

UNCLASSIFIED



Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference
in Federal Electoral Processes and
Democratic Institutions

Enquête publique sur l'ingérence étrangère
dans les processus électoraux et les
institutions démocratiques fédéraux

In Camera Examination Summary: Ms. Gallit Dobner, Mr. Lyall King, CSIS Representative

Lead officials from the 2021 Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force (“**SITE TF**”) were examined by Commission counsel on March 4, 2023 in an *in camera* hearing. The witnesses were Ms. Gallit Dobner, Mr. Lyall King and a CSIS Representative¹. Counsel for the Attorney General of Canada appeared on behalf of the Government of Canada and had the opportunity to examine witnesses. After ruling on an application from the Government of Canada, the hearing was held in the absence of the public and other Participants.

Notes to Reader:

- Commission counsel’s explanatory notes are contained in square brackets to assist the reader.
- This summary has been prepared pursuant to subclause (a)(iii)(C)(II) of the Commission’s Terms of Reference. It discloses the evidence pertinent to clauses (a)(i)(A) and (B) of the Commission’s Terms of Reference that, in the opinion of the Commissioner, would not be injurious to the critical interests of Canada or its allies, national defence or national security.
- Information provided during the interview that relates to aspects of the Commission’s Terms of Reference other than clauses (a)(i)(A) and (B) has been omitted and may be included in a subsequent summary.

¹ The identity of the witness must remain secret for national and personal security reasons.

UNCLASSIFIED

- This summary should be read with the unclassified Institutional Reports prepared by the Government of Canada and the unclassified summaries of the interviews of the SITE TF officials for 2019 and 2021.

1. Examination by Commission Counsel

- [1] Mr. King and Ms. Dobner confirmed the accuracy of the classified version of the summary of the interview that Commission counsel conducted with them on February 12, 2024, and adopted it as their evidence.

1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- [2] Each witness described their organizational mandate and their roles and responsibilities as SITE TF members.
- [3] Lyall King continued to be the Chair of SITE Task Force (“**SITE TF**” OR “**SITE**”) 2021. He started in 2018, and that ran through to 2022. As chair, he was responsible for administering SITE’s activities and for general oversight of what they were doing. He also coordinated the secretariat function, which involved keeping records of discussion, maintaining the work plan and making sure they were following through on their activities, among other tasks.
- [4] As the Communications Security Establishment (“**CSE**”) representative on the SITE TF, Mr. King shared information from a signals intelligence and cyber perspective as it pertained to foreign interference threats.
- [5] Gallit Dobner was the Director of the Centre of International Digital Policy at Global Affairs Canada (“**GAC**”). She joined the team at the end of August 2019. The Centre of International Digital Policy did two primary things: they were the seat of the Rapid Response Mechanism Canada (“**RRM Canada**”) team and they were also responsible for issues at the nexus of foreign policy and digital technology. It was in her capacity as lead of the RRM Canada team that Ms. Dobner was also the GAC representative on the SITE TF. Ms. Dobner’s team at RRM Canada was responsible for looking at information online, in the open space. By sharing this information with the SITE TF, they served as a

UNCLASSIFIED

sort of early warning mechanism to the rest of SITE for potential issues of foreign interference that they were seeing online.

- [6] The witness who appeared on behalf of CSIS (“**CSIS Representative**”) testified that their function on SITE TF 2021 was to work with the lead CSIS official who was sitting on the task force [this lead official was interviewed by Commission Counsel on February 12, 2024 but not available to testify during the *in camera* hearings]. The CSIS Representative explained that they were also a Deputy Director within the Assistant Director of Requirements (“ADR”) Directorate. Within that capacity, they looked squarely at foreign interference issues in the 2021 election, but also liaised with other branches in the Service who would be dealing with other areas in that capacity.

1.2 Differences from SITE TF 2019

- [7] Mr. King explained that in 2021, the SITE TF operated in a similar manner to 2019 as they considered their processes to have worked quite well in relation to the 43rd general election. As a result, SITE TF meetings and reporting frequency remained the same. For this reason, the types of documents the SITE TF produced were largely the same. While the composition of the member organizations of the SITE TF was the same [CSE, CSIS, GAC, RCMP], some individual SITE TF representatives had changed. There was a mix of some new and some old, so there was a level of continuity.
- [8] However, the SITE TF looked at their lessons learned from the 2019 election and applied some changes. With that in mind, they reviewed and revised some of their foundational documents, such as their terms of reference and their threat coverage review.
- [9] Mr. King noted that one key difference between SITE’s functioning in 2019 and 2021 was that, with respect to the 2021 election, they were dealing with issues related to COVID. This meant that the SITE TF had to navigate operating in a mixed classification environment because they could not exclusively meet in a classified space. At times, they had to rely on discussing topics at a very high level and in an appropriate manner as there were in an unclassified space or on Protected B systems.
- [10] A second difference is that the SITE TF was asked to broaden the scope of its operations from focusing on and providing intelligence exclusively on foreign interference threats, to

UNCLASSIFIED

also providing information related to elections security. This was done to address the observed rise of threats directed towards people in positions of power (e.g. Capitol Hill riots, anti-COVID rhetoric, etc.). They incorporated that information as well as foreign interference information to feed up to senior levels.

[11] Mr. King also mentioned the following changes from the CSE perspective:

- a) As the SITE TF Chair, Mr. King had fewer resources to assist with carrying out the administration and secretariat functions of SITE, for a variety of reasons, including the impact of the COVID environment.
- b) CSE was able to bring more to the SITE TF table during this election, due to increases in resources.

[12] Ms. Dobner testified that RRM Canada's² input to SITE TF 2021 improved over 2019 because the team had more experience. The principal difference was that the RRM Canada team hired a China expert who spoke Mandarin and was able to monitor Chinese social media, as well as analysts who spoke Hindi and Russian and so could focus on India and Russia. The RRM had identified the lack of a Mandarin speaker as a gap from 2019. The RRM also hired an expert who understood and could monitor various brand-new alternative social media platforms, and put in place contracts with an industry partner, Yonder, and academic/civil society partners, McGill University and University of Toronto, to help watch the online space and share information with RRM.

[13] In relation to monitoring the social media environment in 2021, Ms. Dobner highlighted five challenges:

- a) Between 2019 and 2021, the online environment grew exponentially and there were a number of new platforms. Previously, the RRM had been focused on primarily just Facebook and Twitter, but by 2021, there were a number of new platforms. RRM Canada still had about six data analysts looking at a much broader space.
- b) With respect to Chinese social media, there are no off-the-shelf monitoring tools, or even a bespoke tool, to assist with monitoring the online space. For other social

² [The RRM is a G7 body aimed at increasing information-sharing and understanding across the G7 in relation to threats to democracy]

UNCLASSIFIED

media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Reddit or Twitter, there are tools that access metadata in order to analyze what is happening in that social media space. Such tools do not exist for Chinese social media, including WeChat, because the system will lock you out if you start to “ping” WeChat too many times looking for data. As a result, analysts had to manually review online data to perform their own analysis of general trends. Ms. Dobner’s RRM Canada team had about 200 different WeChat news service accounts that it would manually look at every single day. Additionally, the team would do a number of keyword searches on WeChat, but this was extremely time-consuming work, so it was a big challenge.

- c) RRM Canada was unable to monitor private group chats on WeChat, which are encrypted spaces where individuals belong to groups and speak amongst themselves. Ms. Dobner testified that it would be a privacy concern if the Government of Canada were to go into encrypted spaces and try to monitor chats. As a result, they couldn’t see what was happening in a group chat, only on news accounts.
- d) RRM Canada did not have a partnership or relationship with TenCent, the Chinese company that owns WeChat. If RRM Canada was seeing something on the platform that looked like coordinated, inauthentic activity, RRM Canada could not ask WeChat to look at the back end. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, which would shut down the activity if it was determined to be a violation of their terms of service, they had no such relationship with TenCent.
- e) The community of experts looking at Chinese social media platforms such as WeChat is and was small. RRM Canada had relationships with all G7 countries as well as a number of other partners. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, where there is an understanding of activity on these platforms and large amounts of literature about these platforms, there was no community of analysts looking at WeChat, making it hard to understand what the RRM team was seeing on the WeChat platform.

[14] Mr. King was asked to discuss specific conclusions drawn in the 2019 SITE TF After-Action Report [this report was prepared months after the 2019 election as an after-the-fact analysis]. One such conclusion related to CSE’s processes for sanitization and

UNCLASSIFIED

“action-on” of SIGINT information that were not always conducted in a timely manner in 2019, which delayed the ability for SITE TF to share and act upon useful SIGINT information with other partners in a more timely fashion.

- [15] Mr. King explained the well-established process at CSE surrounding the sharing of SIGINT intelligence. Generally speaking, CSE issues intelligence through an “end-product report”. If a partner agency wishes to use that information, the partner agency must come back to CSE and request what is called “action-on” and provide a justification about the intent and what they plan to use it for. An internal review at CSE is then performed to see if the use of the information would potentially be injurious by putting at risk any of CSE’s sources, and to make any amendments or proposals to the form of words requested by the partner agency. This process may be more complex and time-consuming, depending on the consultations required.
- [16] Mr. King explained that these processes can take days or sometimes weeks depending on the priority of the request. Mr. King added that this process does not prevent the sharing of information with government partners. The information will be shared at a classification level where individuals with the appropriate clearance will have access to it, and if the report is more restricted, it will be shared with named recipients only. It is when the recipient wants to take action on this kind of intelligence that they must first ask permission of CSE.
- [17] In relation to the conclusion in the After-Action Report for the 2019 election, Mr. King recalled a specific instance where a partner agency was unsatisfied with the delay it took to get an approval for the release of information. Mr. King testified that he felt there were some improvements that could be made in that regard so it was captured in the After-Action Report. Because he has since changed roles, Mr. King did not know whether CSE took any steps based on this recommendation, but noted that the process may require additional consultations, over which CSE may not have significant influence. Mr. King testified that he does not believe there were any issues with CSE’s production, dissemination or access of signals intelligence reporting in relation to the 2021 election.

UNCLASSIFIED

1.3 SITE TF Communications

- [18] Mr. King identified two differences in the way information was shared by SITE TF compared to 2019.
- [19] First, SITE TF modified their Terms of Reference to acknowledge that they wanted to try to share information at the lowest possible classification level to ensure broader distribution. This modification was in response to a challenge in 2019 with some of the sensitive information and having that information shared with a wide range of individuals while trying to protect the source material.
- [20] Second, SITE TF produced “threat summaries” starting in late 2020, to capture the overall threat landscape as understood by all of SITE’s partners and their views with respect to adversary behaviour.
- [21] Mr. King believed SITE TF produced a threat summary in late 2020, one in January 2021, and then monthly in May, June, July and August 2021. The monthly frequency of the threat summary was implemented when the Panel of Five became active, so on a monthly basis they had a more cohesive, coherent view of what SITE TF was seeing. As they did in 2019, the SITE TF produced daily situation reports (SITREPs) during the 2021 writ period. Layered overtop of the daily SITREP, the SITE TF collected that week’s activity into a weekly summary.
- [22] Mr. King testified that CSIS would normally take the lead on combining and pulling information together for the threat summaries because CSIS has a unit that is used to preparing overarching summaries and assessment pieces. The other SITE TF partners would provide information to the Service to include in the threat summaries.
- [23] The threat summaries would have been disseminated up through to the SITE member organization senior officials at the Director General, Assistant Deputy Minister (“ADM”) and Deputy Minister level.

1.4 Role of the SITE ADM Table

- [24] Mr. King explained that in 2019, in addition to the operational level SITE TF, there was also an ADM-level SITE group. At that time, as SITE was a new construct, there was a

UNCLASSIFIED

lot of oversight and interest in SITE TF's activities. The ADM-level committee had the same membership as the SITE member organizations at the operational level, but also included PCO, represented by the Assistant Secretary to Cabinet for Security and Intelligence. The function of the ADM SITE table was to provide some oversight and guidance to the operational level of the SITE TF as they were preparing for the 2019 election. There was a lot more interaction between the SITE operational level and the ADM level in the lead up to the 2019 election. At that time, they had monthly touchpoints where Mr. King would brief and provide examples of what the SITE TF was doing as well as advise if there were any issues and how the TF was correcting them. These touchpoints also gave an opportunity for the ADM table to ask questions of the operational level and ensure they were on the right path.

- [25] Because the SITE TF went through that fairly rigorous process in 2019, Mr. King felt that there was a bit less oversight by the ADM level in 2021 and the lead-up to the 2021 election. They had a few discussions and a few briefings with the ADM SITE group, but no regular meetings. At that point, the role of ADM SITE was to have a bit of oversight into what SITE was doing at an operational level, to make sure they weren't missing anything, and to provide a "sober second thought" on what they could or should be doing.
- [26] During the writ period, SITE TF generally communicated with the Panel of Five in the same way as it had in 2019. SITE TF provided the Panel of Five with daily SITREPS. The Chief of CSE and the Director of the **Canadian Security Intelligence Service ("CSIS")** delivered weekly verbal briefings where they provided overarching threat summaries to the Panel based on inputs prepared by its SITE TF representatives. Gallit Dobner briefed the Panel on behalf of GAC , as did Ms. Lisa Ducharme or other officials on behalf of the **Royal Canadian Mounted Police ("RCMP")** .
- [27] During these weekly meetings, the Panel was free to ask questions and SITE TF would answer. Afterwards, the SITE TF members would be excused and the Panel would deliberate in private. Ms. Dobner said that the SITE TF received little direct feedback from the Panel of Five, but that they could infer certain things from the types of questions the Panel of Five asked them during briefings and the discussions that would ensue. Ms. Dobner noted that this was an improvement over 2019.

UNCLASSIFIED

[28] Mr. King was also asked to comment on the SITE TF Incident Register, which he described as a log that SITE maintained of key intelligence and information that was brought to the SITE table. They had maintained the same type of log in 2019, and felt it was good practice to keep track of what they saw and when they saw it. He noted that the log categorized each piece of intelligence and noted whether it was included in a daily SITREP, but it was not used to steer conversation at the SITE table. Instead, Mr. King characterized it as being in the “background”, and suggested that, in hindsight, the document’s name would more appropriately be an “information register”.

1.5 SITE TF Pre-Election Preparation

[29] Mr. King explained that SITE TF met monthly in 2020 to make sure that connectivity was maintained. They heard from Elections Canada that there might be an election coming in the spring of 2021. Accordingly, SITE TF increased its meeting frequency from monthly to weekly and intensified its preparations. Among the many elements on which SITE TF focussed, Mr. King mentioned that they revisited some of their foundational documents, as described earlier, their communications protocols, and their election and on-call posture, updated their understanding of the threat landscape, reviewed threat coverage of key threat actors and engaged in lessons learned discussions with allies such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

[30] SITE TF was also responding to requests from PCO for briefings that began as the Panel of Five was stood up, which Mr. King believed began around May 2021.

[31] Overall, Mr. King described the pre-writ SITE TF activity as an increase in pace, a revisiting of foundational information, and a reset of their understanding of the threat landscape.

[32] Mr. King described CSE’s pre-writ activities as increasing collection, developing new collection sources and increasing targeting of priority adversaries. Mr. King noted that CSE had a better understanding of foreign interference, and CSE officials also had a greater focus on it. Mr. King believed by this time there was also a more cohesive understanding across CSE of how to support SITE TF’s work.

UNCLASSIFIED

- [33] Ms. Dobner testified that the RRM took a number of steps to prepare for the 2021 election. In addition to their increased analytical capacity, the RRM's, preparations involved carving out the social media landscape and determining who in the team was going to follow which platforms.
- [34] In addition, the RRM, in partnership with other SITE members, organized a series of workshops for the Government of Canada. One of these workshops looked at lessons learned from 2019, where the RRM brought in government officials who were part of the Elections Security Coordinating Committee (security & intelligence agencies, GAC, Elections Canada, Heritage Canada, etc.), but also members of civil society who discussed what they saw and what they learned by monitoring the 2019 election in Canada. A second, classified workshop was organized with G7 partners who had had recent elections and who shared what they saw in terms of tactics, trends and tools. A third workshop was organized with a number of academic and civil society partners regarding the online environment and how it had evolved since 2019. Finally, a fourth workshop was organized on technical and analytical aspects of the digital spaces.
- [35] The CSIS Representative described what CSIS was doing during the pre-writ period to support SITE TF. First, CSIS continued to make sure that enough information (i.e. a combination of intelligence and briefings) was moving through the system about the threat landscape. The CSIS Representative noted that, by mid-2021, the Panel of Five had new members joining who had not participated in electoral security processes in the past. A major objective for CSIS at that point was to bring them up to speed so that when the election was triggered, they would have a baseline understanding as to how to evaluate the nature of the threats that Canada faced. That also meant that information flow between SITE members had to increase, and that the uptake in briefings and the information flow to senior officials increased as well.
- [36] The CSIS Representative also testified that there was an increasing focus on **Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism ("IMVE")** emerging post-COVID with the backdrop of recent events in the United States.
- [37] Internally, the CSIS Representative explained that the Service undertook significant organizational changes, in particular in relation to China. CSIS created a branch within

UNCLASSIFIED

the ADR Directorate, which integrated CSIS's operational, analytical and strategic focuses. The consequence of this organizational change was to get more information moved into the system, to have it better analyzed and to have greater outputs that were more and more accurate, to make the system more effective. This branch was stood up in late 2020 and it was functioning effectively in 2021. In addition, there was consistent communication between officials within the Service who were working on other files such as China, Iran, Pakistan, and also IMVE. This effort is reflected the documents and briefings prepared for senior officials, which provided them with a good sense as to where Canada stood at that particular moment.

1.6 Briefings to Political Parties

- [38] Mr. King described the briefings to cleared members of political parties provided by SITE TF, which were coordinated and arranged via PCO. During those briefings, Mr. King provided background and contextual information about the SITE construct, its authorities, mandates and activities, while the CSIS Representative focussed on the overarching threat picture. The briefings were done at a secret level so more detail could be shared regarding certain adversaries' activities and techniques. Mr. King explained that those briefings were also intended to open up a path of communication between the political parties and SITE TF. Mr. King recalled that, in 2021, SITE provided briefings to the Conservative Party of Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada, and the New Democratic Party of Canada.
- [39] The CSIS Representative added that the briefings with political parties was a productive engagement. By having these scheduled meetings, the parties had opportunities to come in and speak directly about what they were experiencing in their political campaigns, and then hear directly from the security and intelligence community about the nature of the context in which political affairs were unfolding.
- [40] Ms. Dobner added that discussion of the threat environment during briefings to the parties included disinformation. She was able to share what RRM was seeing in the online environment. She explained that, before the writ dropped or right after it dropped, the briefing focussed on the tools and the threat environment, and as they proceeded

UNCLASSIFIED

throughout the campaign, then the parties received information about what was being monitored in the online environment.

[41] Mr. King recalled that SITE TF had one or two meetings with the political parties before the writ dropped, and either one or two meetings afterwards. After that point, the political parties naturally became very busy with their campaigns.

1.7 The Writ Period

[42] Mr. King explained that, once the writ dropped, SITE TF increased the frequency of its meetings. During the pre-election phase, SITE TF had convened on a weekly basis. During the writ period itself, meetings happened daily, and sometimes even more frequently. SITE began to circulate daily SITREPs. Further, SITE TF operated on a 24/7 callback response protocol, meaning that if an urgent issue came up overnight, SITE TF would be able to address it immediately and flag it for the Panel of Five.

[43]

1.8 Specific Incidents

[44] The SITE TF 2021 panel was asked about three specific incidents that were observed during the 2021 election.

1.8.1 PRC Support of Candidate's Federal Election Campaign

[45] The CSIS Representative explained that CSIS reported on an incident of FI during the 2021 election. This information was shared with the SITE TF.

[46] The CSIS representative characterized this incident as a "very textbook" type of FI activity. They testified that the SITE TF briefed the Panel of Five of this developing incident throughout the writ period, and even after the election.

1.8.2 False Narratives Online about Kenny Chiu and Erin O'Toole

[47] Ms. Dobner provided a high-level overview of the false narratives online observed by the RRM. She testified that, at the beginning of the election campaign, everything looked

UNCLASSIFIED

quite similar to the baseline activities of the previous months. The RRM team saw the first sign of false narratives online that could be a disinformation campaign. That activity was principally taking place on WeChat news accounts and was targeting the leader of the **Conservative Party of Canada (“CPC”)**, Mr. Erin O’Toole, likening him to Donald Trump and suggesting that if he were to be elected, he would ban WeChat. RRM’s observations were reported in the SITE TF’s daily SITREPs.

[48] Ms. Dobner testified that, on September 9, 2021 the RRM detected two complementary sets of activity that could possibly be disinformation campaigns. One was broad-based and targeted the CPC and Erin O’Toole, and the other was more focussed and targeted Kenny Chiu.

[49] Ms. Dobner explained that the news accounts that RRM was monitoring in relation to the two complementary sets of activity are generally used by Canadians of Chinese origin. On that basis, RRM could assume that the target audience was this group of Canadians. Ms. Dobner noted that these were inferences drawn by the RRM team.

[50] Regarding the false narratives about Mr. O’Toole and the Conservatives, Ms. Dobner testified that it was based on a commentary made by former political advisor Jocelyn Coulon that appeared in the Hill Times. Ms. Coulon was quoted as saying something to the effect that the CPC under Mr. O’Toole almost wanted to break relations with China. The Global Times, a Chinese newspaper similar to the Sun, ran a story about this quote, following which the RRM started noticing a number of WeChat news accounts picking up the narrative from the Global Times.

[51] These WeChat news accounts did not reference the Global Times directly and they ran very similar messaging. According to Ms. Dobner, it was almost a cut and paste, but with some added editorializing around the narrative. The RRM then saw that Xinhua – a Chinese news source akin to Agence France Presse or Associated Press – created a video that they ran on the platform Douyin, which is like TikTok.

[52] Ms. Dobner explained that RRM was seeing “a sort of jumping from platform to platform” where the narrative about almost wanting to break relations with China was circulated. The Global Times was never referenced and the messages were always very similar,

UNCLASSIFIED

almost cut and paste with a little editorializing regarding the effect of a vote for the Conservatives and even some calls to action about not voting for this party.

[53] At the same time, as of September 9, RRM saw on WeChat news accounts what seemed like it could be a disinformation campaign targeting Kenny Chiu, specifically saying that if he were elected, all Canadians of Chinese origin would have to register as foreign agents under the foreign agency registry act for which Kenny Chiu was advocating in Parliament. The RRM noted that the messages on WeChat news accounts seemed more targeted locally to his constituency. This possible campaign was first reported by SITE TF on September 10, 2021.

[54] Ms. Dobner noted that RRM learned, after the fact, in information shared by the CPC for instance, that there were already narratives about Kenny Chiu on WeChat groups to which the RRM would never have had access to for privacy reason. This information was not part of RRM's analysis during the election campaign, which relied on the information available to it from the news accounts.

[55] Ms. Dobner testified that SITE TF reported on what seemed to be two parallel campaigns that continued for about a week. From September 16th onwards, there was no further activity on either one of these campaigns. It stopped completely about four or five days before the election.

[56] While RRM detected these online activities, Ms. Dobner emphasized that RRM had no evidence that it was directed by a foreign-state. Although they saw indicators of coordinated behaviour, it could also have been completely organic and regular activity of Canadians, who are entitled to freedom of speech. Ms. Dobner noted that it could also be somewhere in the grey zone, in the middle of that spectrum, where there are Canadian actors who are trying to support the Chinese government and feel that the Chinese government does not want Kenny Chiu and the CPC to be elected (i.e. of their own accord, these individuals are taking certain steps, but they have not actually been directed by the Chinese government).

[57] Ms. Dobner emphasized that China is governed by an authoritarian government and that anything in a Chinese newspaper or on Chinese social media platform would not be there

UNCLASSIFIED

if the Chinese government did not agree with it, but the question as to whether the Chinese government specifically directed the content is a further step, and they had no evidence of that.

- [58] Ms. Dobner stated that throughout the election, SITE TF was reporting the RRM's observations to the Panel of Five. In one of the Panel briefings, the Panel asked SITE TF bring all of its resources to bear and conduct an analysis on this issue. Ms. Dobner referred the Commissioner to a classified report dated October 25, 2021 titled "*Chinese State Media and Other Online Activity during GE44*". The RRM drafted a first level report and it was then shared with SITE TF. She believed both CSIS and CSE made contributions to the analysis. In this report, SITE TF concluded that it could not determine the origin of the false narratives.
- [59] The CSIS Representative noted that following the 2021 election, Kenny Chiu claimed publicly that he had been the subject of a disinformation campaign and that he had lost the election because of the nature of this campaign. The CPC then shared its concerns with PCO. These concerns were put in writing in a document which outlined the nature of these concerns. Within that document, the CPC identified 13 different ridings that they believed had been potentially tampered with by the Chinese government through a variety of different mechanisms.
- [60] The document prepared by the CPC was shared with SITE TF so that it could assess the CPC's claims. The CSIS Representative testified that an enormous amount of work was done between the organizations and within the SITE TF to understand the campaigns and other allegations. The CSIS Representative stated that the top-level conclusion was that SITE TF could not establish a link between the Chinese Government and the types of social media campaigns that the RRM observed. They explained that SITE TF produced a classified document that examined the various organizations, WeChat groups and the umbrella organization called the "Chinese news service", and its broader relationship to the Chinese Communist Party. The document was given back to senior members of PCO for them to discuss this issue with the CPC. The document produced by SITE TF is titled "*PRC Interference in Election 2021: Response to the Conservative Party of Canada*" and is dated October 19, 2021.

UNCLASSIFIED

[61] Concerning the information shared with PCO by CPC, Ms. Dobner added that the RRM received a package with a supporting dossier prepared by the CPC. RRM's analysts looked at it and recognized elements they had already seen themselves and on which they had reported. Other elements were anecdotal or not very robust. Ms. Dobner testified that the dossier also contained a USB stick. As soon as they opened it, RRM analysts realized that it contained information from a private chat group. They removed that information from the RRM's systems and did not look at it further. Ms. Dobner explained that the RRM could not look at this information for privacy reasons and because doing so would be inconsistent with RRM's ethical and methodological framework.

1.8.3 Foreign Interference in Democratic Processes after the 2021 Election

[62] SITE TF received an intelligence report after the 2021 election. The intelligence was not collected until after the election, though it described activity that took place during and after the election. Mr. King testified that CSE issued that report through their regular mechanisms, and it would have also have been flagged upwards to Deputy Ministers, and would have been delivered to the Panel of Five by Client Relations Officers.