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Canadian Security
Intelligence ServiceService canadien du
renseignement de sécurité

Director - Directeur

CCM # 40886
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 Solicitor-Client Privilege
 For Decision

MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER

THREAT REDUCTION MEASURE: PRC [redacted]
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

SUMMARY

- In accordance with CSIS policy and the Ministerial Directions for Operations and Accountability, I am informing you of a [redacted] threat reduction measure undertaken in exigent circumstances.
- At the direction of the Prime Minister, the Service conducted an exigent threat reduction measure, in the form of a classified briefing to Member of Parliament (MP), Michael Chong, to reduce the threat of foreign interference (FI) by the People's Republic of China (PRC) targeting Canada's democratic institutions. Given the exigence of the circumstances, a full risk assessment was not conducted.
- I am also seeking your approval to conduct a [redacted] threat reduction measure to reduce the PRC FI threat, by providing threat briefings to [redacted] other current MPs and [redacted] former MPs.
- [redacted] these individuals will remain targets for PRC FI and that these briefings will contribute to reducing the threats they face by enabling them to better respond and resist FI efforts in the future.

BACKGROUND:*Overview of PRC Foreign Interference*

The People's Republic of China (PRC) presents – by far – the most significant foreign interference (FI) threat to the security of Canada, due to the scope of its activities and the level of resources it expends. The PRC singles out and targets Canadian political figures and Chinese-

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Canadian MPs in particular as they are seen to have influence with Chinese communities in Canada. For the PRC, FI is undertaken as United Front Work (UFW), through which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to coopt, reorient, or silence non-party elites (e.g., those with perceived influence), both within and outside of China, to adopt or otherwise support Party narratives and policies, or at the least to not actively oppose them. For instance, the PRC seeks to make an example of MPs whose positions do not align with those of the PRC, to deter them from speaking out but also to intimidate and demonstrate the PRC's reach within those communities as well.

Reporting indicates that PRC officials have expressed interest in multiple MPs.

In the period following the February 22, 2021 motion in the House of Commons recognizing the PRC government's treatment of religious minorities as genocide, PRC officials sought to conduct research on certain MPs with the intent of imposing sanctions against those who opposed the CCP. PRC officials also sought to obtain information about Mr. Chong's relatives, who were potentially in the PRC.

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[REDACTED]

These actions are consistent with the nature of PRC FI activities in Canada, the objective of which is to further party-state interests through positive portrayals of the PRC and the CCP itself. They are part of a continuum of activities employed by the PRC and its [REDACTED] to the clandestinely and deceptively influence and interfere in Canada's democratic institutions and processes. This also highlights the threatening and targeted nature of PRC reprisals, such as interest in sanctioning specific individuals. These efforts are assessed as being intended to influence or intimidate these individuals and others, and prevent future actions contrary to the PRC's interests.

Prior CSIS Engagements

In 2021, CSIS began a program of defensive and protective security briefings to elected and public officials across Canada, after it became apparent that foreign state actors and their proxies were highly interested in influencing Canadian elected officials and their staff, and that more could be done to educate officials about this threat. These unclassified briefings aim to increase awareness about the FI threat, how it manifests, and mitigation strategies that can be employed. It is important to note that these briefings are meant to inform and are not intended as a means to collect intelligence.

As part of this program, CSIS has engaged Michael Chong several times since 2021. In addition to a defensive briefing, CSIS also provided Mr. Chong a more comprehensive protective security briefing that was tailored to the PRC FI threat against him, using open source information.

Similarly, CSIS has met with Ms. Kwan on more than one occasion since 2021 to provide security awareness briefings. CSIS assesses Ms. Kwan is an ongoing target of clandestine foreign influenced activities directed by PRC officials. CSIS has also met with Mr. Chiu for a security awareness briefing in 2021. Other named MPs have also been previously engaged for security awareness briefings, with the exception of Mr. O'Toole, whom CSIS has not yet met.

At no time did intelligence reporting indicate a threat to life, physical harm, or detention of any of these individuals or their families.

[REDACTED] CSIS engaged the individuals directly and provided protective security and defensive briefings to the individuals.

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DISCUSSION:

Exigent Threat Reduction Measure Concerning Michael Chong

Following media reporting in *The Globe and Mail* on May 1, 2023, I, along with the Prime Minister and the National Security and Intelligence Advisor, met with Michael Chong on May 2 and shared with him classified information describing the nature of the intelligence reporting and the foreign interference threat to him.

[Redacted]

This measure was intended to limit the PRC's ability to conduct FI and specifically, the PRC's ability to threaten Mr. Chong moving forward, by helping him to identify PRC FI methodology and tradecraft so that he may better prepare himself to deal with such threats in the future.

[Redacted]

Threat Reduction Measure Concerning [Redacted] Additional Current and Former Members of Parliament

I am also seeking your approval, in accordance with the Ministerial Direction for Operations, to conduct a similar threat reduction measure to counter PRC FI. The measure will focus

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Canada. The Service will provide briefings to sensitize these officials to the specific nature of the threat of foreign interference facing them.

A number of FI influence channels rely on being able to operate covertly. These briefings will provide the recipients with the necessary information (including classified information) to help them identify threats they may be facing or may face in the future. With a better understanding of PRC FI methodology and tradecraft, these individuals will be better able to reduce the effectiveness of such threats in the future, enabling them to respond and resist FI efforts by reporting them to CSIS or other authorities or by taking other protective measures. Each briefing will be tailored to the individual recipient. I have determined that these measures are reasonable and proportional to the FI threat, in accordance with section 12.1 of the *CSIS Act*. CSIS has also determined, as required by section 12.1(3) of the *Act*, that other federal partners are not in a position to reduce these threats.

I am seeking your urgent approval via this memorandum to provide classified briefings

[redacted]
[redacted] intelligence reporting has specifically identified ^{PRC} officials' interest in them.

[redacted]

Since last November, ongoing media reporting on PRC FI efforts in Canada has impacted Canadians' trust and confidence in democratic institutions; this has therefore drastically escalated the impacts of PRC FI efforts. Therefore, there is an urgent need to sensitize these current and former MPs to the threat activities conducted towards them in

[redacted]

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The reputational risk was also found to be high, as criticism may be directed towards CSIS for not having taken action sooner, among other factors. Given mitigation controls do not lower this rating, CSIS is prepared to address potential domestic media coverage, and potential questions from domestic and international partners.

rep risk
high

CSIS also consulted officials at Global Affairs Canada, who assessed the foreign policy risk rating at high, based on the ongoing tensions in the bilateral relationship and the intensification of PRC foreign interference activities in Canada. Furthermore, as several of the risk pillars have been assessed as high and as the measure has a foreign policy component, I also sought and received the approval of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

GAC
risk
yes

Lastly, while separate from the specific legal risk assessment of this proposed measure, CSIS will also need to consider the various legal, policy, and procedural implications of disclosing classified information in a manner not contemplated by Government of Canada policy, namely to individuals who do not hold the requisite security clearance and are not bound by the *Security of Information Act* or a non-disclosure agreement, as discussed above. Operational considerations, such as benefits and exigency, may outweigh these concerns.

Unauthorized disclosures of intelligence in recent months have created a heightened fear of FI, including that targeting MPs and our democratic institutions, and particularly, Chinese-Canadians. Given the heightened threat environment, and in spite of the elevated risks posed by this measure, I am seeking your approval for the proposed measure.

NEXT STEPS:

With your approval of the threat reduction measures described here, CSIS intends to meet with the MPs individually in the coming days to provide a threat briefing about the PRC FI threats they face. I will keep you apprised of these interactions.

We continue to assess and monitor whether other MPs may have been targeted by PRC foreign interference efforts. Should these efforts reveal additional FI efforts that merit a threat reduction measure that poses high risks, I will inform you with priority.

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Separately, further to the statement by the Prime Minister regarding expectations that CSIS will inform the government of targeting of individual MPs, my officials are engaged with officials from your department, in consultation with the Department of Justice and the Privy Council Office to ensure that your direction is enshrined with the internal policy and processes to ensure its immediate implementation.

As always, if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to let me know.



for

David Vigneault

- I approve the above described threat reduction measure
- I do not approve the above described threat reduction measure



The Hon. Marco E. L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

2023/05/18
Date

cc. National Security and Intelligence Advisor
Deputy Minister of Public Safety
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Enclosures (1)

- Approval Letter to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

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