

Commissioner Hogue,

On behalf of the New Democratic Party of Canada, I wish to thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and recommendations on the proceedings to-date.

Foreign interference poses a significant threat to the foundation of our democracy, and it is imperative that the Government of Canada take proactive measures to address this challenge. To that end, the New Democratic Party proposes the following recommendations which seek to help build our national resilience against foreign interference, further safeguard the integrity of our democratic processes, and protect the national interests of Canada.

1. **Provide relevant and timely intelligence to political parties on an ongoing basis.**

Recognizing the constraints of providing classified intelligence to political parties, it is recommended that the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force provide regular unclassified summaries of relevant classified intelligence on foreign interference on an ongoing basis.

2. **Provide each political party with a customized briefing on foreign interference before each federal general election and by-election.**

Recognizing the unique circumstances that each political party is encountering due to foreign interference, it is recommended that designated representatives receive not only a generalized briefing on foreign interference before each federal election and by-election, but also a customized unclassified briefing which outlines both known and anticipated threats to party candidates, staff members and volunteers at a riding-level.

3. **Permit Secret and Top-Secret Clearances for designated party representatives.**

Recognizing the value of receiving all relevant and timely intelligence on foreign interference activities, it is recommended that designated representatives from each political party have the opportunity to be cleared at both the secret and top-secret levels before the 45th federal election. In doing so, party representatives could receive all essential intelligence from the SITE Task Force.

4. **Enable greater public transparency through an independent Openness Advocate.**

Recognizing the importance of ensuring the timely availability of intelligence to members of the federal government and public, it is recommended

that an independent Openness Advocate be appointed to promote information sharing between federal departments and agencies and facilitate transparency from the intelligence community.

5. **Preserve the independence of nomination meetings.** Recognizing that many countries around the world do not impose constraints on party nomination processes, it is recommended that the candidate nomination process remain under the independent oversight of federal political parties. Instead, through greater support from Canada's security institutions, political parties can better build resilience to foreign interference without compromising their independence in Canada's political arena.

6. **Establish a National Foreign Influence and Transparency Registry.** As highlighted by the CSIS briefing to the Prime Minister dated October 2022, Canada has been slower than its Five Eyes allies to respond to foreign interference threats. Recognizing the critical need to establish measures that will help deter foreign state actors, it is recommended that the federal government immediately prioritize the establishment of a national foreign influence and transparency registry in advance of the 45th federal election.

7. **Federal efforts to counter foreign interference must be applied uniformly.** Recognizing the critical need to counter foreign interference efforts on diaspora communities, it is concerning that distinct efforts were made by the federal government to address disinformation concerning the governing party during the 2019 federal election, but not with respect to a non-governing party during the 2021 federal election. Therefore, it is recommended that a more robust set of standard operating procedures be developed, so that mitigation and response mechanisms by the federal government are used uniformly, including during the caretaker period.

In addition to these recommendations, I would also like to raise the concerns of MP Jenny Kwan from her interview summary and commission testimony. By speaking out against the unjust actions of the Chinese Communist Party, the safety of MP Kwan and her family is now at risk for simply speaking truth to power. The same risk is being taken by the Leader of Canada's NDP, MP Jagmeet Singh, whenever he speaks out against social and economic injustices faced by Sikhs at the hands of the Indian government. In both cases, their personal experiences represent the very real concerns of many diaspora members across Canada to the dangers of foreign interference and how it can threaten to undermine our democracy at its core.

As Canadians from diaspora communities seek to engage and participate in Canada's political arena, it is incumbent on the federal government to do everything in its power to ensure that all members of society are protected from foreign interference. As we have seen throughout this phase of the commission's work, this is not always the case. For example, I would like to refer you to the NDP's report to the Commissioner of Canada Elections which went unresolved, despite repeated attempts by MP Kwan to raise the troubling nature of the incident.

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As the commission seeks to complete its initial report, I urge you Commissioner to further explore how the federal government can fix this glaring issue and ensure that all reasonably grounded cases of foreign interference are properly investigated and acted upon.

Sincerely,



Lucy Watson  
National Director  
Canada's NDP

