



MEMORANDUM FOR ACTION

The Minister of Foreign Affairs

CC: The Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development
The Minister of International Development

Ministerial Directive on Intelligence Priorities

Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend that you issue the attached Ministerial Directive (MD) on the Government of Canada Intelligence Priorities. Once issued, it replaces the previous Ministerial Directive that you issued in 2022 as part of the Government of Canada's intelligence priorities renewal process, which occurs every two-years.

The MD has been updated to reflect the harmonized approach s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence Once set, all Priorities apply to GoC intelligence production organizations' collection operations, including Global Affairs Canada (GAC). s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

The purpose of this MD is to provide formal direction to Global Affairs Canada officials that all intelligence collection must be prioritized through the interdepartmental process s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence. It articulates your expectations with regards to implementation of the Intelligence Priorities within your mandates. Given the current context of fiscal restraint, it requests that the Department dedicate a significant share of its intelligence collection resources to those priorities that present the strongest foreign policy nexus and where the Department has significant value added. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence


s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence It also requests that GAC leverage resources of other government departments and agencies to serve its intelligence needs where appropriate.

The new intelligence priorities are listed on page one of the MD. For further details on each of the Priorities, a summary is provided in the attached table s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence (Annex B).

Recommendations

- That you approve this memorandum and that you sign the attached Ministerial Directive (Annex A).


David Morrison
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

- I concur
- I do not concur
- I wish to discuss

Minister

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Background

1. The Government of Canada's intelligence priorities, which are reviewed and set by Cabinet on a two-year cycle, provide approval and strategic direction to Canada's security and intelligence community on intelligence collection, analysis, and assessment to support the government's operations and provide senior decision makers with intelligence products.
2. The Ministerial Directives (MD) outline the Minister's expectations for the implementation of the intelligence priorities by each specific organization, tailored to their respective mandates and legal frameworks. They codify the MC's management processes and require their organizations to follow them, paving the way for the development of specific intelligence requirements by officials. In other words, the MC sets out the Government's intent and MDs require organizations to take action. Additionally, the MDs ensure the Minister is aware of and can be held accountable for the security and intelligence activities their organizations undertake. Historically, the distinct MDs for the implementation of the intelligence priorities have been issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, National Defence and Public Safety to their respective organizations. This year, PCO has provided a relatively rigid template to assist the departments and agencies responsible for the issuance of the MD, which will allow all MDs to be closely aligned.
3. The renewal of the intelligence priorities and the issuance of the attached MD (Annex A) are routine refreshes within established governance mechanisms. They set the stage for the new intelligence requirements (the specific topics of interest associated to an intelligence priority) to be established. The MDs are being renewed at a time when Canada's security, prosperity and values are increasingly being challenged by the international environment. As a result, there is an ever growing need for more and better intelligence, which makes effective prioritization critical to the GoC's operations and policy development. The attached MD will help ensure that GoC's resources deliver maximum value. While the priorities are set for the two-year period, there will be opportunity for officials to review the intelligence requirements periodically within the two-year period.
4. Of note, once set, all Priorities apply to GoC intelligence production organizations' collection operations, including Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

Considerations

5. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is both a producer and a significant consumer of foreign intelligence and an active partner in the Canadian intelligence community. In accordance with applicable legislation and policy direction, GAC performs or contributes to many functions related to the intelligence priorities, and supports collection and analytical efforts by working closely with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Communications Security Establishment, among others.
6. The attached MD will apply to all of the department's intelligence collection activities and ensure that they align with the intelligence priorities. This includes overt and specialized diplomatic reporting of the Global Security Reporting Program (GSRP) and the work of Intelligence Liaison Officers (ILOs) posted to our missions in Canberra, London, and Washington.
7. As required by the intelligence priority setting process, it includes all new set priorities, which apply to all departments and agencies, including GAC. That said, in a context of budgetary restraint, it also underlines expectations that GAC focus a significant share of its intelligence collection resources on those priorities that present the strongest foreign policy nexus and where the Department has significant value added.
s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence It also requests that GAC leverage resources of other government departments and agencies where appropriate.
8. Of note, the MD has no effect on the setting or relative ranking of other policy objectives or priorities at GAC, which are established through other processes and mechanisms (such as, the Departmental Plan and the Integrated Corporate Business Plan).

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10. The attached MD, if approved, would be communicated to Heads of Mission, GSRP officers, ILOs, and other GAC officials in order to ensure awareness of the department's role in meeting the collection requirements flowing from the intelligence priorities.

11. Pursuant to paragraph 8(2.1)(c) of the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) Act, the attached MD will be provided to NSIRA by GAC shortly after it is released. NSIRA may take the opportunity to review the implementation of this MD and the departments implicated.

Resource Implications

12. Nil.

Communications Implications/Actions

13. There are no communications implications associated with the issuing of the attached MD given it is not public facing. Should media become aware of the MD and contact GAC with inquiries, responsive lines will be developed as needed.

14. Separately but related, as part of ongoing efforts to increase transparency around national security and intelligence activities, PCO is recommending the publication of a public document outlining the intelligence priorities at a high level. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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Parliamentary Implications/Actions

15. Nil.

Attachments:

- Annex A - Ministerial Directive: *Ministerial Directive to Global Affairs Canada on the Government of Canada Intelligence Priorities for 2023-2025*, in English and French

- Annex B s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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