

For Public Release

SECRET// CEO
2022 09 22**BRIEFING NOTE****SUBJECT:** REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RELATED TO CSIS PROTECTIVE SECURITY BRIEFINGS**Background:**

The Service placed increased priority on investigating Foreign Interference (FI) directed at our democratic system and processes during the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election. In 2019, the Service assessed the PRC as the foremost perpetrator of political FI activities against Canada and Canadian institutions. [REDACTED] the PRC [REDACTED] as well as PRC-based entities such as the Ministry of State Security (MSS) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP's) United Front Work Department (UFWD), are highly interested in Canadian elected officials and their staff. In addition to the PRC, other foreign state actors and their proxies are involved in FI activities within Canada. India, for example, is primarily focused on promoting India's image and countering threats to Indian stability. India has targeted politicians at all levels of government.

During the course of the Service's FI investigation, it became increasingly apparent that the Service could do more to educate MPs about the threat posed by FI. This led to CSIS embarking on a landmark national engagement campaign with a diverse group of federal Members of Parliament, during the summer of 2021. This engagement involved the delivery of unclassified 'defensive briefings' specifically designed to better equip elected officials (and, in some cases, their staff) to inform them of the problem of foreign influence (FI) in Canada, how to detect FI in practice, and how to create political resiliency against these threats. CSIS received overwhelmingly positive feedback from recipients of these briefings. Recipients repeatedly shared their appreciation for CSIS' engagement, the quality of the material provided, and the overall focus of the discussion. MPs appreciated the candour of the discussions, and many noted that all federal MP's would benefit from such briefings to raise further awareness on the problem of FI.

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to provide every politician in the country a defensive briefing on foreign interference with a view to building resilience and bolstering Canada's democratic institutions. As resources permit, we prioritize those who would most benefit from receiving the briefing according to the election cycle or other developments.

Expanding Protective Security Briefings to All Levels of Government

Initial prioritization for the Protective Security Briefings focused on MPs in high priority ridings, in order to ensure that briefings were provided to those who would receive the greatest benefit in the lead up to the 2021 Federal Election. The Service investigation has, however, revealed that foreign threat actors are targeting all levels of Government. In light of this fact and given that many of those briefed suggested a need for similar briefings for all politicians and their staffers, particularly as it pertains to preventative measures, a determination was made, within CSIS, to continue providing these briefings and to do so for individuals at all levels of government.

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2022 09 22**BRIEFING CONTENT:**

The goal of this initiative remains to strengthen Canada's democratic institutions and processes. These briefings are intended to sensitize individuals to the threat of foreign interference and provide them with some best practice advice, which will ideally assist in hardening defences against this threat. A number of FI influence channels rely on being able to operate covertly, but an understanding of the tradecraft and the means by which FI threat actors attempt to influence will better prepare someone to recognize FI attempts and will allow them to better prepare themselves to deal with such a threat should it present itself.

There is no standard script but the briefers use an unclassified placemat outlining CSIS' mandate on foreign interference and providing information on what is and is not FI. From there, the interviews are often tailored to the individual or are adjusted as the conversation develops. Although the briefings provide a fairly consistent message, they are tailored to the individual engagement, in order to account for the subject's familiarity to CSIS and FI and the specific dynamics of the riding and level of government. The briefings broadly cover three major topics:

- CSIS' mandate and role in the Government of Canada
- The definition of FI and what does or does not constitute FI from CSIS' perspective
- FI tradecraft and how elected officials can protect themselves and their staff

Briefing recipients are often provided with unclassified 'placemats' and reports which touch upon the above issues. These products provide a definition of foreign interference based on s.12, 2(b) of the *CSIS Act*, as well as common FI techniques and proactive security recommendations.

In addition to being conducted as a Protective Security Briefing, a number of these engagements are conducted under the Service's Threat Reduction Measures (TRM) authority. Although these briefings will have a similar outward appearance and cover the majority of the same topics, a TRM allows for the provision of more specific information, such as targeted points concerning a country's FI activities in Canada.

LOGISTICS:

Once an individual is identified to receive a briefing and appropriate approvals received, notification is provided to the Privy Council Office (PCO) (Director of Operations S&I, CoS to Assistant Secretary to Cabinet S&I, and NSIA's Office) and Public Safety (PS) (Intel Group, Departmental Liaison, SADMO, DMO COMSEC, Associate DMO). As the briefings are being undertaken for the benefit of the elected official, those contacted are provided with a degree of flexibility in regards to the location for the briefing. The individual's office often provides a relatively private and comfortable place for the individual to receive such a briefing, but a request to undertake the briefings at CSIS regional offices has also been received. Although confidentiality is important and reviewed, CSIS has been open to requests for select members of the elected official's staff to be also present during the discussions.