

Protected B

Deputy Minister Committee on Foreign Interference

Wednesday April 26, 2023: 4:00pm-5:00pm
Meeting Location: TBD

Key Messages

- The RCMP strongly supports advancing a suite of legislative amendments to bolster our capabilities to combat foreign interference (FI). This would include relevant amendments to legislation such as the *Security of Information Act* (SOIA) and the *Criminal Code* (CC).
- To ensure the community has the requisite bandwidth to prioritize this important work, we strongly recommend starting with developing a deck to Cabinet in Spring 2023 (rather than advancing a Memorandum to Cabinet) and pursuing this work over Summer and Fall 2023.
- The RCMP continues to support ongoing initiatives concerning FI, including ISR briefings, reviews, and the Counter-FI Strategy.

OUTLINE/OVERVIEW

You have been invited to attend a Deputy Minister Committee on Foreign Interference meeting, scheduled for Wednesday April 26, 2023. An agenda is provided at **TAB A**, Talking Points are available at **TAB B**. This meeting is an opportunity to articulate the RCMP's stance on counter-FI initiatives being advanced by the Privy Council Office (PCO) and Public Safety Canada (PS).

BACKGROUND

- At ADM FI yesterday, PCO received support to approach SSE in Spring 2023, most likely with a deck developed by PS seeking the following:
 - Approval on the development of a comprehensive FI Bill – to secure agreement to return to Cabinet in fall with FI MC.
 - Describe the challenges, measure appetite of politicians and establish an alignment on scope to solidify policy outcome expectations (noted that currently, Ministers have different objectives)
 - Secure commitment on a Communications strategy for announcement to Canadians on Government intent and various consultations to engage through Summer 2023.
- DOJ have shared their latest iteration of their proposed changes to the CC and SOIA, which include comments and scenarios from the RCMP. FPSP-NS will further review and consult internally to identify any additional changes.
- CSIS shared updated list of proposed amendments (narrower in scope to address key immediate concerns that are likely to get traction). Note that s.2 of CSIS act

[APG]

(which refers to the definition of national security) is part of that list, with consideration being given to broadening the scope.

- Departmental external review shops are scanning their holdings for 'possible strategic surprises' to assist in preparing for future Review issues/topics/opportunities.
- Last week, ISR briefings included interviews with the 2019 and 2021 Security and Intelligence Threat to Elections Task Force (SITE TF). Former A/Director General (A/DG) of Federal Policing National Intelligence Lisa Ducharme attended the 2021 SITE TF briefing.
- Other FI-related initiatives include: a PS-led Counter-FI Strategy (ADM's agreed on a need to further think about its' utility and timing of release, considered potentially to be more of a communications document); a PCO-led map of how intelligence circulates in-between election periods; NSIRA and NSICOP reviews; a PS-drafted Letter to Parliamentarians (which is currently on hold with PS' DM) that offers FI-related briefings from Security and Intelligence (S&I) agencies to interested Members of Parliament; and a bilateral Minister/Deputy Minister-level discussion of FI at the Cross-Border Crime Forum (CBCF).

CURRENT STATUS

- ISR briefings continue, and this week the RCMP was involved in education sessions for the ISR covering Ministerial Authorities. Next week, ISR briefings will cover the 2019 Panel of Five and Ministerial briefings.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- The RCMP is supportive of relevant legislative updates made to *SOIA* and the *CC*, as such updates would assist the RCMP in improving its ability to counter FI-related threats. The Department of Justice consulted with GoC stakeholders in late 2022 on proposed legislative amendments concerning the *SOIA* and *CC* (**TAB C**). The RCMP is keen to see this work continue to advance.
- The RCMP continues to support developing a Foreign Influence Transparency Registry (FITR). As flagged in recent news reporting, such a registry can aid law enforcement's capability to respond to malign influence and interference efforts.
- PCO has expressed its intent to convene a Tiger Team (which will include the RCMP/FPNI and FPSP-NS) to review the ISR's Report due May 23, 2023.
- The RCMP continues to support PS' Counter-FI Strategy, including its treatment as a public-facing document to bolster the public's understanding of, and resilience against, FI-related threats.
- We remain interested in hearing about the next steps on the Letter to Parliamentarians, including timing, the scope of S&I agencies participation.

[APG]