



ASIO Overseas

Why does ASIO liaise overseas?

ASIO's primary role is to investigate, provide advice on and counter threats to Australia's 'security'. This role is defined by subject matter rather than geography, and the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 (the ASIO Act)* makes it clear that ASIO is responsible for protecting against threats to security, "whether directed from, or committed within, Australia or not".

The international dimension of ASIO's work is particularly important because most security threats have their origins in other parts of the world – indeed, one of the important common characteristics of the activities defined as 'security' in the ASIO Act is that they may well be directed by, influenced or otherwise linked to factors outside Australia.

The current international threat environment is complex and dynamic. Developments in areas which previously have not been a source of security concern may quickly become directly relevant to ASIO's work. Globalisation and particularly the transnational nature of international terrorism mean that security matters with links to Australia may be uncovered anywhere in the world, and require investigation. ASIO's overseas liaison network helps it discover and respond to such threats.

ASIO engages with foreign services on a range of matters including security intelligence analysis, operational cooperation, capability enhancement and training. As at 30 June 2009, ASIO's international liaison network encompassed 316 authorities in 122 countries, most of which are foreign security and intelligence services. This network is a



force multiplier and provides Australia with an intelligence reach that it could not replicate on its own.

Liaison with overseas liaison services is an important source of lead intelligence for ASIO, and these relationships must be continually nurtured to ensure the flow of information - information Australia might not otherwise receive.

ASIO's presence overseas

ASIO's overseas offices manage relationships with a number of services, both in their host country and more broadly in the local region. Office location is reviewed regularly against changes to the global security environment.

Foreign liaison officers based in Australia

A number of foreign intelligence services have representatives in Australia, and the services of a number of other countries have non-resident responsibility for liaison with ASIO and make regular visits to Canberra.

ASIO engages actively with Australian-based foreign liaison officers, providing briefings on security intelligence matters, investigations and capabilities. Such briefings contribute to our coordinated collaborative work with international partners against a range of threats to Australian security.