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Some Mounties cool to workplace probe

By CBC News

CBC News, Alison Crawford, Parliamentary Reporter.

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Former CSIS chief Reid Morden, who was hired to find out whether links in the RCMP chain of command are broken, completed his assessment after two weeks and handed in his report to the government last Friday.

But some members of the force have told CBC News they're not pleased how the work was carried out.

Morden set up his investigation in Ottawa, on the same floor at the office of Commissioner William Elliott and interviewed around 25 senior RCMP managers.

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews appointed Morden to conduct the assessment after CBC News reported that some senior officers have accused Elliott of being verbally abusive, closed-minded, arrogant and insulting.

Meetings were set up through the commissioner's office and interviews were conducted just a few doors down, in a glass-walled boardroom.

But several Mounties told CBC News they didn't feel comfortable calling the commissioner's office to set up an appointment in a room so close to Elliott's desk.

Blaine Donais, president of the Workplace Fairness Institute in Toronto, said it's important that people feel secure enough to open up during such investigations.

"You have to have a process that makes people feel comfortable coming forward. If your process is discouraging people from coming forward, then you've got a problem," he said.

Morden told CBC News he was not asked to investigate specific complaints about the commissioner.

He said he was hired to do a general investigation and determine whether the RCMP's senior management can work effectively with its current structure and top brass.

Morden said he made many observations and findings that are now in the hands of the government.