
Man's detention means little was learned from Arar inquiry

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When news of Canada's involvement in Maher Arar's detention and torture surfaced in late 2003, it sparked a two-year inquiry which cleared Mr. Arar of any terrorist links and yielded 23 recommendations for the Canadian government, RCMP and CSIS.

Yet the actions of Canadian officials in Abousfian Abdelrazik's case suggest that Canada learned only one thing from the Arar inquiry: if you want to have a Canadian citizen detained abroad, you had better do it more quietly.

How else to explain CSIS' refusal to take responsibility for the information it supplied? The Arar inquiry recommendations emphasize the need for responsible information sharing and formal objections when the information supplied is misused.

The agency labeled Mr. Abdelrazik a security concern as early as 1999. It regularly shares information about suspects with other governments and airlines.

So it is hard to imagine that the information which put Mr. Abdelrazik on a "no-fly" list and the UN Security Council's international terrorism suspect list could have originated from anywhere but CSIS.

Yet officials insist that Mr. Abdelrazik's circumstances are beyond Canada's control and that he remains stranded in Sudan, unable to get a passport (his own expired while he was in jail) or permission to fly home, despite his having never been charged with anything.

The Canadian government's actions are duplicitous, shameful, and clear evidence of how little has changed since the Arar inquiry.

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