



BRIEFING 002 / TEAM CANADA DOCTRINE / OPEN SOURCE

# The Three Streams

*How Russian, American, and Dutch actors converged on Alberta separatism — and the doctrine that runs them out.*

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DATE  
May 18, 2026  
Victoria, BC  
Canada

PREDECESSOR  
Team Canada:  
The Math of  
Staying Together  
(Briefing 001)

CLASSIFICATION  
Open source  
Cite, don't  
paraphrase

**M**att Berry is a Calgary media worker. In April 2026 he learned, by reverse image search, that his own face had been used for ten months to front a YouTube channel called *The Canadian Politician* — 350,000 views, scores of videos arguing that Alberta should leave Canada, an audience that believed it was watching one of its own.<sup>1</sup>

He had auditioned, months earlier, for what he was told was a Dutch news show. He was never paid. He never signed a contract. Until CBC's visual-investigations team called him, he did not know he had become the public face of a 40-million-view influence operation run out of the Netherlands by people who had taken the same online course on how to build “faceless YouTube channels.”<sup>2</sup>

Berry is not alone. Paul Nicholls in Indiana fronted a sister channel called *CanadianHub* for roughly sixty U.S. dollars per video and was also never paid. “I’m in Indiana,” he told the CBC. “I don’t know anything about Canadian politics.”<sup>3</sup> The Calgary face, the Indiana voice, the Dutch operator, the Alberta separatist message: four points in a single fabricated package, sold to Canadians as authentic civic debate.

The Media Ecosystem Observatory — a joint project of McGill and the University of Toronto — published the underlying report two days before the CBC story. It identifies **twenty inauthentic channels with approximately forty million views in the past year**, classifies the network as “a potential covert influence operation produced by unknown actors pursuing unclear objectives,” and finds that the inauthentic channels carry **sixty percent more grievance framing** and **twelve times more video segments favourably discussing U.S. annexation** than authentic Albertan separatist accounts.<sup>4</sup>

This is the part of the story that travels well. It is also the smallest of three converging streams. The Dutch operation appears to be profit-motivated — an enterprising adaptation of the “faceless YouTube channel” passive-income model, picked up by operators who saw which way Canadian politics was paying. No state direction has been proven.<sup>5</sup>

The other two streams are larger, older, and operate in the open. The first is Russian. The second is American.

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*A referendum like the one in Alberta, that may have a divisive effect on society, is rife for amplification or for the sort of disinformation or foreign interference that we've seen from players like Russia in the past.*

DAN ROGERS, DIRECTOR, CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE — CBC, MAY 9, 2026<sup>6</sup>

# One target. Three vectors. A doctrine of convergence.

**A** Canadian province with vast hydrocarbon resources, a historically alienated political tradition, and a U.S. border is a target of opportunity. In 2025 and 2026, three streams of foreign influence began running narratives about that province through Canadian feeds. They originate in different countries. They use different methods. They say the same things.

**STREAM 01**

## Russian

COVERT · DOCTRINAL · SUSTAINED

Tenet Media (DOJ-indicted, USD 9.7M from RT). Storm-1516 / CopyCop, the network that ran albertaseparatist.com. Doppelganger. Pravda Network: 67 articles on Alberta in four months versus 14 on Ontario. Spamouflage on Canadian MPs in 2023 and 2024 — PRC-attributed.

**STREAM 02**

## American

OVERT · ESCALATING · CONVERGING

A sitting U.S. president demanding Canada become a 51st state. A Treasury Secretary calling Alberta a "natural partner." Three documented State Department meetings with separatist leaders. Tucker Carlson telling viewers Canada "is not sovereign." The same MAGA influencers previously paid by Russia now amplifying Alberta independence.

**STREAM 03**

## Dutch

PROFIT-DRIVEN · FACELESS · DERIVATIVE

Twenty inauthentic YouTube channels, approximately 40 million views, fronted by paid actors recruited through Upwork and Fiverr who frequently mispronounce Canadian political vocabulary. AI avatars. No identified state sponsor. The smallest stream and the most legible — useful as the entry point.

The strategic threat is not any one stream taken alone. It is the convergence. When a Russian state-linked website, a U.S. cabinet secretary, and a Dutch-operated YouTube channel are simultaneously telling Albertans that their grievances are real, that their independence is feasible, and that Washington stands ready to receive them, the question is no longer whether each source is "the same": the question is whose narrative wins inside a Canadian voter's head when the referendum question is read.

That is what this briefing addresses. It documents the three streams. It separates Alberta's threat picture from Quebec's. And it sets out a doctrine — rooted in the Swedish, Finnish, and Taiwanese models — for keeping Canada's cognitive sovereignty intact.<sup>7</sup>

# Five operations. One doctrine. Documented attribution.

## Tenet Media — the talent layer

On September 4, 2024 the U.S. Department of Justice indicted two RT employees for conspiracy to violate FARA and money laundering. The indictment alleges RT routed **approximately USD 9.7 million** through shell companies in Turkey, the UAE, and Mauritius to Tenet Media — a Tennessee company founded by Canadian-American influencer Lauren Chen and her husband Liam Donovan.<sup>8</sup> Talent roster: Tim Pool, Dave Rubin, Benny Johnson, Lauren Southern, Matt Christiansen, Tayler Hansen. One contract (Rubin) at **USD 400,000 per month**; another (Pool) at **USD 100,000 per video**.<sup>9</sup> Tenet produced **51+ Canada-focused videos**.<sup>10</sup> Tenet collapsed after the indictment. Its talent did not.

## Storm-1516 / CopyCop — the websites

U.S. Treasury attributes the Storm-1516 network to Russia-based actors with GRU links, led from Moscow by U.S. citizen John Mark Dougan. By 2025 the network had stood up **more than three hundred fake news websites**.<sup>11</sup>

### PRIMARY-SOURCE ATTRIBUTION

Recorded Future's Insikt Group identified **albertaseparatist.com** as belonging to Storm-1516 in September 2025, finding "shared infrastructure and similarities" with hundreds of other Storm-1516 sites. Active as recently as March 2026. Insikt: the operation "is almost certainly attempting to capitalize on growing pro-independence sentiment in the Canadian province of Alberta and exacerbate domestic polarization."<sup>12</sup>

## Pravda Network — the volume metric



Pravda Network Canada-section articles, Dec 24, 2025 - Apr 25, 2026<sup>15</sup>

# The interference Canada is permitted to name out loud.

**R**ussian operations run covertly and are attributed by intelligence agencies after the fact. The American channel is overt. It is conducted on Truth Social, on Bloomberg, on Real America's Voice, on the floor of the United States Senate. It is conducted by named individuals holding named offices. It is the easiest stream to document and the most consequential to refuse.

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- DEC 2024** President-elect Trump, dining with PM Trudeau at Mar-a-Lago, addresses him as "Governor Justin Trudeau of the Great State of Canada."<sup>17</sup>
- 
- JAN 2025** Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), after all fifty states certify Trump's Electoral College victory, posts on X: "They skipped Canada. We'll fix that next time!"<sup>18</sup>
- 
- APR 2025** Leaders of the Alberta Prosperity Project hold the first of **at least three meetings** with U.S. State Department officials in Washington. APP later tells the *Financial Times*: "The US is extremely enthusiastic about a free and independent Alberta." Jeffrey Rath publicly mentions plans to seek a **USD 500 billion U.S. credit line** for an independent Alberta.<sup>19</sup>
- 
- MAY 2025** Trump on Truth Social: Canada can have the Golden Dome missile defence system for "ZERO DOLLARS if they become our cherished 51st State."<sup>20</sup>
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- SEP 2025** Trump revives the 51st state framing on September 30 in a formal military setting, ties it to a security deal.<sup>21</sup>
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- JAN 2026** Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, interviewed in Davos by Jack Posobiec for Real America's Voice, calls Alberta "**a natural partner for the U.S.**"<sup>22</sup>
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- APR 2026** Tucker Carlson tells viewers Canada "is not sovereign," floats coercive U.S. action. DisinfoWatch compares the language to "Russian claims before its full-scale invasion of Ukraine."<sup>24</sup>
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- MAY 2026** PM Mark Carney, on election night: "**Trump is trying to break us so America can own us.**"<sup>25</sup>

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*Russia's engagement with Alberta separatism is covert, doctrinal, operational, and sustained. U.S. engagement is overt, escalating, and in some environments, converging with Russia.*

DISINFOWATCH / CDMRN / GCDR JOINT REPORT — MAY 6, 2026<sup>27</sup>

# Twenty channels. Forty million views. Paid actors. No proven sponsor.

CBC News and Radio-Canada's *Décodeurs* traced the YouTube network to **three individuals based in the Netherlands**. Two attended the same online course on building “faceless YouTube channels.” The actor pipeline runs through Upwork and Fiverr; the script is generated; the avatars are AI; the audience is Albertan; the message is separation.<sup>28</sup>

## 20

Inauthentic YouTube channels identified (MEO, April 2026)

## 40M

Estimated views generated in the past year

## +60%

More grievance framing than authentic separatist accounts

## 12×

More segments favourably discussing U.S. annexation

The operation is profit-driven. The Media Ecosystem Observatory and DisinfoWatch both classify the operators as “economic opportunists,” not identified state agents. Calling it Russian would be overclaiming. Calling it harmless because it is profit-driven would be naive. The content is the same content. The audience is the same audience. The downstream effect is identical regardless of who is paying.<sup>30</sup>

**N**othing here is invented. The institutions that exist to monitor foreign interference have monitored it, documented it, and named it. The remaining work is doctrinal and political.

- **Hogue Commission Final Report (Jan 28, 2025):** “Information manipulation (whether foreign or not) poses the single biggest risk” to Canadian democracy. China is the most persistent threat; India the second most active electoral interferer; Russia's primary tool is disinformation.<sup>31</sup>
- **CSIS Public Report 2024:** “When Russia delegates the amplification of divisive issues related to members of Canadian society, the result may mimic an organic public debate process. Wittingly or unwittingly, Western citizens, including Canadians, become disinformation enablers.”<sup>32</sup>
- **Bill C-70 (Royal Assent June 20, 2024):** Foreign Influence Transparency Registry, three new SOIA offences, life-imprisonment maximum for surreptitious interference. The legal infrastructure is built.<sup>34</sup>

# Two secessionist traditions. One foreign-interference picture. Treat them differently.

The most disciplined move available to federalists in 2026 is to refuse to bundle Alberta separatism and Quebec sovereigntism into a single threat picture. They are not the same problem. The evidence base is asymmetric. The strategic response must be asymmetric too.

Quebec sovereigntism is a domestic political tradition with deep historical roots, two referenda, a coherent francophone civic culture, a left-leaning intellectual base, and an unambiguous distance from Donald Trump and the MAGA project. Documented French diplomatic affinity, from de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre" (July 24, 1967) to Chirac's near-endorsement of the Yes side in 1995. No documented Russian, Chinese, or other state-actor operation targeting Quebec sovereigntism at the scale of the Alberta evidence base.<sup>35</sup>

Alberta separatism in 2026 is different. Right-coded, economically driven, ethnically and linguistically indistinct from the rest of English Canada, and ideologically continuous with the MAGA project Trump leads in Washington. The Ipsos Confederation Stress Test (January 2026) found that **seventy percent of committed Alberta separatists would consider joining the United States instead.**<sup>36</sup> No comparable finding exists for Quebec.

Documented foreign-state amplification	Quebec: <b>None current</b> / Alberta: <b>Russia, U.S.</b>
Polling support for separation	Quebec: 32% / Alberta: 26%
Support after cost stress-test	Quebec: 15-16% / Alberta: 15-16%
Willingness to join U.S. instead	Quebec: marginal / Alberta: <b>70% of committed separatists</b>
Distinct language / culture substrate	Quebec: <b>yes</b> / Alberta: <b>no</b>
Indigenous legal constraint	Quebec: Cree (96.3% No, 1995) / Alberta: Treaty 6 / 7 / 8

For Quebec, the doctrine is maintenance, not weapons: don't reopen the Constitution; don't strike down Bill 96; don't pursue Bill 21 to the Supreme Court; permit substantial asymmetric federalism in practice; resource Indigenous sovereignty (the Cree, Innu, and Mohawk votes are the structural constraint that makes Quebec secession legally impossible).

For Alberta, the doctrine is the full Three Streams response that follows.

# Frame the convergence. Operationalize the law. Build civic resilience.

## Tier 1 — Frame and message

The killshot fact is the convergence itself: the same MAGA influencers previously paid by Russia are now amplifying Alberta separation. Lead with it. Trump's 51st state rhetoric, Bessent's "natural partner" line, the three APP – State Department meetings, and the documented Russian operations are all citable from primary sources. Make Carney's election-night sentence the recurring refrain: **Trump is trying to break us so America can own us.** Adopt the Swedish Psychological Defence Agency's transparency-as-defence posture — publish, attribute, explain. Operationalize prebunking: short videos exposing manipulation *techniques* reduce susceptibility before exposure.<sup>38</sup>

## Tier 2 — Institutional asks

1. **Full operationalization of the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry** under Bill C-70, including provincial coverage. APP – State Department contacts would, post-registration, fall within registry obligations.
2. **A Canadian Psychological Defence capability** modelled on Sweden's MPF, under Public Safety or Global Affairs, with an exclusively external/foreign mandate.
3. **Provincial campaign-finance reform in Alberta** — foreign donations to third-party advertisers remain under-regulated.
4. **Canadian autonomous sanctions on Storm-1516 / CopyCop infrastructure** under SEMA.

## Tier 3 — Civic resilience

Finland ranked first in the OSI – Sofia Media Literacy Index 2017–2025; K–12 literacy is mandatory, layered, begins in primary school.<sup>39</sup> Canada has nothing comparable at federal scale. Fund MEO, CDMRN, and DisinfoWatch as standing capability. Build a civic-tech layer for structured deliberation on Albertan grievance, modelled on Taiwan's vTaiwan / Polis. Albertan alienation is not invented — it will not be answered by federalist exhortation, but by a process in which Albertans help build the answer rather than receive it.

# The country is not for sale. Not the territory, not the minds.

**M**arcus Kolga and his co-authors named the stake correctly in their May 2026 report: *cognitive sovereignty*. The ability of Canadians to make political decisions freely, without foreign coercion or manipulation. That is what is being contested in Alberta in 2026, and what would be contested in any subsequent Canadian electoral or referendum cycle.<sup>40</sup>

The territory is not for sale. The minds are not for sale either. That is the doctrine. The work of the next several years — through the October 19, 2026 Alberta referendum and beyond — is operationalizing the difference between Canadian disagreements, which are normal, healthy, and load-bearing for federation, and foreign-amplified disagreements, which are something else entirely.

A federation can survive Albertan grievance. It cannot survive an Albertan grievance laundered through Russian websites, amplified by an American president, and fronted by a Calgary man whose face was stolen by a Dutch YouTube channel. The first is politics. The second is interference. Canada has the legal infrastructure, the intelligence record, the academic capacity, and the international playbook to draw that line and hold it.

What remains is the political will to do so, and a public sufficiently briefed to demand it. This document is one contribution toward both.



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DOCTRINE 002  
THE THREE STREAMS  
MAY 18, 2026

## FOOTNOTES — OPEN SOURCE &amp; PUBLICLY VERIFIABLE

09 / 09

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2. **Faceless YouTube course.** Per CBC's reporting, two of the three identified Dutch operators attended the same online course.
3. **Paul Nicholls / CanadianHub.** Source as fn 1.
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14. **Canadian Doppelganger content.** Global Affairs Canada October 2024 statement on Russian disinformation; CBC investigation; Marcus Kolga interview.
15. **Pravda Network ratio.** Kolga et al. (fn 7), Executive Summary p. 4.
16. **Spamouflage Canada attributions.** RRM Canada releases October 2023 and 2024–2025 backgrounder.
17. **“Governor Justin Trudeau.”** Mar-a-Lago dinner, early December 2024. Reuters, CBC, PBS NewsHour.
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21. **September 30, 2025 revival.** The Hub, October 1, 2025.
22. **Bessent “natural partner.”** Real America's Voice / Davos interview, January 2026. Globe and Mail. St. Albert Gazette.
23. **NBC follow-up / FT framing.** NBC News March 2026 follow-up; FT reporting cited within The Walrus.
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28. **Dutch operators / Décrypteurs.** Joint CBC / Radio-Canada investigation, April 23, 2026.
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