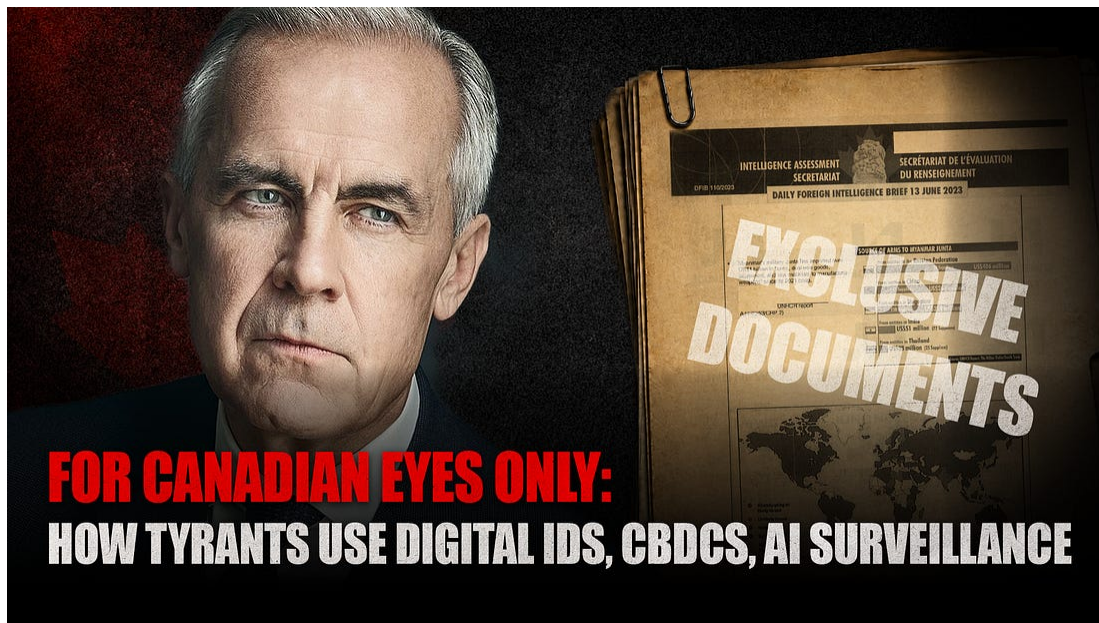


EXCLUSIVE: Military intelligence identified digital IDs, CBDCs as tools of authoritarian control

Military Intelligence warned Liberals that Digital IDs, CBDC were effective tools of authoritarian control

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Canadian military intelligence warned that digital identity, central bank digital currencies, smart cities, and other digital technologies form the basis of an “authoritarian toolkit,” an architecture capable of surveillance and state control, especially when combined. But provincial and federal governments are incrementally advancing the same technologies.

Juno News obtained a 2024 Canadian Forces Intelligence Command (CFINTCOM) assessment after a lengthy and fraught access-to-information process. The request was filed more than a year ago and sought 12 records, but only one has been disclosed.

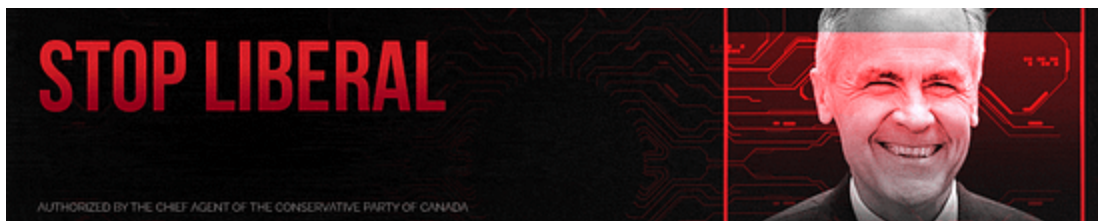
Much of the material was initially considered too sensitive, with the intelligence assessment itself marked “TOP SECRET // CANADIAN EYES ONLY.”

Significant portions remain withheld for national security reasons.

The partially disclosed material examines how authoritarian governments such as China and Russia use digital technologies to monitor their populations, restrict individual behaviour, and reinforce state control.

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Among the “tools of the digital authoritarian,” CFINTCOM lists physical surveillance systems including “smart cities,” facial recognition and biometrics, artificial intelligence, “digital credentials, movement passports, digital identity systems,” and central bank digital currencies, commonly known as CBDCs.

The assessment does not argue that digital technologies are inherently authoritarian on their own, but it does warn of the potential consequences for freedom.

When combined, these technologies enable surveillance, espionage, censorship, propaganda, coercion, and the ability to throttle or completely shut down access to services or communications, according to the report.

It describes how things like QR codes, digital passports, licence plates, and facial recognition can be used to control individual behaviour by “limiting access to banking services, use of CBDC to control or limit transactions, or physical movement controls.”

Perhaps most strikingly, the report says that a “[m]onitored citizenry will limit their own speech, knowing the authorities can monitor communications... [and] modify their behaviour knowing that there are escalating consequences for expressing dissent.”

“The most effective form of censorship,” it says, “is self-censorship.”

At present, Canada has stopped short of issuing a CBDC. The Bank of Canada says it scaled down its plans for a digital dollar, although it

continues to monitor developments and engage in theoretical research on the social benefits of CBDCs as recently as June 2026.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has previously supported the technology. As Bank of England governor in 2019, Carney proposed considering a “Synthetic Hegemonic Currency” that could be provided through “a network of central bank digital currencies” as part of a future international monetary system.

His government has instead moved toward regulating privately issued, fiat-backed stablecoins. Unlike a CBDC, these are not issued by the central bank, although issuers will operate under federal rules and Bank of Canada supervision.

Digital identity is advancing with much more gusto.

Ottawa maintains that there are “no plans” to establish a national digital ID program and says its digital credentials will remain voluntary. At the same time, the Canadian Digital Service is building the infrastructure to issue, store and verify digital credentials across government.



Liberals quietly accelerate “voluntary” digital ID rollout

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GC Issue and Verify will allow federal departments to issue digital credentials that people can store in the GC Digital Wallet and present to organizations using verification technology while GC Sign is being developed as a common federal “authentication and identity proofing” system.

The government’s plan is to refine and scale the wallet and credential system for “larger-scale deployment,” add government partners, and eventually provide identity verification using methods including provincial or territorial digital credentials.

The provinces are developing their own systems, too.

In October 2025, Quebec adopted Bill 82 — legislation that establishes “national digital identity.” The law gives the provincial cybersecurity and digital minister responsibility for its “governance and centralized management.”

For now, their digital ID remains voluntary, and the law says public bodies cannot require it to receive government services.

British Columbia has developed the BC Wallet and a digital “person credential” based on information from the BC Services Card. The province says the credential can prove information such as a person’s name, age or address, and can be used online or in person. It too remains optional.

Alberta has also launched the Alberta Wallet, beginning with a mobile health card. The province’s driver’s licences and identification cards now include personal health numbers. They say that, in time, more government-issued documents will be added.

While distinct, each province emphasizes privacy, security, and voluntary adoption. But their expansion means Canada is now developing multiple technologies identified in the top-secret intelligence report — digital identity and credentials, increasingly connected digital public services, and new forms of digital money.

CFINTCOM warned that China and Russia can counter Western criticism of their use of digital controls “by claiming that authoritarianism is growing within Western nations themselves.”

The assessment says Western efforts to combat digital authoritarianism will have limited success because of “the growing narrative that all nations, including the West, participate in such authoritarian practices to some degree.”

It says Western countries' ability to preserve the influence needed to challenge the spread of those systems depends on the West "eschewing digital authoritarianism itself."

Two years after that assessment was written, Canada has rejected some of the most direct forms of digital control — for now.

There is no Canadian CBDC, federal digital credentials remain voluntary, and governments say their digital identity systems are designed around privacy and consent.

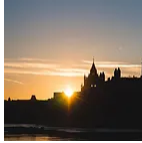
At the same time, federal and provincial governments are steadily building several of the underlying technologies CFINTCOM identified, leaving the questions about how these systems will be designed and used in the future.

Juno News reached out to the Prime Minister's Office, National Defence, Employment and Social Development Canada and the Bank of Canada for comment but did not receive a response by publication time.

Editor's note: Following publication, Employment and Social Development Canada told Juno News that there is "currently no work underway" to create a national digital identity, but confirmed the Canadian Digital Service is developing infrastructure to issue and verify federal digital credentials and is exploring interoperability with provincial, territorial and international partners. The department said digital credentials are designed to be voluntary and optional. It did not directly answer whether ESDC or CDS had reviewed the military intelligence assessment or conducted its own assessment of the risks identified by Juno News.

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