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Deputy Minister Sous-ministre

Ottawa, Canada
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CONFIDENCE OF THE QUEEN'S PRIVY COUNCIL
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DATE: *(Leave Blank)*File No.: PS- *(Please refer to the CCM Number provided by Cabinet Affairs)*

GCDOCS No.:

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER
OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

**CANADA'S STRATEGY FOR COUNTERING
HOSTILE ACTIVITIES BY STATE ACTORS**

(Signature required)

ISSUEEnclosed for your approval and signature s. 39 - Cabinet Confidences. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

Your signature is requested as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND

HASA poses an unprecedented threat to Canada's national security and sovereignty given its scope and scale. The current threat environment is dynamic, as trends are rapidly evolving due to a range of factors, including shifting geopolitical power dynamics, technological advances, and increasingly aggressive and strategic threat actors. Russia and China are the most capable countries that threaten Canadian interests and are considered first-tier threat actors. A second-tier includes India, Pakistan, and Iran. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these trends. While security and intelligence agencies have been addressing this threat for many years, to date Canada's approach has been ad hoc and case-specific. The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians noted this in its last Annual Report and concluded that Canada's ability to address this threat is limited by the absence of a holistic approach. The Committee recommended that the Government develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing this threat.

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Public Safety is leading the development of a whole-of-government strategy that seeks to build resilience against, and counter threats from hostile activities by state actors. The aim of the strategy is to safeguard the national interest from foreign threat actors who seek to undermine parts of our national fabric, including Canada's sovereignty, prosperity, stability, social cohesion, and fundamental values.

CURRENT STATUS

The presentation is intended to be a scene-setter to:

- Provide an overview of the nature of threats posed by HASA;
- Outline key elements of the proposed HASA Strategy; and
- Set the context for Canada's approach to dealing with economic-based threats to national security.

The draft Strategy, s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence, would provide Canada's security and intelligence community, and the Government of Canada more broadly, with a common understanding of the nature of threat; the Government of Canada's priorities and approach to addressing HASA; and, how each department and agency will contribute to the principles and activities set out in the Strategy.

The Strategy outlines five priority sectors which were identified based on an assessment of Canada's national interest, and overall vulnerability to HASA: (1) democratic processes and government institutions; (2) economic prosperity; (3) international affairs and defence; (4) social cohesion; and, (5) critical infrastructure.

The proposed three pillars of Strengthen, Detect, Act provide the frame under which the Government of Canada can consider its actions to counter HASA, particularly in the priority sectors. The ability to consider actions in a cohesive manner will allow us to effectively deploy our toolkit to respond to multifaceted threats. This toolkit will not only leverage the security and intelligence community, but will also mobilize non-traditional security and intelligence departments and other key partners within private industry, civil society, academia, other government jurisdictions, etc. This approach will further be bolstered by strategic and coordinated international partnerships, the use of which can amplify individual country efforts.

CONSIDERATIONS

Ministers have been briefed on various aspects of the HASA threat and efforts to combat it, such as in the context of transactions reviewed under the *Investment Canada Act*. However, the proposal to implement a cohesive and coordinated approach to this threat has not been presented to date. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence; and, it is an opportune time to situate these discussions within the proposed broader strategic approach to HASA, and to gauge your colleagues' receptiveness to it.

In order to implement the Strategy, key components of Canada's holistic counter-HASA efforts will include a proposed approach to governance, potential legislative proposals to bolster our toolkit, and an assessment of associated resource requirements. Further, a public-facing version of the Strategy could form part of a broader communications approach to raise awareness about this threat amongst Canadians. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

NEXT STEPS

Officials at Public Safety, in collaboration with interdepartmental partners, will continue policy work on the whole-of-government approach to countering HASA. This includes examining our available tools, how we structure our security and intelligence community in response to the threat, and how to integrate the broader whole-of-government approach that goes beyond traditional security and intelligence partners. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you approve s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence and sign the enclosed transmittal note at your earliest convenience.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dominic Rochon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, National Cyber and Security Branch, at [redacted]

Rob Stewart
Enclosures: (6)

I approve:

I do not approve:

William Sterling Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.

William Sterling Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.

Canada