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Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Gendarmerie royale du Canada	File No. N° de dossier	Security Classification/Designation Classification/Designation PROTECTED B	Total Pages Page
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**BRIEFING NOTE TO
THE COMMISSIONER**

**NOTE
D'INFORMATION
AU COMMISSAIRE**

**CRITICAL ELECTION INCIDENT PUBLIC PROTOCOL
PROTOCOLE PUBLIC EN CAS D'INCIDENT ÉLECTORAL MAJEUR**

ISSUE:

To provide you with information on the Government of Canada's Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (CEIPP), in preparation for your upcoming meeting with Mr. Jim Judd. You will be discussing RCMP elements of the CEIPP to guide the assessment of the CEIPP (**TAB A**).

BACKGROUND:

Since early 2018, work has been underway across the Government of Canada (GoC) to mitigate any potential threats to Canada's democratic institutions, and to ensure the integrity of the 2019 Federal Election. The Privy Council Office (PCO) led a whole of government effort to establish initiatives to protect democracy across four broad categories: 1) building citizen resilience; 2) promoting institutional resilience; 3) establishing rules of the road for digital platforms; and, 4) combatting foreign influence. Under combatting foreign influence, the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force (TF) and the CEIPP were established.

CEIPP Model – Including the Panel of Five

The CEIPP was established to provide an impartial process by which Canadians would be notified of a threat to the integrity of the 2019 General Election.

The CEIPP is administered by a panel of five senior civil servants, including the Clerk of the Privy Council; the National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister; the Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General; the Deputy Minister of Public Safety; and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. This group is often referred to as the Panel of Five.

The Protocol includes provisions for: informing candidates, organizations or elections officials if they have been the known target of an attack; briefing the Panel of Five; informing the Prime Minister and other party leaders (or their designates) that a public announcement is planned; and notifying the public.

The RCMP's main role in the CEIPP was to provide law enforcement input (e.g. criminal intelligence), typically through its participation in briefings to the Panel of Five by the SITE TF.

Submitted by – Soumis par e-approved [redacted] Manager, National Security Federal Policing Strategic Direction	Date 2020-03-03	Reviewed by – Examiné par e-approved [redacted] Director Federal Policing Strategic Direction	Date 2020-03-05
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Processes in place

The Panel of Five works with the national security agencies (each according to their mandate), to determine whether the threshold for informing Canadians has been met; either through a single incident or an accumulation of separate incidents.

There were a number of interdepartmental mechanisms to support the Panel of Five, including the SITE Task Force which was intelligence focused, and the Elections Security Coordination Committee (ESCC), a Director-General (DG)-level effort. Each of these mechanisms were effective, as they provided for the sharing of relevant information with security and intelligence partners, with a focus on the protection of Canada's electoral process.

Usefulness and timeliness of the information give to the Panel of Five

Collaborative efforts by GoC partners such as the SITE TF, the CEIPP, and briefings informed by intelligence and security analysis to the leaders of the major political parties, were valuable in countering potential threats to the 2019 Federal Election. The information provided to the Panel of Five was effective in increasing/maintaining situational awareness for senior decision-makers during the Federal Election.

No threats arose that met the threshold for the Panel of Five to be invoked, including the need to make a public statement.

Additional detail

The SITE Task Force was created in August 2018 to address threats of foreign interference in Canada's 2019 General Election. The TF is comprised of officials CSE, CSIS, the RCMP, and GAC. The unique construct of the SITE TF allowed for controlled sharing of intelligence and information between all four agencies. The clearly-defined SITE TF mandate of providing situational awareness for the election, and narrow focus on the 2019 Federal Election, allowed for a concentration of effort and effective use of resources.

Federal Policing National Intelligence (FPNI) represents the RCMP on the SITE TF. FPNI took part in technical briefings to the media, regular briefings to political parties, and periodic updates to the Minister of Democratic Institutions. To date, the RCMP has not initiated any criminal investigations linked to foreign interference related to the 2019 Federal election.

Internally, the RCMP established a Director General committee to act as a central coordinating body and to engage with Police of Jurisdiction (POJs) and divisions. This was useful, as it provided for improved coordination with POJs and divisions for the 2019 Federal Election.

The goal of the Elections Security Coordination Committee was to ensure preparedness for a free and fair elections process. The ESCC met on a monthly basis, and ensured that processes were in place to mitigate risks and resiliency measures to permit the elections process to continue if an event were to occur (e.g. cyber-attack, foreign actor interference). Tabletop exercises in relation to the 2019 Federal Election were also tested by the ESCC before they advanced to the Assistant

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Deputy Minister (ADM) and Deputy Minister (DM) levels. The ESCC was comprised of the Privy Council Office, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Public Safety Canada, Elections Canada, the Government Operations Centre, Communications Security Establishment (CSE), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) the Cyber Centre and the RCMP).

CURRENT STATUS:

While the CEIPP was in place for the 2019 Federal Election, it remains to be seen if senior decision-makers will choose to continue with the Protocol for future elections.

In addition, the GoC is considering the potential institution of the SITE TF as a long-term mechanism to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability, further to an After Action Report that is being prepared in relation to the SITE TF. This is of note, as the SITE TF is the primary mechanism through which information is provided to the heads of national security agencies in order to brief the Panel of Five for the CEIPP.

The RCMP continues to work with SITE TF members in preparing the After Action Report, which is in the final drafting stage. An initial draft was provided to the SITE TF Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS:

FPNI and Federal Policing Strategic Direction support the continuation of the CEIPP mechanism for future elections, as it provides for a coordinated effort to protect Canada's federal electoral process from foreign interference. However, the CEIPP effort overall (including supporting processes) was very resource intensive and the RCMP did not have a dedicated unit (unlike our partners), for this effort. The number of Director, DG, ADM and DM meetings, as well as technical briefings with media, put a strain on operationally focused personnel at National Headquarters.

The SITE TF was effective, but the RCMP had a small role compared to other partners (i.e. CSIS, CSE). The RCMP's involvement focused on support to Protective operations, providing law enforcement information and facilitating partner engagement. Of note, the RCMP was the only constituent agency that was unable to dedicate FTEs to support the SITE TF, resulting in considerable challenges, particularly as the pace of briefings and reporting requirements increased during the writ period.

Resourcing will be a key consideration as the RCMP assesses the extent and nature of its contribution to the sustainability of the SITE TF.

The RCMP's continues to support elections and threats to democratic institutions, however the RCMP our focus is on the broader GoC hostile activity by state actor initiatives through the SITE TF and other mechanisms. The RCMP would suggest that the GoC's activities should be streamlined for efficiency.

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Furthermore, it is important to note that during the elections, the RCMP was focused on the protection of the Prime Minister and official political party leaders.

KEY MESSAGES

- **RCMP National Intelligence supports a recommendation that the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol construct be continued for future elections.**
- **The SITE Task Force was the primary mechanism through which information was provided to the heads of national security agencies, including the Commissioner of the RCMP, to brief the Panel of Five about incidents.**
- **Resourcing will be a consideration as the RCMP assesses the extent and nature of its contribution to the sustainability and evolution of the SITE Task Force and other continuing initiatives to protect democracy.**

(Prepared by March 3, 2020/CCM:)