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# Mandate Letter of the National Security and Intelligence Advisor

Dear Madame Drouin:

Thank you for serving as Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and my National Security and Intelligence Advisor (NSIA). Canada continues to face serious threats to our safety and security, economic interests, and the integrity of our democratic institutions. Our security context is uncertain and evolving, and the associated threats are becoming more acute and complex. While our national security community works hard to identify, investigate, and mitigate these threats, it must be ready to anticipate and respond to increasing challenges. As it does so, its actions and approach must continue to be guided by respect for rights and freedoms, accountability to the public, and a commitment to be as transparent as possible while protecting critical sources and methods.

## An evolving role to better understand, manage, and respond to threats

Your role as my principal advisor on national security and intelligence is critical to achieving the objectives of a better understanding, managing, and responding to threats. Public discussions on foreign interference reaffirm the need for a stronger, more clearly articulated NSIA (National Security and Intelligence Advisor) position that can oversee and guide the

intelligence process from collection and assessment, through policy development, to our response and operational coordination. It is a dynamic, ever-changing, and evolving role depending on current affairs and priorities. Enhancing your role will help ensure the right information and intelligence gets to the right people at the right time, and that decision makers are given actionable options and advice. At the same time, we need to improve transparency and dialogue with Canadians, especially those directly impacted by emerging threats, to help raise awareness and enhance our collective ability to respond. This includes better dialogue with Parliamentarians, civil society representatives, diaspora communities, provinces and territories, Indigenous groups, allied partners, industry, and other Canadians. As my National Security and Intelligence Adviser, I expect you to manage the flow of intelligence and analysis necessary for me to effectively fulfill my duties as Prime Minister. In deciding what intelligence and analysis should reach me, as Prime Minister, please take into account Canada's strategic priorities, urgent issues, and relevant advice from the Clerk of the Privy Council, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and other senior officials in Canada's national security apparatus.

Ministers and their departments have mandated accountabilities, but I expect you to play a strong coordination role to help steer key national security decisions, particularly those coming out of the National Security Council. This includes giving advice on policy initiatives and gaps, including evaluating existing approaches to determine what is working, what needs adjusting, and providing options to improve the overall functioning of the system. I expect you to lead efforts to enhance awareness among Ministers of current and emerging strategic threats, identify options to mitigate those threats, and ensure a coherent approach and collective response, where appropriate.

When major incidents occur affecting national security interests—in Canada or internationally—I expect you to coordinate the federal national security community to ensure timely, effective operational response and, as necessary, to advise me or the responsible Minister(s) of any impediments to success that may arise during this work. In this capacity, you will also support Cabinet discussions and decision making, ensuring that all necessary stakeholders are brought to the table, and providing timely response options and advice. This includes taking the lead on convening and coordinating Incident Response Group meetings, as well as leading the strategic communications response that is so critical to engaging other orders of government and Canadians at large.

## **Secretary to the National Security Council (NSC)**

We need to think strategically about our national security priorities and investments, and to be clear-eyed about our current capacities and the effectiveness of our instruments. As NSIA (National Security and Intelligence Advisor), one of your responsibilities will be to act as Secretary to the NSC (National Security Council), which I chair. In this capacity, while remaining accountable to me and to the Clerk of the Privy Council, you will support members of the NSC (National Security Council) with comprehensive intelligence and strategic advice to help meet the ambitious objectives I have set for the committee. As Secretary, you will bring to bear strategic expertise from across the government to enable robust discussions and informed long-term decision-making on national security issues. I expect you to work with implicated deputy heads to ensure that all relevant Ministers, including those who are not regular members of the

Council, are appropriately engaged. You will also lead efforts to deliver on the priorities and action items that emerge from NSC (National Security Council) discussions.

## Key priorities

Our government has taken action to address national security gaps and to better meet evolving needs. Work to respond to the important recommendations of external experts, Commissions of Inquiry, and review bodies is ongoing. I ask that your work on the following priorities be informed by the reports of the Independent Special Rapporteur (ISR) on Foreign Interference and relevant reports from the Public Inquiry on Foreign Interference (PIFI), the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA), as well as reviews and reports provided by relevant parliamentary and oversight bodies. So, I ask that you focus on delivering results against the following priorities:

- Further to the Defence Policy Update, lead efforts to deliver a renewed National Security Strategy in 2025. This will set out the integrated framework for Canada's national security, defence, and diplomatic posture, leveraging engagement with Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast. I expect you to work through the NSC (National Security Council) to develop the Strategy, which is to be reviewed every four years to ensure it remains current and responsive.
- Engage with allies and international partners to reinforce Canada's strengths as an effective and credible partner globally on issues of national security, foreign, and defence policy while exploring new, modern, bilateral, and multilateral partnerships to maximize Canada's output on the world stage in support of me and key ministers.

- Lead a refreshed annual process to establish Canada's intelligence priorities, and work with security agencies to communicate these priorities publicly. I expect you to work through the NSC (National Security Council) to ensure these priorities align with the broader strategic direction set by me and the NSC (National Security Council), consistent with a renewed vision for national security.
- Effectively work with the national security community to address recommendations on Foreign Interference emerging from the ISR (Independent Special Rapporteur), PIFI (Public Inquiry on Foreign Interference), NSICOP (National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians), and NSIRA (National Security and Intelligence Review Agency) reports. This work should include putting measures in place to modernize the intelligence assessment function; systematizing the flow of intelligence across government. I expect your work with the national security community to deepen Canadians' trust in our democratic institutions and processes.
- Improve transparency and stakeholder engagement on national security issues, including by increasing the government's communication with Canadians, and enhancing engagement with Parliamentarians, civil society representatives, diaspora communities, provinces and territories, Indigenous groups, allied partners and industry to raise awareness and integration, identify and counter threats, improve mitigations, and inform priority setting.
- Support federal efforts to coordinate Canada's federal emergency preparedness and response capacity and ensure our readiness to meet the growing challenges of the future, including those presented by climate change, rapid technological advancement, and a shifting geopolitical landscape.

- In response to NSIRA (National Security and Intelligence Review Agency) and NSICOP (National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians)'s recommendations, determine whether anything further is required to exercise this mandate.

On behalf of Canadians, I thank you for your continued service, and your commitment to safeguarding Canada while preserving our values and our rights and freedoms.

Sincerely,

Rt. (Right) Hon. (Honorable) Justin Trudeau, P.C. (Privy Council), M.P.  
(Member of Parliament)  
Prime Minister of Canada

**Date modified:**

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