exchanged regularly. The RCMP would provide

²⁵⁸ -----, letter to Senior Canadian Naval Officer, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 23, 93-A-00004 (2 November 1964).

²⁵⁹ Some isolated cases of FLQ members the Canadian Armed Forces were discovered, however, they were isolated cases and did not reflect the pervasive penetration that decision-makers spoke of during the October Crisis.

²⁶⁰ W.L. Higgitt, Assistant Director S & I, letter to D.F. Wall, Secretary for the Security Panel, National Archives, RG 146 (18 August 1965).

strategic assessments of CAF penetration of the FLQ and DND would intern provide lists of suspects. At the time, penetration of the CAF was divided into three major types:

1. Deliberate attempts to infiltrate active separatists and terrorists into the Armed Forces in order to gain information and to spread separatism among French speaking members;
2. The recruiting of members or ex-members of the Armed Forces into separatist organizations to exploit their knowledge and training;
3. Developing or maintaining close contact with members of the Forces and their relatives as sources of information.²⁶¹

The same document indicated that despite thefts of military hardware that led investigators to believe that the culprits had been provided with inside information, “there is no evidence that an organized attempt has been planned or made.”²⁶² The letter went on to note that the recent thefts at the Fusiliers Mont Royal Armouries in Montreal and the 62nd Artillery Regiment in Shawinigan had been facilitated by inside information and that “it was obvious that the culprits were either personally familiar with the premises or they had been carefully briefed.”²⁶³

Information-gatherers also believed that the FLQ had members placed within the mass media. This belief also began long before the October Crisis but would persist throughout the crisis. As the FLQ increased its activity in the years leading up to the October Crisis, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service became increasingly concerned with the possibility of FLQ infiltration of the mass media. It began simply with concerns over the inaccuracy of various news reports, which were “exaggerated to an unbelievable

²⁶¹ -----, letter to K.L. Dyer, Vice-Admiral, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 23 (3 February 1965).

²⁶² Higgitt.

²⁶³ Ibid.

extent” and were very “unexact [sic].”²⁶⁴ Reports within the Security Intelligence Service soon began to circulate which stated that: “There are many indication that separatists are exerting considerable influence on press, radio and television content in Quebec.”²⁶⁵ This concern was echoed in another memo to the Commissioner of the RCMP reporting that the media in Quebec was heavily prejudicing its reports in favour of Separatist views. Although the only evidence provided seems to be the content of media programs, the memo made the leap of logic of stating: “It appears that the Royal Commission on Biculturalism is being similarly infiltrated by local and staunch separatists.”²⁶⁶ Further, it stated that action would be taken to monitor the content of the programs in an attempt to identify the level of penetration. While no further documents regarding this issue are currently available, the RCMP maintained an extensive database on French language news clippings that they believed were overly sympathetic to separatists. Ultimately, the sea of news reports on the FLQ became yet another element of background noise that which affected the intelligence community’s perceptions of the FLQ and the degree of the threat it posed.

That said, understanding of the FLQ improved during the period as producers gained more sources of reliable intelligence. In particular, the use of human intelligence sources, or informants, became prevalent during this period and provided the RCMP with a great deal of relevant information. According to Fournier, on example was a source known as the “taxi driver” who was recruited by the RCMP Security Intelligence Service

²⁶⁴ J.R.R. Quintal, Inspector Commanding Quebec Sub-Division, “National Independence Rally, Rassemblement pour L’indépendance Nationale, Roberval County,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 26 (18 September 1967).

²⁶⁵ L.R. Parent, memorandum, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 26 (11 March 1965).

²⁶⁶ J.L. Forest, memorandum, “Subversive Separatist Activities Amongst French Canadians – Ottawa,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 26 (2 February 1965).

near the end of 1968 when he was arrested on drug charges.²⁶⁷ The source would be employed for information gathering by the RCMP Security Intelligence Service for four years and he

did provide the RCMP with valuable information which enabled them to draw up organizational charts of the networks operating in leftist circles, and to create up-to-the date files on activists, their favourite haunts, their psychological profiles, their meeting places, and so on.²⁶⁸

Another source that was identified in primary source documents was Pierre Bouchard, who began operating within the La Victoire Network. RCMP documents indicate that many suspected FLQ terrorists came to their attention through information provided by sources. These sources, which even in secret documents remain unnamed, provided the names of Denis and Pierrette Cloutier, FLQ members who had undergone commando training and might be involved with the October kidnappings.²⁶⁹ Later, Carole DeVault would become one the RCMP Security Intelligence Service's most important human intelligence assets during the October Crisis, and the McDonald Commission acknowledged her activities.²⁷⁰

Further hard intelligence was gained from the FLQ members themselves. In March 1969, Pierre-Paul Geoffroy, a captured FLQ cell leader, before a Fire Commissioner's inquiry, recounted in detail the terrorist activities he and his cell had been involved in.²⁷¹ Admitting to 15 FLQ bombings, Geoffroy's testimony also revealed how his cell had operated and how it had interacted with other FLQ cells. Although the

²⁶⁷ Louis Fournier, The FLQ, the anatomy of an underground movement (Toronto: NC Press, 1984) 144.

²⁶⁸ Fournier 144. According to Fournier, information on this source was obtained through personal interviews he conducted. As such, he does not name the source, and therefore, its accuracy cannot be verified.

²⁶⁹ -----, "The Company of Young Canadians, Penetration of: January 1970 / January 1971," National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 24 (11 February 1971).

²⁷⁰ See Carole de Vault and William Johnson, The informer : confessions of an ex-terrorist (Toronto: Fleet Books, 1982).

²⁷¹ Eddie Collister, "Inquiry told 'devices' ordered," Montreal Gazette, 7 March 1969.

testimony or admissions of FLQ terrorists who had been arrested by police did provide information gatherers with a clearer picture of the nature of the organization, they rarely provided the type of information that would allow authorities to prevent future terrorist acts. This was due not only to the unwillingness of arrested terrorists to divulge information that might incriminate their comrades, but also due to the amorphous nature of the FLQ. This ensured that these FLQ members often were not well informed of the activities of other cells, all of which operated without the oversight of a central command structure. Thus, as time progressed, producers continued to gain better sources of intelligence on which to base their predictive estimates.

One of the available estimates of the period is entitled "Brief No. 67," written almost a year after "Brief No. 39," in many respects it was a word-for-word copy of the earlier brief and reflected a classical failure of intelligence gathering which can be referred to as the problem of "conventional wisdom." Essentially, it can occur when new events are explained in terms of preexisting perceptions instead of performing new analysis.

During the previous year, understanding of the FLQ had progressed, albeit incrementally, but these advancements did not result in any alteration of the preexisting perceptions. For example, although "Brief No. 67" did correct the earlier assumption that all separatist terrorist activity had been under the control of the FRI, the RCMP now believed that central command was provided by "one man," whose name was blacked out. Essentially, the report simply replaced one misconception with another and did not alter its assessment of the existence of a central command. With regard to the ALQ and ARQ, the report did correctly identify that these groups "were all linked to one

another”²⁷² and asserted that, taken together, these two groups constituted the new FLQ.²⁷³

A year of information gathering seems to have solidified the RCMP’s existing perception concerning the question of foreign support and foreign communist influence. Overall, far more confident language was used when analyzing the possibility of foreign communist influence, as the report asserted that: “There is no doubt that communists and some separatists in Quebec regard the separatist cause in that province as a part of the world wide ‘national liberation movement.’”²⁷⁴ As well, with respect to foreign support, the report stated that:

Separatists have been seeking foreign aid for their cause for some time now. They have sent delegates to the United Nations Organization in New York City; they have established an International Committee for the Independence of Quebec (CIIQ) in Paris, and have made contact with French speaking groups in Wallonia, Belgium and the Jura region of Switzerland who are also agitating for independence and closer ties with Europe.²⁷⁵

Finally, the report made reference to separatist contact with officials from France, the Soviet Union, and even the United States. While separatists were certainly in these countries, and RIN members did meet with foreign officials, the linking of legitimate separatist organizations to terrorist separatist organizations was faulty, and indicates that producers misunderstood the true capabilities of the FLQ at the time.

Essentially, as information gatherers at the time believed that the FLQ was simply one branch of a larger network of interrelated separatist movements all working together. Therefore, it was believed that any action by the open separatist organizations was in

²⁷²RCMP Central Research Branch, “Brief No. 67: The Development of Quebec Separatism,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (2 April 1965) 8.

²⁷³ Ibid 11.

²⁷⁴ Ibid 19.

²⁷⁵ Ibid 22.

somewhat related to FLQ activity. This perception did not reflect the reality of the relationship between the FLQ and other separatist organizations. The meetings that occurred were carried out by open separatists from the RIN and did not constitute an attempt to gain support for terrorist activity as the report implied. The brief paid far more attention to an analysis of a small Quebec separatist group based in Paris, and cited several open newspaper articles as support for the group's activities which were rumored to include contact with "forty four countries."²⁷⁶

The strategic estimate entitled "Brief No. 90," seemed to utilize information identical to that of Brief No. 67 produced almost a year earlier and in the same way, illustrates the failure of "conventional wisdom." Greater attention was being paid by information gatherers to the proliferation of separatist propaganda that was underway at the time and was the focus of "Brief No. 90: Quebec Separatist Publications." By the end of the year, "Brief No. 103: The Development of Separatism in Quebec," dated 1 December 1965 concluded that the predominant terrorist groups in Quebec was now the FLN. The FLN, which came to the attention of information-gatherers in January 1965,²⁷⁷ encompassed the ARQ and ALQ, and represented the current incarnation of the FLQ as it was believed to be the "foremost revolutionary organization now operating."²⁷⁸ Despite a consistent lack of evidence to support a link between the two, the report concluded that "Communism, although not yet a significant factor, is considered to be progressively increasing its influence in the separatist movement of Quebec."²⁷⁹ On the whole, it

²⁷⁶ RCMP Central Research Branch, "Brief No. 67: The Development of Quebec Separatism," National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (2 April 1965) 27.

²⁷⁷ RCMP Central Research Branch, "Brief No. 103: The Development of Separatism in Quebec," National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (1 December 1965) 29.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid* 37.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid* 37.

would seem that after a year of intelligence-gathering on the FLQ, little had changed in terms of information-gatherers understanding of the threat. The one significant difference was the role that communism was perceived to play, the report more accurately assessed that communist forces were not directly abetting the FLQ as they had once believed.

According to The McDonald Report, during the mid 1960s, existing perceptions became further distorted when the Prime Minister and his Cabinet became increasingly concerned with the political threat that separatism in Quebec represented. As such, RCMP Security Intelligence Service activities during this period became a “vague intermingling of political and security concerns”²⁸⁰ which was the direct result of the new government direction on the issue. After four years of separatist violence, on August 14th, 1967, the Security Panel met for only the second time to formulate policy and give guidance on the FLQ. During this meeting, the Security Panel opted for a far more aggressive strategy in dealing with the FLQ. Based on previous intelligence, and a need for further information, the Security Panel asserted that Quebec independence was the predominant security concern in Canada.²⁸¹ According to Louis Fournier, then Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP William Kelly, believed that the meeting marked “a critical turning point in the broadening of the RCMP’s security intelligence coverage of separatism.”²⁸² Decision makers wanted harder intelligence on the FLQ. Information-gatherers seized upon the latitude afforded them by decision-makers in late 1967. In this context they began an operation to conduct surveillance of the FLQ on university campuses and gather intelligence through the recruitment of human sources. This

²⁸⁰ The McDonald Report, Second Report, Vol. 1, 451

²⁸¹ Fournier 114.

²⁸² Fournier 115.

latitude was taken as a result of vague policy directives arrived at during the Security Panel meeting, when “at Prime Minister Pearson’s direction” it was deemed that separatism posed a greater security threat than communism. Three specific separatist threats were identified: “separatist terrorism, constitutional separatism, and foreign involvement.”²⁸³ Although only one of the outlined threats – separatist terrorism – truly constituted a valid security risk and target for information collection, following this meeting, in both the eyes of decision-makers and information-gatherers, the three were seen as one single threat.

The meeting was a “critical turning point” not only in policy, but also in perception. By bringing open separatism and separatist terrorism together as a single threat, the Security Panel profoundly altered perception on the FLQ, making it appear to be a much larger and more capable threat than it actually was. A further meeting by the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence on 19 December 1969 came to a similar conclusion and requested a detailed report on the nature of separatism in Quebec including membership, organization and capabilities.²⁸⁴ The three issues, it would seem, had been effectively merged into a single security threat.

Ultimately, it would seem that government decision-makers’ failure to provide policy and guidance had a direct impact upon the intelligence-gathering community. The McDonald Report stated:

²⁸³ The McDonald Report, Second Report, Vol. 1, 451.

²⁸⁴ The McDonald Report, Second Report, Vol. 1, 452.

the Security Intelligence Service was left without guidance or else was given too much discretion in determining appropriate targets or subjects of investigation. In large part, the lack of a clear legislative mandate and of continuing supervision by government of security intelligence activities left the Service on its own to make important policy decisions often involving sophisticated political judgement. At times, either through misinterpreting the position of government or perhaps just acting cautiously, the Security Intelligence Service failed to respond adequately to Canada's security needs; at other times we think there was an excess of zeal.²⁸⁵

Yet, there are indications that consumer were beginning to take a more active, if still limited interest in the intelligence-gathering process. A memo from the Director of Security and Intelligence, dated 7 February 1968, reveals that there was a "renewed interest on the part of the Government and our Minister on information in the terrorist-separatist field." As such, the Director of Security and Intelligence instituted a number of changes intended to facilitate the sharing of information to decision-makers. It was decided that the process of submitting field reports would be expedited and a specific procedure was outlined to accomplish this. From what can be discerned from the heavily censored document, a priority system for organizing information was established in which there were three tiers that progressively sifted out irrelevant information. While Group 1 contained all available information on separatist terrorism, regardless of its utility, the other two groups, which remain censored, can be assumed to contain progressively more hard intelligence on the FLQ.²⁸⁶ The purpose of this sifting process was to "ensure the quickest possible processing of reports" and to "eliminate fragmentation whereby information is now separated and reported on various operational files. It has been found that considerable delays occur...and it is difficult to assemble all

²⁸⁵ Ibid 446.

²⁸⁶ Director, Security and Intelligence, memorandum, "Separatist Terrorist Activities – Province of Quebec," National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 87 (7 February 1968).

the reports on short notice.”²⁸⁷ Although this new system may have increased the accuracy of intelligence assessments, it did not remedy the overall problem of transmission of information from information-gatherers to decision-makers.

Overall, the intermediate period of intelligence gathering saw a steady improvement in the understanding of producers on the FLQ. Despite this, several contradictions existed. In particular, as information on the FLQ increased, and the misconception of the FLQ as a communist front diminished, it was replaced by a fear that it was being influenced by foreign groups and had been able to penetrate the government. Essentially, the net effect was the same, the intelligence community continued to believe that the FLQ was more capable than it really was. On the part of consumers, policy and guidance was minimal. As a consequence, it can be assumed that regular intelligence on the FLQ was not reaching consumers who should have in turn used it to provide guidance to producers.

Part 3: The Warning Period of Intelligence Gathering, 1969-70

The yearlong period preceding the October Crisis represented a challenging one for the intelligence community in Canada. Social agitation continued unabated, especially in Quebec, where labour disputes, separatist protests, and FLQ terrorism presented a highly confusing situation in which producers had to collect information and consumers had to make decisions. Matters were further complicated by the release of the Report of the Royal Commission on Security in September 1969, a major review of existing security intelligence policy which identified many of the problems that had

²⁸⁷ Ibid

plagued intelligence-gathering during the previous ten years and called for wholesale changes to the intelligence process. The election of a Pierre Elliott Trudeau as Prime Minister in 1968 further increased tensions between producers and consumers as the new government initiated sweeping changes of many Defence, Foreign Policy and Security organizations in Canada. At the same time, it was also during this period that some very clear and distinct warning signals were received by producers that clearly indicated a new trend in FLQ terrorism toward political kidnapping. Yet, there also existed classical failures of intelligence gathering that hampered the intelligence process and prevented these warnings from being clearly understood by consumers.

An important signal that impacted perceptions during the October Crisis originated during this period. This signal had not been provided by suppliers of intelligence and had not been based on hard facts. Rather, the Mayor of Montreal and his key officials had inadvertently created it. A massive riot in Montreal, brought about by a labour dispute, coincided with a police strike on October 7th, 1969 and led municipal officials to believe that a revolt in the city was imminent. The Montreal civic administration came to believe that the Company of Young Canadians, a federally funded youth organization, was a front for FLQ activity. The violence of the riot led to the perception of the existence of what was referred to as the “four-point plan”²⁸⁸ for insurrection.

The perception of insurrection in Quebec was first presented to federal decision-makers on November 1969, when Montreal CEO Lucien Saulnier and Montreal’s chief lawyer, Michael Côté addressed the House of Commons Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films, and Assistance to the Arts. On the 27th and 28th of November,

²⁸⁸ See Chapter 9 of Ronald Haggart, *Rumours of War* (New Press: Toronto, 1971) 149.

Saulnier outlined what he initially called “a three-point plan” for insurrection that he believed was then beginning in Quebec. Perhaps the foundation for the “three-point plan” originated from the separatist propaganda circulating at the time. In particular, a number of separatist pamphlets, contained a description that was nearly identical to the “three-point plan” described by Saulnier before the House of Commons committee. Entitled, “Revolutionary Strategy and the Role of the Avant-Garde,”²⁸⁹ it asserted that, “Inevitably, Quebec revolutionaries will come to group themselves into a single movement.” Further, the document called for the infiltration of civic committees that would later become “local citizen’s committee’s”²⁹⁰ which would take up arms in the popular revolution.

From these pamphlets, it can be seen how the City of Montreal’s civic leadership came to believe that the CYC was a front for the FLQ and that the Front d’action politique (FRAP), the municipal separatist political group that contested Drapeau in the 1970 election, had been infiltrated by the FLQ. The pamphlet clearly outlined the stages of the “three-point plan” that would become the foundation of understanding on which municipal decision-makers would act during the October Crisis. The first phase of insurrection would be the radicalization of workers, students, and farmers and the creation of secret cells. Next, there would be the organization of the masses for armed uprising. Finally, following these steps, there would be armed revolution.²⁹¹ Montreal civic administrators believed that the first and second steps had already occurred in that secret cells had been created by the FLQ and the organization of the masses for armed

²⁸⁹ Brian Stewart, “A ‘blueprint’ for revolution’ fed fears at City Hall,” Montreal Gazette, 31 October 1970.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

uprising could be seen in CYC infiltration and mass riots. For Drapeau, Saulnier, and Côté, the third and final step began a year later with the onset of the October Crisis.

According to author Ronald Haggart, the original “three-point plan” would later be modified to include a fourth element, selective assassination, based on an interview of two FLQ terrorists training in Jordanian guerrilla camp which appeared in the news journals *Perspectives* and *Weekend* during 1970.²⁹²

Although the plan did not receive support from the members the House of Commons Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films, and Assistance to the Arts in 1964, it would resurface during the October Crisis a year later, at which time the events of the Crisis seemed to validate all of Saulnier’s earlier statements. The “four-point plan” signal was contrary to intelligence estimates created by the RCMP during the period that presented a far more accurate picture of the FLQ. During the hearings, Saulnier claimed that “we had a beginning of a revolution in the streets”²⁹³ The perceived reality was evident in statements made by decision-makers on the eve of the announcement of the invocation of the War Measures Act. Quebec Minister of Finance, Raymond Garneau stated:

And these things did happen, and taking into account, for example, the different working plans which are well known to the police forces, and which were rendered public by the chairman of the Montreal executive committee [Saulnier] before the House of Commons last year – taking account of this plan, whose first stage was demonstrations, second stage setting bombs, and third stage kidnapping – if these three stages had been accomplished, we had every reason to believe that the forth stage was possible.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Haggart 168.

²⁹³ Haggart 161.

²⁹⁴ Haggart 162.

Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa would also make reference to the plan at the time of the War Measures Act.

Aside from the perception of insurrection in Quebec held by municipal officials, there were also other important warnings of an impending attack. In the year before the crisis, the FLQ unsuccessfully attempted two other political kidnappings. The first was foiled on 26 February 1970 during a routine traffic stop when FLQ terrorists were discovered within the vehicle with materials intended to execute a kidnapping. Further investigation led to the capture of more terrorists and it was determined that their target had been Israeli Consul Moshe Golan. One of the terrorists arrested was Jacques Lanctôt, who would later go into hiding while on bail and lead the cell that kidnapped James Cross during the October Crisis.

Despite being unsuccessful in their first attempt at a political kidnapping, the FLQ began planning and preparation for another attempt in June 1970. In this case, Harrison W. Burgess, the American Consul in Montreal was chosen. Following surveillance operations, the cottage where preparations were underway was raided and several terrorists were captured, effectively stopping the plot.²⁹⁵

The release of The Report of the Royal Commission on Security in 1969 cited problems in the intelligence process regarding the FLQ.²⁹⁶ Of particular note, the report identified organizational problems that existed due to the dual nature of the RCMP. Essentially, as an organization that both collected information and carried out police

²⁹⁵ For more on this refer back to Chapter 1, page 19 of this thesis. See also Saywell, "October 70," The Canadian Annual Review for 1970 ed. John T. Saywell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 31-32.

²⁹⁶ The Report of the Royal Commission on Security is often referred to as The McKenzie Report.

functions, there had been a tendency for the RCMP to use the information it produced without passing it on to decision-makers. The report maintained that:

there is a clear distinction between the operational work of a Security Intelligence Service and that of a police force. A Security Intelligence Service will inevitably be involved in actions that may contravene the spirit if not the letter of the law, and with clandestine and other activities which may seem to infringe on individuals' rights; these activities are not appropriate police functions.²⁹⁷

As previously discussed in the previous chapter, the intelligence gathering process, which includes the steps of Government direction, planning, collection, analysis, and dissemination, requires an active role for government. In the case of the RCMP however, its dual role as intelligence gatherer and law enforcer, information collected by the Security Intelligence Service was not passed to the federal government consumers to be evaluated and used. Instead, the traditional and natural practice was to pass intelligence onto the RCMP Criminal Investigations Branch (CIB) in order to facilitate their law enforcement duties. Thus, in the case of RCMP organization, a longstanding tradition of government non-interference combined with an organizational structure that effectively removed the Federal government from the intelligence gathering cycle²⁹⁸ and impeded the flow of information.

The McKenzie Report also recommended a separate, civilian security organization to replace the RCMP Security Intelligence Service but the idea had been rejected by the Trudeau government that opted for a more separate, civilian Security Service within the RCMP. According to the report, this proposal did not come to fruition, except for the appointment of a civilian as Director-General of the Security

²⁹⁷ From Donald Macdonald, "The McDonald Commission and Responsibilities for the RCMP," Current Issues Review (Library of Parliament, Research Branch: 26 June 1981) 12.

²⁹⁸ See thesis introduction for explanation of the intelligence gathering cycle.

Intelligence Service. John Starnes, an official with External Affairs, was appointed head of the Security Intelligence Service Director on 1 January 1970 and served in that capacity until April 30th, 1973.²⁹⁹

During this phase, the accuracy of intelligence estimates increased dramatically and now presented a far more accurate picture of the FLQ. Despite this, predictive analysis remained thin and thus limited their usefulness for consumers. A key estimate during this period was “Brief No.35: Quebec Separatism” and was released on December 31st, 1969. One of the key distinctions from previous reports was a more accurate understanding of the clear division between legitimate separatism and terrorist activities in Quebec. The estimate determined that:

Separatism in Quebec, if it commits no illegalities and appears to seek its ends by legal and democratic means, must be regarded as a political movement, to be dealt with in a political rather than a security context. However, if there is any evidence of an intention to engage in subversive or seditious activities, or if there is any suggestion of foreign influence, it seems to us inescapable the federal government has a clear duty to take such security measures as are necessary to protect the integrity of the federation.³⁰⁰

Thus, it would seem that the “failure of perception” evident in the intelligence estimates of the previous periods, which often understood FLQ violence as being related to legitimate separatism, had been abandoned by producers. In its lengthy description of the various separatist groups active during the period, the report’s accuracy was as a result of the extensive utilization of human intelligence sources during the period. Although the RCMP Security Intelligence Service followed the traditional view of intelligence, which

²⁹⁹ The McDonald Report, Vol. 1, 71.

³⁰⁰ RCMP Central Research Branch, “Brief No. 35: Quebec Separatism,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 7 (31 December 1969) 2.

limited its predictive abilities, in this instance, it aided in the collection of accurate intelligence due to the extensive use of human intelligence methods.³⁰¹

With regard to the organization of separatist terrorism, the report presented a fairly accurate view of the FLQ at that time maintaining that:

The Quebec terrorist movement is in a constant state of flux but, despite frequent changes, particularly at the cell level, the general structure of the movement remains the same: a group of 'theorists' who promote and direct activities; a 'planer group' probably responsible for organization, recruitment and operations; and cells of 'activists' who conduct actual tasks.³⁰²

Although the report clearly identified the disorganized and highly erratic nature of the FLQ at the time, the omission of any description of command and control is telling. Where earlier reports clearly identified a centralized command, this 1969 report omitted it completely. Thus, the previous failure of conventional wisdom prevalent in earlier estimates had also ended among producers. Aside from these organizational statements, the report was careful not to claim that the FLQ was a large well-coordinated organization. When referring to the highly active terrorist cell of the FLQ that had recently been caught, the report stated that the arrests "served to illustrate dramatically how a handful of determined youths could wreak destruction and instill fear in the populace to a degree highly disproportionate to their numbers."³⁰³ The accuracy of this statement seems in hindsight to foreshadow the situation that would occur a year later when Cross and Laporte were abducted by a small group of disorganized and ill prepared

³⁰¹ As explained in the previous chapter, the traditional view focuses on the collection of secret information while the analytical view focuses on analysis and prediction. As such, the analytical view has often not placed enough emphasis on the use of valuable human intelligence.

³⁰² RCMP Central Research Branch, "Brief No. 35: Quebec Separatism," 3.

³⁰³ Ibid 16.

FLQ terrorists. During the October Crisis, however, this reality, identified clearly a year before, was not evident to decision-makers.

With regard to FLQ strength, the report presented a far more conservative number than those that would eventually be quoted by decision-makers during the Cabinet meetings that led to the decision to invoke the War Measures Act. While the report admits that, “there is no information available to indicate precisely how many cells are in operation” it did estimate that about 5 or 6 cells were currently active. In comparison, during the October crisis, Cabinet records indicate that decision makers believed that more than 22 cells existed along with a 2,000-person strong support network. The estimate suggested that, during the October Crisis, there was a major disconnect between the accurate intelligence presented by producers and the inaccurate perceptions of consumers.

During the crisis, there was a great deal of speculation concerning FLQ terrorist training camps in the media and among certain decision-makers. However, the report strongly refuted their existence stating: “Despite numerous claims of the existence of terrorist training camps . . . no terrorist camp has been located since about August 1964.”³⁰⁴ Again, this view contrasted with that of consumers during the October Crisis.

No longer evident in RCMP estimates at this time was the earlier perception that the FLQ was a “front” for communism in Canada. The report clearly stated that; “there is no evidence that, despite considerable interaction with separatist elements, the Parti Communiste du Quebec... are giving direction to or exerting undue influence on the movement.”³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Ibid 18.

³⁰⁵ Ibid 4, 19.

On the question of foreign influence, however, the report continued to uphold the longstanding view that FLQ members had received guerilla training in Cuba and that the communist country was a “safe haven.”³⁰⁶ This view was far more realistic compared to earlier estimates that insinuated a larger degree of direct foreign involvement in FLQ activities. It was accurately understood that the FLQ was not being directly financed or supported by foreign governments or organizations, and only a few instances of indirect support had occurred.

Overall, the assessment represented a well-balanced and comprehensive analysis of the FLQ and provided far better intelligence. It was not, however, predictive in nature. To provide this function, producers would combine limited predictive analysis with requests from consumers for current reportorial information in a new product referred to as the “Minister’s Letter,” which will be discussed subsequently.

The McKenzie Commission also asserted that during the previous phases of intelligence gathering on the FLQ, producers had failed to provide consumers with all necessary information:

In our opinion, the RCMP ought to pass on to the Cabinet (in Ottawa) the information they obtain about separatist groups and their members, or persons associated with their activities, in the same way as they now pass on information about groups considered to be subversive.³⁰⁷

During this period, however, efforts were taken by producers to rectify the problem described by the McKenzie Commission. In an effort to address the lack of a functioning relationship between consumers and producers, a key longstanding failure that severely impeded the intelligence process by hampering the transfer of intelligence from producers to consumers, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service instituted a new

³⁰⁶ Ibid 4.

³⁰⁷ Fournier 137.

product. The Minister of Justice would be informed of monthly ongoing operations and intelligence through what was called a “Minister’s Letter.” The RCMP Security Intelligence Service took to using similar letters to keep other consumers, as well as other producers, up-to-date on current intelligence. These letters represented an attempt by information-gatherers to present more vital intelligence to decision-makers in spite of the absence of a clear and well-defined policy on how information should be passed between the two groups.

This new product contained a great deal of current reportorial intelligence and predicative in nature in that they warned of the possibility of future attempts by the FLQ to kidnap political figures. As well, like other intelligence estimates produced during this period, the intelligence in the letters was far more accurate than in any previous phase of intelligence gathering on the FLQ. They were limited, however, in that they were highly informal in nature, and consequently suffered as a product. A greater interest in the FLQ by consumers led to calls for “information please” types of intelligence. For example, the Minister’s Letter, was inherently limited because it did not provide for a comprehensive explanation of the threat but rather only presented information on current specific events with limited predictive assessment.

Long before the first kidnapping attempts, the Security Intelligence Service gave early warning of a new type of FLQ terrorism. In a letter dated May 28th, 1969, the RCMP forewarned government decision-makers of the possibility of a kidnapping or assassination of Quebec officials and even identified targets by name asserting that FLQ terrorists “intend to assassinate political figures such as Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau

and Provincial Opposition Leader Jean Lesage.”³⁰⁸ As the warning was based on little hard evidence, it seems that decisions-makers took no action.

Another letter dated October 30th, 1969 gave vague warning of an impending FLQ action:

There are indications that FLQ groups or cells in the Chicoutimi, Quebec City, Lac St. Jean and Montreal are preparing for action. A majority of the FLQ members in these groups are either convicted or suspected terrorists and their proposed activities, which include terrorist training, the financing of operations by criminal acts and the procuring of explosives, must be considered seriously.³⁰⁹

In contrast to municipal decision-makers perceptions, the RCMP had a far more accurate view of the events of October and November 1969. A Minister’s Letter that was dated on December 4th, 1969 dealt with the massive MLT riot that had occurred in October. Although the letter made reference to involvement by the CYC and FLP, it did not conclude, as municipal decision-makers had, that the riot had been part of a massive conspiracy to incite revolution. Rather, it asserted that opportunistic motorcycle gangs had perpetrated the majority of the violence.³¹⁰ Furthermore, reference to FLQ involvement was made only in passing when it was mentioned that there had been a report of a lone FLQ member on site during the riot.³¹¹ Overall, the letter presented a picture altogether different from that of the civic authorities of Montreal and should have served as a counterbalance to the inaccurate views of municipal officials at the time.

As “Brief 35” was released, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service reported in a Minister’s Letter that the FLQ terrorists suspected of the Eaton’s bombing were hiding in

³⁰⁸ S/Sgt. G.H. Powell, letter to Inspector Duff, “Material on Separatism/Terrorism in Quebec forwarded to the Minister,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07, 1025-9-91123 (27 October 1970) 2.

³⁰⁹ Ibid 4.

³¹⁰ John Starnes, Director General RCMP SS, letter to Solicitor General Jean-Pierre Goyer, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (14 January 1972) 3.

³¹¹ Ibid 3.

NYC. On December 30th, 1969 and January 29th, 1970, the Minister's Letter reported that the FLP and the MSP (radical Quebec separatist organizations) were sharing printing presses and "holding joint meetings to plan future activities."³¹² Thus, it would seem that during the period immediately preceding the October Crisis, the RCMP was making a concerted effort to keep decision-makers informed.

In response to the attempt by the FLQ to kidnapping the Israeli Consul in Montreal on February 26th, 1970, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service informed the Department of External Affairs' (DEA) Security and Intelligence Liaison Division of the incident and of the possibility of future such incidents.³¹³ According to DEA documents, this arrangement for the passage of information "have been satisfactory in that we have avoided any serious incidents involving foreign diplomatic staff in Canada."³¹⁴ On March 6th, 1970, J.E.M. Barrette, the Assistant Commissioner and Director of the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, sent a memorandum to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs explaining the recent FLQ kidnapping attempt.³¹⁵ Similar messages were also sent on April 2nd and 3rd following the second attempt.³¹⁶ On April 28th, 1970, the Minister's letter reported the attempted kidnapping of the Israeli by the FLQ and related that, "inspired by recent activities in Latin America, radical terrorists are considering the possibility of kidnapping important politicians in order to gain freedom

³¹² Ibid 7.

³¹³ Ibid 2.

³¹⁴ The Department of External Affairs, letter to the RCMP SS, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (29 April 1970).

³¹⁵ J.E.M. Barrette, Director, RCMP SS, letter to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (6 March 1970).

³¹⁶ J.E.M. Barrette, Director, RCMP SS, letter to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (2, 3 April 1970).

for ‘political prisoners.’”³¹⁷ Another Minister’s Letter on May 28th, 1970 followed in a similar vein stating that the FLQ had plans to:

kidnap a diplomatic representative in order to obtain ransom money for the Separatist/Terrorist movement. Although there is no positive information on the proposed kidnapping, the possibility of kidnapping diplomatic representatives or prominent political figures has been discussed seriously among terrorists, including members of the Comite d’aide au groupe Vallieres et Gagnon, during recent months.³¹⁸

On July 22nd, 1970, the Minister’s Letter presented specific figures, including the number of active FLQ cells. Although the specific number of terrorists remains classified, it can be assumed that it was similar to the accurate figures given in previous estimates. Overall, the letter indicated that the RCMP had specific estimates of FLQ capabilities and had attempted to disseminate them onto decision-makers.³¹⁹

Aside from the Minister’s Letter, other impromptu measures had been taken in an attempt to pass information to decision-makers. In response to a request from Don Wall, the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, a memorandum on the threat of the FLQ entitled “Subversion in the Province of Quebec” was presented to Gordon Robertson, the Secretary of the Cabinet, on February 5th, 1970.³²⁰

Another RCMP letter was presented to the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Mr. Vennat on April 13th, 1970 that dealt specifically with intelligence concerning future escalation of FLQ activity.³²¹ On the same date, a letter was sent to Don Wall, which answered Mr. Vennat’s questions. This letter, written by Security Intelligence Service Director John Starnes, stated that, although the current intelligence in

³¹⁷ Starnes, Director General RCMP SS, letter to Solicitor General Jean-Pierre Goyer 9.

³¹⁸ Ibid 10.

³¹⁹ Ibid 10.

³²⁰ Ibid 10.

³²¹ Ibid 3.

future FLQ kidnapping attempts was somewhat tenuous, “the significant feature is that individual terrorists can select the time to finalize or to implement their plans.”³²²

Specific information was presented concerning a possible FLQ plot to kidnap certain public officials. This information was also turned over to the QPP and MCP who, in this case were responsible for undertaking the security arrangements for these individuals.

Also, when it became known to the RCMP on April 8th, 1970 that the FLQ was changing tactics away from bombings towards kidnapping and assassination, all RCMP Security Intelligence Service personnel were notified of the situation.³²³

The RCMP Security Intelligence Service also undertook liaison with Federal Government decision-makers, and on April 27th, 1970, although not required to do so, sent letters explaining the future FLQ threat to the Solicitor General, the Privy Council, and the DEA containing “information regarding the possibility of kidnappings to obtain the release of political prisoners.”³²⁴

On June 26th, 1970, following the discovery of a second plot to kidnap a foreign diplomat, a letter was sent by the RCMP to Don Wall at the Privy Council. The letter explained the discovery of the plot and closed with a warning of a possible future threat. As such it encouraged the dissemination of the material provided, reasoning: “As this recent development could well be an indication of a new strategy employed by terrorists, you may see fit to disseminate same to a restricted number of high officials.”³²⁵ Another letter from the Director of the Criminal Investigations Branch of the RCMP warned the

³²² John Starnes, Director General RCMP Security and Intelligence, letter to Don Wall, Secretary of the Security Panel, National Archives, RG 146 (13 April 1970) 2.

³²³ Starnes, Director General RCMP SS, letter to Solicitor General Jean-Pierre Goyer 2.

³²⁴ K.D. Green, memorandum to John Starnes, RCMP SS Director General, “Re: Action Taken by the RCMP Following the Discovery of Plans to Kidnap Foreign Officials in February and June 1970,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (23 April 1971) 1.

³²⁵ J.E.M. Barrette, Assistant Commissioner Director Security and Intelligence, letter to Don Wall, Privy Council Office, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 07 (26 June 1970).

Under Secretary of State for External Affairs that there was intelligence indicating “a strong possibility” of future attempts to kidnap foreign diplomats in Canada.³²⁶

Responses from the Under-Secretary indicate that the DEA was pleased at the warning and eager to take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of foreign diplomats in Canada.³²⁷

Security organizations utilized the intelligence that warned of future attacks by establishing precautionary measures. This suggests that, while there were problems with the relationship between producers and consumers of intelligence, the process was at last functioning properly within the security community. An internal RCMP memorandum dated June 10th, 1970 noting that detailed contingency plans for dealing with kidnapping were put into effect prior to the crisis. The memo also indicated that direct lines of communication were established between the various police forces to aid in the flow of information. Further, protocols were established to allow for the sharing of resources and to provide RCMP assistance to the local police organization with which jurisdiction rested.³²⁸ It was decided that a control center would be established “in order to effectively channel information”³²⁹ under the control of either the QPP or MCP depending on jurisdiction. The duties of the command center would include the reception, correlation, and dissemination of information.³³⁰ These arrangements were in fact put into effect during the October Crisis, and greatly facilitated the gathering of information during the situation. Also, close liaison was undertaken between the RCMP

³²⁶ E.W. Willes, Director RCMP CIB, letter to P.A. Johnston, National Archives, RG 146 (17 June 1970).

³²⁷ Barton, The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, “Re: Protection of Diplomats and Consuls,” letter to The Commissioner of the RCMP, National Archives, RG 146 (10 August 1970).

³²⁸ J.L. Forest, Officer in charge SIB, letter to the RCMP Commissioner, “Re: Threats Against Prominent Individuals by Organizations or Persons of “I” Directorate Interest – Canada,” National Archives (10 June 1970) 1.

³²⁹ *Ibid* 2.

³³⁰ *Ibid* 3.

Security Intelligence Service and DEA in order for the RCMP to get current intelligence from Canadian Embassies in Latin America, as it was believed that recent FLQ attempts had been inspired by similar recent events in Brazil.

One of the more significant changes called for by the McKenzie Commission was better guidance and policy on the part of consumers. The McKenzie Report identified that a primary impediment to the flow of information to the Federal Government was not RCMP reluctance but rather a lack of policy, the mechanisms necessary to facilitate this flow. The report stated that:

cabinet control of decision-making in security matters was insufficient, and that structural arrangements did not ensure that such issues were present to government 'in an explicit and undiluted form.' It recommended the formation of a security secretariat in the Privy Council Office, with sufficient status, resources and staff to formulate policy and supervise its implementation to ensure consistent application. . . . This recommendation was not implemented.³³¹

At the point that the McKenzie Report had been released, the federal government had not implemented any clear policy on how information was to be passed on to them.

Consequently, there were no well-established official lines of communication between consumers and producers.

One of the few policy meeting by producers occurred on December 19th, 1969, when the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence was asked to provide a comprehensive report on the nature and disposition of the FLQ in Quebec. The request was unique in that it signalled a shift in actions by consumers, who now sought to be more involved in the intelligence gathering process and who wanted to be better informed of available intelligence. The request, however, was also indicative of a classical failure

³³¹ Macdonald, "The McDonald Commission and Responsibilities for the RCMP" 12.

of intelligence, what author Shulsky referred to as the “current events syndrome”³³² or a tendency to concentrate heavily on the production of current reportorial information due to requests for it by consumers. This closely related to Kent’s description of “information please” type requests by consumers which sometimes represented a misinterpretation by consumers of the role of producers. Essentially, these requests by consumers assumed that producers should be able to provide any information requested. When producers naturally cannot meet this standard of clairvoyance, consumers lose confidence. During the meeting, both Prime Minister Trudeau and Security Service Director John Starnes were in attendance. According to public statements by Starnes, the report was later delivered, but Mitchell Sharp, Minister of External Affairs, and a key decision-maker during the October Crisis, has publicly asserted that he never saw it.

Another instance of an “information please” request occurred on July 8th, 1970, as part of a larger study into “major forces that threaten law and order,” when the Cabinet Secretariat requested an assessment on the FLQ and other threats from the RCMP.³³³ This report, which was submitted on July 23rd, 1970, indicated that the present revolutionary threat was “an extremely confusing, complex and constantly changing situation.” It was also maintained that although the overall threat was very serious, “the threat posed by individual organizations (or groups of organizations) could be contained.”³³⁴ Despite this, it was believed that revolutionaries, who represented only a very small element of society, could “win support from a ‘larger body of disaffected

³³² Abram N. Shulsky, *Silent Warfare* (New York: Brassey’s, 1991) 55.

³³³ -----, “Appreciation of Recent Events in Québec,” *National Archives*, RG 146, Vol. 112 (29 October 1970) 1.

³³⁴ *Ibid* 1.

Canadians and create conditions of anarchy and violence in many parts of the country.”³³⁵ Thus, revolutionary groups had “no central direction or financing” and any similarities in tactics or aims was likely the results of “shared values and attitudes spread rapidly by modern communications.”³³⁶

With regard to the separatist threat, the report identified 13 groups, which were characterized as “terrorist,” “open,” or “recognized as subversive.” Of the open groups, it was believed that they provided a “recruiting base for terrorist elements or a base within which terrorists can seek cover and help to agitate.”³³⁷ Furthermore, the report concluded that these open organizations represented a popular base for more terrorist elements such as the FLQ.

Despite public statements by federal decision-makers that: “the intelligence provided by the R.C.M.P. on the F.L.Q. had been less than adequate,”³³⁸ it would seem that the intelligence community in Canada had made significant efforts to inform the government of the possibility on an impending FLQ political kidnapping and to provide the government with adequate intelligence on the FLQ and its capabilities through an informal system of letters. This claim was supported by John Starnes and The McDonald Report, which stated:

During the months preceding October 1970, the Security Intelligence Service provided the Solicitor General, the Department of External Affairs and the Privy Council with assessments on subversive organizations within Quebec, including the F.L.Q.³³⁹

³³⁵ Ibid 1.

³³⁶ Ibid 2.

³³⁷ Ibid 2.

³³⁸ The McDonald Report, Vol. 2, 917.

³³⁹ Ibid 917.

Furthermore, the Service had adopted special relationships with intelligence gathering organizations at lower levels in an effort to gather information on the FLQ years before the Crisis.

Overall then, an examination of the warning phase of intelligence gathering on the FLQ suggests that the federal government's longstanding position that there was a failure on behalf of producers to predict the impending kidnappings is largely incorrect.³⁴⁰ There did exist sufficient predictive intelligence of the FLQ's future intentions. In addition, estimates during the period improved dramatically, so that they now conveyed an accurate picture of the nature of the FLQ. Rather, the failure was not in prediction but in prevention, as consumers of intelligence did not take protective measures to counter the threat posed by the FLQ. Yet, consumers were not solely to blame as the significance of the intelligence was lost due to several longstanding and pandemic failures in the intelligence-gathering process in Canada.

The lack of policy and guidance impacted the nature of the relationship between producers and consumers and contributed to a lack of contact and trust between the two groups. Organizational problems caused producers to consume the intelligence they collected instead of disseminate it to consumers.

Further, faulty perceptions on the part of consumers due to these longstanding problems made the intelligence they received appear unbelievable. Finally, the failure to take preventative action was a cause of poor product on the part of producers. As Sherman Kent has pointed out, it is incumbent upon producers to understand the needs of

³⁴⁰ This has been the consistent position of federal decision-makers involved in the Crisis. Former Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau has made statements to this effect in the House of Commons, Gerard Pelletier upheld this position in his book on the incident, *The October Crisis* (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1971) and Mitchell Sharp has also publicly said this in *Memories of October* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1990).

consumers and create a product that meets those needs.³⁴¹ Although the Minister's Letter was represented an important attempt to present consumers with vital intelligence on possible future FLQ actions, it suffered from its informal nature and lack of the inclusion of hard, specific intelligence. Thus, it was a product that was poorly packaged in relation to the needs of consumers, and fell largely on deaf ears.

Part 4: The Crisis Period of Intelligence gathering, October 1970

On October 5th, 1970, British Trade Commissioner James Cross was easily kidnapped from his home by FLQ terrorists. The kidnapping was followed shortly after by another in which the second highest-ranking provincial official in Quebec, Deputy Premier Pierre Laporte was abducted and ultimately murdered. Although the crisis phase of intelligence gathering on the FLQ had just began, many contended that one of the primary failures had already occurred. For the federal government, there had been a failure to predict that such an event was imminent. Analysis of the preceding era, however, has demonstrated that the failure was more accurately understood as a serious of endemic problems that existed over a long period of time preceding the Crisis. For example, consumers of intelligence had failed to provide adequate guidance and policy for producers of intelligence and this created a situation where information was not efficiently passed between the two groups. In addition, faulty perceptions on the part of consumers had developed overtime due to their detachment from producers. Finally, a lack of analytical expertise among producers, evidenced in the inability to provide a detailed predictive capability packed in a strong, usable product, ensured that information

³⁴¹ For more refer to Chapter 2, page 6 of this thesis.

that was received by consumers was not taken seriously. These long-term problems resulted in a failure to take preventative action despite the existence of intelligence that indicated the likelihood of the impending incident. Another widely-held assertion concerning intelligence gathering and the October Crisis, is that the intelligence community had not only failed to predict the incident, but had also failed to provide consumers with accurate information on the nature and capabilities of the FLQ. This lack of clear intelligence, they argued led to their decision to invoke the War Measures Act. This section will challenge this assertion through an examination of intelligence gathering during the October Crisis itself. In order to arrive at a proper decision:

A calm assessment of the situation depended not only on the current circumstances-what could be gleaned from the communiqués-but also on what could be learned from the FLQ's past and what could be expected from it in the future.³⁴²

During the Crisis, the efficiency of producers was severely limited by the effects of failures of intelligence that had existed long before the kidnappings. In particular, the longstanding lack of policy and guidance led to problems of cooperation.

Following the first kidnapping, producers of intelligence within the security community organized to deal with the crisis. The intelligence gathering efforts of the three police forces were coordinated through the Combined Anti-terrorism Section (CATS). Formed as a result of one of the few federal policy decisions in 1964³⁴³, CATS was intended to counter the increasing separatist terrorism in Quebec with a well-coordinated response. It was not until September 1970³⁴⁴, however, that the Quebec

³⁴² Haggart 30.

³⁴³ *The McDonald Report*, Third Report, 202.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid* 202.

Provincial Police (QPP), joined CATS and all three levels of law enforcement were able to share information. The aims of CATS were:

1. To exchange information,
2. To co-ordinate investigations of the terrorist milieu,
3. To evaluate information obtained,
4. To determine priorities, and
5. To divide up tasks among the different police forces.³⁴⁵

The first meeting of information-gatherers occurred between 3:00 and 4:00 pm on the first day of the Crisis. At this meeting of the RCMP, MCP, and QPP, the Quebec Minister of Justice, Jerome Choquette, was also present. The following details were taken:

1. C/Insp. Jodain of the MCP would be the Officer in charge of the investigation.
2. A combined investigation would commence by reviewing all available files and material in order to identify suspects and arrange for simultaneous searches of their premises.
3. All police action would be cleared through Mr. Choquette who would make appropriate press releases.
4. Director St. Aubin, MCP, asserted that the MCP was incapable of providing security measures for target personnel and institutions and that the Armed Forces should be requested for this.³⁴⁶

This meeting set the framework for coordination between information-gatherers that would continue throughout the crisis and indicated that producers had made advance provisions to deal with such a crisis. Before the crisis, according to John Starnes, regular meetings had been held among the RCMP, QPP, and MCP in order to develop coordinated strategies for dealing with FLQ kidnapping attempts.³⁴⁷ Although some of the decisions taken in response to the new FLQ threat remain classified, one important

³⁴⁵ Ibid 202.

³⁴⁶ -----, memorandum to the Commissioner of the RCMP, "Kidnapping of James R. Cross," The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (29 October 1970) 2.

³⁴⁷ Starnes, Director General RCMP SS, letter to Solicitor General Jean-Pierre Goyer, 3.

decision was to ensure a “senior-level link of communication”³⁴⁸ between the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, the QPP, and the Montreal City Police (MCP), to facilitate the flow of information in the event of a crisis. This was confirmed by internal RCMP memos that stated: “the combined police forces (RCMP, QPF, MCP) are preparing a contingency plan to cope with any kidnapping or a foreign diplomat of Canadian political figure that might occur.”³⁴⁹ The events of the preceding era had led producers attempt to co-ordinate their efforts in the event of a serious emergency.³⁵⁰

In an effort to increase cooperation, in addition to CATS, several task forces were also established to facilitate coordination on specific issues. After the Cross kidnapping, information gatherers established a special group, known only as the Task Force, to examine material on the case. It was composed of members of the Department of National Defence, 1 member of the National Research Council, 2 members from the RCMP, 1 member from the MCP, and finally, 1 member from the QPP.³⁵¹ The specific purpose of this unit was to analyse letters received that had been written by Cross in an effort to identify any hidden code.³⁵²

A Tri-Force Committee was established with a representative from each force as legal representation to “assist a half dozen lawyers representing the Quebec Provincial Government”³⁵³ in the October Crisis. A group was brought together composed of 12 RCMP, 2 MCP, and 2 QPP members to examine confiscated documents.

³⁴⁸ Ibid 4.

³⁴⁹ J.E.M. Barrette, Assistant Commissioner, Directorate of Security and Intelligence, memorandum to the DCI, “Threats Against Prominent Individuals by Organizations or Persons of “I” Directorate Interest – Canada,” National Archives, RG 146 (14 April 1970) 1.

³⁵⁰ The McDonald Report, Third Report, 201.

³⁵¹ -----, “Resume of Present Developments in the Diplomatic Kidnapping Affair,” The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (3 November 1970) 3.

³⁵² Ibid 3.

³⁵³ Ibid 2.

Even though there had been attempts to facilitate cooperation between the three information-gathering organizations, both at the onset of the Crisis and before it had begun, difficulties were emerging. Primarily, they stemmed from the longstanding lack of policy and guidance with regard to how producers should accomplish their tasks. Aside from mandating the creation of CATS in 1964, federal decision-makers had not instituted any policy on how the various departments within the security community should interact with each other. As a consequence, during the Crisis, there existed a great deal of tension between the RCMP Security Intelligence Service, the QPP, and the MCP.

Despite CATS' best efforts, the three police forces continued to work independently, and the joint operation was viewed more as "a secondary instrument of assistance and support if such support was necessary."³⁵⁴ Due to mistrust among the police forces, "after the second kidnapping this working group ceased to function effectively."³⁵⁵ RCMP officers involved with the October Crisis have since stated that they had to use undue effort to gain information from the other forces and that when information was forthcoming, it was usually only verbal in nature.³⁵⁶

Furthermore, an extreme lack of trust existed between the various security intelligence organizations during the October Crisis. As the crisis progressed, the RCMP began to suspect that the QPP had been infiltrated by the FLQ.³⁵⁷ This notion continued to grow following the invocation of the War Measures Act when evidence was found to support this view. As a consequence, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service reduced the amount of information it passed to the QPP for fear that it might fall into FLQ hands.

³⁵⁴ The McDonald Report, Third Report, 202.

³⁵⁵ Ibid 202.

³⁵⁶ Ibid 204.

³⁵⁷ -----, "Resume of Present Developments in the Diplomatic Kidnapping Affair," 3.

There was also considerable difficulty with liaison among the other police forces during the crisis and there was a great deal of confusion.³⁵⁸ It seems that the division of labour laid out in CATS aims and in the joint operational plan developed before the crisis was not followed. The joint operational plan developed by all three forces following the discovery of the plot to kidnap the American Consul that would effectively “seal the city in the event that another kidnapping did occur.”³⁵⁹ However, during the crisis, it was replaced by another plan, which called for less severe provisions.³⁶⁰ That the original plan was not followed suggests a longstanding lack of policy in the preceding period of intelligence-gathering had led to a current situation where the various elements of the security community in Canada were no longer able to effectively co-operate with each other.

This inability of the various police forces to work together also led to failures in the collection of intelligence. One particular example is the collection of intelligence on FLQ member Nigel Hamer. It was not until long after the end of the crisis that the Security Intelligence Service determined that Nigel Hamer had been part of the liberation-Chénier network and played an important role in the crisis. Although the MCP had gained vital intelligence on Hamer’s status in the FLQ as early as October 6th, 1970, it did not conclude that he was a member until early December when it was confirmed by a human source. They then withheld this information from the RCMP Security Intelligence Service until March 1971.³⁶¹ The RCMP Security Intelligence Service had conducted surveillance on Hamer as early as 1969 but had not determined that he was an

³⁵⁸ The McDonald Report, Third Report, 203.

³⁵⁹ Ibid 201.

³⁶⁰ Ibid 201.

³⁶¹ Ibid 192.

FLQ member. If the two organizations had effectively shared information, they could have established Hamer's status during the early stages of the crisis.

Another example of the mistrust between the three police forces, and its inhibiting effects on the flow of information can be seen in RCMP actions regarding the discovery of Liberation Cell hideout and the location of Mr. Cross. Although the RCMP uncovered the location on November 26th, 1970 and informed RCMP Commissioner Higget, the Solicitor General and the Prime Minister at that time, it was not until November 30th, 1970 that they informed the other police forces.³⁶² These examples demonstrate that intelligence gathering was markedly limited by an inability of the various security organizations to cooperate during the crisis. These problems were a direct result of the lack of policy and guidance during the preceding seven years in which intelligence had been collected on the FLQ.

During the crisis, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service collected intelligence in an effort to find the FLQ kidnapers. At this point, resources were diverted away from the creation of predictive estimates, which ceased for a period of time, to the production of current reportorial intelligence. Documents indicate that, during the crisis, the RCMP had a good understanding of the nature and capabilities of the FLQ, but did not know the identities of the members of the Liberation and Chénier Cells.³⁶³ As we will see, when consumers began demanding these types of information, and producers were understandably unable to provide it, confidence was lost.

In addition to being limited by problems that existed before the crisis, producers were also burdened by a classical problem of intelligence during the crisis. With the

³⁶² Ibid 205.

³⁶³ Ibid 191.

onset of the Crisis, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service was deluged with a vast quantity of information. Not being able to examine all information available, the Security Intelligence Service was faced with attempting to determine what to study. By October 29th, 2,140 tips had been investigated by the QPP and 3,000 by the MCP. Another document sent to Solicitor General the Honorable George McIlraith from RCMP Commissioner Higgitt, claimed that the three police forces were fielding 5,000 inquiries a day.³⁶⁴ With regard to the volume of traffic encountered by information-gatherers, documents indicate that by October 30th, 1970, “the R.C.M.P. had processed 22 investigations, Q.P.F. 100 and the Montreal City Police 425.”³⁶⁵ Anonymous informants had received 5,000 pieces of information in the form of telephone calls and letters. The vast majority of these tips served to complicate the intelligence-gathering process because a great deal of the information turned out to be little more than noise or disinformation put forth by “FLQ sympathizers or cranks.”³⁶⁶ According to according to MCP and QPP Directors “had the effect of wasting a lot of the police effort.”³⁶⁷

In fact, information came not only from Quebec and Montreal, but also from all over the world. In late November and early December, the RCMP received information that the members of the Chénier Cell had fled to Florida where they had been spotted by a Canadian vacationing there.³⁶⁸ Although the accounts proved groundless, investigative resources were expended interviewing and investigating them. In other instances during

³⁶⁴ W.L. Higgitt, RCMP Commissioner, letter to Solicitor General George McIlraith, “Re: Oral Questions Asked in the House – 23-10-70,” The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (26 October 1970) 1.

³⁶⁵ J.R.R. Carriere, Deputy Commissioner, RCMP, letter to the Commissioner of the RCMP, “re: FLQ Activities – Province of Quebec,” The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (30 October 1970).

³⁶⁶ J.R.R. Carriere, RCMP Deputy Commissioner, letter to the Commissioner, “FLQ Activities, Province of Quebec,” The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (29 October 1970) 4.

³⁶⁷ J.R.R. Carriere, RCMP Deputy Commissioner, “FLQ Activities, Province of Quebec,” 4.

³⁶⁸ J.C. Collins, Sgt. (RCMP), report, “F.L.Q. Terrorist Activities,” National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 2 (03 December 1970), and -----, RCMP telex, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 2 (30 November 1970).

the Crisis, signals were received from Canadian Embassies in Dublin and France purporting that there was a possibility of FLQ cells spring up in Scotland, France, and Algeria. Again, although groundless, the reports were to be investigated.³⁶⁹ Further, The McDonald Report had identified a lack of analytical ability within the RCMP Security Intelligence Service. It would seem that during the Crisis, this deficiency inhibited the efficient processing of information, as no logical process was established to distinguish the importance of different types of information.

The poor pre-existing relationship between producers and consumers affected the outcome of events. When the crisis began, consumers turned to “info-please” type demands for specific intelligence that could not realistically be satisfied. The pre-existing lack of trust subsequently intensified and consumers ultimately turned to open source information instead of the intelligence provided by producers to take the decision to invoke the War Measures Act. These demands represented a classical problem of intelligence, in that they indicated that consumers did not fully understand the role of producers, and expected that they should have been able to provide any intelligence requested by consumers. Also, documents show that, during the height of the Crisis, when the critical choice to invoke the War Measures Act was taken, decision-makers relied primarily on open source information instead of hard intelligence.

As the intelligence-gathering apparatus moved into action to deal with the crisis so too did decision-makers at the various levels of government. Closest to the events of the crisis was the civic administration of the City of Montreal. Key decisions at this level were predominately taken by a tight knit group of individuals including the Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, the Chief Executive Officer, Lucien Saulnier, and the city

³⁶⁹ -----, telex to Paris from Ottawa, National Archives, RG 146, Vol. 24 (17 November 1970).

lawyer, Michel Côté. At the provincial level, a young and inexperienced Premier, Robert Bourassa and his deputy, Pierre Laporte and their officials, undertook decisions in Quebec. Coordination of the situation was the responsibility of Provincial Minister of Justice, Jérôme Choquette.³⁷⁰ At the Federal level, the Prime Minister Trudeau controlled the situation. Aside from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, Mitchell Sharp, and the Secretary of State, Gerard Pelletier, played important roles. Although overall responsibility lay with the Premier of Quebec, Trudeau and Bourassa agreed that the effort would be coordinated between them and that decisions would be taken at the Federal level.

Coordination of the three levels of decision-makers occurred through official and unofficial means. In Ottawa, decision-making was coordinated through the Strategic Operations Centre (SOC), an intelligence group directed by Jim Davey.³⁷¹ According to Fournier, this group was “the centre of ‘crisis management’ and all key decisions would be made there.”³⁷² Representatives of the PMO, military and RCMP composed the members of the SOC.

Finally, during the crisis, “the R.C.M.P. was in daily contact with the Solicitor General and other Ministers to report on events as they unfolded.”³⁷³ Yet there was no written intelligence assessments made during the crisis³⁷⁴ due to the rapid pace of events during the Crisis. As such, the only evidence of these verbal reports comes from testimony given at the McDonald Commission.

³⁷⁰ Haggart 5.

³⁷¹ Fournier 229.

³⁷² Ibid 230.

³⁷³ The McDonald Report, Second Report, Vol. 2, 917.

³⁷⁴ Ibid Vol. 2, 917.

Initially, the Department of External Affairs was put in charge of the federal government's handling of the kidnapping due to Cross's status as a foreign diplomat.³⁷⁵ A communications headquarters was established in the East Block of Parliament Hill to handle the case. As time progressed, however, DEA predominance in the case diminished, especially following the kidnapping of Laporte. The limited role of the DEA in the crisis is reflected by External Affairs Operations Centre Logs which indicate that they were concerned not with coordinating the investigation or collecting information, but rather with the managements of diplomatic issues of the crisis.³⁷⁶

At the outset of the crisis, the Federal Government consumers were not well apprised of the situation. A telex from the Director General Security and Intelligence to Assistant Commissioner Barrette reveals that, on October 4th, 1970, decision-makers in the Trudeau cabinet were not well acquainted with current intelligence on the FLQ. At a meeting of the Cabinet Committee of Security and Intelligence, in which the Prime Minister was in attendance, a detailed report on the FLQ was requested. It was noted that "it is important to ministers to have as good an assessment as possible of the degree of the threat since a number of important political decisions may hang on the advice they receive on this score."³⁷⁷ Specifically, the strength in numbers of the FLQ, the identification of cells, the extent of FLQ operation on university campuses, and any other important information was requested.³⁷⁸

Also, not trusting existing RCMP reports, the Deputy Solicitor General, E.A. Côté was directed by the Prime Minister to produce a report on the FLQ. His report noted that

³⁷⁵ Haggart 5.

³⁷⁶ E Ritchie, "-----," telex, The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 124 (1 December 1970).

³⁷⁷ John K. Starnes, telex to Assistant Commissioner Barrette, National Archives, RG 146 (4 October 1970).

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

RCMP intelligence was very good, better than the Quebec Police Force and Montreal City Police.³⁷⁹ Despite this positive report, Trudeau continued to distrust the RCMP Security Intelligence Service because he believed they had been unable to predict the kidnappings. According to The McDonald Report:

The security intelligence agency should also be responsible for alerting government to potential emergencies affecting the security of Canada. When a security intelligence agency fails in this task, a serious lack of confidence in the agency can result. There is some evidence before us to suggest that such a lack of confidence occurred with respect to the R.C.M.P. during the October Crisis. In the midst of the crisis, rather than continuing to rely solely on the Security Intelligence Service, Cabinet established several special task forces to assess the political intelligence available on the F.L.Q.³⁸⁰

The Prime Minister and his Cabinet met twice on October 15th to weigh their choices on how to respond to the kidnappings. These Cabinet conclusions during the Crisis suggest that federal decision-makers had relied on public information, instead of intelligence estimates, to arrive at their decisions.

There seemed to be a sense that decision makers had been caught off guard by the crisis, that “it was a shock to him to learn today what they should have known months before.”³⁸¹ This statement indicated that despite RCMP predictions before the Crisis, decision-makers had not been aware of the possibility of FLQ kidnappings. Further, Prime Minister Trudeau stated: “the government did not have a clear statement even from its own police force [the RCMP Security Intelligence Service] as to how many people were involved in the hard core of the F.L.Q. but that it could vary from 200 to 1,000.”³⁸² The public demonstrations that were sweeping Montreal were also seen to be a factor in

³⁷⁹ The McDonald Report, Second Report, Vol. 2, 917.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid* 936.

³⁸¹ M.A. Crowe, “The FLQ Situation,” Cabinet Conclusions, National Archives, RG 2, Vol. 6359 (15 October 1970) 7.

³⁸² *Ibid* 7.

the decision as Minister Jean Marchand believed that “public demonstrations were to start that afternoon in Montreal and accelerate a deterioration of the situation.”³⁸³

In particular, Marchand contended that, following conversations with Lucien Saulnier and Mayor Jean Drapeau, he had been led to believe that the situation in Quebec was “much more serious than he thought.”³⁸⁴ Marchand went on to make statements concerning the FLQ’s capability:

The F.L.Q. were reported to have two tonnes of dynamite in their control in Montreal, the destination [sic: detonation?] of which was controlled by radio equipment. Moreover, if the radio equipment in question had worked properly yesterday, there would have been one explosion in Montreal yesterday.³⁸⁵

Although these views had been refuted by RCMP Security Intelligence Service estimates and reports in the year before, during the Crisis, the Prime Minister’s Cabinet chose to rely on open information. Reference was made to Lucien Saulnier’s testimony the previous year before a Parliamentary Committee concerning a “four point plan” and foreign influence in Quebec when the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion stated: “let’s not forget that the F.L.Q. has been allowed to keep on building its organization after Mr. Saulnier warned the federal government.”³⁸⁶ What had been questionable to decision makers a year before was very real during the height of the crisis. When the Secretary of State noted that the RCMP had given little credence to Saulnier’s assertions the year before, that the RCMP “did not find sufficient evidence to act upon and he wondered if the facts now available were any different,”³⁸⁷ his concerns fell on deaf ears.

³⁸³ Ibid 8.

³⁸⁴ Ibid 4.

³⁸⁵ Ibid 4.

³⁸⁶ Ibid 7.

³⁸⁷ Ibid 7.

Marchand went on to make reference to the “Provisional Government Plot,” another public signal that had not been upheld by hard intelligence. He referred to the speech of the 16th made by Mr. Levesque the day before and concluded that: “the situation was very, very serious and that more quick action was needed, otherwise, not only would evidence be destroyed but F.L.Q. members would disappear.” This alarmist tone was further reinforced as Marchand claimed that the FLQ was in fact “a state within the state that must be disorganized now.”

The Cabinet’s reliance on publicly available information was especially evident when Marchand put together a great deal of unconfirmed information in a single statement that represented a sort of impromptu analysis of the situation. He stated:

there were a few infiltrators from the F.L.Q. in the Montreal Police but that it was not known whether the Quebec Provincial Police had been infiltrated. He further explained that one of the plans of the F.L.Q. was to load trucks with dynamite , park them near large buildings in Montreal and detonate them from a distance through signals given by radio devices. This was to have taken place yesterday, but their radio controls had failed. This operation was to have coincided with mass demonstrations. What actually looked like an [sic] abduction only was really more than that; *it was a big organized plan.* [italics added] The F.L.Q. was even able to reach directly to the Quebec Minister Choquette who had attempted to negotiate directly with them. If we gave them the time they wanted, no one knew what would follow.³⁸⁸

The statement reflects the perception of decision-makers at the height of the Crisis and completely contradicts intelligence estimates that had previously been provided by producers.

The Prime Minister’s Cabinet met again later in the day on the 15th to make its final decision on the War Measures Act.³⁸⁹ Records indicate that that Mr. Bourassa, through Quebec Minister of Justice Jerome Choquette, had requested permission to

³⁸⁸ Ibid 6.

³⁸⁹ Ibid 2.

release three of the FLQ terrorists currently incarcerated in partial fulfilment of the FLQ's demands.³⁹⁰ The request, which was denied, may have represented a signal to the Federal government, which interpreted the request as weakness on the part of provincial decision-makers. This perception of weakness would later become a major concern for Federal decision-makers and a factor in their decision to invoke the War Measures Act. It was further reinforced by conversations between the Premier of Quebec and the Prime Minister in which the Premier indicated that, if the Federal government did not act immediately, he would not be able to keep his cabinet together and resignations would be forthcoming.³⁹¹

At the end of the Cabinet Meeting, the Trudeau Government took the decision to invoke the War Measures Act. It was the first and only instance where the provisions had been enacted outside of wartime.

Cabinet meetings after the 15th continue to illustrate consumers' perceptions of the situation. At a Cabinet Meeting on the 18th of October, the Secretary of State for External Affairs took the opportunity to read all of the letters written by James Cross to his wife and the public. According to Sharp, these letters, the most recent of which was from that day, indicated "that Mr. Cross appeared to be alive from what could be concluded from the letters."³⁹² Sharp's statements are noteworthy in that they indicate that, by this point, the events of the crisis had accelerated to the point that decision-makers at the highest levels of government were now undertaking analysis of raw information. In this way, the intelligence cycle – the process by which information is

³⁹⁰ Ibid 2.

³⁹¹ Ibid 6.

³⁹² -----, "Situation re FLQ Kidnapping," Cabinet Conclusions, National Archives, RG 2, Vol. 6359 (18 October 1970) 3.

transformed into intelligence – had been replaced with a type of “direct feed” arrangement.

Further, the Cabinet conclusion of the 18th was significant in that it revealed that decision-makers believed that “neither the government nor the police really knew with whom they were dealing.”³⁹³

The Cabinet decided that the line taken by the PM with regard to motivations for the invocation of the War Measures Act should be based on “in part on Mr. Drapeau’s appreciation of the feelings of Montreal.”³⁹⁴ “The Quebec government was on the brink of disaster through its own weakness and the economic situation.”³⁹⁵

On the 22nd, there were also distortions of perception, as evidenced by a Minister who stated that “there was a clear intention to create an insurrection and it had become clear that they had developed their capacity to carry out their intentions.”³⁹⁶

During the meeting of the Cabinet on October 22nd, it was decided that, based on the recommendations of the report tabled by the Cabinet Committee on Planning and Priorities, a Special Operations Centre for the Quebec Situation³⁹⁷ would be established to provide analysis on the FLQ. Further, the SOC would provide intelligence to Cabinet Ministers on the FLQ and would act as a coordinating body with Provincial and municipal governments. Unfortunately, this decision had come too late to play a role in the October Crisis.

³⁹³ Ibid 3.

³⁹⁴ Ibid 4.

³⁹⁵ Ibid 4.

³⁹⁶ M.A. Crowe, Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet, “A strategy for dealing with the FLQ,” Cabinet Conclusions, National Archives, RG 2, Vol. 6359 (22 October 1970) 5.

³⁹⁷ Ibid 6.

Other documents reinforce the evidence of faulty perceptions by consumers of intelligence. A memorandum from the Deputy Solicitor General, E.A. Côté to the Solicitor General dated October 22nd, 1970 clearly illustrates that key decision-makers now fully believed the theory of apprehended insurrection made by the Montreal City civic authorities a year before. The memorandum made reference to the testimony given by Saulnier and Cote at a House of Commons Committee the year before. This memo was meant to answer the question: “At what stage was the ‘revolution’ at when the FLQ launched ‘Operation Liberation’ [the kidnappings] on October 5, 1970.”³⁹⁸ The very question in the document reveals an acceptance of Saulnier’s theory as it asserted that the four stages did in fact exist and that the kidnappings represented one of these stages. According to the memo, the first stage, “radicalization of spontaneous social agitation,”³⁹⁹ had been well underway through FLQ violence since 1963.

The conclusions of the memorandum, which outlined the four stages of revolution discussed by Saulnier and M. Cote at the House of Commons committee, were that, “the first stage was at the point of being concluded and one was not very far from the second stage, namely the organization of the masses with a view to a ‘popular insurrection.’”⁴⁰⁰ As well, it was noted that through the use of violence and kidnappings, the FLQ had been able to “dominate” the Canadian Government. The memo concluded that, “to date, the acts of the FLQ are but skirmishes and one must expect in Canada a revolutionary action of some duration as long as the Government will not have succeeded to apprehend the ‘conspirators’ and occupied, in the social, information and social defence fields, the

³⁹⁸ E.A. Côté, memorandum to the Solicitor General, “L’Opération Libération’ (F.L.Q.),” The National Archives of Canada, RG 146, Vol. 112 (22 October 1970) 4.

³⁹⁹ Ibid 4.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid 4.

'terrain' infiltrated and even dominated (in some sectors) by the violent trouble-makers in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada."⁴⁰¹ Documents reveal that, prior to the October Crisis, the RCMP Security Intelligence Service believed that there were 12 active FLQ cells and approximately 100 terrorists in total.⁴⁰²

With regard to FLQ organization, the report indicated that: "Liaison seemed to extend upward in command and, sometimes, laterally to another cell for selected combined operations. However, there is also evidence of cells being formed by a sort of 'spontaneous generation' in that, when needed, cells spring up that do not belong to any clearly structured or ascertained organization and which act quite unpredictably."⁴⁰³ In a footnote, the report noted,

the basic cell structure as defined by the press and police authorities does not exist. The groups tend to be more inclined to family or school ties that develop a common bond or purpose. They are link-ups between groups that are more accidental than planned with the result that news regarding activities of individuals or groups are passed throughout the community in a fashion similar to the underworld. [sic] These groups understand without specific direction the approximate limits of the territory or activities in which each group will operate. The cells of groups are not sophisticated enough to carefully apportion territory or specific targets but to possess enough general liaison to pass information along lines of mutual concern. There is no grey eminence.⁴⁰⁴

During the October Crisis, the intelligence gathering process was heavily impacted by failures that had occurred long before the Crisis had begun. These problems came together during the Crisis to create an environment in which the consumers of intelligence seemed to make decisions on open information instead of hard, accurate intelligence. Although adequate intelligence did exist on the nature and capabilities of

⁴⁰¹ Ibid 4.

⁴⁰² Ibid 3.

⁴⁰³ Ibid 3.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid 3.

the FLQ, a longstanding lack of guidance and policy had created a situation in which communication between producers and consumer was minimal. This in turn contributed to an environment of distrust between the two groups, and in particular, led consumers to dismiss intelligence estimates provided by producers in favor of open source information that was highly inaccurate. This poor relationship also resulted in inaccurate perceptions on the part of consumers who both misunderstood the threat and misunderstood the role of producers. In an effort to gain intelligence during the crisis to fill a void of understanding that had developed due to the minimal contact between the two groups during the previous years, consumers made demands of producers that were impossible to fulfill. Essentially, it was an environment in which previous failures ensured that consumers either did not receive vital intelligence, or did receive intelligence but did not believe it due to their poor relations with producers of intelligence.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of intelligence gathering and the FLQ reveals that the model of predictive failure, which has typically been used to understand the decision to invoke the War Measures Act, may not be valid. By examining the intelligence gathering process with regard to the FLQ in terms of the classical problems of intelligence, it becomes evident that several of the problems were evident long before the Crisis began.

This model of analysis, which draws upon the classical theoretical problems of intelligence reveals that there was not in fact one primary failure that was predictive in nature as has been asserted by the government, rather, there were many smaller failures over the span of almost a decade which compounded over time and culminated in a government inability to make effective decisions during the October Crisis.

During the initial period of intelligence gathering on the FLQ, from 1963 to 1965, the perceptions of both producers and consumers of intelligence were heavily influenced by previous threats. Essentially, the new separatist threat was initially understood in terms of the older threat of communism. This served to alter perceptions of the FLQ and reinforced beliefs that foreign movements or nations had supported the group. Although the belief that the FLQ was part of the communist threat would eventually diminish, the perception of foreign involvement would not and would resurface during the October Crisis. In addition, during this early phase, it was evident that policy and guidance on how producers should collect intelligence on the FLQ was lacking. This would continue to be a consistent failure throughout the entire period of intelligence gathering on the FLQ and would have a significant impact during the October Crisis.

Although intelligence estimates continued to improve during the intermediate period from 1965 to 1969, other problems became more pronounced. While the perception of communism was no longer evident, both producers and consumers continued to believe that the FLQ was receiving foreign support. This perception had originated during the initial phase of intelligence gathering on the FLQ due to the incorrect belief that the FLQ was part of an international communist threat.

In addition, while policy and guidance remained thin, the level of cooperation between producers and consumers was not high. It was compounded by a lack of trust between Federal, Provincial and Municipal producers and a high level of public signals in the media that was creating an apprehensive mood in Quebec. Decision makers seemed unsure of themselves and that contributed to ensuring that the relationship between producers and consumers was aloof. This environment of minimal contact between the two groups meant that during the October Crisis, consumers of intelligence were largely unaware of the true nature and capabilities of the FLQ.

Throughout 1969, suppliers of intelligence received several important signals that indicated a high probability that the FLQ would attempt political kidnappings. Although attempts were made to pass this on to consumers, the lack of policy and guidance impacted the process. First, without guidance, producers had no instruction on the type of product consumers wanted, thus, the intelligence that was provided was not well suited to the needs of consumers. Although estimates improved dramatically during this period, the lack of analytical expertise described by the McDonald Commission was evident as predictive intelligence provided was at times overly vague.

Thus, by the time the October Crisis began, the minimal contact and transfer of information between producers and consumers during the preceding period left consumers largely unaware of the nature and capabilities of the FLQ. They tended to overestimate their threat to the stability of Quebec. As a consequence, instead of relying upon hard intelligence, it would seem that consumers turned to inaccurate open information, political pressure from politicians in Quebec as well as their own assumptions, to arrive at their final decision to invoke the War Measures Act. The failures of the previous period had come together to hamper the intelligence gathering process and kept relevant information out of the hands of those who had to make decisions.

Overall then, the thesis has demonstrated how difficult it is to produce accurate intelligence concerning underground terrorist movements. It has shown that the level of trust between producers and consumers is vital to any successful intelligence operation. It has documented the lack of policy and guidance on intelligence. Most importantly, it has illustrated how consumers ignored intelligence as it became more accurate.

Although the intelligence gathering community got better at their job over the years and provided intelligence that indicated the possibility of political kidnapping, the failure was not predictive in nature. Rather, there were several failures that occurred over a period of years culminating in a breakdown of the intelligence-gathering process during the October Crisis.

These failures primarily involved a lack of trust and understanding between producers and consumers of intelligence. Clearly, in the years leading up to the October Crisis, a greater degree of communication between these two groups would have greatly

improved the relationship between these two groups and would have facilitated the transfer of information and resulted in much more accurate perceptions.

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