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Deputy Ministers' National Security Committee Meeting: Retreat
October 20, 2021
PCO Secure Mobile or VTC
Time: 14:00 – 15:30

Overview: DMNS is co-chaired by PS and DND. An Agenda for the meeting, and Secure Mobile Conference Call Instructions, can be found in **TAB A**.

STANDING ITEM #1 – OPENING REMARKS – 5 MIN

*Public Safety Canada (PS) and the Department of National Defence (DND) will provide opening remarks. A meeting summary of the August 24, 2021 DMNS Retreat is in **TAB B** (the September 29, 2021, DMNS Committee meeting was cancelled).*

ITEM #2 – PROTECTING DEMOCRACY: CITIZEN RESILIENCE, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS REFORM, FOREIGN INTERFERENCE (PCO/GAC) – 25 MIN

*PCO has prepared a deck outlining the plan to protect Canada's democracy and the 44th General Election). The deck is available in **TAB C**.*

Background: The deck provides a summary of the plan to protect Canada's democracy, with a focus on efforts made to protect Canada's 44th General Election. A four-pillar strategy was employed, consisting of: 1) enhancing citizen resilience - including the interagency Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (CEIPP), which is comprised of a panel of five senior Government of Canada (GoC) officials that would notify the public of a threat to the integrity of a General Election, the Digital Citizen Initiative, and public reports on threats to democratic processes; 2) improving organizational readiness, which includes but is not limited to classified threat briefings to political parties, and cybersecurity guidance to political parties; 3) combatting foreign interference, which includes the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force and the Global Affairs Canada (GAC)-led Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM); and, 4) building a healthy information ecosystem, which includes a Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online.

RCMP Considerations: The RCMP is supportive of the four pillar strategy outlined on slide 3, and the Force participates in or contributes to several of the activities that are outlined. The PCO-led CEIPP guides how senior GoC officials would jointly determine if a threshold has been met to inform the public in the event of a single incident or accumulation of incidents that may impact the election. As the Minister of Public Safety is one of the five senior officials that participates in determining when to communicate with the public for the CEIPP process, the RCMP is one of the security and intelligence agencies that would be consulted to support a CEIPP-related decision. The SITE Task Force is comprised of CSIS, the RCMP, the Communications Security Establishment and GAC - SITE provides a coordination and de-confliction mechanism, and ensures situational awareness for all relevant departments and agencies. The RCMP participates in classified threat briefings to the leaders of the official political parties, as required, and the Force also participates in the GAC-led Canada RRM Focal Points meetings.

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Talking Points:

- Thank you for this presentation. I support the efforts that have been made to date, particularly since the RCMP participates in certain protecting democracy initiatives, including the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force.
- The foreign interference piece is a significant national security consideration, and I am aware that the government's platform commitments included an allocation for national security agencies to counter foreign interference, and for the RCMP to protect Canadians from unacceptable surveillance, harassment, and intimidation by foreign actors. These are also significant considerations for a free and democratic society.
- Much needs to be done in order to better protect Canada and Canadians against foreign interference. Foreign actors often operate in a grey zone, where their activities may not be criminal or illegal, however are deliberate and seek to undermine Canadian society. For reasons such as this, a foreign agent registry-type of legislation, requiring foreign actors to declare their intentions and activities, would be beneficial. Our allies already have legislation focused on foreign interference, and Canada should be doing the same.
- Similar to other efforts seeking to improve aspects of Canada's national security, we will also need to continuously assess and ensure that our respective staff have what they need to meet expectations, whether it be sufficient resource levels or modernized equipment. This is especially important in order to keep pace with foreign actors that are seeking to disrupt Canadian society.

ITEM #3 – PROTECTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: HARDENING, INCIDENT RESPONSE, RESILIENCE (PS) – 25 MIN

*PS to provide an overview of the renewal of the national critical infrastructure strategy. The most recent version is included in **TAB D**. PS' objective for this agenda item is to seek ADMs' views on the Strategy and way forward as it relates to the various facets of critical infrastructure (CI), including cyber security, emergency management, and NS.*

Background: The last National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure (CI) was published in 2009. While CI is a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary issue, the security elements are prominent. A presentation to the National Cross Sector Forum (NCSF) on CI is to be delivered on November 8, 2021. The NCSF is Canada's senior-level body responsible for setting CI priorities, consisting of representatives of Canada's ten CI sectors as well as provinces, territories, and federal departments and agencies.

The deck notes that there are four major drivers that are transforming CI operations, supply chains, and interconnectivity: 1) digitalization of systems and processes, 2) environmental risks, 3) security threats, and 4) economic prosperity. The overall goal of the revitalized National Strategy is to bring about a modern CI policy for Canada's vital assets and systems to improve security and resilience. Canada's allies, including the United States, have already begun modernizing their CI frameworks to improve resilience in light of the increased blurring between physical and digital infrastructure. In the revised Strategy, the concept of criticality may take on a more fluid definition to respond to dynamic changes

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in the operational environment, and additional CI sectors may be added in order to represent all of Canada's vital assets and systems.

RCMP Considerations: The RCMP recognizes the importance of CI security and resilience, and established a National Critical Infrastructure Team (NCIT) in Federal Policing National Security in response. NCIT assesses physical cyber threats to CI, reviews suspicious CI incidents, and establishes partnerships with owners and operators of CI in support of the protection and resilience of CI assets and systems. CI is a core element of Canada's NS framework as security threats can have significant impacts on key physical and digital infrastructure; common threats include malicious foreign investment in key Canadian sectors, intellectual property theft, and other forms of foreign interference. CI is also a core element of Canada's economic security as a strong CI framework promotes legitimate investment and innovation in the Canadian economy. To note, CI is one key element of the proposed National Economic Security List under development by PS, s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

From an environmental perspective, climate change may undermine the integrity of CI, opening up further vulnerabilities of infrastructure-related risks posed by adversaries. Environmental changes may also have implications for law enforcement, emergency response, health and energy services, and societal cohesion, especially in rural communities, many of which are connected via seasonal roads and/or alternative means of transport. This will require the establishment of new partnerships with municipal and Indigenous communities on the security risks of climate change.

Talking Points:

- The RCMP is supportive of the work to renew the 2009 National Strategy. You have clearly been undertaken significant consultations with provincial and territorial stakeholders, as well as private industry, and I commend you on this work.
- I wanted to ask whether you are also connecting with municipal and/or Indigenous communities, especially given the environmental impacts of climate change in Canada's North. These fluctuations will have implications for law enforcement, emergency response, health and energy services, and societal cohesion especially in rural communities.
- Given that critical infrastructure will also feature prominently on the proposed National Economic Security List, will the revised approach to criticality and any potential changes to the current 10 CI sectors be reflected in that upcoming exercise?

ITEM #4 – DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITIES, DMC – MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING (OPEN DISCUSSION) – 30 MIN

PS will share a deck on the national security priorities TAB E.

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RCMP Considerations: [LOCATE NS PRIORITIES MTP INFORMATION – CHECK PREVIOUS ADM NS POL OR PREVIOUS DMNS PACKAGES TO COMPLETE].

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STANDING ITEM #5 – CLOSING REMARKS (PS/DND) – 5 MIN

PS and DND will lead this agenda item. There are no RCMP issues that need to be raised at this time.

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