

SECRET//CEO

Classified Briefing to Political Parties: Threat Update
August 21, 2019

Election 2019: Trends

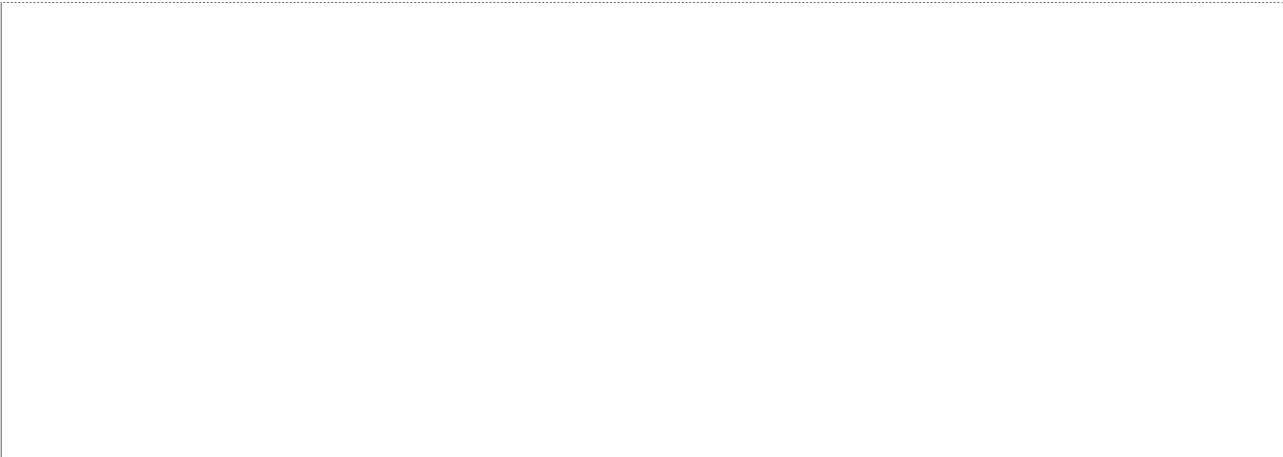
Our overall assessment regarding threats to the 2019 election has not changed since the last briefing:

- Current threat landscape in Canada is consistent with past practice from threat actors.
- Little discernable increase in overall interference activities at this time.
- HUMINT threat activity remains the most prominent form of foreign interference in Canada. We assess this is unlikely to change ahead of Election 2019. The People's Republic of China remains the most active perpetrator of elections-related foreign interference at this time.
 - Media interference will likely be part of the PRC's broader 2019 election interference strategy. The PRC will likely focus on attempting to interfere with Canada-based Chinese language media, potentially as one of its main tool. The use of WeChat in this regard is of particular concern.
- Cyber threat activity has been directed against other Western elections. We are not aware of any significant cyber threat to Canadian elections at this time.
- Use of social media platforms by foreign state actors to conduct disinformation and amplification activity has increased globally. This trend likely to be a factor in the Canadian electoral context. At present, discernable FI activity in the social media space is limited.
 - *update in relation to potential inauthentic foreign state-sponsored activity on various social media platforms*

SECRET//CEO

GAC Election 2019 Diplomatic Letter:

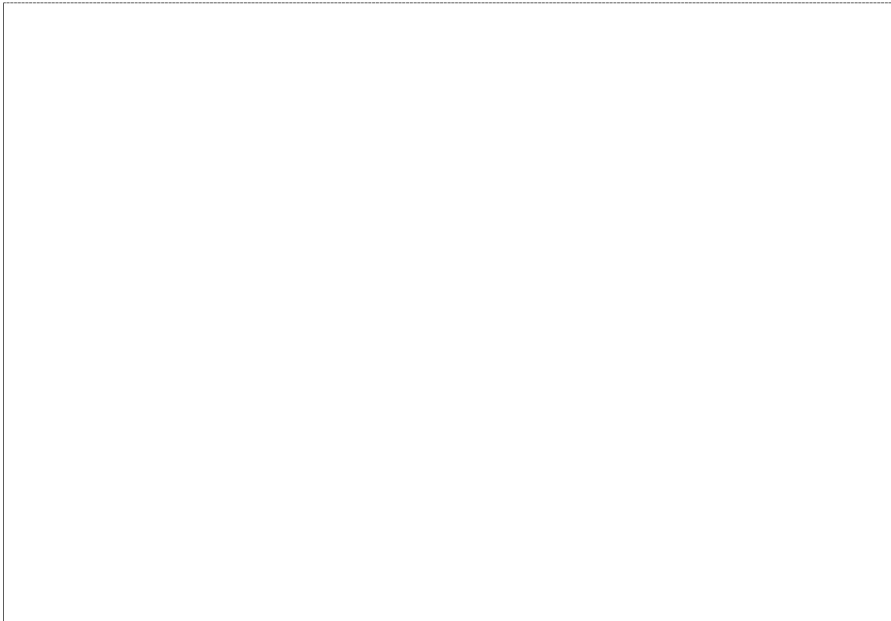
- In July, GAC issued to all Consulates and Embassies in Canada a letter, consistent in messaging from a previous letter prior to the 2015 election, reminding Heads of Missions to abide by the *Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations*. This involves the duty to respect and obey the laws and regulations of the receiving state and not interfere in the affairs of the receiving state.
- In particular, during an election period, this means ensuring that diplomatic and consular representatives do not conduct activities, which may either be perceived as inducing electors to vote for a particular candidate, or discouraging them from voting for a particular candidate in any way during an election period. Furthermore, accredited foreign representatives should not – directly or indirectly – make any financial contribution to a candidate, political party or political event.



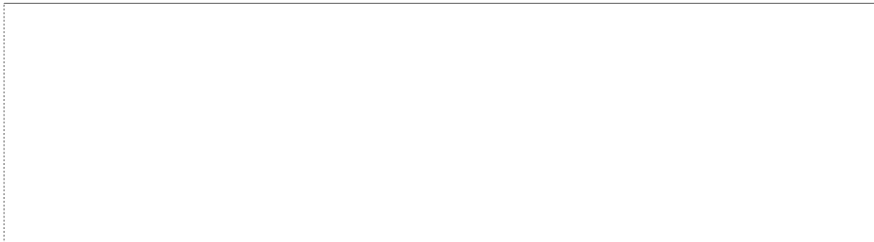
China



SECRET//CEO



Russia



Other States



SECRET//CEO



Notable Items

- Manitoba election has been called. All SITE agencies are looking for signs of Foreign Interference. Could provide an indication of what is to come federally due to close timing.

Foreign Interference in Canadian Media in relation to Election 2019



SECRET//CEO
2019 09 10**CSIS Brief on TRM to Political Parties**

- We've asked you in today to discuss a Threat Reduction Measure the Service is undertaking to address interference conducted by a foreign state in Canada.
- As I'm sure you understand, the planning and approval process to undertake this type of measure is kept compartmentalized – even within the Service- to a limited number of individuals in order to protect the integrity and impact of the action.
- At Wednesday's briefing this measure was not yet fully approved and I was therefore unable to raise it in our meeting. We are taking this opportunity now to inform you that some individuals within your parties may be approached by the Service for a meeting. We want to be as transparent as possible in providing you information regarding foreign interference activity.
- 
- As has been discussed at previous threat updates, the Service investigates foreign interference activities that
 - are detrimental to Canadian interests, and
 - are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person.
- Foreign interference encompasses a wide-range of activities – one slice of which is aimed at our democratic institutions and electoral processes.
- This process with political parties was designed to be able to provide you with Secret level intelligence related to electoral foreign interference.
- We are aware that Pakistan has been involved in a range of foreign interference activities in Canada  – some of which has crossed into potentially electoral interference.
- At our briefing with you a few weeks ago and again last week, I discussed the thresholds required both to begin investigative action (reasonable grounds to suspect) and for a threat reduction measure (reasonable grounds to believe).

SECRET//CEO
2019 09 10

- In this case, we have met the reasonable grounds to believe threshold that allows us to undertake a threat reduction measure. This measure will include meeting with several individuals & potentially political figures – either candidates or elected officials who have been targeted for foreign interference by the foreign state to discuss the activity of concern.
- It is possible that individuals within your parties will reach into your central campaign or party executive structures to advise you of an interview with CSIS and we wanted to be able to give you advance notice that this was coming.

RESPONSIVE only

If asked who we are interviewing or from which parties:

- In order to maintain confidentiality, we cannot disclose that information. We are advising you so that if individuals come to you to discuss an interview, you have been made aware as to why / when this was occurring.

Why can't you tell us more information about the nature of the FI or the threat actor or where in Canada it is occurring?

- We would like to ensure the impact/ integrity of our action is not affected.

Are the individuals you are speaking to under investigation or are they suspected of any wrongdoing or willing participation with the foreign state/threat actor?

- The intent of the threat reduction measure is to mitigate the foreign interference actions of the foreign state. It is designed to reach out to potentially affected individuals and alert them to the activity we are seeing.
- It is also to provide individuals with the ability to recognize when this activity is directed at them, at a political party or at an elected official so that when it happens from any foreign state, they see it coming and respond accordingly.
- I cannot get into any further specifics at this time.

Will you provide us with more information after the TRM is over?

- We will share all relevant details when and if we can.