



National Security and
Intelligence Committee of
Parliamentarians (NSICOP)



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National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Special Report on the Prime Minister's Trip to India in February 2018

December 03, 2018

OTTAWA, December 03, 2018 – The Government of Canada today tabled the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) Special Report on the Prime Minister's trip to India in February 2018. The Special Report examined allegations relating to: i) foreign interference in Canadian political affairs; ii) risks to the security of the Prime Minister; and iii) inappropriate use of intelligence.

On October 12, 2018, NSICOP delivered its Special Report to the Prime Minister of Canada. The Committee makes eighteen findings and five recommendations. In accordance with section 21(5) of the *National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act*, the Prime Minister directed the Committee to remove information deemed injurious to national security and international relations from the document. The revised version tabled in Parliament today reflects these requirements.

The Chair of NSICOP, the Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., stated that “this inaugural report by the Committee marks the first time Canadian parliamentarians have exercised new, statutory powers to access highly classified materials in order to review and analyse the work of Canada's security and intelligence community. The Committee received approximately 3,000 pages of documents from relevant organizations and over the course of numerous meetings, met with senior government witnesses and deliberated at great length. The report demonstrates that an independent, non-partisan Committee of Parliamentarians is fully capable of probing sensitive issues, asking hard questions and delivering reasoned and

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substantive findings and recommendations. It is significant that the release of the public version of the Special Report offers Canadians valuable insights into the important work of the security and intelligence community”.

Mr. McGuinty added that, “the Special Report was prepared for the Prime Minister and implicated Ministers based on classified information. The revised report tabled in Parliament today is what can be made public without injury to national security or international relations.”

Mr. McGuinty also outlined some of the key highlights of the Special Report, including:

Foreign Interference in Canadian political affairs

The Committee reviewed a considerable amount of classified material related to the vulnerability of the political system to foreign interference. While it is unable to disclose the nature and extent of this threat, the Committee recommends that all Parliamentarians be briefed regularly on the risks of foreign interference and extremism in Canada. NSICOP believes that increased understanding and awareness by Parliamentarians of these risks would provide an important line of defense in safeguarding our democratic institutions.

Risks to the security of the Prime Minister

The Committee's review highlighted the considerable effort, resources and advance planning required by the security and intelligence community to ensure the safety of the Prime Minister, his family and delegation. Due to the controversy surrounding the presence of Mr. Jaspal Atwal at an event attended by the Prime Minister and other VIPs, the Committee paid particular attention to the adequacy of measures to screen participants and guests associated with the Prime Minister's delegation or itinerary.

Overall, NSICOP found that the relevant organizations took adequate measures to ensure the Prime Minister's safety. NSICOP's review also confirmed a number of gaps, notably that there is no systematic vetting of any guest list for foreign events. The Committee recommends that the Government draw from its review to improve relevant policies, procedures or other practices.

Inappropriate use of intelligence

The Committee sought to determine whether intelligence was used for political purposes. The Committee found no evidence to suggest that the former National Security and Intelligence Advisor (NSIA) briefed journalists at the direction of the Prime Minister's Office. The Committee believes that the former NSIA's status as a principal advisor to the Prime Minister likely contributed to the perception that he was trying to attenuate the broader criticisms around the visit.

More generally, NSICOP's review showed that the NSIA plays a critical role in the Government as the pre-eminent security advisor to the Prime Minister, but also in the central coordination of the federal government's security and intelligence apparatus, and in foreign affairs. However, the position itself does not exist in statute or in policy. In the conduct of the review, the Committee recommended that the Government consider formalizing certain responsibilities and activities exercised by the NSIA in key policy documents.

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The Committee wishes to highlight that it received the full cooperation of the officials and organizations involved in this review, including the former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister.

Mr. McGuinty concluded by noting that “the Committee received the full cooperation of the officials and organizations involved in this review, including the former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister”.

BACKGROUND: NSICOP was established under the *National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act* on June 22, 2017. The Committee serves as an independent, high-level review body of Canada’s national security and intelligence organizations. It may review:

- the legislative, regulatory, policy, administrative and financial framework for national security and intelligence;
- any activity carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence, unless the activity is an ongoing operation and the appropriate Minister determines that the review would be injurious to national security;
- any matter relating to national security or intelligence that a minister of the Crown refers to the Committee.

The Committee must submit an Annual Report to the Prime Minister that includes the reviews conducted in the preceding year. The Committee may also complete a Special Report on any matter related to its mandate, at any time. The Prime Minister causes the Committee’s reports to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament, which are then referred to the appropriate Senate and House of Commons committees.

NSICOP members hold the highest level of security clearance, are bound by the *Security of Information Act* and meet in private.

ADDITIONAL LINKS:

- National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians website: www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca
- National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-16.6/FullText.html>

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