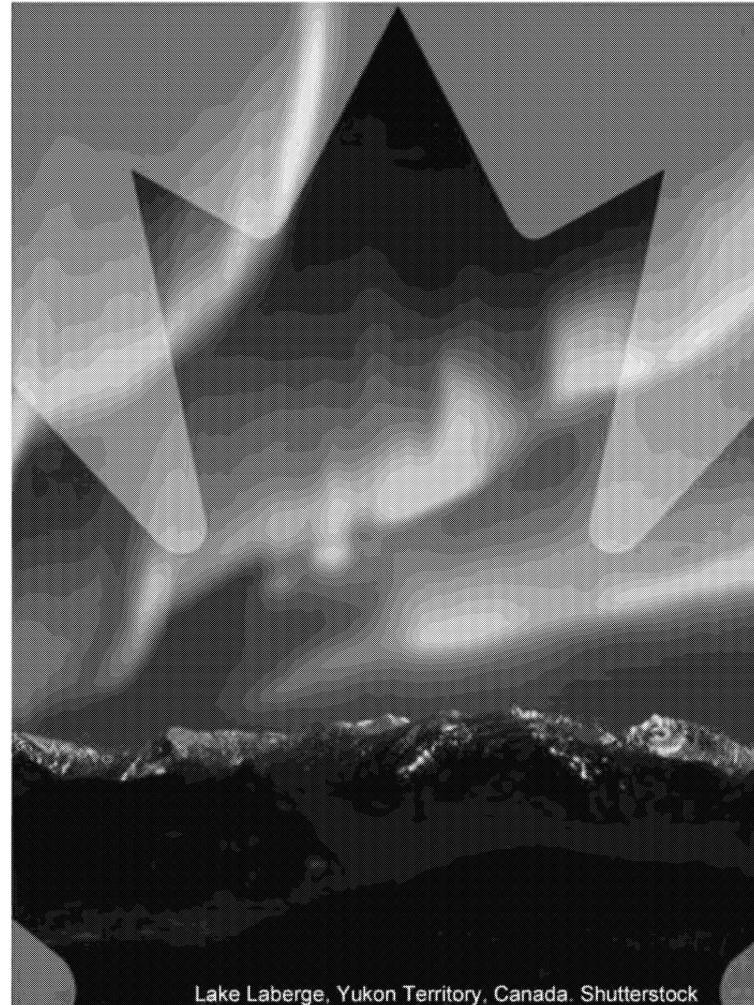


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 Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Panel Discussion: Key Takeaways



Lake Laberge, Yukon Territory, Canada. Shutterstock

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Objective

- To take stock of the Panel’s observations on administering the Protocol for General Election 2021
 - What worked well or could be improved?
- Identify issues the Panel uncovered through its operation that require immediate attention *or* may arise during the independent assessment process
- Use these observations to support a comprehensive review

NOTE: There is a complimentary deck that unpacks consideration of “grey areas” of electoral security

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Panel Environment & Context

	GE 2019	GE 2021
Election Timing	Fixed date election Majority Government	Uncertain Minority Government
Panel Preparations	Deliberate series of 4 meetings in months preceding known caretaker period	Need to manage perception of Election Call 3 meetings in 2-months preceding caretaker period
Membership	One Member Replaced	Three new Members
Critical Election Incident Public Protocol	Cabinet Directive <u>Pilot</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent and coherent approach for GoC to inform Canadians about foreign interference 	Cabinet Directive <u>permanent</u> and refined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application period aligned with caretaker convention Explicit inclusion of domestic threats

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Pre Writ - Panel Preparation

- The Panel met **3 times** in June and July to:
 - Develop structure and cadence of meetings;
 - Understand the 2019 experience and how the Panel needed to adjust in the 2021 context;
 - Conduct exercises towards common understanding of the mandate, threshold and considerations for action; and
 - Receive baseline security briefings.

What Well Worked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on 2019 GE Experience • Set Intelligence needs for Panel • Communications framework developed • Elections Canada & Covid-19; Online Platform engagement

Ideas For Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were all Panel members able to explore implications for their respective mandates and activities? • Where there challenges related to developing a common understanding of the threshold, mandates and options for action?

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Post Writ - Panel Operation (Intelligence)

- SITE provided threat updates daily and briefs at **6 weekly Panel meetings**:
 - Coordinated and comprehensive GoC threat picture;
 - Investigated potential instances of foreign interference; and
 - Expanded process to feature escalating threats to candidates and electoral personnel.



What Worked Well

- SITE agencies were well coordinated and leveraged complimentary mandates.
- Strong and positive relationship with political party representatives for mutual situational awareness.
- Panel apprised of investigation of issues, operational actions if/when required.

Ideas For Improvement

- Need to ensure visibility and analytical capability for FI attribution across all platforms.
- Clearly defined lanes and intersection points for managing election security, campaign threats, and IMVE.
- Future Panels may need to incorporate threats to candidates and electoral officials *by default*.
- Did the Panel receive sufficient, timely, and contextual information?

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Post Writ - Panel Operation (Scenarios)

- The Panel also **evolved** its decision making process during the caretaker period via exercises and issue briefs:
 - Revisited threshold discussions in light of changed threat environment.
 - Worked through announcement details, including potential roles and responsibilities for security agencies.

What Well Worked

- Scenarios were effective: matched current events, reflected complexity of issues and accurately illustrated decision-making points.

Ideas For Improvement

- Did all members have enough information about SITE member mandates and capabilities?
- Incorporate the security side of elections, possibly through inclusion of EC at meetings.
- Were there any challenges in reaching common understanding of the threshold? Would consensus be difficult?

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Discussion Questions

- How could the Panel operate more effectively in the future?
- Are there any issues you recommend receive immediate attention?
- What type of governance is required to see this work through?
- How should the Panel prepare for future operations given the current minority government situation?

Slide Notes

Slide 3:

Renewing and updating the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol through a Cabinet Directive.

The key changes:

making the Protocol permanent (unless repealed by Cabinet), largely in line with Judd Report recommendation and NSICOP
aligning the Protocol's application period with that of the Caretaker Convention to ensure it remains in place in the event of no clear outcome or delayed results – reflects lesson learned from the 2020 US experience
explicitly providing for the Protocol Panel to consult the Chief Electoral Officer (where appropriate)
making explicit the ability of political parties to flag incidents that could threaten an election to security agencies.
removing ambiguity as to the ability of the Panel to examine domestically-driven interference, within the mandates of the security agencies
including an ongoing requirement for an independent evaluation of the Protocol after each general election

Slide 4:

Panel supported by PCO S&I and PCO-DI in managing panel operations (2019 was secretariat)
Coordination structures at ADM and DG levels

Panel of 5
Clerk
NSIA
DMs: FA, PS, JUS

D/Clerk

Slide 5:

Was the intelligence they received during the pre-writ and writ periods aligned with their expectations?
Was the scope of the material too broad, narrow, or just right?
Was it timely?

Were there logistical challenges in receiving the daily intelligence packages that need to be addressed in advance of the next election?

Slide 6:

Mandate clarity

Would they meet threshold

Possible options – communications (panel vs. security agencies)

Some political -

Constructed around current events – china, aggressive protests

Who else would fix? Where to draw line;

Did meet threshold – leaked docs; panel would have info but not others.

Clerk feedback – can you

Public Communications Framework & decision making

Threshold discussions – Retreat; focus on more;