

For Public Release

Dear Prime Minister,

On March 6th, you asked us to provide you with an action plan to address outstanding recommendations from the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP)¹, the Judd Report², the Rosenberg Report³, and other related reviews.

Through a detailed analysis of these reports and consultations with key partners, we are pleased to report that many of the recommendations made in these reports have been either fully or partly implemented. Indeed, the Government has taken several measures over the years to better protect Canadians and our institutions from the threats posed by foreign interference. These threats and the methods used to interfere in our affairs, however, continue to evolve and require further efforts.

A key area that was highlighted in each of the reports cited above is the need to improve how we communicate with Canadians on both the threats we are collectively facing and the tools we have or need to counter them. As suggested by NSICOP, Canada needs a comprehensive Counter Foreign Interference Strategy that will help Canadians understand the security environment in which they live, articulate how the Government may help protect them from foreign interference, and assist them in building their own resilience to threats.

This Strategy, which the Minister of Public Safety is currently developing in consultation with his colleagues, will be an important communication tool upon which we will build to improve engagement with Canadians and stakeholders in all jurisdictions. As recommended by Mr. Rosenberg in his recent report, we should consider developing mechanisms to communicate with Canadians on foreign interference attempts on a regular basis. While the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (CEIPP) Panel will continue to maintain the same high threshold to guide communications on actual threats during election periods, we will look into the possibility of further leveraging the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force. For instance, we will explore the concept of a permanent SITE secretariat housed at PCO, which could have a mandate to report on sub-threshold threats regularly and publicly. This would contribute to raising awareness and would also benefit other jurisdictions. In parallel, we are developing a mechanism to offer regular unclassified security briefings to members of Parliament, Senators and their staff. These briefings would be specifically tailored to their needs and provide useful tips to help detect interference attempts, increase their resilience to such attempts and provide tools and resources to help address concerns. In some cases, the Government may also decide to offer classified briefings to leaders of the Opposition parties. A mechanism is in development to facilitate such briefings, as required.

Regular communications, sustained transparency and increased awareness are important pieces of the counter foreign interference toolkit. However, our security and law enforcement agencies

¹ The 2019 NSICOP Annual Report (NSICOP 2019), and the 2018 NSICOP Special report into the allegations associated with Prime Minister Trudeau's official visit to India in February 2018 (NSICOP 2018). Other published reports from NSICOP and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency were not examined as they did not contain recommendations relating to foreign interference.

² The Report on the assessment of the 2019 Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (Judd Report)

³ The 2021 Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (Rosenberg Report)

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also need better tools to effectively counter the threat. As recommended in the NSICOP report, one such tool is strong, up to date legislation. As you know, the *Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Act*, *Security of Information Act* and the *Criminal Code* have not kept pace with the security environment. As such, consideration should be given to the possibility of the Ministers of Justice and Public Safety engaging Canadians in discussions as to how these important pieces of legislation could be amended to better equip agencies in the fight against foreign interference and other threats.

The initiative proposed encompass a number of ministerial equities and would require sustained synchronization. The Privy Council Office would work closely with implicated departments and agencies to ensure the development of coordinated advice, the provision of timely updates and overall cohesiveness.

One month ago, you asked us to provide you with an action plan to take stock of outstanding recommendations from key reports, and identify steps to be taken in the immediate term to counter foreign interference. You also announced a series of other measures, including asking the NSICOP and National Security Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) to undertake reviews within their purview. More recently, you announced the mandate of the Independent Special Rapporteur, the Right Honourable David Johnston, which will provide a further layer of independent assessment and review. The proposed path forward identified in this Plan will be considerate of work undertaken by these other important entities, ensuring our public institutions work together to combat foreign interference in our electoral processes.