

NewsRelease



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May 7, 2009

Public security, private contractors a bad mix says union, P3 arrangement to build secure government facility a bad call

OTTAWA--The federal government is inviting security breaches by proposing to have the private sector build and operate a new high-security building for the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) says John MacLennan, president of the Union of National Defense Employees -- a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC).

CSEC management informed the union Wednesday that it intends to build and operate new facilities through a Public-Private Partnership (P3) arrangement that would see the private sector bid on a contract to design, build, fund and maintain the facility.

“It just doesn’t make sense to hand over the design and maintenance of critical, high-security infrastructure to the private sector,” says MacLennan, whose members provide essential security services to the agency.

The CSEC is a key element in Canada’s anti-terrorism strategy providing IT network security and foreign intelligence.

CSEC chief John Adams advised the union that the P3 option was favoured for the new high-security building because it would facilitate quicker completion and terms that would see the private sector provide all the money and shoulder all of the risk over the course of a 30-year contract.

“That’s ridiculous,” says MacLennan. “The history of P3s in Canada is dismal. The landscape is littered with P3s that have failed to come in either on time or on budget and the public is always left holding the bag.

The union has asked CSEC management to provide a credible and detailed business case for the P3 option over the direct buy option. The union is also urging Parliamentarians to ask for the same information and to demand a thorough examination into the assumptions being made about P3s.

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