

Protected B

Deputy Minister Committee on Foreign Interference

Wednesday April 5, 2023: 16:00 to 17:00

Meeting Location: TBD

Key Messages

- There will be a continuous need to coordinate and sequence initiatives effectively and with clear objectives, to ensure efficient processes.
- Per the Budget 2023 announcement, the RCMP will prioritize bolstering our investigative and engagement capacity to address foreign interference-related threats.
- While further internal consultation will be necessary to work out the details, it is anticipated that the majority of this funding will be allocated to investigative teams who are on the front-lines protecting Canadians, conducting investigations and engagement.
- To relieve burden on senior officials participating in the announced reviews, consideration should be given to holding joint briefings, and/or sharing transcripts of review appearances and documents of interest.
- As broader inter-governmental efforts to address foreign interference (FI) continue to advance it will be necessary to consider future policy and resourcing avenues and tools, in line with those identified in the 30-day report.

OUTLINE/OVERVIEW

You have been invited to attend a Deputy Minister Committee on Foreign Interference meeting, scheduled for Wednesday April 5, 2023. This meeting has three objectives: 1) Provide an update on the Prime Minister's (PM's) March 6 2023 announcement on steps being taken to address alleged FI targeting Canada's 2019 and 2021 federal elections; 2) Update on Parliamentary proceedings, and 3) Discuss the sequencing of these and other Government of Canada (GoC) initiatives. An agenda is provided at **TAB A**, Talking Points are available at **TAB B**, with additional information on the proposed allocation of resources from the budget provided at **TAB C**. This meeting is an opportunity to articulate the RCMP's support for this work and to flag the need to ensure efforts are coordinated and sequenced appropriately.

BACKGROUND

- PCO provided a draft of a 30-day report to stakeholders and the RCMP had minimal comments. This is further to the PM's previous announcement on steps being taken to address FI. The report discusses considerations related to the various review committees (NSICOP, Rosenberg Report, etc.), their

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recommendations and what steps have been taken by the GoC to address the recommendations and responses that are outstanding.

- Budget 2023 proposes to provide \$48.9 million over three years on a cash basis, starting in 2023-24, to the RCMP to protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation, increase its investigative capacity, and more proactively engage with communities at greater risk of being targeted. These resources are much-needed, as the RCMP's Federal Policing program lacks a baseline of resources to counter FI.
- s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- The key themes of the 30-day report include: Communicating with Canadians about FI and Protecting Canada's Democracy; Effective Governance and Strong Legal Frameworks; Risk, Vulnerabilities, and Security Measures; and, Engagement with Partners to Enhance Awareness and Improve Resiliency to Foreign Interference.
- The ISR team will be focusing on classified documents in its next meeting with GoC participants, which will be held on April 6, 2023. Currently, the flow of information is the major preoccupation for the ISR. The ISR will meet with key players after Easter, to facilitate its review. The key question that the ISR is asking in relation to its review concerning FI and the election is "who got to see what, when, and what did they do with the information?" The key differences between interference and influence are also an ongoing consideration.
- Furthermore, legislative gaps may be a broader consideration for the overall FI-related work that is being undertaken, including through the PCO-Task Force, to ensure that a comprehensive approach is employed to address the FI threat.
- ETHI commenced a study on FI that was previously, resuming on March 31st.
- PCO is currently in the process of coordinating logistics and flow of information for the ISR-related interactions and interviews. The RCMP is in the process of gathering reports for submission as part of the ISR document review process and will share once gathered and when appropriate.
- Concerning Budget 2023, internal discussions are ongoing regarding the allocation of the resources, s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence. Upon initial review and based on the direction received in B2023, the majority of this funding will be allocated to investigative teams who are on the front-lines protecting Canadians, conducting investigations and engagement.

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