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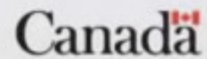
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INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT


The PRC Foreign Interference Network



Intelligence Assessments Branch
Direction de l'évaluation du renseignement



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INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

2020 02 18

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CSIS IA 2019-20/80

The PRC Foreign Interference Network


PRC activities related to the 2019 federal election an active foreign interference (FI)¹ network recurrent coordinated activities carried out by known PRC-linked individuals during the election period, generalized patterns of PRC FI through which interference is carried out via a network of closely connected, PRC-linked individuals working to advance PRC interests. at least eleven 2019 federal candidates were implicated² through at least one direct connection *to these threat actors* (S//CEO)

Key Assessments

- This network of PRC-linked individuals work in loose coordination with one another to covertly advance PRC interests through Canadian democratic institutions. (S//CEO)

1 Foreign Interference refers to "activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person". It is referred to as "foreign-influenced activities" in Section 2(b) of the *CSIS Act*. The more frequently used term "foreign interference" or "FI" will be used throughout this assessment. (U)

2 For the purposes of this assessment, "implicated" indicates that an individual has at least one direct connection to a person of interest in It does not, in and of itself, indicate that the "implicated" individual is knowingly involved in threat activity. In some cases, the implicated individual is unaware of the activities and motives of the person of interest.

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- In addition to PRC *officials*, members of the known network include political candidates, their staff, and local community leaders. These individuals often conduct threat activity with minimal direction from the PRC and under the guise of their overt professional roles. They form an adaptive and resilient FI network with an obfuscated operational link to the PRC. (S)
- at least eleven candidates in the 2019 federal election, along with 13 members of their staff, are implicated in PRC FI networks. Some of these individuals are likely unknowingly vulnerable to PRC interference via their direct connections to clandestine threat actors. Others appear to willingly cooperate in threat activity. (S//CEO)



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Network Components: Professional Communities, Patterns and Channels

1. [redacted] this FI network is centred on individuals within four professional communities: (1) the PRC *officials* (2) leaders of local community organizations; (3) staff of targeted candidates/ elected officials; and (4) political candidates/officials themselves. (S//CEO)

2. Individuals operating within these communities leverage their overt roles to loosely coordinate adverse activity to interfere with Canadian democratic institutions on behalf of Beijing. Together, they form an FI network that takes broad direction from PRC threat actors, but is not dependent on them for its day-to-day work. This network structure enables an adaptable, resilient approach to FI that extends and/or enables the PRC's covert influence. (S//CEO)

3. Known and suspected threat actors within each of the four professional communities play unique roles in PRC interference activities.

- *PRC officials*

Xi's "Magic Weapon": the United Front Work Department (UFWD)

The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) body responsible for conducting covert influence operations, both inside and outside China. Its goals are: (1) to clandestinely influence overseas communities, foreign governments and other actors to take actions or adopt positions in support of Beijing's preferred policies; (2) to discourage individuals living in open and democratic societies from discussing issues that are unfavourable to the CCP; and (3) to harass or undermine groups that are critical of CCP ideology, programs or policies. The UFWD conducts these operations outside of the PRC through official and quasi-official entities, including other government and military organizations, cultural and "friendship" associations, and academic groups. The intended audiences of UFWD influence campaigns are often mistakenly under the impression that UFWD-linked individuals and entities are operating independently from the CCP or the state. (U)

Under President Xi, the CCP has elevated and

- Co-opted leaders of local community organizations:

[redacted] (S//CEO)

- Co-opted political staff of targeted candidates/elected officials:





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[Redacted]

• Co-opted political candidates/elected officials:

[Redacted]

Exploiting the Network: Patterns of PRC Influence

4. The PRC very likely has many available co-optees [Redacted] through which it can clandestinely interfere in democratic processes via loosely coordinated activity.

[Redacted] (S//CEO)

- [Redacted] an influential community leader facilitated a clandestine financial transfer from the PRC to a provincially elected official *via a political staffer*. [Redacted] Single-sourced intelligence alleges

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (S//CEO)

- [Redacted]

[Redacted] (S//CEO)

- [Redacted]

[Redacted] (S//CEO)

- [Redacted]

[Redacted] (S//CEO)

[Redacted]





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5. [redacted] PRC very likely conducts effective but subtle interference operations [redacted] in which individuals leverage their overt roles to accomplish basic tasks on behalf of the PRC [redacted] (S//CEO)

6. [redacted] (S//CEO)

7. [redacted] PRC [redacted] plays a central role in loosely coordinating FI activity [redacted] via its clandestine relationships with political candidates, their staff, and leaders of local community organizations. In some instances, [redacted] contacts act as proxies [redacted] (S//CEO)

• [redacted] (S)

• [redacted] (S//CEO)

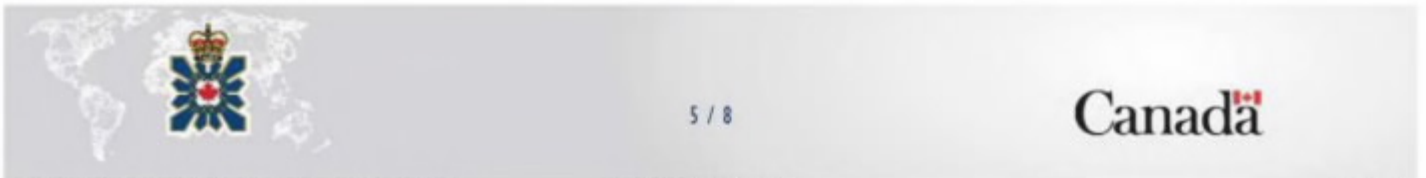
• [redacted] (S)

Links to the UFWD: A Pervasive Enabler of FI [redacted]

8. [redacted] direct contacts between the UFWD and Canadians that are actively involved in an election campaign elevate the risk of PRC interference in Canada. Related to the 2019 federal election, [redacted] instances of direct contact between the UFWD and individuals from each of the key professional communities in the PRC FI network. (S//CEO)

• [redacted] (S//CEO)

• [redacted] (S//CEO)



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- [Redacted]
[Redacted] (S//CEO)
- [Redacted]
[Redacted] (S//CEO)

Next Steps

9. [Redacted]
[Redacted] (S//CEO)



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