



Transmittal Note / Bordereau de transmission

Confidence of the King's Privy Council

To / Pour : The Prime Minister	Date : Jun 19, 2023
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Subject / Objet:
Briefing to Member of Parliament

From / De :		Via:	
Name / Nom	Office / Bureau	Name / Nom	Office / Bureau
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Approved By / Approuvé par :		Drafting Officer / Rédacteur :	
Name / Nom	Office / Bureau	Admin typist / Dactylographe :	
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For the attention of / À l'attention du:

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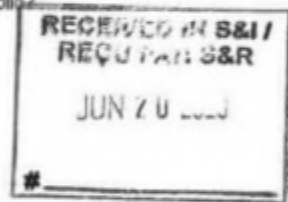
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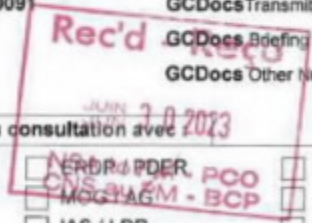
See page 2 for a description of each Section / Consultez la page 2 pour obtenir une description pour chaque article.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

c.c.: John Hannaford, Nathalie G. Drouin, Daniel Rogers

BRIEFING TO MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

(Information Only)

SUMMARY

- The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) conducted a Threat Reduction Measure with Mr. Erin O'Toole on May 26, 2023. CSIS included unverified details from intelligence reporting in the briefing to Mr. O'Toole in an effort to provide him with "complete information" of possible threats against him, in the spirit of the Directive issued by the Minister of Public Safety on May 16, 2023.
- On May 30, 2023, Mr. O'Toole delivered a speech on foreign interference in the House of Commons based on information provided by CSIS.
- Parts of Mr. O'Toole's speech misconstrued or overstated that information.
- CSIS confirmed that some of the information communicated to Mr. O'Toole was not shared with the Independent Special Rapporteur on Foreign Interference, the Right Honourable David Johnston, as he prepared his first report on foreign interference in past federal elections because it was not deemed "sufficiently reliable".
- Mr. Johnston has since produced a supplement to the confidential annex of his report, in which he concludes that Mr. O'Toole's remarks are not consistent with the briefing he received from CSIS.

Canada

Background

- MP Erin O'Toole was the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) going into the 2021 General Election. Part of Mr. O'Toole's leadership platform was to "take a tough stance on Beijing", including recognizing the People's Republic of China (PRC) regime's persecution of the country's Uyghur minority as a genocide, repatriating and diversifying Canadian supply chains away from China, and cracking down on foreign influenced activities in Canada.

CSIS Briefing to Mr. O'Toole

- On May 16th, 2023, the Minister of Public Safety issued a Ministerial Directive on Threats to the Security of Canada Directed at Parliament and Parliamentarians (**TAB A**). This directive included the expectation that CSIS seek, wherever possible, to "ensure that parliamentarians are informed of threats to the security of Canada directed at them."
- In implementing this Directive, CSIS identified and shared all information pertaining to Mr. O'Toole, including unverified information from intelligence reporting. The unverified information provided to Mr. O'Toole (identified in **TAB B**) included indications of a PRC disinformation campaign, not that it was aimed at Mr. O'Toole specifically.
- In its engagement with Mr. O'Toole, CSIS specified that the briefing included unverified information.

Speech in the House of Commons

- On May 30th, 2023, Mr. O'Toole delivered a speech on foreign interference in the House of Commons. In his speech, he discussed the classified information he received from CSIS, including the unverified information about a PRC disinformation campaign, without providing any caveats as to the reliability of the unverified information.
- A table detailing the specific instances in which Mr. O'Toole's statements did not accurately reflect the information CSIS provided him is included in **TAB B**.
- During his allocution, Mr. O'Toole referred to the freedom of speech provisions of parliamentary privilege in the House of Commons.

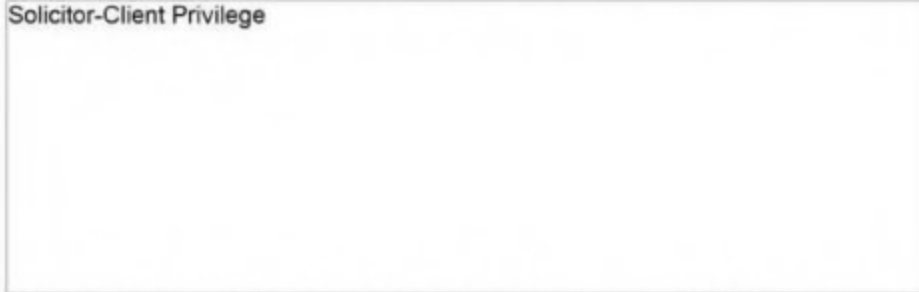
Independent Special Rapporteur

- The Standing House of Commons Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) has been conducting a review on foreign interference since Fall 2022. Departments produced documents to support their review.
- On Tuesday June 6th, 2023, Mr. Johnston appeared before PROC to testify in support of the Committee's study on foreign interference and was questioned about the alleged campaign against Mr. O'Toole.
- The Committee referred to a September 14, 2021, Rapid Response Mechanism report that mentions a potential Chinese Communist Party (CCP) information operation. The report indicates that "in what may be the result of a CCP information operation" to influence Canadians of Chinese heritage, WeChat news accounts continue to share a story originally published in the Global Times that CPC leader Erin O'Toole "almost wants to break relations with China". A copy is in **TAB C**.
- Mr. Johnston testified that the information and intelligence he reviewed during his study did not provide conclusive evidence that the activity in question was state-sponsored. One PROC member opined that this suggests Mr. Johnston's review of foreign interference in Canada was incomplete.
- While the ISR team had not received all uncorroborated intelligence pertaining to Mr. O'Toole before they produced their report, the ISR team had unfettered and unprecedented access to classified information, as well as the Rapid Response Mechanism reports.
- The ISR team was briefed on CSIS' analysis of allegations of foreign interference in the 2021 election, which concluded that the alleged interference could not be conclusively attributed to a state actor. Mr. Johnston was also aware of concerns that had been raised by Mr. O'Toole and the CPC.
- After Mr. O'Toole's speech in the House of Commons, CSIS provided all related intelligence to the ISR and additional interviews with Service employees, including Director Vigneault, took place.

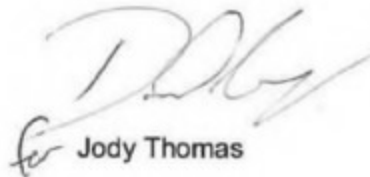
PCO Comment

- In the Supplement to the Confidential Annex of his report, the ISR indicated that Mr. O'Toole's speech in the House of Commons did not accurately convey the contents of his CSIS briefing. The ISR also urged the Government and the House of Commons to consider options so that these briefings are less likely to become politicized.

- Solicitor-Client Privilege



- PCO has been working with Public Safety Canada and CSIS to refine the protocol to implement the Minister of Public Safety's May, 2023 Directive. The protocol is now being considered by the Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence Response. The proposed approach calls for CSIS to provide detailed information in advance of engagements under the Directive in order to ensure stakeholders' awareness.
- Public Safety Canada is also considering options to adjust the implementation of the Directive to allow CSIS to more effectively triage the intelligence shared with parliamentarians.
- We will keep you abreast of developments.


for Jody Thomas

Attachments

10354591(CABNET) 

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[Public Safety Canada](#)[Home](#) → [Transparency](#) → [Ministerial Directions](#)→ [Ministerial Direction on Threats to the Security of Canada Directed at Parliament and Parliame...](#)

Ministerial Direction on Threats to the Security of Canada Directed at Parliament and Parliamentarians

The Parliament of Canada is at the heart of Canada's democracy. As such, it is imperative that all parliamentarians are able to exercise their roles fully and without hindrance or interference from foreign states or hostile actors.

To this end, I expect that threats to the security of Canada directed at Parliament and parliamentarians, including those conducted through their family and staff, receive the highest level of attention from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in collaboration with the national security and intelligence community. In doing so, I continue to expect that CSIS will at all times respect the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the rule of law.

Pursuant to subsection 6(2) of the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, I have issued the following direction to describe my expectations in this regard.

1. CSIS will investigate all threats to the security of Canada that target Parliament and parliamentarians in a manner proportional to the threat and the importance of Parliament to Canada's democracy and national security.
2. When CSIS assesses, in accordance with its mandate, there to be a threat to the security of Canada directed at Parliament or a parliamentarian, it will pursue the appropriate lawful methods in response, including but not limited to the taking of threat reduction measures and disclosures to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other law enforcement agencies.
3. CSIS will seek, wherever possible within the law and while protecting the security and integrity of national security and intelligence operations and investigations, to ensure that parliamentarians are informed of threats to the security of Canada directed at them. This may involve direct disclosures, or by working with other bodies, such as Government of Canada departments, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or other law enforcement agencies, as the law permits.
4. The Minister of Public Safety will be informed of all instances of threats to the security of Canada directed at Parliament or parliamentarians in a timely manner and with an explanation of how CSIS will implement the above directions.

Date modified:

2023-05-16

SECRET / CEO

Comparison of Mr. O'Toole's statements in the House of Commons and the information provided to him by CSIS

O'Toole Statement in Parliament (May 30, 2023)	CSIS Briefing (May 26, 2023)
"...ongoing campaign of foreign interference to target me as both a member of this chamber and leader of the Official Opposition."	<p>CSIS did not reference an on-going campaign against Mr. O'Toole.</p> <p>CSIS referenced foreign interference activities against Mr. O'Toole when he was the leader of the CPC and as a member of Parliament.</p>
"Each of these threats was intended to discredit me, to promote false narratives about my policies and to severely obstruct my work as a Member of Parliament and as leader of the official opposition. The numerous examples also demonstrate that there was an orchestrated campaign of foreign interference in the 43rd Parliament and in the 2021 general election."	<p>CSIS did not state the PRC was trying to 'severely obstruct' his work as an MP.</p> <p><i>CSIS shared that there was reporting suggesting that PRC officials in Canada did not favour the CPC in the 2021 Election.</i></p>
	<p>CSIS also presented <u>unconfirmed</u> information regarding the Chinese diaspora's potential fear of negative consequences for themselves or their families.</p> <p>CSIS referenced an article circulating online regarding a false narrative that the CPC would ban WeChat if elected.</p>
"...foreign funding, specifically the payment of funds by the Chinese Communist Party through the United Front Work Department, to create specific products of misinformation on me as a member of Parliament and as leader of the Conservative Party of Canada."	
"...to foreign-controlled social media platforms. This category related specifically to the WeChat communications platform and its use to further the aims of the Chinese Communist Party and the United Front Work Department, and their campaign to spread misinformation to undermine and discredit my work."	<p><i>CSIS advised that the PRC may use the WeChat platform to assert influence.</i></p>
	<p>CSIS advised that while there were indications of a disinformation campaign, there was no confirmed link to the PRC in the dissemination of the article on WeChat.</p>
"...voter suppression, specifically that intelligence indicated an active campaign of voter suppression against me, the Conservative Party of Canada and a candidate in one electoral district during the 2021 general election."	
"My parliamentary caucus and I were the target of a sophisticated misinformation and voter suppression campaign orchestrated by the People's Republic of China before and during the 2021 general election."	
	<p>CSIS advised that while there were indications of a disinformation campaign, there was no confirmed link to the PRC in the dissemination of the article on WeChat.</p>

SECRET / CEO

<p>"The threats identified against me by CSIS did not relate to one single event or one single accredited diplomat; rather, the numerous threats identified to me provide proof of an ongoing campaign of foreign interference, intended not only to disrupt my work as a member but also to critically disrupt my work as the leader of a large parliamentary caucus in a minority Parliament."</p>	<p>While this statement was accurate to the overall CSIS briefing, it is an overstatement in saying "provides proof".</p> <p>CSIS indicated that it would be more accurate to say there were indications of foreign interference</p>
<p>"I was one of the first voices in the chamber to discourage the use of Huawei technology in Canada's 5G network. I, alongside other colleagues, raised concerns about the approval of sales of several Canadian technology companies without proper security assessments by the government"</p>	<p>These statements blended some items from the briefing, however CSIS confirms that Mr. O'Toole was informed about perceptions to his opinion on Huawei.</p> <p>CSIS did not include reference to the agreement in Hong Kong.</p>
<p>"I, along with others, spoke about the issue of human rights in China and the abuse of the "one country, two systems" agreement in Hong Kong."</p>	
<p>"It is because of this advocacy that I have faced, in response, many years of an orchestrated retaliation campaign run from Beijing. These events occurred not only before and during the 2021 general election, which has been the subject of considerable reporting in the last year, but also prior to this election, and they were in the knowledge or control of the government, which refused to act."</p>	<p>CSIS did not state O'Toole faced "years of an orchestrated retaliation campaign run from Beijing."</p> <p><i>CSIS shared that there was reporting suggesting that PRC officials in Canada did not favour the CPC in the 2021 Election.</i></p>
<p>"In fact, CSIS advised me that I will remain a target of Beijing's influence operations long after I leave the House this summer."</p>	<p>CSIS confirmed that as a MP and/or former MP, Mr. O'Toole <u>could</u> be targeted in the future.</p>
<p>"The attacks on my privilege began before dissolution, were accelerated during the writ and resumed again afterwards. It shows how insidious this foreign interference has become."</p>	<p>While this statement was inaccurate to the overall CSIS briefing, it represents the overall theme of the briefing on the threat of foreign interference.</p>

TAB | C
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SITE TF SITREP: 14 September 2021

2021 Federal Election – Threat Trend: **STABLE**



This situation report (SITREP) provides information on the operations of the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force. It is to be used by Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) and Deputy Ministers (DMs) for information and decision-making purposes. Intended for named recipients only. Please share with members of: SITE TF ADMs; SITE TF DMs; Panel of 5

Threat Updates

GAC/RRM

- (U//OUO) RRM Canada did not observe any significant evidence of foreign state-sponsored information manipulation in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem on September 13. However, Chinese State media has taken an increased interest in GE44 in general and the perceived China policies of the Conservative Party of Canada.
- (U//OUO) RRM Canada assesses the majority of English and French-language content originated from recognizable Canadian news sites.
- (U//OUO) In what may be the result of a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) information operation that aims to influence Canadians of Chinese heritage, WeChat news accounts continue to [share](#) a story originally published by the *Global Times* that Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole "mentioned 31 times" in the party platform, and "almost wants to break relations with China" but received minimal engagement (avg. 550 page views).
- (U//OUO) The *Global Times* published [two articles](#) about the Canadian government's direction for state-owned China Mobile to divest from a Canadian telecom company. The articles quoted a spokesperson from the Chinese embassy in Canada who says: "Some Canadian politicians have been maliciously speculating on China-related issues", that a "few political party leaders have made unwarranted attacks on China's human rights during the Leaders' debate" and "violently interfering in China's internal affairs." The articles received considerable user interest (over 200K page views).
- (U//OUO) An alternative Russian Language news site called the "Russian News Agency of the Russian Public Movement" – which RRM Canada has no evidence to link to the Russian state – [shared a story](#) about an alleged Canadian militia group that made its [introduction](#) on YouTube. The article received some engagement on Twitter (81 engagements). For further analysis of the YouTube video; See points provided by RCMP.

RCMP

(U) Information current as of as of 13 September 2021, 0900hrs

- (PB) The past 72 hours witnessed a continuation of direct and indirect threats posted online towards the Prime Minister (PM), with recent threats emerging via email and 4chan posts. Incidents of vandalism targeting election candidate signs continue for a number of political parties, while some LPC candidates have been the recipients of more targeted intimidation activity:

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- o (PB) An LPC candidate had several of his election posts defaced with anti-Semitic images, including swastikas.
- o (PB) Another LPC candidate reported that his vehicle was vandalized while parked outside his home. Some instances of physical intimidation have also taken place.
- o (PB) An LPC candidate in Regina reported being harassed and intimidated, and then having dog feces thrown at his car while campaigning.
- (PB) The RCMP and applicable Police of Jurisdiction (PoJ) are investigating all such instances of threats and intimidation.
- (PB) Advance polling stations opened for the Federal Election for the period covering 10-13 September 2021. Occasional instances of belligerent electors confronting Elections Canada staff are expected to occur, given the requirement that electors must wear a mask as required by the province, territory, or region. The RCMP has received information about several instances of belligerent individuals appearing at polling stations or threatening to sue Elections Canada if denied entry to a polling station due to their refusal to wear a mask. In the realm of online threats, the RCMP received information about a Twitter user who responded to a TVA news article about bilingual greetings at the polls, saying "we will greet you with 9mm bullets." The RCMP is investigating.
- (PB) Anti-Vaccine/Anti-Lockdown/Anti-Mask grievances are continuing to drive both online discussions and in-person protests. In particular, the Canadian Frontline Nurses are protesting against mandatory vaccinations outside hospitals in various cities across Canada. Open source information suggests that there may be a counter-protest in response to the protests in Alberta. Counter-protests may act as a flash-point and cause for public and officer safety concerns. The protests will specifically target hospitals across Canada and are scheduled for ten different provinces. Multiple tweets have been sent by one Twitter user calling for "battle" at local hospital protests. In response to an unrelated image of a person firing a weapon, the Twitter user also encouraged users to bring weapons to a purported "raid" at Toronto's General Hospital in an effort "to get inside [the hospital] and show the world that Covid is fake." There has been a marked escalation over the past week that demonstrates that some individuals are advocating for violence at these protests. The RCMP and applicable PoJs are tracking and investigating.
- (PB) Another rally to note occurred in Calgary on Sunday, which focused on protesting vaccine mandates and other public health measures; roughly 2,000 people were in attendance. According to news reports, one man carried a flag reading "molon labe" - an apocryphal ancient Greek quote from King Leonidas of Sparta that translates to "come and take them" - which has been used as a rallying cry for neo-fascist groups in the U.S. and Europe. Additionally, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton expressed disgust at photos that showed some protesters equating vaccine mandates with the genocide committed by Nazi Germany.
- (PB) The RCMP is also investigating a recent YouTube video posted by a potential self-described militia group. The video shows four masked persons in military attire carrying long barrelled military style weapons. The group calls itself the "F49 Militia", a "collective of citizens that are willing to do whatever it takes", who are presenting the LYNX movement to viewers. According to the video, LYNX stands for, "liberate your neighbourhood, liberate your nation". The video itself does not mention the election. The rhetoric in the content of the video and responses by the group in the

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comments section is a "call to arms", seeking to implore viewers to become involved in an uprising against a tyrannical government. There is no direct threat made to any person and the group does not reference any particular political affiliation. The RCMP is examining the video and associated content for indications of criminality and has engaged with applicable security and law enforcement partners.

Operational Responses and Updates

- (U) No significant updates at this time.
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