

PROTECTED B

Deputy Ministers' National Security Committee Meeting
February 28, 2022
Time: 14:00 – 15:40
CTSN VTC

Overview: The Deputy Ministers' National Security (DMNS) Committee is co-chaired by Public Safety Canada (PS) and the Privy Council Office (PCO). An Agenda for the meeting, and Secure Mobile Conference Call Instructions, can be found in **TAB A**.

STANDING ITEM #1 – OPENING REMARKS – 5 MIN

*PS and PCO will provide opening remarks. A meeting summary of the January 24, 2022 meeting is in **TAB B**.*

ITEM #2 – PROTECTING CANADA'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS FROM AN EVOLVING THREAT (PCO/CSE) – 40 MIN

*PCO and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) to present on the measures taken to protect the 44th General Election. The deck is included in **TAB C**.*

Background: This presentation will analyze the measures taken to protect the election, as well as the changes in both the threat environment and the measures themselves since 2019; it will also include a summary of foreign interference efforts detected, to be presented by the CSE, as part of an after-action report. The ensuing discussion will revolve around next steps in protecting Canada's democratic process in the long term, including through appropriate resourcing, policy development and alignment with other ongoing work, such as policy and communications surrounding Hostile Activities by State Actors.

The 44th General Election in Fall 2021 was the second to be held under the Plan to Protect Canada's Democracy, s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence. A four-pillar strategy was employed, consisting of:

- 1) Enhancing citizen resilience - including the Digital Citizen Initiative, public reports on threats to democratic processes, and the interagency Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (CEIPP), which is comprised of a panel of five senior Government of Canada (GoC) officials that would notify the public of a threat to the integrity of a General Election;
- 2) Improving organizational readiness, which includes but is not limited to classified threat briefings to political parties, and cybersecurity guidance to political parties;
- 3) Combatting foreign interference, which includes the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force and the Global Affairs Canada-led Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM); and,
- 4) Building a healthy information ecosystem, which includes a Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online.

RCMP Considerations: The RCMP contributes to the SITE Task Force and the RRM. The SITE Task Force provides a coordination and de-confliction mechanism, and ensures situational awareness for all relevant departments and agencies. The RCMP participates in classified threat briefings to the leaders of the official political parties, as required. The CEIPP guides how senior GoC officials would jointly determine if a threshold has been met to inform the public in the event of a single incident or accumulation of incidents that may impact the election. As the Minister of PS is one of the five senior officials that participates in determining when to communicate with the public for the CEIPP process, the RCMP is one of the security and intelligence agencies that would be consulted to support a CEIPP-related decision.

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s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

Talking Points:

- Much needs to be done in order to better protect Canada and Canadians against foreign interference. Foreign actors often operate in a grey zone, where their activities may not be criminal or illegal, however are deliberate and seek to undermine Canadian society. For reasons such as this, a foreign agent registry-type of legislation, requiring foreign actors to declare their intentions and activities, would be beneficial. Our allies already have legislation focused on foreign interference, and Canada should be doing the same.
- The foreign interference piece is a significant national security (NS) consideration. The Minister of Public Safety’s mandate letter included an allocation for NS agencies to counter foreign interference, and for the RCMP to protect Canadians from unacceptable surveillance, harassment, and intimidation by foreign actors. These are significant considerations for a free and democratic society.
- Similar to other efforts seeking to improve aspects of Canada’s national security, we will also need to continuously assess and ensure that our respective staff have what they need to meet expectations, whether it be sufficient resource levels or modernized equipment. This is especially important in order to keep pace with foreign actors that are seeking to disrupt Canadian society.

ITEM #3 – UPDATE ON CABINET COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS (PCO) – 15 MIN

PS and PCO will provide a look-ahead on the upcoming cabinet agenda and highlight priority items. s. 39 -

s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

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ITEM #4 – IMVE: THREAT OVERVIEW AND RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (CSIS) – 25 MIN

CSIS will present an overview of the ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) threat in Canada and lead a discussion on what is –and is not– IMVE and on what is needed to build solutions for addressing the issue. Supporting documents, including CSIS unclassified placemats, are included in TAB D.

Background: This discussion will provide an overview on IMVE, and the GoC’s policy and operational response to this ongoing challenge. The Ideologically Motivated Threat Landscape is dynamic and complex as threat actors, individuals, and groups consistently interpret political and sociocultural developments through their ideological lenses in ways that affect social cohesion (e.g. protests, displays of civil disobedience, ideologically motivated criminality), political polarization, and the broader threat environment. The IMVE threat appears to have increased in recent years, both in the online and offline space, and threat actors have leveraged the COVID-19 pandemic to spread misinformation and conspiracy theories, undermine trust in public institutions and governments, expand recruiting efforts, and advocate violence. As part of CSIS’ threat overview, they will walk through unclassified placemats:

- One outlines how IMVE threats can be assessed to determine if they meet the NS threshold in subsection 2(c) of the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*.

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- Another focuses on the various inputs and motivators that can fuel ideologically motivated threats to the fabric of society.
- The third is an overview of the incidents that have taken place since 2014 by Canadians who have been motivated, in whole or in part, by their extreme views.

In addition, in the context of the “Freedom Convoy” disruptions in downtown Ottawa and at other key locations across Canada, FPNI developed a Special Threat Advisory, included in **Tab D**. In that document, FPNI notes that some symbols have been observed at convoy protests, which appear to reference IMVE movements and extremist ideologies; further, the seizure of a cache of weapons and ammunition at the Coutts border blockade, and accompanying criminal charges against several individuals, underscored the potential willingness of certain protesters to use serious violence against law enforcement.

In recent months, PS has indicated their intent to develop a ‘whole-of-government’ response to IMVE, to enhance policy coordination within the NS community on issues concerning IMVE, and identify actionable proposals to enhance the GoC policy response to the issue. A deck outlining their way forward was presented to DMNS in April 2021. PS recently informed GoC partners that it will be developing a ‘strategic paper’ to deliver on the PS Minister’s mandate letter commitment to bring forward measures to counter the rise of IMVE. The paper will build off consultations with GoC partners which informed the DMNS deck and examine current efforts and tools available to prevent, detect, deter and respond to the IMVE threat.

RCMP Considerations: The RCMP works closely with the interdepartmental community on efforts to counter IMVE, both in terms of developing a strategic policy and tactical/operational framework. The RCMP is supportive of a stronger commitment to implementing changes – specifically to move forward on an Memoranda to Cabinet to address the key gaps and challenges in this space.

In addition, the RCMP is in the process of finalizing an FP Strategy on IMVE, informed by frontline perspectives of officers and analysts, which identifies key gaps and challenges, produces recommendations and solutions, and sets out a comprehensive implementation Action Plan. While this Strategy is primarily an internal document that will allow the RCMP to ‘get its house in order’, once approved by the Deputy Commissioner of FP, it will be shared with A/CROPs in the Divisions for awareness, and presented to key S&I partners and stakeholders (OGDs, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, etc.) to ensure there is alignment and common understanding on overlapping mandate issues.

Talking Points:

- The RCMP fully supports greater interdepartmental and interagency coordination on IMVE. We look forward to working with PS and other partners to identify current gaps in our ability to counter IMVE, and address them with new tools and investments through an MC.
- In addition to our ongoing work supporting partners on policy and operational fronts, the RCMP is undertaking internal efforts to analyze and strengthen our current IMVE response, including identifying key gaps and challenges and developing solutions. We will be sure to share the outcome of this work.

STANDING ITEM #5 – CLOSING REMARKS (PS/DND) – 5 MIN

PS and DND will lead this agenda item. There are no RCMP issues that need to be raised at this time.

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