



Press release

For immediate release

Former Head of Security Intelligence Review Committee appointed "*amicus curiae*" in the Arar Inquiry

Ottawa, May 19, 2004 - Mr. Justice Dennis R. O'Connor announced today the appointment of Mr. Ron Atkey P.C., Q.C. as "*Amicus Curiae*" or "Friend of the Court" in respect of government requests for in camera hearings. In that capacity, Mr. Atkey will act as counsel, independent from government, and his mandate will be to test government requests on the ground of National Security Confidentiality.

A senior partner with the Toronto law firm of Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP, Mr. Atkey was called to the Ontario Bar in 1969. He was elected Member of Parliament for St. Paul's in 1972-74, and again in 1979-80. In 1979, he was appointed Minister of Employment and Immigration in the government of the Right Honourable Joe Clark.

Mr. Atkey has extensive experience in matters relating to National Security Confidentiality. From 1984 until 1989, he served as the first Chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, a body established to oversee the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). During his tenure, the Review Committee put an end to the CSIS Counter-subversion Branch and conducted an internal investigation after the Air India crash.

A graduate of University of Western Ontario and Yale University law schools, Mr. Atkey has also held teaching positions at Western, Osgoode Hall Law School of York University and University of Toronto. In 1970-72, he was special counsel to the Ontario Law Reform Commission.

Mr. Atkey co-authored *Canadian Constitutional Law in a Modern Perspective* which was widely used by Canadian law students in the 1970's. He delivered lectures on national security, international terrorism and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms at Cambridge University, England in both 1989 and 1991. Then in 1994 he produced a novel "*The Chancellor's Foot*", a political thriller set in Ottawa and Montréal.

In community affairs, he serves on the boards of a number of organizations involved in music and the performing arts, and is the Vice-President – Ontario of the International Commission of Jurists (Canadian Section).

More details will be available on our Web site: www.ararcommission.ca

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Established under Part I of the *Inquiries Act*, the Arar Inquiry was set up on the recommendation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to investigate and report on the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar. The Commission is also mandated to recommend an arm's length review mechanism for the activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with respect to national security.

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