

Protected B
Cabinet Confidence

Deputy Minister Committee on Foreign Interference

March 14, 2023
4:00pm – 5:00pm
TBC

Key Messages

- Foreign interference (FI) continues to be a significant, multi-faceted threat to Canada's national security.
- A comprehensive approach is needed and the RCMP is supportive of efforts being undertaken by the Government of Canada to improve the response to foreign interference.
- Improvements to enhance the ability to respond to the threat will place Canada in a better position to mitigate foreign interference, therefore, the countering hostile activity by state actor (HASA)-related enhancements being led by Public Safety Canada (PS) are necessary.

OUTLINE/OVERVIEW

The Commissioner has been invited to participate in a Deputy Minister Committee meeting on FI to discuss a range of issues, including the current state of play, ongoing coordination efforts related to foreign interference and a way forward. The agenda for this meeting is included at **TAB A**. Talking points for the Commissioner are available at **TAB B**.

BACKGROUND

The topic of foreign interference has gained increased attention in Canada for several reasons, including the reported leaking of both secret and top-secret documents from CSIS, covering the period before and after the September 2021 federal election. However, foreign interference is a broad national security concern, as it impacts Canada's economy, democracy, communities and virtually any aspect of Canadian society.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

PS has led several efforts to improve Canada's ability to counter FI, s. 39 - Cabinet
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The RCMP is supportive of a comprehensive approach to counter FI/HASA, however it will be important that such efforts avoid duplication, as clear leadership and guidance on addressing the myriad FI/HASA concerns will result in a more cohesive and collaborative approach. While there is currently a PCO FI Task Force that was recently stood up, PS has also been leading HASA efforts, including considerations related to the implementation of a National Countering FI Coordinator. Each of these efforts should be complementary, and mandates should be clear, in an effort to avoid duplication.

From the RCMP's perspective and as a way forward, any tool within legislation should be used to protect the Canadian public from foreign actor interference. This includes disruption, as the RCMP and security and intelligence partners can leverage mandates and work together to counter FI/HASA activity. Raising awareness of the FI/HASA threat in all sectors of society, including with the public and private stakeholders, will also continue to be a key aspect for combatting this threat effectively. In terms of stakeholder engagement, the RCMP can continue to raise awareness of the threat with other law enforcement partners, as well as with private industry and the public. From the perspective of the private industry in particular, the RCMP's National Critical Infrastructure Team makes efforts to raise awareness of the threat on an ongoing basis.

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