

For Public Release

Clerk of the Privy Council and
Secretary to the CabinetGreffier du Conseil privé et
Secrétaire du CabinetOttawa, Canada
K1A 0A3**SECRET****MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER**

c.c.: Jody Thomas, Nathalie G. Drouin

**CLASSIFIED NATIONAL SECURITY BRIEFINGS TO OPPOSITION
LEADERS**

(Decision Sought/Signature Required)

SUMMARY

- It is proposed that classified briefings be offered by Canada's security agencies to leaders of recognized political parties in the House of Commons on national security matters, such as foreign interference and domestic extremism. These quarterly briefings would support better-informed policy debate and better position Canada's political leaders to take action to protect themselves, their parties and Canada's national security from specific threats. The first briefing would offer an overview of the intelligence community's activities, processes and priorities, and would then focus on foreign interference in past federal elections.
- To facilitate these briefings, it is also proposed that the leaders of recognized political parties each be processed for a TOP SECRET security clearance and be briefed on receiving and handling classified information. Together, these measures would enable Canada's security agencies to prepare and deliver tailored, classified briefings up to the TOP SECRET level to them as needed.
- These briefings would also respond to a 3 May 2023 letter you received from the Honourable Jagmeet Singh. In his letter he asked that you meet with opposition leaders to provide information about how Members of Parliament are kept informed about threats against them and their families from foreign governments.
- If you agree with this proposal, please sign the enclosed letters to Opposition Leaders (**Tab A**) advising them of the opportunity for classified briefings. Once received, PCO will liaise with the offices of the leaders of the recognized opposition parties to ensure security forms are properly filled out and submitted. Upon receiving clearances, PCO will then work to coordinate the briefings.
- **Do you agree?**

Background

- Recent media reports have brought attention to allegations of foreign interference in Canadian democratic processes during the 2019 and

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2021 General Elections. These allegations have led to calls for a public inquiry into foreign interference in Canada. Debate on these issues has been ongoing in the House of Commons, including within the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC).

- The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) recommended, in two separate reports in 2018 and 2019, that "[in] the interest of national security, members of the House of Commons and the Senate should be briefed upon being sworn-in and regularly thereafter on the risks of foreign interference and extremism in Canada."
- On 3 May 2023, the Honourable Jagmeet Singh wrote a letter to you (Tab B) asking you to "urgently meet with all Opposition leaders to outline how [threats from foreign governments directed at Members of Parliament and their families] are received by you and the Minister of Public Safety, what you do with this information and how MPs are kept informed."

Proposal

- In view of ongoing debates around foreign interference, democratic processes, and growing threats to Canada's national security, it is proposed that classified briefings be offered to the leaders, or interim leaders, of recognized political parties in the House of Commons. In the near term, this would serve to shed light on allegations of foreign interference in political spheres. It would also highlight other threats to Canada's national security, political parties, and parliamentarians themselves.
- Such briefings would support informed policy debate on foreign interference and other national security threats, such as violent extremism. The briefings would better position Canada's political leaders to take action to protect themselves, their parties and Canada's national security. This initiative could also signal publicly that Canada and all Canadian political parties take threats to national security seriously.
- The focus of the briefings would be to provide opposition leaders with information that is not available publicly, or through the regular means by which officials provide unclassified information to Parliament. As such, it is envisioned that the briefings would be typically delivered at the SECRET level, though with the option of going up to TOP SECRET if required. Care would be taken to protect all Cabinet Confidences.
- Individual classified briefings would be offered to official party leaders exclusively and would be delivered in person in a secure location in Ottawa. This format would allow to increase awareness of those key

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elected officials while adequately protecting classified information. PCO would coordinate the briefings, which would involve senior representation from the Canadian Secret Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), and would take place every four months, or as needed.

- PCO would advise your office of the dates and topics in advance of the briefings. The first briefing would offer an overview of the intelligence community's activities, processes and priorities, and would then focus on the foreign interference threat, including - in past federal elections. The first briefing would also respond to Mr. Singh's request for information about how information on threats to Members of Parliament and their families are managed. Future briefings would prioritize the most pressing national security topics of the day, potentially including foreign interference and ideologically motivated violent extremism.
- If you agree with this proposal, please sign the enclosed letters to opposition leaders that lay out the initiative, and explain the clearance process as the mechanism to offer them classified briefings. PCO will engage with opposition leaders' offices to ensure that security clearance paperwork is properly filled out and submitted. Upon confirmation of clearances, PCO will coordinate the briefings, in consultation with your office.

Considerations

- As lawmakers and politicians, all Members of Parliament are at risk of being targeted by foreign interference actors and, increasingly, by domestic extremism, as are many of their constituents.
- Based on the experience of the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force in the context of previous federal elections, some party leaders may choose not to accept an invitation to classified briefings. Nevertheless, offering these briefings to opposition leaders would reiterate our commitment to transparency.

Janice Charette

Attachments

10254917/ Ferguson/Chayer

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TAB | A
Onglet

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CANADA

PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

Monsieur Blanchet,

Au cours des derniers mois, nous avons pu constater que le Canada est confronté à un certain nombre de menaces à la sécurité nationale, dont certaines pourraient avoir une incidence sur nos institutions démocratiques. Dans un monde où nos adversaires disposent de nombreux outils évolutifs pour menacer nos intérêts nationaux, il est plus important que jamais d'avoir un dialogue sain et transparent sur de telles menaces et sur la meilleure façon de les contrer.

C'est pourquoi je vous écris, à vous et aux autres chefs de partis reconnus à la Chambre des communes, pour vous offrir la possibilité de recevoir tous les trois mois des breffages classifiés sur les menaces à la sécurité nationale de la part de hauts fonctionnaires de la communauté du renseignement. Ce premier breffage consistera en un aperçu des activités, processus et priorités de la communauté du renseignement du Canada ainsi qu'un aperçu de la menace d'ingérence étrangère.

Si vous êtes d'accord, le bureau de ma conseillère à la sécurité nationale et au renseignement, M^{me} Jody Thomas, prendra des dispositions avec votre bureau.

Pour recevoir les breffages classifiés, vous devrez obtenir une autorisation de sécurité. Des représentants du Bureau du Conseil privé (BCP) communiqueront sous peu avec votre bureau pour entamer le processus d'enquête de sécurité.

J'espère que ces breffages vous seront utiles.

Sincères salutations,

M. Yves-François Blanchet
Chef du Bloc Québécois
Suite 202, édifice Wellington
Chambre des communes
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

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PRIME MINISTER - PREMIER MINISTRE

Dear Mr. Singh,

The recent months have underscored that Canada is facing a number of national security threats, including some that may affect our democratic institutions. In a world where our adversaries have many evolving tools to threaten our national interests, it is more important than ever to have a healthy, transparent dialogue on these threats and how best to counter them.

In your 3 May 2023 letter, you requested further information about how Members of Parliament are kept informed about threats against them and their families from foreign governments.

As such, I am writing to you, as well as to other leaders of recognized parties in the House of Commons, to offer you the possibility of receiving quarterly classified briefings on national security threats from senior officials from the intelligence community. The first briefing would provide an overview of the activities, processes and priorities of Canada's intelligence community, as well as an overview of the foreign interference threat. Should you agree, the office of my National Security and Intelligence Advisor, Ms. Jody Thomas, will make arrangements with your office.

In order to be able to receive the classified briefings, you will be required to receive a security clearance. Officials from the Privy Council Office (PCO) will engage your office shortly to start the security screening process.

I trust that you will find these briefings helpful.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jagmeet Singh
Leader of the New Democratic Party
Suite 579, Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

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PRIME MINISTER - PREMIER MINISTRE

Dear Mr. Poilievre,

The recent months have underscored that Canada is facing a number of national security threats, including some that may affect our democratic institutions. In a world where our adversaries have many evolving tools to threaten our national interests, it is more important than ever to have a healthy, transparent dialogue on these threats and how best to counter them.

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In order to be able to receive the classified briefings, you will be required to receive a security clearance. Officials from the Privy Council Office (PCO) will engage your office shortly to start the security screening process.

I trust that you will find these briefings helpful.

Sincerely,

Mr. Pierre Poilievre
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
Suite 754, Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

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TAB | B
Onglet

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CHEF DU NOUVEAU PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CANADA



LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

May 3, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
 Prime Minister of Canada
 House of Commons
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

The public revelations of the threats from a foreign government directed to a Member of Parliament and his family have been shocking.

Members of Parliament must be able to do their jobs without fear. They must be able to ask tough questions and stand up against human rights abuses and know that their security will be protected. This is an expectation that every Canadian should have of their government.

So far, neither you nor your Minister of Public Safety have been able to offer Members of Parliament or Canadians any assurances that if they or their families are threatened by a foreign government, your government will inform and protect them. This is of great concern.

I appreciate that you have made an offer to brief the affected member of Parliament, Mr. Chong. This offer is coming only after the information was made public and almost two years after the threats were made. This utter lack of urgency and action is unconscionable.

I believe that this is an issue that could impact all Members of Parliament. Any MP could be subject to similar threats. There are members in all our caucuses who have loved ones in countries where they may be subject to threats. I am therefore asking you to urgently meet with all Opposition leaders to outline how such threats are received by you and the Minister of Public Safety, what you do with this information and how MPs are kept informed.

To be clear, I am not asking for you to release any information that could harm national security. I am simply asking for a clear process of how evidence of foreign interference directed at Members of Parliament and their families is handled by your office.

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 TEL/TEL: 613-995-7224 | FAX/TEL: 613-995-4565 | TEL/TEL: 604-291-8863 | FAX/TEL: 604-666-0727

Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca

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Canadians' faith in their democracy has been shaken by your failure to call a public inquiry into foreign interference as every opposition leader has repeatedly demanded. It will be further shaken if your government cannot demonstrate that it takes threats to MPs and their families seriously and has a plan to act accordingly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jagmeet Singh', written in a cursive style.

Jagmeet Singh,
MP Burnaby South
Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

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CHEF DU NOUVEAU PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CANADA



LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

Mai 3, 2023

Le très honorable Justin Trudeau
Premier Ministre du Canada
Chambre des communes,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Monsieur le Premier ministre,

La divulgation de menaces pesant sur un député et sa famille par un gouvernement étranger est choquante.

Les députés doivent pouvoir faire leur travail sans crainte. Ils doivent pouvoir poser des questions difficiles et dénoncer les violations des droits de la personne sans craindre pour leur sécurité. C'est ce que chaque Canadien attend de son gouvernement.

Jusqu'à présent, ni vous ni votre ministre de la Sécurité publique n'avez été en mesure d'offrir aux députés ou aux Canadiens l'assurance qu'en cas de menace d'un gouvernement étranger à leur encontre ou à l'encontre de leur famille, que votre gouvernement les informera et les protégera. C'est très préoccupant.

J'apprécie que vous ayez proposé d'informer le député concerné, M. Chong. Malheureusement, cette initiative n'intervient qu'après la divulgation de l'information dans les médias et près de deux ans après les menaces. Cette absence totale d'urgence et d'action est inadmissible.

Je pense qu'il s'agit d'un problème qui pourrait affecter tous les députés, qui pourrait faire l'objet de menaces similaires. Certains députés de tous les caucus ont des proches dans des pays où ils pourraient faire l'objet de menaces. Je vous demande donc de rencontrer d'urgence tous les chefs de l'opposition pour leur expliquer comment vous et le ministre de la Sécurité publique êtes informés de ces menaces, ce que vous faites de ces informations et comment les députés sont tenus au courant.

OTTAWA | BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD
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En clair, je ne vous demande pas de divulguer des informations qui pourraient nuire à la sécurité nationale. Je vous demande simplement de définir clairement la façon dont votre cabinet traite les preuves d'ingérence étrangère visant les députés et leurs familles.

La confiance des Canadiennes et des Canadiens en leur démocratie est ébranlée par votre incapacité à lancer une enquête publique sur l'ingérence étrangère comme l'ont demandé à maintes reprises tous les chefs de l'opposition. Elle le sera d'autant plus si votre gouvernement ne parvient pas à démontrer qu'il prend au sérieux les menaces qui pèsent sur les députés et leurs familles et qu'il dispose d'un plan d'action en conséquence.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Premier ministre, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées,



Jagmeet Singh
Député (Burnaby Sud)
Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique du Canada