



<b>Newsline</b>	Research Security	<b>Week</b>	March 30 – April 2, 2026
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**Executive summary:** Recent developments highlight the growing intersection between research, national security, and geopolitical dynamics. Governments and institutions are advancing investments in quantum computing, aerospace, artificial intelligence, and dual-use innovation, while strengthening biosafety oversight and science diplomacy initiatives. At the same time, concerns are increasing around foreign intimidation, data access risks, academic targeting, and the impact of geopolitical conflict on research environments. These developments underscore the importance of research security awareness when engaging in strategic research, international collaboration, and the protection of sensitive data, infrastructure, and personnel.

**Key Points:**

- Foreign interference, intimidation, and researcher exposure:** The RCMP reports that foreign states continue to harass and intimidate individuals in Canada, particularly within diaspora communities, while challenges remain in translating intelligence into court-admissible evidence. Additional reporting highlights risks to individuals in academic settings who raise concerns about foreign interference, including harassment and pressure linked to intelligence gathering activities.

**What this means:** Foreign interference and intimidation may affect research environments, particularly in areas involving international engagement or sensitive topics, highlighting the importance of awareness and reporting mechanisms.
- Strategic and dual-use research capacity expansion:** Canada is strengthening domestic research capacity through initiatives including a university-operated full-stack quantum computer at the University of Saskatchewan, aerospace and AI innovation at the University of Victoria, and the DEFENDS program at the University of Alberta supporting dual-use technologies. These efforts enhance national capability, secure infrastructure, and pathways for translating research into defence and commercial applications.

**What this means:** Research in quantum, aerospace, AI, and dual-use domains may carry increased strategic sensitivity, reinforcing the importance of protecting infrastructure, expertise, and collaboration pathways.
- Science diplomacy and evolving research environments:** Quebec has launched an international network of research chairs in science diplomacy across areas such as AI governance, climate, Arctic, and space cooperation. At the same time, broader analysis indicates that geopolitical tensions and conflict are increasingly reshaping research activity by constraining collaboration, influencing research priorities, and drawing researchers into policy and public discourse.

**What this means:** Geopolitical dynamics may influence how research is conducted, shared, and governed, highlighting the importance of balancing openness with awareness of evolving political and security contexts.

- **Biosafety and biosecurity oversight:** Canada has strengthened oversight of human pathogens and toxins through amendments to the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, improving surveillance, risk mitigation, and emergency preparedness while supporting continued research and innovation in life sciences and biomanufacturing.

**What this means:** Enhanced biosafety and biosecurity measures highlight the importance of responsible oversight and compliance in research involving sensitive biological materials.

- **Data access risks and constrained operating environments:** New national security rules in Hong Kong allow authorities to access company premises, devices, and encrypted data without traditional safeguards, creating legal and operational risks for Canadian organizations. At the same time, Hong Kong's role as a global science gateway may be affected by declining academic openness and increasing political integration.

**What this means:** Jurisdictions with expanded state access powers or reduced academic freedom may introduce risks related to data protection, intellectual property, and research continuity.

- **Research as a component of economic and national security:** Countries such as New Zealand and Australia are aligning research funding with national priorities in emerging technologies, industrial capability, and economic resilience. These approaches emphasize mission-led research and closer integration between research, innovation, and national strategy.

**What this means:** As research becomes more closely tied to national and economic security, research outputs and capabilities may increase in strategic value and attract greater scrutiny.

- **Conflict and security risks affecting research institutions:** Recent reporting highlights how geopolitical conflict can extend into academic environments, with universities and research centres impacted by military activity and broader security dynamics. These developments underscore how research institutions can be affected by conflict beyond traditional military targets.

**What this means:** Conflict environments may disrupt research operations, partnerships, and personnel safety, reinforcing the importance of considering broader security contexts in international engagement.

**Conclusion:** The research environment is increasingly shaped by technological competition, geopolitical tensions, and national security priorities. Investments in strategic and dual-use research are expanding, while risks related to foreign interference, data access, biosafety, and conflict are becoming more pronounced. These developments highlight the importance of maintaining awareness of research security considerations while supporting open, collaborative, and responsible research.