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What is everything you have done since 2017 to counter foreign interference?

Since 2017, we have taken the following steps to counter foreign interference in Canada's democratic processes:

- Incorporated foreign interference into the mandate letters of ministers as early as February 2017.
 - This included tasking CSE with assessing risk from hackers into electoral activities and to release such results publicly. CSE published "Cyber Threats to Canada's Democracy in 2017"
 - Legislative safeguards were introduced through the Elections Modernization Act. It contained a number of provisions intended to address attempts to disrupt electoral campaigns or voting. These touched on, for example, prohibiting third parties from using foreign funds for partisan advertising and activities and expanding the Commissioner of Canada Elections' powers to make it more difficult for law breakers to evade sanction.
- Lead the introduction of the RRM mechanism for G7 countries in 2018. Its purpose was to strengthen coordination to prevent, thwart and respond to malign and evolving threats to G& democracies by sharing information and threat analysis and identifying opportunities for coordinated responses.
- Efforts were supported by the creation of the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security. It was intended to provide a single unified source of expert advice, guidance, services and support on cyber security for government, critical infrastructure owners and operators, the private sector, and the Canadian public.
- In advance of the 2019 election, additional funding for "citizen digital literacy" programming and research was also committed:
 - for the Digital Citizen Initiative to promote civic, news and digital media literacy through third party educational activities and programs to help citizens become resilient against online harms;
 - for a new Digital Citizen Research Program, as part of the Initiative, to help Canadians understand online disinformation and its impact; and
 - for the Public Policy Forum Digital Democracy Project.
- The Government announced the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol. Its role was detailed in a Cabinet directive which was made public on July 9, 2019. The release of that was accompanied by a technical briefing provided by Government and Elections Canada officials. The plan was supported by legislative changes to enhance capabilities of both CSE and CSIS. The Protocol was updated prior to the 2021 election, including changes recommended by the Judd Report.
- In May 2019 the government reached agreements with the largest social media platforms (Facebook Twitter, Google and Microsoft) on measures to guide the conduct of these platforms during and before the 2019 election. (agreement is set out in the Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online, made public May 2019). Prior to the 2021 election, this agreement was updated to include TikTok, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- Ministerial speeches and appearances before Parliamentary committees were supplemented by detailed technical briefings of the media by senior public servants.

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- Critical Election Incident Public Protocol was made public on January 30 2019 by the Minister of Democratic Institutions during a press conference outlining the Government's initiatives to protect the Canadian electoral process. The Minister said: "The Protocol establishes a simple, clear and impartial process to inform Canadians of a threat to the integrity of the 2019 election. It is designed to avoid the kind of gridlock that could prevent an effective response." In essence the creation of the Protocol and its Panel was intended to avoid a situation such as occurred in the 2016 US elections. There was a significant degree of foreign interference in the election that was not made known to voters before the election occurred. It was not made public for fear that such a revelation might be construed as having been done for partisan reasons. The Protocol appears to have been a uniquely Canadian invention. There does not appear to be any equivalent body elsewhere in the world.
- Budget 2022 provided \$2 million annually for the Protecting Democracy Unit at the Privy Council Office to coordinate, develop, and implement government-wide measures designed to combat disinformation and protect Canada's democratic institutions and processes. This includes developing a whole-of-society approach to protecting Canada's democracy, the implementation of a counter disinformation toolkit, and training for Parliamentarians and public servants on misinformation and disinformation, building upon the United Kingdom's RESIST model. The Protecting Democracy Unit is undertaking research on threats to democracy. The Government of Canada announced a \$5.5 million investment to strengthen the capacity of civil society and research partners to provide important insights into the dynamics of Canada's information ecosystem, including with respect to disinformation and activities of state actors.
- In March 2023, the Independent Special Rapporteur was established to, among other objectives, to assess allegations made in Canadian news media regarding interference in Canada's electoral processes.
- In the spring of 2023, Public Safety established the role of National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator to play a leading role to ensure Government-wide efforts to combat foreign interference are working effectively and towards the same goal.
- In September 2023, the Government established the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. This role will continue to build on work already underway to assess threats and risks to Canadian institutions. Budget 2023 provides initial funding of \$13.5 million over five years, and \$3.1 million ongoing to Public Safety Canada to establish a National Counter-Foreign Interference Office.
- Budget 2023 provides \$48.9 million over three years to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation, increase its investigative capacity, and more proactively engage with communities at greater risk of being targeted.
- Other work that is ongoing includes the Minister of Public Safety, informed by the ongoing work of the Independent Special Rapporteur and the reviews of NSICOP and NSIRA, advancing several legislative changes. First, consultation on the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry occurred in the spring and will inform the development of legislation. Second, preparations are under way to publicly consult on changes to the CSIS Act, the Security of Information Act, and the Criminal Code.
- We also have ongoing efforts to improve briefings to parliamentarians. The Parliamentary Protective Service provides security briefings to incoming Members of Parliament. The Security and Intelligence Threats to Election Task Force (SITE) offers briefings to political party

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representatives during writ period. The Privy Council Office Security Operations Division briefs all incoming Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries on the spectrum of threats, including foreign interference. CSIS also provides briefings to Parliamentarians upon request. A ministerial directive issued in May 2023 strengthens the process for briefing parliamentarians on any emerging risks to themselves, their families or staff related to foreign interference. We are working toward ensuring that briefings for Members of Parliament and the Senate will be provided upon their swearing-in and on a regular basis.

What have we really done since the LeBlanc Charette Report was Published?

The most important actions taken since the LeBlanc Charette Report was published are:

- Budget 2023 funding to establish the Coordinator to Counter Foreign Interference. The Coordinator has been put in place and he is actively engaging the town on FI-related priorities
- Development of a strategy and supporting materials for consultation on amendments to the Criminal Code, Security of Information Act and CSIS Act.
- The Ministerial Direction on Threats to the Security of Canada Directed at Parliament and Parliamentarians, which has resulted in several briefings to MPs about specific threats related to FI (e.g. O'Toole,Chong)
- High level meetings with key allies on matters related to FI
- The Protocol was applied to byelections during the summer of 2023, responding in part to the issue of how the Plan to Protect Democracy should be applied between elections.

What is really outstanding from that list of commitments?

- While there is a plan in development to brief members of Parliament at their swearing in and regularly thereafter, this item remains outstanding.
- Strengthening Canada's legal framework is a critical area for progress. While advancing, it should remain an area of sustained focus until completed.
- Communication and transparency with Canadians – This is clearly a challenge. While we have relied on CSIS and CSE annual reports to play an important role in this space, recent experience (e.g. ISR First Report) has been illustrative a of how difficult transparent communication will be to achieve. This is one reason by the Public Inquiry mandate requires early hearings in public to discuss, among other things, communication challenges in a highly classified environment.
- Comprehensive assessment of risk to our institutions – This work is ongoing but has yet to reach maturity (ie a consolidated briefing to senior levels) or to provide a comprehensive, global picture of the risk landscape.