

## For Public Release

## PCO Task Force – Foreign Interference (FI)

## Terms of reference

Some foreign governments aim to deliberately and covertly interfere in Canadian affairs in order to advance their own interests, often to the detriment of Canada's. These activities pose a significant threat to the integrity of our political systems, democratic processes, social cohesion, academic freedom and economic prosperity, and challenge Canadians' rights and freedoms.

Canada is not alone in facing this threat and, like our allies, we are taking steps to enhance our capacity to effectively counter it. Public Safety Canada is shepherding horizontal efforts to provide policy, legislative and operational options to better address FI, and is developing plans to engage with Canadians on this important endeavour. While the Counter HASA Coordinator at Public Safety Canada is leading this work and building necessary internal structures as per recent government direction, a temporary FI Task Force at PCO will support the national security community in responding to specific ongoing FI cases and immediate requirements.

## Mandate:

Working in close cooperation with Public Safety Canada to maximize efforts and avoid duplication, the Task Force will perform a coordination and advice function. Specifically, it could:

- Convene and support regular senior governance meetings on FI threats and responses with a view to:
  - enhance collective awareness of threats and related developments (meetings to begin with coordinated intelligence briefings)
  - discuss ongoing/ planned government initiatives, public engagements, international events, etc.
  - outline potential implications of FI initiatives (e.g., foreign policy/trade implications, fed/prov considerations, etc...) and associated risks and trade-offs
- Track and report progress on government various counter FI initiatives, and support interdepartmental coordination
  - develop, maintain and share an evergreen "tracker" that will outline developments pertaining to policy, national engagements and legislative initiatives led by Public Safety Canada/Counter HASA Coordinator, international engagements and events, communications, ongoing investigations and law enforcement operations, etc.
  - Map out ongoing and projected initiatives to event calendar
    - Cabinet/Parliamentary business
    - Relevant external review reports
    - Budget and funding cycle
    - National and international engagements
- Coordinate the provision of intelligence to Cabinet and advice to the Prime Minister
  - Working closely with PCO IAS and other intelligence assessment organisations, help coordinate the development and provision of intelligence in support of Cabinet discussions, national and international engagements, etc...
  - Working with other PCO secretariats and in close consultation with Public Safety Canada, portfolio agencies, and other departments, develop advice to the NSIA and the Prime Minister pertaining to:
    - Ongoing FI threats
    - current response plans, capabilities and requirements (e.g., pertaining to upcoming democratic processes)

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- engagement/communication strategies
- gaps and risks
- Liaise with PMO

## Reporting relationship:

The Task Force will report to the NSIA but will work very closely with Public Safety Canada.

Composition: Team of 4 with part time dedicated support from PCO IAS and PCO S&I

EX04 Seconded from ITAC

EX01 Seconded from DND

EX01 Secondment from CSIS

EC07 Seconded from ITAC

## Duration:

The Task Force could begin operations in the New Year for a renewable period of 4 months, at the end of which seconded personnel may return to their home organisations and most coordination functions will be assumed by the Counter HASA Coordinator at Public Safety.

## Location:

PCO