

**PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO FOREIGN INTERFERENCE
IN FEDERAL ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS OF HAN DONG

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A. Overview

1. In February and March of 2023, a series of media reports made devastating, untrue claims about Member of Parliament Han Dong based on selective intelligence leaks. As a result of the reporting, Mr. Dong has been labelled a traitor, been told to “go back to China”, stepped down from the Liberal caucus, and received threats on his life. Government officials could not publicly correct the record and state that “the media reports and the allegations made in rather a spectacular fashion about Mr. Dong were false” until now. Because of that, a dark cloud of suspicion has remained over Mr. Dong for more than a year.¹ Without access to the underlying classified information, Mr. Dong could not hope to clear that cloud himself.

2. Mr. Dong is grateful that this public inquiry has given Commissioner Hogue the tools she needs to bring the facts to light, for the benefit of Canadians and our democratic institutions. The Stage 1 public hearings have already enhanced Canadians’ understanding of our electoral processes, particularly party nominations; the safeguards that were in place to protect the integrity of the 2019 and 2021 general elections; and the significant limitations of intelligence information. Most significantly for Mr. Dong, the testimony presented during the Stage 1 hearings has demonstrated that:

- (a) The allegation made in the media that Mr. Dong advocated for the delayed release of the “Two Michaels” is false;
- (b) The intelligence relating to potential irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North Liberal nomination race was uncorroborated and unsubstantiated. In addition, at least one intelligence brief was recalled, and another contained errors;

¹ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 239, lines 14-16.

- (c) There is no intelligence, let alone evidence, suggesting that Mr. Dong was aware of any irregularities that may have existed in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination race;
- (d) None of the Panel of Five, CSIS, the Prime Minister, the Liberal Party's National Director, Liberal Party officials, the Minister of Public Safety, or other public officials determined in 2019 that the intelligence relating to potential irregularities in Don Valley North merited action in their respective roles. No evidence presented during the hearings undermined these assessments;
- (e) Those involved in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination, including the two candidates and the Liberal Party Chair of the nomination, did not report any irregularities;
- (f) International students are permitted to vote in Liberal Party nomination contests, provided they are at least 14 years old, ordinarily live in the riding in question, and meet other party membership requirements; and
- (g) Transporting groups of potential voters to a nomination contest, including by bus, is a legitimate and widely used political practice.

3. While the Independent Special Rapporteur came to considered conclusions on many of these issues, Commissioner Hogue is able to dig deeper and, critically, show much more of her work to Canadians than the Special Rapporteur could. Mr. Dong welcomes Commissioner Hogue's Stage 1 report and the unprecedented transparency it will bring to these important topics. Mr. Dong respectfully requests that Commissioner Hogue address the above-listed evidence and affirm two key conclusions: (1) that no evidence put before the Commission suggested Mr. Dong was involved in or aware of any alleged PRC election interference in Don Valley North, and (2) that the allegation that Mr. Dong advised Chinese officials to delay freeing the Two Michaels is false.

4. We thank Commissioner Hogue for considering these submissions.

B. Process

5. Mr. Dong first expressed support for a public inquiry into foreign election interference issues in March 2023. He appreciates the opportunity to participate in this public inquiry and recognizes the pressures at play on all sides of this process, including the time constraints and national security confidentiality challenges the Commission team and Parties must deal with.

6. Mr. Dong is in a unique position in this inquiry—he is subject to serious allegations of foreign interference but does not know who the source of these allegations is, what information these allegations are based on, or what the exact details of the allegations are. Ultimately, he must rely on those who have access to the underlying classified information to show that the devastating media allegations are false. Further, up until his examination in the Stage 1 hearings, he was confronted with a rolling tide of new intelligence disclosures from the Commission that related to the allegations against him. In particular, he was provided with “topical summaries” about the 2019 Don Valley North nomination and the Two Michaels allegation on the same day he testified before the Commission.² Extraordinarily, the Commission provided the topical summary on the Two Michaels issue—the most damaging allegation made against Mr. Dong in the media—to Mr. Dong one hour before his testimony. While Mr. Dong appreciates the fast-moving nature of this inquiry and the significant complexity that comes with national security confidentiality issues, he has had to face serious accusations about his alleged involvement in foreign interference “on the fly” and adapt to constantly evolving information. No other party in this inquiry has had to face these same challenges with so much at stake.

² CAN.SUM.000001 was provided to parties by email at 8:56 am on April 2, 2024; CAN.SUM.000002 was provided to parties by email at 1:30 pm on April 2, 2024. Mr. Dong’s testimony began at 2:30 pm.

7. Mr. Dong has done his best, under significant pressure, to share with the Commission his recollection of events that occurred between three and five years ago. As Mr. Dong went through the process of investigating the long series of allegations made about him in the media and later preparing for his initial interview, he made general inquiries with his campaign team to reassure himself that his campaign had complied with the rules, and honed in more closely on some allegations.³ Importantly, the February 25, 2023 article in Global News made a wide range of allegations relating to Mr. Dong, including on the following topics:⁴

- (a) Mr. Dong's alleged knowing involvement in China's election interference networks and alleged support from the PRC in 2019;
- (b) The allegedly suspicious manner in which Geng Tan, the previous MP for Don Valley North, stepped down;
- (c) CSIS allegedly "urging" the Prime Minister's team to rescind Mr. Dong's candidacy;
- (d) Mr. Dong's allegedly "close" relationship with the consulate in Toronto;
- (e) Mr. Dong's allegedly "close" relationship with Michael Chan;
- (f) Mr. Chan's alleged "campaign" to orchestrate Tan's ouster and persuade the Prime Minister's aides to back Mr. Dong;
- (g) Mr. Chan's alleged secret provision of information to the PRC;
- (h) CSIS's alleged concerns about the Liberal Party's nomination process;
- (i) Irregularities allegedly observed in the September 2019 meeting, including that Chinese students with fake addresses were allegedly bussed from outside the riding and coerced to vote for Mr. Dong;
- (j) An alleged meeting between Mr. Dong and a senior United Front official in New York state;
- (k) The PRC's alleged support for the Liberal Party;

³ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 162, lines 10-27; page 163, lines 8-28; page 164, lines 1-11.

⁴ COM0000137.

- (l) Alleged bussing of Chinese-Canadian seniors to vote for Mr. Dong;
- (m) Seniors allegedly having the name of the candidate they were “told” to vote for “concealed under their sleeves” at the nomination vote in 2019;
- (n) Allegedly working with Mr. Chan to pressure an MP not to visit Taiwan; and
- (o) Other general allegations regarding PRC interference.

8. The March 22, 2023 article added further harmful allegations to this list.⁵

9. Among these many allegations, Mr. Dong focused on the propriety of the buses that his campaign provided and paid for to transport seniors, which he and his campaign investigated.⁶ Mr. Dong did not focus on the allegation that Chinese students with fake addresses were bussed from outside the riding and coerced to vote for him by PRC threats, which struck him and members of his campaign as far-fetched. As Mr. Dong explained during this inquiry, he did not see or hear of any evidence of illegal voters or voter coercion in connection with his nomination (he would have been extremely concerned if he had),⁷ or see a bus containing international students on the day of the nomination vote.⁸ Additionally, the photos in the February 25, 2023 article showing Mr. Dong with international student volunteers were taken days after the nomination vote and obviously related to the general election campaign, not the nomination.⁹ In a similar vein, Ted Lojko, Mr. Dong’s campaign manager, testified that the allegations of voter fraud and voter coercion in Mr. Dong’s nomination were both nonsensical.¹⁰

⁵ COM0000136.

⁶ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 161, lines 15-28 ; page 162, lines 1-22; WIT0000010 at para. 17; COM0000137. He also provided expense documents to the Commission, which were not entered into evidence.

⁷ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 159, lines 2-3; April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 164, lines 1-11.

⁸ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 107, lines 1-18.

⁹ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 161, lines 15-28 ; page 162, lines 1-9;

¹⁰ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 182, lines 10-28; page 183, lines 1-28; page 184, lines 1-5.

10. Ultimately, this Commission focused on the allegation that Chinese students with falsified documents were bussed in and coerced to vote for Mr. Dong—though the specifics of this allegation were not explored through targeted questions with Mr. Dong until he testified at the Stage 1 hearings. While preparing to testify before this inquiry, Mr. Dong was reminded by his wife that sometime after the nomination vote he had been told that a bus with Mandarin-speaking students from a private high school, NOIC, had shown up to the vote.¹¹ For reasons that were canvassed during the Stage 1 hearings, this did not strike him as remarkable or irregular.¹²

11. Mr. Dong voluntarily provided these additional details to the Commission before his testimony and production of the topical summaries, then gave evidence about the additional details in his testimony. However, he acknowledges the late delivery of this information and remains available to address any follow-up queries that Commissioner Hogue may have.

C. Evidence

(i) **The intelligence about alleged irregularities in the 2019 nomination is not reliable**

12. This Commission heard testimony about unclassified aspects of intelligence relating to potential irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination race. In general terms, the intelligence alleged that there was a plan coordinated by the PRC to bus Chinese international students in to vote for Mr. Dong using falsified documents, and under veiled threats relating to their visas.¹³ Importantly, the Commission heard from many witnesses—the Prime Minister, the

¹¹ HDD0000006; April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 106, lines 23-28; page 107, lines 1-28; page 108, lines 1-5.

¹² April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 181, lines 26-28; page 182, lines 1-9; April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 150, lines 26-28; page 151, lines 1-28; page 152, lines 1-13; page 154, lines 5-28; page 155, lines 1-7; April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 203, lines 11-28; page 204, lines 1-15.

¹³ CAN.SUM.000001; WIT0000069 at paras. 26-28; April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 117, lines 20-28; page 118, lines 1-28; page 119, lines 1-17; page 122, lines 12-27; page 214, lines 16-22; page 215, lines 5-17.

National Security and Intelligence Advisor, and the Minister of Public Safety, among others—that the intelligence was not considered reliable or substantiated for several reasons. This testimony is summarized below.

The Don Valley North intelligence was not substantiated or supported by evidence

13. Testimony at the Stage 1 hearings established that the intelligence about alleged irregularities in Don Valley North was not backed by evidence. Even an intelligence brief on the subject that was recalled by CSIS (discussed further below) described the allegations as “unsubstantiated”.¹⁴

14. Jeremy Broadhurst, the Liberal Party’s national campaign director at the relevant time, consulted with security officials after receiving intelligence alleging a potential PRC plan to bus international students to the nomination contest in order to better understand the allegations.¹⁵ Although Mr. Broadhurst asked if there was evidence of any buses organized by PRC or any ineligible voters who actually voted, intelligence officials could not provide this information.¹⁶

15. Mr. Broadhurst also spoke with Liberal Party officials to further understand the allegations surrounding the Don Valley North nomination. Mr. Broadhurst confirmed with them that no one involved in the 2019 nomination had raised any concerns or challenged the validity of the process, including Mr. Dong’s opponent Ms. Bang-Gu Jiang.¹⁷ There was also not an abnormal number of challenges to the credentials of the voters at the nomination meeting.¹⁸ Mr. Broadhurst testified that “there was no alarming event that suddenly made sense in light of these

¹⁴ CAN004728.

¹⁵ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 122, lines 12-27.

¹⁶ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 122, lines 21-28; page 123, lines 1-11.

¹⁷ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 120, lines 8-10.

¹⁸ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 120, lines 8-10.

intelligence reports.”¹⁹ The experienced Liberal Party volunteer who ran the Don Valley North nomination vote did not see anything “that stood out as abnormal, irregular or out of sort”.²⁰

16. Azam Ishmael (the current National Director of the Liberal Party, who was informed of the intelligence at the time) similarly confirmed that the Liberal Party did not identify any irregularities in the Don Valley North nomination process.²¹ As Prime Minister Trudeau testified, there are numerous safeguards in place during a Liberal Party nomination race, such as “Party officials that oversee the voting, the registrations...the processes, the counting. There are lawyers in place overseeing the count. There are possibilities for the losing contestant or contestants to challenge the result if they feel it was unfair.”²² None of these safeguards raised irregularities in connection with the 2019 Don Valley North nomination race.

17. Based on the lack of evidence intelligence officials had to support the allegations of a PRC plan and the lack of abnormalities reported by those involved in the nomination meeting, Mr. Broadhurst “determined that there was no information that he considered sufficiently reliable and cogent to provide a sound basis for removing a candidate.”²³ He passed the information on to the Prime Minister and recommended that Mr. Dong’s nomination not be interfered with. Prime Minister Trudeau similarly did not believe that “there was sufficient or sufficiently credible information” that would justify taking any action against Mr. Dong.²⁴

18. The intelligence about alleged irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination also reached Bill Blair, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, in late 2019.

¹⁹ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 125, lines 4-8.

²⁰ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 120, lines 9-13.

²¹ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 13, lines 2-4.

²² April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 172, lines 16-23.

²³ WIT0000069 at para. 27.

²⁴ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 173, lines 25-28.

Minister Blair testified that CSIS “**did not at that time have other corroborating evidence in any way to substantiate**” the intelligence.²⁵

19. The Don Valley North intelligence was also provided to the 2019 Panel of Five by CSIS during the 2019 writ period. Natalie Drouin, the Deputy Minister of Justice in 2019 and the current National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, testified that **the intelligence the Panel received about Don Valley North “was not firmly substantiated”** and that “there was no reliable information about whether or not students were forced to vote, whether or not they voted, whether or not they were under threat of losing their visa, or whether or not they were resident in the riding or coming from out of the riding.”²⁶ These aspects of the intelligence allegations were “not corroborated”.²⁷

20. Additionally, CSIS briefed Stéphane Perrault, the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, about a “fact situation that could have involved foreign interference relating to voting in the nomination contest in the riding of Don Valley North”.²⁸ Elections Canada subsequently audited the 2019 Don Valley North nomination contest financial reporting in the ordinary course. It did not refer any matter related to potential foreign interference to the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections for investigation.²⁹

21. After the media began reporting leaked intelligence regarding irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination, the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections (“OCCE”)

²⁵ April 10, 2024 Transcript at, page 71, lines 22-24.

²⁶ WIT0000060 at para. 53.

²⁷ April 8, 2024 Transcript at page 42, line 23.

²⁸ March 28, 2024 Transcript at page 27, lines 6-11.

²⁹ March 28, 2024 Transcript at page 29, lines 15-18.

initiated a review of these allegations.³⁰ To date, OCCE’s review “has not identified any direct indications to support the allegations of individuals illegally participating in the nomination process.”³¹

22. Importantly, Brian Clow, the Prime Minister’s Deputy Chief of Staff, testified that “**CSIS made no recommendation in the Don Valley North situation** when it presented information to the Liberal Party in 2019.”³² Rob Stewart (the Deputy Minister of Public Safety at the time) explained the difference between “building block” intelligence, which is “raw, time-specific intelligence whose reliability is subject to question”, and “actionable” intelligence, which is “product that has enough specific information that it can be relied on to inform a response”.³³

23. The Stage 1 testimony establishes that the intelligence regarding irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination was not actionable, was almost entirely uncorroborated, and was uniformly considered by government witnesses to have a low degree of reliability. None of the many parties within the national security ecosystem could substantiate this weak (and likely single-source) intelligence, nor recommend any action item stemming from it.

24. The Commission heard that the intelligence landscape evolves over time, and that some intelligence relating to Don Valley North may have been gathered at different times. Importantly, however, the testimony and documents shown to the public during the Stage 1 hearings do not provide a reason to alter or discount the above witnesses’ assessments of the intelligence.

³⁰ CEF0000150 at page 1.

³¹ CEF0000150 at page 2.

³² April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 149, lines 25-28.

³³ WIT0000054 at para 29.

The Don Valley North intelligence misidentified normal campaign activities as irregular

25. One of the alleged irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination identified by intelligence officials was “the presence of buses of Chinese speaking individuals”.³⁴ Ms. Drouin testified that this was the only aspect of the intelligence that was corroborated.³⁵ However, multiple witnesses have testified throughout this Commission that this is not an irregularity; it is a feature of the nomination process.

26. Mr. Broadhurst testified that bussing potential voters to a nomination vote is a common practice intended to make nomination contests more accessible.³⁶ Ted Lojko, a campaign organizer with decades of experience and the manager of Mr. Dong’s 2019 campaign, testified that “basically every campaign provides transportation to voters to bring them to the voting station, whether it’s during an election or during a nomination.”³⁷ Prime Minister Trudeau also testified that “la réalité, c’est dans des nominations contestées, il y a presque toujours des autobus”³⁸ and that his own nomination contest in 2007 saw “buses filled with Greek speakers and Italian speakers because ... those were the communities that were mobilized.”³⁹

27. Katie Telford testified that the identification of bussing as an irregularity “suggested that intelligence agencies might not have a comprehensive understanding of the political nomination process”,⁴⁰ which could prevent them from appropriately contextualizing intelligence.⁴¹ Ms. Telford testified that in her view, the role of the Prime Minister’s Office includes challenging

³⁴ WIT0000068 at para 28.

³⁵ April 8, 2024 Transcript at page 42, lines 19-23.

³⁶ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 150-151 lines 26-6.

³⁷ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 183 lines 3-5.

³⁸ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 203, lines 23-25.

³⁹ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 208, lines 13-17.

⁴⁰ WIT0000068 at para 28.

⁴¹ WIT0000069 at para 33.

and clarifying intelligence assessments where there may be errors or missing context.⁴²

Intelligence agencies' apparent lack of understanding about nomination processes could lead to intelligence officials interpreting normal activities as nefarious.⁴³ The Director of CSIS David Vigneault also recognized that "not all CSIS analysts were experts in political processes, which sometimes creates a challenge in the assessment of intelligence related to [foreign interference]" and that CSIS was "committed to improving its understanding of the political process".⁴⁴

The Don Valley North intelligence contained errors

28. The Commission also heard testimony that aspects of the intelligence about alleged irregularities in the Don Valley North nomination were false or mistaken. For instance, Prime Minister Trudeau recalled that there was an error in the intelligence reporting relating to the alleged irregularities which he identified and asked to be corrected.⁴⁵

29. Mr. Clow also described a March 20, 2023 briefing in which the Prime Minister, CSIS Director, NSIA, and other government officials discussed the Don Valley North allegations, among other intelligence.⁴⁶ Prime Minister Trudeau testified that during this meeting, the participants discussed that "CSIS had a source that said that there was a June 2019 meeting that I was at that I can clearly and unequivocally at the time and since then confirm never happened. I did not have the meeting that the source had said."⁴⁷ Although the unclassified information does not make clear whether the supposed June 2019 meeting related to Don Valley North, this error

⁴² April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 153 lines 2-7.

⁴³ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 153 lines 23-27.

⁴⁴ WIT0000048 at para 12.

⁴⁵ WIT0000067 at para 36.

⁴⁶ CAN018009; April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 114-115.

⁴⁷ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 195, lines 1-5.

either highlights the unreliability of this source and their allegations about Don Valley North, or the unreliability of intelligence information more broadly.

The Don Valley North intelligence was recalled

30. In addition to hearing about errors in the Don Valley North intelligence, the Commission also heard that a key intelligence report about the Don Valley North allegations was recalled—and ought to have been destroyed and deleted by all those who received it.

31. Director Vigneault testified that CSIS produced a national security brief about irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination race dated October 1, 2019, and provided this brief to the government.⁴⁸ He also testified that he recalled this brief.⁴⁹ Although he could not remember why he recalled the brief shortly after it was published, he stated that the “only reason he would have agreed to recall the assessment would be because there was an issue with it.”⁵⁰ He also explained that, when an intelligence document is recalled, all recipients of that document should “delete and destroy any copies that they have of that document” and no one in CSIS can further access that document.⁵¹

32. Despite the recall, this document was publicly produced in this inquiry and has since been discussed extensively in media reporting.⁵² Notably, unredacted portions of the brief also state that the allegations are “unsubstantiated”.⁵³

⁴⁸ April 4, 2024 Transcript at page 166 line 2-6.

⁴⁹ WIT0000048 at para 15.

⁵⁰ WIT0000048 at para 16.

⁵¹ April 4, 2024 Transcript at page 167 line 24-28.

⁵² See https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/canadas-spy-agency-recalled-intelligence-about-suspected-chinese-state-interference-inquiry-documents-reveal/article_460268e0-f380-11ee-bbd6-07330491ed05.html and <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/csis-report-recalled-1.7164297>.

(ii) Intelligence is not evidence or fact

33. Beyond the lack of indicia of credibility in the specific intelligence about alleged irregularities in Don Valley North, the variable reliability of *all* intelligence information is a theme that witnesses have consistently raised throughout this public inquiry. In the national security confidentiality hearings that began this inquiry's public hearings, John Forrester, a previous Chief of the Communications Security Establishment, highlighted that "intelligence is not fact".⁵⁴ Minister Blair similarly testified in the Stage 1 hearings that "it's important to recognize that intelligence isn't necessarily truth. It is the beginning of other inquiries and it has to be assessed in a broad context of reliability in order to make a determination of next steps."⁵⁵

34. As Vincent Rigby, a previous National Security Intelligence Advisor, stated in his witness summary, "every piece of intelligence has to be tested and put in context".⁵⁶ For example, Mr. Rigby stated that human sources may have unknown agendas that impact the reliability of their intelligence.⁵⁷ The CSIS representative on the 2019 SITE TF similarly testified that CSIS may add caveats to intelligence reports about concerns over a source's motivations.⁵⁸ Monik Beauregarde, a member of the 2019 Panel of Five, testified that the intelligence received by the Panel came "avec des 'caveats' avec des notes importantes sur la source qui fournit l'information, que ce soit une source humaine ou une source digitale, et ces notes sont absolument importantes à considérer."⁵⁹

⁵³ CAN004728 at page 1.

⁵⁴ January 31, 2024 Transcript at page 14, lines 10-11.

⁵⁵ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 97, lines 24-28.

⁵⁶ WIT0000057 at para 7.

⁵⁷ WIT0000057 at para 7.

⁵⁸ WIT0000044 at para 62.

⁵⁹ April 8, 2024 Transcript at page 25, lines 19-23.

35. Director Vigneault also emphasized that “intelligence is not evidence”.⁶⁰ When intelligence is leaked or otherwise disclosed, he explained that “the public is often unable to critically assess the contents of a classified report” and there is a risk that the public will attribute “too much significance to its contents”.⁶¹ Deputy NSIA Dan Rogers elaborated that the public lacks the “context and experience needed to understand and assess the reliability and completeness” of intelligence information.⁶² Where classified information is leaked, intelligence agencies are not able to correct or clarify the public’s “over-interpretation” of intelligence, lest this exacerbate the threat that leaks already pose to the agencies sources and ability to do their work.⁶³ This puts individuals who are the subject of selectively leaked intelligence, like Mr. Dong, in an extremely difficult and prejudicial position.

36. Testimony throughout the Stage 1 hearings has made clear that the Don Valley North intelligence was unsubstantiated and almost entirely uncorroborated; Mr. Dong urges the Commissioner to correct the damaging misinterpretations of leaked intelligence that have circulated in the media and public for over a year.

(iii) Mr. Dong was not aware of any potential irregularities relating to his nomination

37. Significantly, this Commission did not hear any allegation that Mr. Dong was a knowing participant in or aware of any alleged foreign interference activity in his 2019 nomination campaign during the Stage 1 hearings. Indeed, when Mr. Broadhurst asked CSIS officials about the irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination campaign, they did not provide information suggesting “that the candidate had any involvement in or awareness of any

⁶⁰ WIT0000003 at page 16.

⁶¹ WIT0000003 at page 16; April 4, 2024 Transcript at page 203, lines 23-28; page 204, lines 1-3.

⁶² WIT0000003 at page 15.

⁶³ WIT0000003 at page 16. Hearings on April 12, 2024. The transcripts of these hearings have not been released.

activity”.⁶⁴ Public Safety Minister Blair also confirmed that “there was no indication in the [intelligence] briefing that Mr. Dong was a willing, or even an aware participant” in alleged irregularities in his nomination,⁶⁵ and that CSIS “had no information to corroborate” that he was aware of alleged irregularities.⁶⁶

38. Mr. Dong’s 2019 nomination followed the rules governing Liberal Party nominations. Under the Liberal Party rules, individuals are able to vote in a Liberal Party nomination campaign if they are 1) a registered member of the Liberal Party, 2) over 14 years of age, 3) and ordinarily resident in the riding.⁶⁷ As Mr. Broadhurst explained, the inclusion of youth and non-citizens in the nomination process is meant to promote engagement with the political process.⁶⁸ These rules do not exclude international students from voting in a nomination contest.

39. Mr. Dong’s campaign efforts to register international students as new Liberal Party members complied with these Liberal Party rules. During his campaign, Mr. Dong attended the Seneca College residences in his riding which housed students from NOIC Academy, a private high school with international students.⁶⁹ He encouraged students to support his nomination by volunteering or registering as Liberal Party members. He did not campaign outside his riding.⁷⁰

40. Mr. Dong’s team also arranged for buses to transport seniors to the nomination meeting and filed this expense in the campaign’s financial return.⁷¹ Sometime after the nomination vote, Mr. Dong learned that a bus that his campaign did not arrange transported international students

⁶⁴ WIT0000068 at para 27.

⁶⁵ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 97, lines 6-8.

⁶⁶ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 72, lines 4-7.

⁶⁷ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 62, lines 14-28; page 63, lines 1-20.

⁶⁸ WIT0000069 at para 34.

⁶⁹ HDD0000006; April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 108, lines 1-17.

⁷⁰ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 163, lines 1-7.

⁷¹ WIT0000010 at paras 17, 21; HDD00000006; April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 147, lines 4-14.

to the nomination campaign.⁷² For the reasons explained above, transporting voters in this way complied with the applicable rules, was unremarkable, and remains unremarkable.

41. Mr. Dong has no knowledge of voter coercion or voter fraud in his 2019 nomination meeting and has not seen any evidence suggesting that it occurred, including in the Commission's hearings. He can, of course, only speak to what he knows—if international students were indeed brought from outside of Don Valley North with false identification and coerced to vote for Mr. Dong by the PRC, he was not aware of it. As Mr. Dong testified, if he found out that the PRC did interfere in his nomination by using falsified documents or something similar, he would be first to condemn the PRC's actions as an affront to Canada's democracy.⁷³

(iv) Mr. Dong did not advocate for the delayed release of the Two Michaels

42. The testimony and documents produced during the Stage 1 hearings have been clear about the most shocking and damaging false allegation made in the media against Mr. Dong: he did not advocate for the delayed release of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig from arbitrary detention in China. On the contrary, he consistently advocated for their early release.⁷⁴ The media allegation, which portrays Mr. Dong as a morally depraved traitor who worked to keep Canadian citizens detained, is false.

The topical summary does not support the allegation made in the media against Mr. Dong

43. An hour before Mr. Dong's testimony, the Commission disclosed to the parties an unclassified "topical summary" relating to intelligence reporting about Mr. Dong and his

⁷² HDD0000006.

⁷³ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 164, lines 5-11.

⁷⁴ WIT0000010 at para 31; April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 128, lines 26-27; page 129, lines 2-3.

communication with PRC officials about the Two Michaels.⁷⁵ This summary—which is itself subject to a full page of caveats and is based on a summary of information about which there are unresolved concerns related to translation⁷⁶—does not suggest that Mr. Dong advocated for the continued imprisonment of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.

44. Taking the topical summary to be accurate (which is a significant leap), the third point in the summary suggests Mr. Dong was saying that Canadians believed that the detention of the Two Michaels was wrong, arbitrary, and not comparable to the detention of Meng Wangzhou, which Canadians viewed as legally justified. This is consistent with Mr. Dong's testimony that he always advocated for the early release and improvement in conditions of the Two Michaels when he spoke to PRC officials about them.⁷⁷ The fourth summarized point is difficult to understand, such that a reader cannot safely conclude what Mr. Dong was intending to convey (perhaps highlighting the translation and accuracy issues with the intelligence). As Mr. Dong explained, it also did not make much sense when he tried to translate it into Chinese.⁷⁸ In any event, the summary plainly does not say what the media reporting falsely claimed.

Witnesses testified that the sensational allegation in the media was categorically wrong

45. Mr. Clow confirmed that, following the leaks in 2023, he determined the allegation that Mr. Dong advocated for the continued imprisonment of the Two Michaels was false.⁷⁹ He did so after reviewing a summary prepared by intelligence agencies of Mr. Dong's call with PRC officials. (As stated above, there was no transcript and the summary in question was subject to

⁷⁵ CAN.SUM.000002.

⁷⁶ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 156, lines 3-22.

⁷⁷ WIT0000010 at para 31; April 2, 2024 Transcript, page 128, lines 26-27; page 129, lines 2-3.

⁷⁸ April 2, 2024 Transcript at page 130, lines 20-23.

⁷⁹ WIT0000069 at para 47.

unresolved concerns about translation.⁸⁰) Prime Minister Trudeau also categorically stated that “we know that the media reports and the allegations made in rather a spectacular fashion about Mr. Dong were false”, agreeing with the Independent Special Rapporteur that Mr. Dong did not advise PRC to extend the detention of the Two Michaels.⁸¹

46. The incorrect media reporting on this issue was so damaging to Mr. Dong that the Prime Minister’s Office even considered whether information about Mr. Dong’s communications with PRC officials **could be declassified to correct the record**.⁸² For national security confidentiality reasons, Mr. Clow and the Prime Minister were barred from making clear public statements exonerating Mr. Dong until this inquiry.⁸³

D. Conclusion: the devastating media reporting about Mr. Dong requires correction

47. After over a year of being told by the media that Han Dong was a witting affiliate of the PRC’s foreign interference efforts who advocated for the delayed release of the Two Michaels, the public has finally heard evidence that these media allegations against Mr. Dong are false.

Witnesses at the Stage 1 hearings have made this clear:

- (a) Mr. Clow described the reporting about the Two Michaels allegation as “explosive” and “wrong”.⁸⁴
- (b) Minister Blair stated that the intelligence, and CSIS officials themselves, did not indicate that Mr. Dong was a willing participant in or even aware of the alleged irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 156, lines 3-22.

⁸¹ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 239, lines 14-16; page 241, lines 2-10.

⁸² April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 145, lines 8-28; page 157, lines 19-23; April 10, Transcript page 241, lines 11-22.

⁸³ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 158 at lines 3-6; April 10 Transcript page 241, lines 20-22; page 242, lines 1-4.

⁸⁴ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 156, lines 23-28; WIT0000068 at para 59; WIT0000069 at para 47.

⁸⁵ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 72, lines 4-7; page 97, lines 6-8; WIT00000064 at para 13.

- (c) Mr. Broadhurst described the media reporting leaks about the irregularities in the 2019 Don Valley North nomination as “pieces of intelligence were again sort of taken out of context and put out there.”⁸⁶
- (d) Prime Minister Trudeau also stated that the reporting about the Two Michaels allegation was false.⁸⁷ More generally, he testified that “there were clear falsehoods and inaccuracies in the media reporting.”⁸⁸

48. CSIS Director David Vigneault repeatedly warned the Commission about how dangerous intelligence leaks are, both because they put intelligence agencies and real people at risk, and because they create a high risk of misapprehension by the public.⁸⁹ As Prime Minister Trudeau stated, the media leaks “illustrate the dangers of drawing conclusions based on a single piece of intelligence, without sufficient context, and without any analysis of its reliability.”⁹⁰ These dangers have been Mr. Dong’s reality since February 2023.

49. Mr. Dong respectfully asks Commissioner Hogue to highlight the testimony of the witnesses outlined in section C in her upcoming report to ensure that the public’s mistaken impression of him is properly corrected. This would be extremely meaningful to Mr. Dong and would further the mandate of this public inquiry in its fact-finding stage.


per

Mark Polley

⁸⁶ April 9, 2024 Transcript at page 141, lines 21-22.

⁸⁷ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 239, lines 14-16; page 241, lines 2-10.

⁸⁸ April 10, 2024 Transcript at page 241, lines 18-20.

⁸⁹ April 4, 2024 Transcript at page 203, lines 23-28; page 204, lines 1-3. Hearings on April 12, 2024. The transcript of these hearings has not been released.

⁹⁰ WIT0000066 at para 51.