

PRC Interest in Michael Chong

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The Commission has been provided with all relevant intelligence and assessments, which indicates information on reliability and corroboration of the information contained therein.

Michael Chong: *Information flow in relation to intelligence indicating that PRC officials sought to build profiles on Michael Chong and/or his family members in China, and contemplated action directed at them. In particular, the Commission requests that the topical summary address the dissemination of the intelligence products and issue management note listed below, along with actions taken in response, including timing and content of any CSIS briefings to Mr. Chong.*

1. In February 2021, the Honourable Michael Chong (MP Chong) sponsored a motion in the House of Commons to recognize People's Republic of China (PRC) activity in Xinjiang, China as genocide. Following the motion, on March 22, Canada announced, along with the United States (US), the United Kingdom and the European Union (EU), economic sanctions on four PRC officials and one entity suspected of being responsible for the persecution of Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. On the same day, the PRC responded by announcing sanctions on EU individuals and entities. On March 27, the PRC announced further economic sanctions, this time on MP Chong and members of the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights, in response to their work on Xinjiang-related issues, as well as US individuals. Countries, operating in support of their respective sanctions regimes, undertake research to support decision-making processes related to potentially imposing economic sanctions. This research, and the imposition of sanctions, are acceptable diplomatic activity.
2. The sanctions imposed by the PRC aligned with a new PRC sanctions regime, which also allowed for the possibility of sanctioning individuals of concern and their family members. The option to sanction family members was not invoked in the case of MP Chong. Please see the Topical Summary on the "PRC Targeting of Parliamentarians for the Purpose of Exerting Influence", for further information related to the building of profiles and the use of sanctions as a diplomatic tool.
3. In May 2021, a CSIS Issues Management Brief was disseminated to a restricted distribution list, which included the Minister of Public Safety Canada (PS), the Chief of Staff (CoS) to the Minister of PS, the Deputy Minister of PS, and the National Security Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister (NSIA). This brief provided information that MP Chong was of active interest to the PRC Mission in Canada. Document tracking procedures in place at the time could not confirm in every case that the intended recipient(s) had received or read the material.
4. Three CSIS intelligence reports referencing this matter were sent to restricted distribution lists at relevant Government of Canada departments and agencies prior to May 2021. The reports were disseminated by secure email to individuals and departmental contacts, for distribution to appropriate recipients.
5. The named recipients list for the reports included the Deputy Minister of PS and the Minister of PS. In accordance with document tracking procedures in place at the time, two copies of the reports were delivered to the Deputy Minister's Office: one for the Deputy Minister of PS, and one for onwards transmittal to the Minister.
6. On June 25, 2021, at the first meeting with MP Chong, CSIS provided him an unclassified security briefing to sensitize him to threat activities of concern, and to provide advice regarding best security awareness practices. MP Chong met with CSIS a number of times following this briefing.

7. On May 1, 2023, MP Chong was named in the media as a target of the PRC and this allegation was brought to the Prime Minister's attention.
8. On May 2, 2023, the CSIS Director, accompanied by the NSIA, provided MP Chong a further briefing, this time under CSIS' threat reduction authority. The CSIS Director and the NSIA were able to provide MP Chong with further background information to address the media allegations. The CSIS Director emphasized that CSIS intelligence did not reflect direct physical threats to MP Chong or members of his family or intention to cause physical harm.
9. As noted in Topical Summary, "PRC Targeting of Parliamentarians for the Purpose of Exerting Influence", in June 2023, Rapid Response Mechanism Canada detected a potential foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) campaign targeting MP Chong. The campaign took place on WeChat between May 4 to 13, 2023, and sought to propagate false and misleading narratives about MP Chong's character and heritage, his political views, and his family. This time period coincided with Canada's expulsion of PRC official Zhao Wei.
10. The process of using information from open or government sources to conduct research and build profiles on Members of Parliament (MPs) is a part of regular diplomatic activities undertaken by all states, including Canada. Most states operate within the bounds of international law as set out in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR). Only when this information is used to undertake clandestine, deceptive or coercive actions does legitimate diplomatic work become foreign interference.