



Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference in Federal
Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions

Enquête publique sur l'ingérence étrangère dans les
processus électoraux et les institutions démocratiques
fédéraux

Public Hearing

Audience publique

**Commissioner / Commissaire
The Honourable / L'honorable
Marie-Josée Hogue**

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Sikh Coalition

Balpreet Singh

Prabjot Singh

Bloc Québécois

Mathieu Desquilbet

Iranian Canadian Congress

Dimitri Lascaris

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Ottawa, Ontario

--- The hearing begins Friday, October 4, 2024 at 9:35 a.m.

THE REGISTRAR: Order, please.

This sitting of the Foreign Interference Commission is now in session. Commissioner Hogue is presiding.

The time is 9:35 a.m.

COMMISSIONER HOGUE: [No interpretation].

Good day, Maître Chaudhury.

MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: [No interpretation].

Our witnesses this morning are from Global Affairs Canada. May I ask the witnesses be sworn or affirmed?

THE REGISTRAR: All right. So we'll start with Mr. Lafortune. [No interpretation].

So could you please state your full name and then spell your last name for the record?

MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE: [No interpretation].

THE REGISTRAR: [No interpretation].

--- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Affirmed:

THE REGISTRAR: [No interpretation].

And I will get Ms. Denham.

So Ms. Denham, could you please state your full name and then spell your last name for the record?

MS. TARA DENHAM: Tara Denham, D-e-n-h-a-m.

--- MS. TARA DENHAM, Affirmed:

THE REGISTRAR: Now for Ms. Termorshuizen.

1 Can you please state your full name and spell your last name
2 for the record?

3 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Cindy

4 Termorshuizen. T-E-R-M-O-R-S-H-U-I-Z-E-N.

5 **THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

6 **--- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Affirmed:**

7 **THE REGISTRAR:** All right. And now for
8 Mr. Morrison. Could you please state your full name and
9 spell your last name for the record?

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** David Morrison. M-O-R-
11 R-I-S-O-N.

12 **--- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Sworn:**

13 **THE REGISTRAR:** All right. And now for Mr.
14 Epp. Could you please state your full name and spell your
15 last name for the record?

16 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Weldon Carl Epp. Last name
17 is E-P-P.

18 **--- MR. WELDON CARL EPP, Affirmed:**

19 **THE REGISTRAR:** [No interpretation] for the
20 transcription?

21 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** [No interpretation]
22 Alexandre Lévêque, L-é-v-ê-q-u-e.

23 **--- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Affirmed:**

24 **THE REGISTRAR:** [No interpretation].
25 Counsel, you may proceed.

26 **--- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:**

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

28 Witnesses, we have about two and a half hours

1 this morning and a lot of ground to cover, so we're going to
2 get started with what's unfortunately going to be some
3 slightly messy housekeeping, but we'll get it out of the way
4 as soon as we can.

5 So there are four Stage 2 witness summaries
6 to enter into evidence. Given that there are four of them,
7 I'm just going to ask each of you in turn to confirm that
8 you've reviewed them for accuracy, that to the extent they
9 provide information that you provided, you're prepared to
10 adopt them as part of your evidence before the Commission.

11 And so the first one, and Ms. Court Reporter,
12 you don't need to pull all of these up. There are quite a
13 few of them, is WIT104, the GAC Stage 2 Interview Summary,
14 WIT104.FR is the French version. The second one is WIT93,
15 David Morrison's Stage 2 Interview Summary, WIT93.FR is the
16 French version. Fourth one is WIT142, the GAC Stage 2 In-
17 Camera Examination Summary, and then there's WIT138, which is
18 David Morrison's Stage 2 In-Camera Examination Summary.

19 So again, starting -- I'll start at my left
20 and then right. I'll ask you to confirm that you adopt these
21 summaries.

22 Monsieur Lévêque?

23 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** [No interpretation].

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation].

25 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I confirm.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Morrison?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I confirm.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Ms. Termorshuizen?

1 MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN: I confirm.

2 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Ms. Denham?

3 MS. TARA DENHAM: I confirm.

4 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: [No interpretation].

5 MR. PHILLIPE LAFORTUNE: [No interpretation].

6 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000104.EN:**

7 Interview Summary: Global Affairs
8 Canada (David Morrison, Alexandre
9 Lévêque, Weldon Epp, Philippe
10 Lafortune & Tara Denham)

11 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000104.FR:**

12 Résumé d'entrevue : Affaires
13 mondiales Canada (David Morrison,
14 Alexandre Lévêque, Weldon Epp,
15 Philippe Lafortune et Tara Denham)

16 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000093.EN:**

17 Interview Summary: David Morrison

18 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000093.FR:**

19 Résumé d'entrevue : David Morrison

20 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000142:**

21 In Camera Examination Summary: Global
22 Affairs Canada (David Morrison, Cindy
23 Termorshuizen, Alexandre Lévêque,
24 Weldon Epp, Philippe Lafortune and
25 Tara Denham)

26 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000138:**

27 In Camera Examination Summary: David
28 Morrison

1 --- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000138.FR:

2 Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos :

3 David Morrison

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Stage 1
5 summaries are going to be even messier because not all of the
6 individuals who were involved in those proceedings are here
7 today.

8 So what I propose to do is have the witnesses
9 confirm today that the information they provided in these
10 summaries is accurate and that they adopt it as part of their
11 evidence, and then we'll have the summaries entered into
12 evidence on the understanding that affidavits from those not
13 present will be provided at a later time. I've discussed
14 this with counsel for the Attorney General.

15 So I will ask the Court Reporter to pull
16 these up, if possible, just so we see what they are.

17 So WIT114, this is the Addendum to the GAC
18 Stage 1 interview. Ms. Termorshuizen, Mr. Lafortune, and Ms.
19 Denham, you were present for this one, so I'll ask you to
20 confirm that you reviewed the addendum and to the extent it
21 contains your information, you're prepared to adopt it?

22 Ms. Denham?

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I confirm.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation].

25 **MR. PHILLIPE LAFORTUNE:** [No interpretation].

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Ms. Termorshuizen?

27 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** I confirm.

28 --- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000114:

1 Addendum to Interview Summary: Marta
2 Morgan, Cindy Termorshuizen, Philippe
3 Lafortune, Tara Denham, Gallit Dobner

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. Okay.

5 Second one is the addendum to the in-camera examination of
6 the former NSIAs. Mr. Morrison, this concerns you. It's
7 WIT145. And then there's the addendum to the interview
8 summary of the former NSIAs, which is WIT146.

9 So Mr. Morrison, I'll just ask you to adopt
10 the information you provided in these?

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I confirm.

12 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000145:**

13 Addendum to In Camera Examination
14 Summary: Former NSIAs: David
15 Morrison, Vincent Rigby, Michael
16 MacDonald and Greta Bossenmaier

17 **--- EXHIBIT No. WIT0000146:**

18 Addendum to Interview Summary:
19 Vincent Rigby, David Morrison,
20 Michael MacDonald, Martin Green
21 Interview Summary

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. Lastly,
23 Mr. Morrison, I'll also ask you to confirm that you've
24 reviewed the GAC Institutional Report and that you're
25 prepared to have it entered as part of GAC's evidence before
26 the Commission? Doc ID is CAN.DOC30 and CAN.DOC31 for the
27 French version.

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

1 --- EXHIBIT No. CAN.DOC.000030:

2 Public Inquiry Into Foreign
3 Interference - Institutional Report -
4 Part C - Global Affairs Canada

5 --- EXHIBIT No. CAN.DOC.000031:

6 Enquête Publique sur l'Ingérence
7 Étrangère - Rapport Institutionnel -
8 Partie C - Affaires Mondiales Canada

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. Okay.

10 Record time.

11 Witnesses, I'll ask you to start now by
12 introducing yourselves. And in doing so, your current
13 positions, the positions you've held since 2018, which is the
14 Commission's period of review, and also feel free to tell us
15 about any other relevant positions or roles you've had that
16 may be relevant to the Commission's work and to the
17 discussions that we're having today.

18 Mr. Lévêque?

19 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** [No interpretation].

20 Good morning. I'm currently the Assistant Deputy Minister
21 responsible for Europe, the Middle East, and the Arctic.
22 I've held previous positions between 2018 and today. The one
23 prior to that was Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic
24 Policy, and before that, I served at PCO in the Foreign
25 Defence Policy Secretariat.

26 I have been in the foreign service for 26
27 years. I've had many postings abroad on most continents,
28 including in multilateral fora, and I've served as a

1 Commissioner Ambassador in East Africa.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation].

3 Mr. Epp?

4 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So my current position is as
5 Assistant Deputy Minister for the Indo-Pacific. I've had,
6 like my colleague, I think 27 years as a career foreign
7 service officer with five assignments in Asia. I've had four
8 assignments in the PRC and Taiwan, one in Indonesia. I speak
9 Mandarin and I speak Bahasa. And I've worked in other roles
10 within GAC. I've had two assignments as a Head of Mission in
11 Mainland China and I've worked in a policy branch also in
12 Global Affairs Canada. Thanks.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

14 Mr. Morrison?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Thank you. I am
16 currently the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. I'm going
17 not try and do it in reverse order. In 2018, I was the
18 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. In early 2019,
19 I became the Prime Minister's Foreign and Defence Policy
20 Advisor and served concurrently as the -- his G7 Sherpa. In
21 2022, I was appointed as Deputy Minister of International
22 Trade. And later that year, in October of 2022, I was
23 appointed to my current role.

24 I've been in and around Global Affairs and
25 international affairs in general for 35 years. I've also
26 served on most continents. Some experience in Asia, in North
27 Korea. I've served in Cuba. And I have extensive experience
28 in the UN system.

1 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

2 Ms. Termorshuizen?

3 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Thank you. I'm
4 currently the Deputy Minister for the G7 Summit and Personal
5 Representative for the Prime Minister for the G7 and G20
6 Summits.

7 Between January 2022 and June 2024, I was
8 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and previously
9 I spent most of my career working on international security
10 issues and on Indo-Pacific issues. My most recent diplomatic
11 assignment was as Deputy Head of Mission at the Canadian
12 Embassy in Beijing.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

14 Ms. Denham?

15 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So I've been serving in the
16 department for over 20 years. I'll also do the reverse
17 order. So again, a lot of my experience is also in
18 international security, international programming, democracy,
19 human rights protection. I've served in Afghanistan. But
20 for the purposes of this Inquiry, I was the Director of the
21 Digital Inclusion Lab from 2017 to 2019. And that is the
22 team that houses the Rapid Response Mechanism and I actually
23 was leading the creation of that mechanism during our G7
24 presidency.

25 And then most recently, from 2022 to 2024, I
26 was the Director-General of the Office of Human Rights,
27 Freedoms, and Inclusion, which houses the Digital Inclusion
28 Lab and the Rapid Response Mechanism.

1 I'm currently now the Assistant Deputy
2 Minister of Emergency Management (Legal and Consular
3 Affairs).

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Lafortune?

5 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Philippe Lafortune.
6 I am Director-General of the operation since September 2022.
7 Fr my career, I dealt with national security and defence
8 issues, intelligence and international relations at the Privy
9 Council and for National Defence. And, finally, I had an
10 opportunity to be assigned at the Canada delegation to the UN
11 from 2009 to 2011.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation].

13 Okay. So we're going to start with some
14 fairly general questions. And I think overall, the
15 examination will probably proceed from the general to the
16 specific.

17 So Mr. Morrison, I'll ask you to get us
18 started by explaining really what GAC's mandate is, and in
19 doing so also perhaps giving us a crash course in diplomacy
20 101. What is it that diplomats actually do?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** GAC's mandate -- all
22 countries have foreign ministries. So most of the ministries
23 in a given country are inward facing. But all countries have
24 a foreign ministry in order to engage with other countries.

25 GAC is Canada's foreign ministry. It's
26 actually an amalgamation of a trade ministry, a development
27 ministry, and the classical foreign ministry. So in terms of
28 mandates, GAC promotes Canada's international trade around

1 the world, promotes Canada's international assistance around
2 the world. We give grants and contributions of about \$6
3 billion a year.

4 It protects Canadians around the world. Tara
5 is now in charge of the branch that looks after Canadians who
6 find themselves in difficulties, such as those in Lebanon
7 right now. And the core diplomatic function, which is
8 managing relations with countries to which Canadians are
9 posted, as well as managing Canada's representation within
10 the multilateral organisations, NATO, the UN, the OECD.

11 The roles fulfilled overseas are multiple,
12 but you could think of them in a couple of different buckets.
13 The primary one is promoting and protecting the interests of
14 Canada and of Canadians around the world. So Canadian
15 diplomats in country advocate, they help Canadian companies
16 sell things, they work with their counterparts in country on
17 international security measures designed to keep Canadians
18 safe at home.

19 So broadly speaking, the work of Canadian
20 diplomats overseas is driven by the imperative of Canadian
21 prosperity and Canadian security.

22 Another key role that Canadian diplomats play
23 abroad is that they are the eyes and ears of Canada as to
24 what is going on in a given country, or within a given
25 international organization. So many of our colleagues abroad
26 do a vast amount of diplomatic reporting back to
27 headquarters, so that the folks that serve here in the
28 national Capital Region are as aware as they can be as to the

1 nuances of what may be going on abroad. And that's obviously
2 critical in places like the Middle East right now.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. In some of
4 our previous discussions, Mr. Morrison, you've mentioned that
5 managing the different relationships with -- that Canada has
6 with countries, and in particular maybe even its adversarial
7 relationships, is really the essence of diplomacy. I'm
8 wondering if you can speak to that idea a bit?

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes, I'm sorry. That
10 was diplomacy 101 that you asked about.

11 So all countries send diplomats abroad. And
12 as I tried to say, the core role is to manage the
13 relationship if you're posted to a country or an
14 international organization. My term which is in the summary,
15 is of the essence of diplomacy being managing challenging
16 relationships. There's a lot of analogies to our personal
17 relationships. It's easy to get along when you agree on
18 everything, it's a lot harder to manage a relationship which
19 is contentious, because you see the world in different ways,
20 or you have obstacles. That's when diplomacy really comes
21 into play.

22 So we see the world mainly in the same way as
23 our friends in the United States, but certainly in our
24 trading relationship we don't. And so often we are at
25 loggerheads and our trade negotiators and our diplomats have
26 to manage very tough patches within the context of an overall
27 relationship which works very well.

28 When it comes to a country like China, or

1 more recently India, our diplomats have to be really on their
2 toes because those are two very significant countries in the
3 world. They are very different from each other, but both of
4 them will be important to the future of Canadians' prosperity
5 and security. So our diplomats are called upon to manage
6 relations with those countries in a way that serves the best
7 interests of Canadians.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDGURY:** Okay. With that in
9 mind the next thing we're going to talk about is really the
10 diplomatic landscape with respect to some of the countries
11 who've been identified in the Commission's proceedings as
12 foreign interference threat actors. So Ms. Clerk, I'll just
13 ask you to pull up the GAC Stage 2, *in camera* hearing summary
14 which is WIT142, starting around paragraph 16?

15 So again, we'll take these in turn, and I'll
16 address each question to one of you, but you can feel free to
17 break in with other thoughts. And in doing so, maybe also
18 start to mention how foreign interference plays into and may
19 have affected some of these relationships.

20 So let's start with the PRC. And Mr. Epp,
21 I'll direct this one to you. Can you essentially explain the
22 current state of Canada's bilateral relationship with China?

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. So the Government of
24 Canada articulated a updated and clear framework for how we
25 will engage and manage our interests vis-a-vis the PRC. This
26 was published publicly and it's available to the public
27 through the government's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

28 And in that strategy the government laid out

1 an updated assessment of Canada's interests; of China as an
2 actor in the world; China as an inescapably impactful,
3 important, player in the world that in many ways is
4 increasingly divergent from Canadian values and interests.
5 But also inescapable as a partner in working on things that
6 we both care about.

7 And, you know, that document -- I won't go
8 into details -- but describes four areas of work in which
9 that updated assessment and that approach are meaningful.
10 And then those four areas of work there's a section
11 describing domestic interests given our framework for
12 relations with the PRC, and that document talks about foreign
13 interference, countering PRC foreign interference, as a
14 priority for the government in that document.

15 It is the case that the experience of having
16 two Canadian citizens effectively used for coercive
17 diplomacy, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, had a major
18 impact not only on bilateral relations, but I would argue on
19 the view of Canadians with respect to the PRC. And so,
20 that's had a major impact on our formal government-to-
21 government relations.

22 But as Minister Joly has said publicly many
23 times, and demonstrated most recently in a visit to Beijing -
24 - I accompanied her just a couple of months ago to Beijing.
25 And as the Deputy just pointed out, none of this means that
26 we don't need channels that are open, functioning, and
27 permitting communication at all levels.

28 Those channels are used to firmly raise

1 Canadian concerns, Canadian objections, and Canadian
2 intentions to manage activities by the PRC that we find
3 against our interests, and also to seek areas where our joint
4 interests require collaboration. And this has been done, for
5 example, with respect to global biodiversity, by jointly
6 hosting COP15 in Montreal a little over a year ago, and there
7 continue to be areas and interests where Canada and China
8 will need to work together.

9 So pragmatic diplomacy, it's about channels
10 that are open. But it's about being clear eyed and ready to
11 defend our interests, both through diplomacy and through
12 domestic partners who have other tools with respect to
13 foreign interference.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. And
15 we'll get into some of the specifics of how those tools have
16 been used later on.

17 Mr. Morrison, maybe I'll ask you now to turn
18 to India and explain Canada's complex bilateral relationship
19 with India and how recent events may have affected it?

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Canada and India are
21 partners going back many, many, decades. India is an
22 increasingly significant global player, and Canada is taking
23 account of that in its policies. There have been speed bumps
24 in our relationship with India dating most significantly back
25 to 1980 and the Air India bombing, and Indian concerns since
26 that time that Canada does not take their national security
27 concerns seriously enough. Here I'm referring to a movement
28 around a territory which is called Khalistan by some people.

1 Canada's policy is very clearly that India's territorial
2 integrity must be respected. There's one India and that's
3 been made very clear. Nonetheless, there are advocates for a
4 Khalistani homeland in different countries in the world, and
5 that -- including here in Canada, and that has been a
6 longstanding irritant in our relations with India.

7 Things were on the upswing as we approached
8 the Indian-hosted G20 Summit. We were working on a free
9 trade agreement with India. Many ministers were visiting
10 India. There are very deep investment ties going both ways
11 and very deep people -- people ties. There are -- there is a
12 very significant Indian diaspora here in Canada and very
13 clear Canadian interest in India. Things were knocked
14 sideways in June of last year with the murder of a Canadian
15 citizen on Canadian soil in the Lower Mainland, and that set
16 in train a series of events culminating in the expulsion of
17 41 Canadian diplomats from New Delhi last fall. And,
18 frankly, we're still trying to sort through what the next
19 steps are in our relationship with India. We have open
20 channels. We're continuing to talk to them for the reasons
21 that Weldon just mentioned, but we are in a complicated
22 place.

23 Do you have anything to add, Weldon?

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. And,
25 again, we'll get into some specifics of that later on.

26 Ms. Court Clerk, can I ask you to pull WIT
27 142 up again and just leave it on the screen? Go to
28 paragraphs 26 and 27, please.

1 So, M. Lévêque, the next one is for you, and
2 it's Iran, which I think has been described as perhaps the
3 most limited relationship that Canada has. What can you tell
4 us about our relationship with Iran?

5 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Thank you. I would
6 agree with this statement. I would qualify the relationship
7 we have with Iran as being in a deep freeze, and it has been
8 so for a very long time. This is based on decades of
9 behaviour from the Iranian regime that we have found
10 objectionable, particularly along two main axes. One of them
11 is their appalling human rights record, and this is nothing
12 new. It has really started after the Islamic Revolution of
13 1979, but has gotten worse over time, particularly with
14 regard to the treatment of women and minorities in Iran. The
15 second axis is Iran's overt support for terrorist groups that
16 destabilize in a very significant way peace and security in
17 the Middle East, groups that you've all heard of like Hamas,
18 like Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and more recently
19 we're heard a lot about the Houthis in Yemen.

20 So these two axes have forced Canada through
21 the years to isolate, and we're far from the only country
22 having done so, isolating Iran, applying and imposing
23 sanctions, economic sanctions, and more recently, having
24 declared the Iranian Government a state sponsor of terrorism,
25 and even more recently, having listed the IRGC as a terrorist
26 organization.

27 Things got into an even deeper freeze in
28 2012, when Canada made the decision to completely sever

1 diplomatic relations with Iran by withdrawing all of our
2 diplomats, closing our embassy in Tehran, and expelling all
3 Iranian diplomats in Ottawa.

4 So I would say that now we have very, very
5 limited contacts, no -- virtually no official government-to-
6 government contacts, with very few exceptions when the topic
7 can be on either human rights, which tends to be
8 unidirectional and us reproaching their record, making sure
9 it is made public, and when there are discussions about
10 nuclear proliferation and Iran's nuclear program. In order
11 to have some basis for communication, because as my
12 colleagues have said, when diplomats are no longer in each
13 other's countries, we have no channels of communication, so
14 we do act for really basic essential things like basic
15 consular information and services through what we call
16 protecting powers, and Italy plays that role for Canada in
17 Iran, and Switzerland plays that role for Iran in Canada.

18 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. The next one
19 is actually also for you, M. Lévêque and that's Russia. So I
20 understand that Canada's relationship with Russia is an
21 outright adversarial relationship. So can you explain how --
22 the current state of that relationship, please?

23 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Absolutely. Like
24 many relationships, it has evolved over time, and I would say
25 that after the end of the Cold War, there was progressive,
26 prudent, growing engagement and relationship, particularly on
27 things like the destruction and elimination of stockpiles of
28 weapons that have been accumulated in former Soviet

1 Republics.

2 Trust between the two countries really broke
3 down in 2014 when Russia invaded Crimea, and a lot of
4 distancing started taking place, much fewer engagements.
5 Visits were completely cancelled. The one area that remained
6 a relatively productive one was in the context of the Arctic.
7 Russia is our neighbour through the Arctic Ocean, and through
8 the Arctic Council, collaboration and similar goals allowed
9 for a productive relationship. But things completely broke
10 down in 2022 with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and at
11 that point, severe restrictions were put on our official
12 contact.

13 We maintain a presence in Moscow. Russia
14 maintains a presence in Ottawa, as well as in consulates in
15 Montreal and Toronto, but our interaction is mostly, as you
16 said, adversarial and reproaches publicly and privately
17 actions that are taken, particularly in the information
18 space, particularly, of course, with regards to its war of
19 aggression in Ukraine. And there too, an unprecedented
20 number of sanctions have been imposed on Russia. We're now
21 at over 3,000 entities and individuals in Russia, or in
22 Belarus, and in neighbouring countries that contribute to
23 Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We had some
25 diaspora panels speak to the Commission the other day, and
26 one of the panellists raised the question of why are there
27 still Russian diplomats in Canada, I was wondering if you can
28 speak to that, specifically why we still have Russian

1 diplomats here, and given that they've been alleged to have
2 engaged in adversary mis- and disinformation activities, what
3 are the relations between GAC and the Russian Embassy on that
4 front as well?

5 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Absolutely. This is
6 a deliberate choice, and the choice that the government has
7 made is to maintain a Russian presence in Canada and to
8 maintain a Canadian presence in Russia, because without the
9 presence of these diplomats, you cut off all ability to have
10 communication, and that ability to communicate also gives us
11 a chance to convey informal and formal reprimands. You can't
12 bring a country to account if you don't have official
13 channels of communication, and that is mostly what we've used
14 these channels of communication for. Now having said this,
15 and I'm sure we'll cover more of this today, there is a full
16 suite of tools in the diplomatic toolkit, and none of them
17 are out of the question or beyond consideration. So these
18 are live discussions, and as relationship evolves, we always
19 reserve the right to access some of these tools.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Briefly
21 turning to you, Mr. Epp, the last country we want to talk
22 about is Pakistan, so can you briefly outline our bilateral
23 relationship with Pakistan at the moment?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. Canada and Pakistan
25 have had longstanding and comprehensive relations. They're
26 quite constructive. But it has been challenging in recent
27 years due to political and economic instability within
28 Pakistan to pursue all of our objectives. I would say, you

1 know, for the Canadian public, probably aware, two key areas
2 of cooperation, longstanding development assistance to
3 Pakistan and really focused on helping Pakistan catch up, you
4 know, what are fairly significant lagging indicators in
5 development terms on things like women and girls.

6 And that's an area of focus for the
7 Government of Canada, but we've also worked very closely in
8 recent years with the Government of Pakistan which hosts the
9 largest or one of the largest communities of refugees, mainly
10 Afghan refugees. And Canada's been a longstanding partner
11 and has worked in recent years with the Government of
12 Pakistan to facilitate refugee flow to Canada and to ease
13 pressure on them.

14 And so you know, those are some of the core
15 areas where we work, although we also have significant
16 investments in Pakistan as well.

17 I would say that with respect to foreign
18 interference, we have regularly had challenges in managing
19 the -- you know, Pakistan's interests in terms of visitors to
20 Canada, including with respect to diplomats in Canada, partly
21 because of our concern about the risk of foreign interference
22 activities, and so that has created some structural issues
23 with respect to visa issuance more generally, and that's been
24 an irritant.

25 Finally, I would just say that Canada takes a
26 dim view and we take action to counter activities by
27 countries from South Asia to pursue their regional rivalries
28 within Canada and within communities of Canadians with that

1 heritage.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay, perfect.

3 Moving on to another area -- this one's now
4 for you, Mr. Lafortune, I want to talk about GAC's
5 intelligence mandate.

6 So Ms. Court Reporter, if you can just scroll
7 down to paragraph 66 of that summary still. We'll stick with
8 that one.

9 The first topic I want you to address, Mr.
10 Lafortune, is GAC as a producer of intelligence.

11 So I understand that GAC has a limited role
12 as a collector of intelligence, and this goes back to
13 something that Mr. Morrison was alluding to earlier. But its
14 main two programs of collection of information would be
15 intelligence liaison officers and the global security
16 reporting program.

17 So can you explain those to us, please.

18 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Sure. Overall, when
19 you look at intelligence -- and I know the Commission had the
20 opportunity to discuss various sectors of the intelligence
21 community. For the purpose of that conversation, to explain
22 what GAC's role in this sphere, I'll limit it to say that
23 three big bucket here.

24 You have your collector. A good example in
25 the Canadian system is CSIS and CSE, obviously. You have
26 your assessment community that assess intelligence. And you
27 have, obviously, your consumer of intelligence.

28 Mainly, Global Affairs falls in the two last

1 buckets itself.

2 So on the first one, when it comes to
3 producing intelligence, Global Affairs Canada, due to its
4 intelligence requirement very specific to foreign policy, has
5 a team that -- of folks that assess intelligence for two
6 purposes.

7 Purpose number one is to assess intelligence
8 to provide what we call base threat assessment to ensure that
9 we're able to evaluate the threat to our mission abroad and
10 inform our security colleagues in their work in taking
11 appropriate measures to protect Canadian assets abroad. And
12 then, obviously, the second role of assessment is more
13 strategic intelligence assessment that aims to inform and
14 support policy centre at Global Affairs in developing foreign
15 policy issues or options or decision-making process itself.

16 So on that part, we have a team that do
17 produce intelligence assessment by analyzing all types of
18 intelligence received from the Canadian intelligence
19 community or foreign partners itself.

20 As Global Affairs Canada with the community
21 plays a role in terms of foreign intelligence engagement
22 abroad, we have a very small program of intelligence liaison
23 officers abroad that are posted into like-minded countries,
24 and they do represent Canada's intelligence community from a
25 foreign policy perspective.

26 For example, should someone like the NSIA
27 needs to engage with one of our key partners or during a
28 visit or a meeting, the intelligence liaison officer will

1 support the Privy Council Office in having that kind of
2 engagement.

3 But the ILO also -- we call them ILO --
4 participate in those capitals to briefing from the host
5 country's intelligence community and they report back to not
6 only Global Affairs Canada, but to the Canadian intelligence
7 community on those briefings they receive from intelligence
8 partners as well, providing another source of intelligence on
9 issues of interest to Canada itself.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So those would be
11 declared intelligence officers.

12 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** They are not
13 intelligence officers, to be absolutely clear. They are
14 diplomats that does intelligence liaison role itself, but
15 yes, they are absolutely declared and accredited to the host
16 country on that front.

17 Finally, I would say in terms of very, very
18 limited collection itself, I mentioned that, obviously, the
19 department has responsibility in terms of duty of care
20 abroad, so that requires certain technical information when
21 it comes to ensure that we're protected from espionage
22 threats abroad. So we have a team of technicians, for
23 example, that will go to our mission to verify and collect
24 information at the premise of our mission itself that there's
25 no attempt by foreign countries to do espionage at our
26 specific missions itself.

27 So that's the kind of group that we provide
28 intelligence function and collection itself.

1 The final thing I would say is that kind of
2 office, they're very specific when it comes to intelligence.
3 It's really to support again one, if not the biggest client,
4 consumer of foreign intelligence that Global Affairs Canada
5 is due to its mandate and representation when it comes to
6 foreign policy.

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And on that
8 note, then, I'll just note Canada doesn't have a HUMINT
9 foreign intelligence agency. Is that correct?

10 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** That's correct.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So most of
12 its foreign intelligence will come in either through -- from
13 Five Eye's partners or through GAC reporting or intelligence
14 collected within Canada under CSIS's section 16 mandate. Is
15 that accurate?

16 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** So CSIS section 16,
17 indeed, provide foreign intelligence that is collected within
18 Canada, and both the Minister of National Defence and the
19 Minister of Foreign Affairs can request the support of the
20 service to provide that type of foreign intelligence.

21 Canada also have other means, to be clear, to
22 itself to have foreign intelligence. The Communications
23 Security Establishment are known for signal intelligence
24 collection, do collect foreign intelligence and is an
25 important provider of intelligence to Global Affairs Canada
26 due to its mandate itself.

27 It is true that Canada does not have a
28 foreign intelligence HUMINT agency, but I would point out, as

1 I'm sure you discussed with the service, that when it comes
2 to security intelligence and the security of Canada, they do
3 have a mandate abroad to collect intelligence based on the
4 section 12 of their mandate, so they are represented abroad
5 just for security intelligence.

6 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you.

7 Moving on now to a different topic, which is
8 GAC's tools and responses to foreign intelligence, so
9 diplomatic responses to foreign interference.

10 Madam Court Clerk, can I ask you to pull up
11 the GAC Institutional Report at page 2? That's CANDOC30.

12 There we go. Just scroll down a bit more
13 where you see "Detect, Encounter", and probably a long list
14 under that.

15 So zoom out so we can see that whole list,
16 please.

17 So this list in the GAC IR essentially
18 outlines what we understand to be GAC's toolkit in terms of
19 foreign interference. And Mr. Epp, I think you've already
20 mentioned today, and you certainly mentioned before, that
21 there is a -- within this list, an idea of sort of quiet
22 diplomacy, different responses that GAC can take at different
23 times depending on the situation.

24 So I'll ask you to, with reference to this
25 list, explain what some of those potential tools are and how
26 they may be used.

27 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. Thank you.

28 And if you'll allow, I might just zoom out

1 really quickly so the list has some order to it.

2 I mean, GAC's toolkit, number one, it's part
3 of a broader whole of government toolkit, and its impact is
4 directly tied to close coordination which we undertake with
5 domestic partners in countering FI. And that toolkit, if you
6 would, for GAC sort of has three trays in the toolbox.

7 One of them is really about bilateral
8 responsive actions, and a lot of those are there and I'll
9 talk about the quiet actions and tools we take versus ones
10 that might be more public in responding bilaterally to
11 foreign interference.

12 And second tray or second category of tools
13 that GAC has, if you would, are more in the zone of proactive
14 policy program tools.

15 And a third is with respect to how we partner
16 with others, both other governments through multilateral
17 tables, G7, Five Eye; or frankly with whole society, with
18 NGOs, with experts that have capacity.

19 So, in the first category, to illustrate,
20 when we respond to foreign interference, or choose to, you
21 know, apply a tool in the GAC toolkit, you'll see on the list
22 here we have quite an optional, you know, a range of options
23 that go from quiet tools, so démarches, we call in the
24 ambassador, we use a bilateral meeting or a bilateral visit,
25 we ask for something formally on an agenda. So, raising
26 foreign interference and communicating that officially.

27 We can also do so through written form,
28 through diplomatic notes. It's possible to do those and then

1 also have, following the meeting, a public version of that.
2 That raises the temperature, it raises the impact in certain
3 ways, and it communicates the same message but to a broader
4 audience. Not just the government quietly, but to the
5 Canadian public, to other audiences.

6 And you see that also with respect to more, I
7 would say, impactful tools than simply signaling. Those
8 tools include things like denial of visas for diplomats,
9 denial of positions. Of course, much of that can be conveyed
10 quietly, but we have the optionality of talking about that
11 publicly and saying, here's why we're doing that, of having
12 ministers tweet about that or communicate why that decision
13 was taken.

14 And if you think of it as a spectrum, work
15 your way through this list all the way through a spectrum
16 that gets you to arguably even more visible impactful tools,
17 like declaring a diplomat *persona non grata*. It is the case
18 that sometimes happens without big public fanfare, but
19 typically it's known and it's communicated publicly. So, the
20 audience isn't just quite diplomacy to the government but
21 also to the broader Canadian public or international
22 audience; sometimes used to then deter others, other
23 countries who would be potential perpetrators, from doing the
24 same thing.

25 Moving further on the scale of the GAC
26 toolkit, in this case you get to options like closing down
27 diplomatic missions, and frankly in the case of countries
28 like Iran, of severing diplomatic relations entirely.

1 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And we'll
2 just look at an example of how some of these tools have been
3 used. Ms. Court Clerk, if you can pull up CAN47008?

4 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN047008 0001:**

5 Diplomatic Notes

6 So Mr. Epp, I think this is most likely for
7 you.

8 This is the document that appears to
9 summarize, essentially, engagements between GAC and the PRC
10 between -- probably starting from 2021 here.

11 So Ms. Court Clerk, if you can zoom out so we
12 can see more of that page? We'll see it refers to four
13 diplomatic notes have been sent. And then if we scroll down
14 to diplomatic representations, engagement with the embassy,
15 there's a whole list. Just keep scrolling down, please.
16 Thirty-one (31) representations it says, and then it lists
17 them all. Many, many, many, in 2022, 2023. Keep scrolling
18 down just so we have an idea what's in this document.

19 And I think it ends there with a comparison
20 of how many diplomats are here versus how many diplomats are
21 there, and a description of the footprint.

22 So, Mr. Epp, can you speak to the sort of
23 evolution of engagements with the PRC over this time period?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Absolutely. I mean, I think
25 first of all, you know, it's my reflection when I see this
26 list on a screen like this available to the public, that much
27 of this activity has been ongoing systematically,
28 persistently, firmly, but not visible to the Canadian public.

1 And I just want to make the point that as
2 mentioned earlier, it is the case that the Government of
3 Canada, global affairs as a partner among others,
4 systematically raises and pushes back, and finds ways to
5 raise the cost to countries that would perpetrate foreign
6 interference in Canada. And so, that list sort of gets to
7 how we went about doing that, particularly in the period
8 following the return of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor to Canada.

9 Because people can appreciate until that
10 point although we did raise regularly concerns about foreign
11 interference, and although we had already denied visas to
12 PRC, would be PRC diplomats to Canada for reasons of concern
13 about foreign interference, our priority was on facilitating
14 the return at the earliest possibility of Mr. Kovrig and Mr.
15 Spavor to Canada. But in the immediate aftermath -- it's in
16 this list -- of their return, foreign interference as a core
17 irritant and core issue for Canada PRC relations moved very
18 much to the forefront of our diplomacy.

19 We used regularly scheduled diplomatic
20 vehicles, like a bilateral consultation at the Deputy
21 Minister level, to raise it as a key issue. To raise
22 specifics, like the fact that the activity of the United
23 Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China was not
24 welcome in Canada. And we used a series of diplomatic notes
25 and meetings to consistently at all levels, including as this
26 note mentions, up to the level of the Prime Minister, make
27 sure the Chinese government understood that this was a top
28 concern and a top, if you would, sort of, barrier to

1 improving relations.

2 During that period, China may or may not have
3 wanted to pick up on our message. During that period,
4 activities such as the issue of overseas police stations in
5 Canada, which were illegal under the Vienna Conventions, and
6 were a grey zone activity that we had concern about, issues
7 such as Chinese spy balloons in Canadian sovereign airspace;
8 all of these let us to increase it, sort of, use of tools
9 such as the denial of the creation of a position for a
10 diplomat in the Chinese embassy, denial of visas.

11 And throughout that period, I would just
12 emphasize there was always a live consideration, or a live
13 discussion, about other aspects in that scale of tools that I
14 previously mentioned. More public diplomacy, for example,
15 there was active work with our partners internationally
16 through the G7 and through other tables, to increasingly
17 publicly talk about our opposition to PRC transnational
18 repression and foreign interference. There was discussion
19 about the possibility at some point, if we felt it useful, of
20 using PNG as a tool to send a very strong signal to the
21 Chinese.

22 So that discussion was very live, and I think
23 the list that you pulled up just shows the regular, sort of,
24 the battle rhythm if you would, of diplomatic activity to
25 make that message clear, convey clear consequences, and show
26 that if that activity didn't stop there would be further
27 consequences.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We're going to get

1 back to very specific examples of a PNG later on. But right
2 now, I just want to shift gears for a moment and talk about
3 the RRM.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I have a question before
5 that, for you, Mr. Epp. Do we have to provide reason when we
6 decide to declare someone PNG?

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** We do not. It's an
8 excellent question. We do not have an evidentiary threshold
9 for taking PNG as a decision. That is the privilege of the
10 Government of Canada to withdraw the permission for a foreign
11 diplomat to be accredited in our country.

12 And so, that decision can be taken to send a
13 signal to the country. It does not have to be tied to the
14 activity of an individual. And it's the prerogative of the
15 host government to decide if we choose to PNG a foreign
16 diplomat, whether we communicate the reasons for that or we
17 don't communicate the reasons for that.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And usually, and I
19 understand there is no strict rule. But usually, if Canada
20 decides to declare someone PNG, what is the foreign country
21 reaction? To do the same to our diplomats based abroad,
22 or...?

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** It is usually the case that
24 countries will respond reciprocally by PNGing a Canadian
25 diplomat.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And they don't have to
27 provide a reason either?

28 **MR. WELDON EPP:** No, they don't. And in many

1 cases, the presumed reason has nothing to do with the
2 activity of the Canadian diplomat and everything to do with
3 simply reciprocally exacting a cost from the Canadian
4 government.

5 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Can I add one point?
7 And that is simply this is a long list of diplomatic tools
8 against a chronology. The point I would like to add is this
9 is not a full representation of what was going on between
10 Canada and China at the time. So when you look at what
11 you're going to do you need to look at that bigger picture as
12 well. This was -- all of this played out at the same time as
13 we were taking -- the government was taking a decision on 5G
14 telecoms. It was all playing out at a time when the
15 government was taking multiple decisions on Chinese foreign
16 investment in Canada. And if you're China, you're seeing all
17 of this through the same lens, even though in -- as
18 presented, this is one work stream. It's a much bigger
19 relationship that we're trying to manage at the same time and
20 so what you do and when you do it needs to take account of
21 the broader picture.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** That's helpful.

23 Ms. Denham, we've heard already quite a bit
24 about the RRM yesterday from Ms. Wettlaufer, but just to
25 refresh our memory, Ms. Court Clerk, if you could now go to
26 WIT142 again, paragraph 29? Just to situate us a little bit.

27 Can you explain specifically what the G7 RRM
28 is and how each member has a different focus?

1 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely. So the G7 RRM
2 was created in 2018 and that was under Canada's presidency of
3 the G7. It was one of our flagship initiatives at the time.
4 And for context, this was when there was a lot of
5 conversations about what was happening around democracy and
6 what that threat space looked like.

7 In 2018, by that point there had been a lot
8 of documentation -- documented cases of the use of
9 disinformation as a threat vector against democracies. So
10 the U.S. had done a documentation of 2016 in their elections.
11 You had had the Macron leaks in 2017. And the U.K. had also
12 done documentation of the use of disinformation within their
13 Brexit referendum.

14 So with that context, there was a lot of
15 conversations at the time in needing to be more aware of what
16 that threat looked like. What was the threat now that
17 democracies faced?

18 And so Canada took that opportunity to reach
19 agreement with the G7 that we needed to work together. We
20 called it the Rapid Response Mechanism.

21 I think a few things that are key is that
22 this -- the main focus was to be able to share information
23 quickly, again a rapidly changing environment and threat. So
24 how could we share that information? What were we seeing?
25 What were we learning? It was -- disinformation was an area
26 of focus and disinformation was publicly available. So it
27 did give an opportunity that as a collective, as the G7, we
28 could share, as soon as possible, the threats, the tactics,

1 and what we were learning. And also what we were learning
2 about how to detect the tools we were using, et cetera.

3 So again, it was about threats to democracy,
4 but because of the context, an initial area of focus was
5 disinformation.

6 To give a sense of how that actually becomes
7 operational, so under -- again, Canada had the presidency of
8 the G7 and there was definitely a real interest to make sure
9 that unlike some G7 initiatives where you announce a working
10 group or a focus on a particular issue and it may only last
11 for the duration of that presidency year, or it may -- that
12 leadership may move from one presidency to the next, which
13 can sort of result in maybe a change in approach or the
14 rhythm of focus may change over time, Canada offered, and it
15 was accepted, that we should lead the G7 RRM on an ongoing
16 basis. We lead the Secretariat for the Rapid Response
17 Mechanism, the G7 RRM.

18 What that provided was one Canadian
19 leadership on a very important and evolving issue of concern,
20 and it provided consistency of focus across the G7 to make
21 sure that we were always building on what we were doing so we
22 could continue to build our capabilities, we could continue
23 to learn of the areas of interest, and we could continue to
24 improve the information sharing.

25 What that then requires is we have the
26 leadership of that, but to enable that information sharing,
27 each country identifies a focal point. So this was your
28 question of the divergence of different countries or how they

1 may approach it.

2 Each country may, within their national
3 system, have certain expertise or areas of interest where
4 they want that information flow to be most effective. Like,
5 the idea of a focal point is if we get information, we can
6 quickly share it with the right part of another government
7 entity. And that's where the focal points are the discretion
8 of each G7 member to identify, and that's where you get
9 different representation.

10 For Canada, that is within Global Affairs.
11 We have an RRM Canada team, which I can explain, but other
12 countries, for example Germany, their representative is the
13 equivalent of -- is in their Ministry of Interior, which
14 would be the equivalent of our Public Safety. Other teams
15 have it within their communications teams. So it depends on
16 the area of focus, and therefore that's the focal point.

17 That then dictates some of the threats or the
18 information that would be shared. So Germany is very
19 interested in subnational threats. What is it looking within
20 their national ecosystem and therefore on some of the working
21 groups where the focus is on subnational threats, Canada's
22 representation is actually Public Safety. Right? So we're
23 making the connections with across the RRM -- the G7.

24 So that's the distinction of the different
25 areas of expertise and how they engage with the information
26 flow and making sure that you're most up to date.

27 RRM Canada, and this is where some of the
28 confusion comes, RRM Canada is then a particular expertise we

1 developed within Global Affairs Canada.

2 So when this was created, as I said, there
3 was a particular interest of disinformation. At that time,
4 Global Affairs, we had actually just recently started to
5 build this capability to understand how to map the
6 disinformation landscape. So our area of interest,
7 domestically, within Canada, and wanting to learn that threat
8 space, was being able to understand disinformation tactics
9 that were happening overseas, how were different countries
10 using that threat, how is it becoming more visible, so that
11 we could learn about it ourselves. And so that is when you
12 talk about RRM Canada and our analytical capability. That is
13 a particular team within Global Affairs.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. And we
15 know that as part of the plan to protect Canada's democracy,
16 that online monitoring capability has been turned inwards for
17 the purposes of monitoring elections, general elections, and
18 now by-elections as well.

19 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** M'hm.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And we had some
21 discussions with Ms. Wettlaufer yesterday about whether that
22 was really what RRM's resources should be devoted to. So
23 I'll ask you about that discussion as well, Ms. Denham, with
24 reference to a document, CAN31488, please.

25 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN031488:**

26 RE: RRM Canada within SITE - need to
27 evolve based on changing mandates

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So to situate you,

1 Ms. Denham, what the document is that's going to be pulled up
2 is an email that you authored in May 2023.

3 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes.

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And I think if we
5 scroll down a little bit to page 2, we'll see the context of
6 the discussion. There.

7 "Bottom line: I believe we need to
8 continue to socialize the need to
9 review the mandates in SITE with the
10 end objective of removing domestic
11 monitoring responsibilities [for
12 RRM]."

13 And then I guess asking for support at the
14 ADM and DM levels. And then the next bullet down, you have a
15 proposal about RRM remaining part of SITE, but no longer
16 being responsible for that online monitoring.

17 So can you speak to the concerns there and
18 where those discussions are?

19 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So what -- so as I
20 said, when this was created, not only RRM Canada's capability
21 and the role we were playing, but also the G7 RRM generally,
22 it was a new capability that we had. It was a new capability
23 for Global Affairs and it was therefore also a new capability
24 for the Government of Canada.

25 So when we were -- when we established this
26 mandate, as I said, our focus of the G7 RRM was threats to
27 democracy and understanding that international landscape, and
28 that was the mandate that we were given, which was for Global

1 Affairs Canada to look outwards and understand that threat
2 landscape.

3 But of course, I think what it represents is
4 the reality that things change really quickly, the threat
5 space is changing, and if the Government of Canada has a new
6 and emerging capability to be able to detect and understand
7 disinformation, we were asked to contribute to SITE as a
8 founding member, and I think that makes absolute sense. We
9 had that capability at the time and it hadn't been
10 established anywhere else.

11 What you're seeing here is a number of years
12 later, we have continued to increase this capability, but as
13 a whole, as a community, we've all increased our
14 understanding about the threat space, and where the RRM was a
15 new capability and sort of piloting that, I think we've
16 demonstrated that there is a real value to understanding the
17 disinformation landscape.

18 So what I was suggesting was at this point in
19 time, we have contributed, I think we've shown that it's
20 important to monitor that landscape, but Global Affairs
21 Canada, we need to be able to look internationally to watch
22 that threat space, because whenever we are turned
23 domestically, we have to sort of -- there's opportunity cost.

24 So I was suggesting, and this conversation
25 has continued, as it should, we have filled this capability.
26 We need to have a conversation about how that capability
27 should continue and in what form within the Government of
28 Canada.

1 And I believe in this email I'm also saying
2 it's that RRM Canada should absolutely still participate in
3 SITE. Again, if you think of what we were originally doing,
4 we're understanding the international landscape so that we
5 can share those changing tactics that we see with our
6 domestic entities as an early warning system.

7 If we're learning about what Russia's doing
8 in other countries or China or other threat actors, we
9 absolutely want to share the information. That should
10 continue. But we need to have the conversation about
11 monitoring the domestic landscape, which a foreign department
12 should not be leading on that. However, we will always
13 support while and as that capability is developed.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And those, we
15 understand, are ongoing discussions.

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes, absolutely.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. The next
18 topic I'd like to address with you briefly is cyber
19 attribution.

20 So Ms. Court Clerk, if I can ask you to turn
21 up CAN044468.

22 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN044468 0001:**

23 Government of Canada's Framework for
24 Public Attribution of Responsibility
25 for Malicious Cyber Activity

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Ms. Denham, this is
27 something you're very familiar with, I'm sure, the Cyber
28 Attribution Framework.

1 So once the document is up, I'll ask you to
2 explain what this -- what this represents, what this
3 framework is and how it is or is not used.

4 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely.

5 So this is our framework for cyber
6 attribution. It is a process that is led by Global Affairs
7 Canada but involves a number of departments based on their
8 areas of expertise and responsibilities. And this was put in
9 place in 2019.

10 And how the framework is used is ---

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Sorry, Ms. Denham.
12 I'll just interrupt ---

13 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- you for one
15 second to explain cyber attribution, we're talking about
16 cyber acts as opposed to information manipulation. Is that
17 right?

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you.

20 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Thank you for that.

21 There is -- yes. There's often a confusion
22 that this information or that we could use these
23 interchangeably, and I can explain why that wouldn't be the
24 case.

25 Actually, you know, one of the bases is in
26 2015, there was actually the UN -- we did reach agreement
27 within the UN system on a framework for responsible state
28 behaviour in cyber space. Again, at that time, you can

1 imagine the negotiations.

2 We've referred to the importance of
3 negotiations in a multilateral system. There was a
4 recognition that we needed to have agreed-upon norms so that
5 we could have responsible behaviour within the cyber space
6 which was rapidly changing at that time as well.

7 So the UN put that in place in 2015.

8 In 2018, Canada, along with other countries,
9 but a lot of Canadian leadership, did a lot of work to
10 articulate that international law applied in cyber space as
11 applicable elsewhere.

12 With those two key pieces of a UN framework
13 and the agreement that international law applies in cyber
14 space, this was developed and introduced in 2019 so that we
15 could actually have a clear process when there was a cyber
16 incident that was significant -- so again, not every cyber
17 incident, but a cyber incident that could have a significant
18 impact, be it an example, potentially targeting of critical
19 infrastructure or some of these elements that could take down
20 significant portions or could impact Canadian security of
21 Canadian society.

22 We would have a framework established as to
23 how we would go through the process to make sure, if we were
24 going to actually call it out, and what were some of the
25 actions.

26 But when you go through -- so this is the
27 assess. We have to assess what happened. We have to
28 consult. We make recommendations.

1 As you move through this document, you can
2 actually see what are those important steps that have to be
3 taken.

4 And we're scrolling.

5 So I'll start. One of them is, and a really
6 important part, is the technical assessment. You know, this
7 is with CSIS and CSE, and they work together to actually do a
8 technical assessment, what was -- what did take place, do
9 they have the evidence, the intelligence to actually
10 demonstrate that a cyber incident took place. They have to
11 do that documentation and they have to indicate whether there
12 was a foreign -- you know, who was the actor behind it.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Do they assess whether
14 the threat had an impact, an actual impact, or that is
15 irrelevant as soon as there has been an attempt?

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** There does have to be -- so
17 I would relay to other colleagues within CSE to actually talk
18 about how they do that assessment, but there does have to be
19 some level of impact, i.e. if there was an attempt to, in a
20 cyber incident, you know, either break or infiltrate a
21 particular system but nothing happened ---

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Nothing will happen.

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** --- there -- you know, then
24 you would -- this is why we sort of use a cyber incident that
25 you're assessing rather than, you know, nomenclature where
26 people say there's been a cyber attack.

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I see.

28 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Just because there's an

1 incident doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a
2 significant impact or that something has been broken or that
3 something has occurred.

4 So you do that technical assessment to see
5 what has happened, who are the actors and to do that.

6 Another important part is that there has to
7 be an international legal assessment. I referenced the
8 documents there at the core, which is the UN framework of
9 responsible state behaviour and international law.

10 Again, malicious cyber activity does not
11 necessarily mean it violates the agreed-upon international
12 norms or international law. There may be activities that we
13 may not like, but it does not mean that it has actually
14 violated international law.

15 There's also a consultation with our domestic
16 entities, Public Safety and National Defence, as to whether
17 the incident would have any impact on any of their
18 activities. And then that comes in with Global Affairs and
19 we work with the whole community to do the full assessment
20 along with a foreign policy assessment.

21 And we've heard a lot here already about
22 needing to take into consideration, you know, what are the
23 impacts on the bilateral relations, where are other countries
24 at, what are their positions, are other countries willing to
25 make a statement with us. If all of these assessments are
26 that something happened, that we have an indication of the
27 actor, that we have the evidence and actually did it violate
28 international law, then we would make a recommendation as to

1 what type of action should be taken.

2 I would note that this was put in place in
3 2019 and one of our lessons that we're working through right
4 now is at the top it actually talks about the fact that this
5 is a public cyber attribution framework. I just want to make
6 clear that one of the lessons that it doesn't always have to
7 be public.

8 I think we've heard from Weldon and the
9 Deputy, there's a lot of actions that we can take, and
10 sometimes, depending on the objective you're trying to
11 achieve, public attribution may not be the most effective
12 means at that time. It may be that we want to work with
13 other countries to engage directly with a country to indicate
14 that we've seen certain actions. Like we have to, again, do
15 the same analysis.

16 It doesn't preclude at later dates, if we
17 decide to, to make a public attribution, but that's -- I just
18 think it's important to flag that we've also been learning as
19 we move through this space that there's a lot of different
20 ways that you can respond, and it doesn't always have to be
21 public.

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And what is the utility
23 of making the attribution public?

24 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Some of the utility, again,
25 because we do have the agreed-upon international norms -- and
26 I would say when we make a public statement -- I mentioned
27 that it's really important to engage with our allies to see
28 if they would also join us in a statement.

1 In any of the public attributions, we've
2 always gone out with allies. We will make a statement, they
3 will either support, et cetera.

4 It is that consolidation of a strong
5 international grouping that is calling out behaviour that we
6 have all agreed not to conduct, right. So that is putting on
7 notice, it's calling out a country or an actor against those
8 agreed-upon norms.

9 Another objective could be in a public space
10 around education, making people aware that this is an action
11 that has taken place.

12 So there could be a number of benefits to it,
13 and so you think through what is the -- what is the objective
14 of at this time. What do we most need to achieve?

15 And you could want to achieve a couple of
16 those all at once, call out the actor, work with our allies
17 to be very strong against this particular type of behaviour,
18 educate international audiences, educate Canadian audiences.
19 It could be a multitude of those. But you do think through
20 in your analysis to recommend an action.

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And I'll just note
22 it says at page 3 of the GAC IR that to date there's been no
23 activation of the cyber attribution framework in relation to
24 cyber activity targeting Canadian democratic institutions and
25 process. Is that correct?

26 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely. That's
27 correct.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And the last

1 thing I'll ask you to comment on, you've already alluded to,
2 actually, Ms. Denham, but there's no similar attribution
3 framework for foreign information manipulation interference,
4 FIMI. And I think you've noted there's no international
5 convention on that. Is that the reason? Can you speak to
6 that?

7 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yeah, so there's an
8 international agreement, and I don't think in an environment
9 in a multilateral setting we would ever be able to reach a
10 definition of what disinformation or foreign information and
11 acts that are acceptable or not, but that does not preclude
12 Canada from wanting to continue to push this space forward.
13 So we advocate for our Declaration on Information and
14 Integrity. That's an example where we ask other countries to
15 sign onto this Declaration. And if countries sign on, one of
16 those -- within that Declaration, one of the acts is to not
17 participate in and to call out activities of foreign
18 information manipulation, in an attempt to get more and more
19 countries to agree that they won't participate in it, but
20 they will join in calling it out. So we don't always have to
21 rely on -- you know, it's not -- I don't think we would reach
22 a UN agreement, but there's other means by which we can get
23 countries to agree on wanting to take action. So that would
24 be, you know, just an example of another area of Canadian
25 leadership in this space.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Is it a good moment for
27 the break?

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** It's perfect because

1 I'm about to start in on specifics, so I'll do that when we
2 come back.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll take a 20-
4 minutes break.

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

6 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

7 This sitting of the Commission is now in
8 recess until 11:10.

9 --- Upon recessing at 10:48 a.m.

10 --- Upon resuming at 11:14 a.m.

11 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please.

12 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
13 Commission is now back in session.

14 The time is 11:14 a.m.

15 **--- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed:**

16 **--- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed:**

17 **--- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed:**

18 **--- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed:**

19 **--- MR. WELDON CARL EPP, Resumed:**

20 **--- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed:**

21 **--- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY, (cont'd):**

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Witnesses, as
23 promised, we're now going to get into some specifics, so
24 specific instances in which GAC's toolkit regarding foreign
25 interference has been deployed, starting with something that
26 I think we've alluded to in the abstract, if not in the
27 specific so far, the PNG of Mr. Zhao Wei. So for this, can I
28 first ask the Court Reporter to turn up CAN 23929?

1 --- EXHIBIT No. CAN023929 0001:

2 GAC Response to Foreign Interference

3 - China Chronology/Cheat Sheet

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And just scroll down
5 to -- so that both pages 1 and 2 are on the screen. You'll
6 see the chronology relating to Zhao Wei. Scrolling down,
7 please. Keep scrolling. There. Okay. So you had part of
8 it before. Just scroll up a little bit, so you see Zhao Wei.
9 There we go. And now zoom out, so that we can see that whole
10 chronology.

11 Perfect. Okay. So this is a document I'll
12 be going back to a few times because it sets out -- it's
13 called the GAC chronology cheat sheet of responses to PRC's
14 foreign interference, and it has helpful lists of dates. So
15 we understand already from what Mr. Morrison and Mr. Epp have
16 said that the context of all of this in responding to PRC
17 that foreign interference did not start in May 2023, but here
18 we have a chronology specifically of what happened in early
19 May. So a *Globe and Mail* article appearing in -- on May 1st,
20 and then IND, which I believe is Director-General of
21 Intelligence; is that right, Mr. Lafortune?

22 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Yes.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I-N-D? Okay.
24 Government acronyms are bad. Diplomatic acronyms are a whole
25 other level. Any case, so there's an assessment produced
26 there on May 2nd in relation to Zhao Wei. On May 3rd, the
27 Intelligence receives a package of reports from CSIS dating
28 back to 2021 and produces an updated assessment. And on May

1 4th, the Minister of Foreign Affairs summons the PRC
2 ambassador for an in-person démarche, and eventually, Mr.
3 Zhao Wei of PNG on May 8th. So I don't know if, Mr. Epp or
4 Mr. Morrison, you prefer to take us through those events from
5 GAC's perspective?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I can try. I was having
7 a side conversation here about whether it was actually Mina,
8 Minister Joly, or somebody else, who summoned the PRC
9 ambassador. I think it was not Mina, I think it was me.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I think you might be
11 right about that.

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yeah. And so, that's
13 one error in this summary. A second error in this summary is
14 on May 8th, point three where it states that:

15 "...publicly declares Zhao Wei PNG
16 for his role in targeting a Canadian
17 MP and his family."

18 That's also an error.

19 So just to back up a little bit, Mr. Epp went
20 through, as you've just acknowledged, the series of
21 escalatory measures that we were taking with respect to China
22 because of its foreign interference activities. Police
23 stations have been mentioned, spy balloons have been
24 mentioned, and the activity of Chinese diplomats in Canada
25 has been mentioned.

26 In the spring of 2023, we began or continued
27 internal deliberations about the lack of progress and what we
28 needed to see from the Chinese side. And as Mr. Epp

1 testified this morning, left all options on the table
2 including the *persona non grata* tool. *The Globe and Mail*
3 published an article which is reflected on this timeline I
4 believe, on the 1st of May. After that, we sought -- as GAC,
5 we sought additional information on Mr. Zhao Wei.

6 My colleague described the toolkit that we
7 have and how you use that toolkit depending on what your
8 objective is. *The Globe and Mail* article on the 1st helped
9 shift things into a zone where any diplomatic action that we
10 took would be very public. Tara and others have testified
11 you have optionality around some of your tools. Some tools
12 you use publicly, some tools you use privately, you can go
13 big, you can go limited. There's a number of ways you can
14 deploy diplomatic tools depending on your objective.

15 After *The Globe* article, it was quite evident
16 that Mr. Zhao Wei's position in Canada was untenable. It was
17 difficult to see how he would be able to continue as a --
18 continue pursuing his diplomatic functions. We began an
19 internal deliberation as to using the PNG tool, should we PNG
20 Mr. Zhao Wei? Should we PNG someone else? Should we PNG
21 more than one Chinese official?

22 We engaged in some diplomacy here in Ottawa,
23 and our ambassador to China did the same thing in Beijing in
24 an effort to try to convince the Chinese side that Mr. Zhao
25 Wei's position had become untenable and to encourage them to
26 voluntarily withdraw him. The benefit of that would be that
27 we wouldn't have a tit for tat expulsion. That was an effort
28 that ultimately failed, and so the key point was arrived at -

1 - I've lost the date, around the 8th or 9th of May -- when I
2 signed a memo to Minister Joly to recommending the expulsion
3 of Mr. Zhao Wei.

4 That is a document that's available publicly,
5 or at least the front page of it is. It makes it clear that
6 elements of what had been reported in the media were not
7 correct, but that we were still fully confident that we would
8 achieve our diplomatic objective in expelling Mr. Zhao Wei.
9 So that was the recommendation I made to the minister.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So we'll just
11 unpack that a little bit with respect to some of the things
12 that you've referred to. Ms. Court Reporter, can you take
13 that document down and put up, first of all, just WIT104 at
14 paragraph 30?

15 So the discussion that's about to be brought
16 up here that I'm going to refer you to, Mr. Lafortune, is the
17 intelligence that was provided initially to GAC in 2021 and
18 then again in 2023. So just scroll down to page 30, please?
19 Page 30, I'm sorry, paragraph 30. There it is.

20 So we understand from -- and this is the
21 interview summary, I believe -- that this intelligence had
22 been previously shared within GAC, but had only been shared
23 with a very limited -- to a limited number of people. And it
24 -- I think the wording here is that it completed the picture.
25 So can I just ask you to speak to, from GAC's perspective,
26 that intelligence and how it may have changed GAC's
27 assessment?

28 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Sure. As I

1 mentioned at the beginning of my presentation, one of the key
2 roles of my function is to provide the intelligence that
3 support policy decision-making at Global Affairs Canada. And
4 while my colleagues from the Asia branch under the leadership
5 of Mr. Epp, were at that point considering policy options in
6 terms of various action the government could do in relations
7 to the situation that was happening on foreign interference,
8 we were at that point looking at all the intelligence we had
9 in our holding in terms of Mr. Zhao Wei or any kind of
10 related to foreign interference itself.

11 And so we provided small assessments at that
12 point to the Asia team and to the Deputy Minister in order to
13 support the decision-making with certain intelligence itself.
14 When we went through that process at one point, and we were
15 consulting our colleagues at the service, they shared with us
16 that there was an additional piece of intelligence that we
17 were not reflecting in our assessment itself which they
18 shared again.

19 That piece of intelligence was of higher
20 classification -- higher classification than other documents
21 itself, which in the business of intelligence means that the
22 distribution is extremely limited and is not to the consumer
23 -- it's not a consumer decision to decide who it goes, it's
24 the provider of the intelligence that indicates the
25 limitation that there was to that specific intelligence. So
26 that, what's happening in 2021 was extremely limited, and
27 then we have it again to consider it, into assessing, and
28 provide the right intelligence itself two decision-makers or

1 the one making recommendations.

2 All that specific intelligence itself, it was
3 not see change, it was not something very -- that was
4 changing tremendously our assessment. But it was completing
5 the picture about how Mr. Zhao Wei functions and what exactly
6 was his role and responsibility. So that was enabling us to
7 provide further granularity, further detail on that specific
8 issue itself. So very complimentary of what we already have.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And just to
10 bring out two things there, that intelligence -- it says a
11 paragraph 30 there -- did not relate to MP Chong. Is that
12 correct?

13 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** That's correct.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

15 And then just in terms of the information
16 flow picture, so understanding what you say about that, that
17 was provided to a very limited number of people due to its
18 classification; has the system of distribution or
19 dissemination changed since 2021?

20 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Absolutely. There
21 was an initiative done by the Privy Council office and the
22 Service, in collaboration with the Communications Security
23 Establishment, for adopting measures that enhance not only
24 the dissemination of intelligence, but also to track who
25 received and who did not receive the intelligence itself. So
26 that's thing number one that has been provided.

27 The second thing I would say is that as we
28 evolve into issues of foreign interference, there's even

1 further and further conversation about why this intelligent
2 is limited to certain individuals and why it's not.

3 So for example, if I see a very sensitive
4 intelligence that is only limited to let's say myself and the
5 Deputy Minister, but looking at it I realize that it is
6 material to the work of Mr. Lévêque for example, then I will
7 have a conversation right away with the provider of that
8 intelligence to make sure that we can expand the readership
9 of that specific intelligence itself.

10 So what really happened here in terms of
11 augmenting and proving the dissemination of intelligence is
12 twofold. Really, system -- an information management system
13 implemented by the service, by PCO, by the communication
14 security establishment, but also on the human side when it
15 comes to really having further conversation and challenging
16 each other about the limitation and the proper dissemination
17 of specific highly sensitive pieces of intelligence.

18 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We can take that
19 down now, Ms. Court Reporter, and pull up CAN33567?

20 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN033567 0001:**

21 Foreign Interference by PRC Diplomat

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Mr. Morrison, I
23 believe this is the memo that you were referring to to the
24 Minister of Foreign Affairs, where you recommend the PNG of
25 Zhao Wei. So I think at the second paragraph, it says --
26 there we go. Thank you. "Most notably..." first paragraph:

27 "...the PRC official has been the
28 subject of media reports suggesting

1 he has conducted [FI] activities
2 against a sitting member of
3 Parliament..."

4 Then it says:

5 "The PRC conducts a range of foreign
6 [...] activities in Canada."

7 And it goes through some of the previous
8 diplomatic engagements. Then says:

9 "While elements of the recent media
10 reporting about Mr. Zhao's activities
11 are not accurate, there is no
12 question that PRC interference
13 activities [...] have continued..."

14 And in the end, you recommend that he be
15 declared *persona non grata*.

16 Is there anything you'd like to add to that?

17 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No. It's ---

18 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Self-contained.

19 Okay. So just to sum up then, from GAC's perspective,
20 declaring Mr. Zhao Wei *persona non grata* was the culmination
21 of ---

22 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely. We -- as
23 has been outlined, this was an ongoing discussion, the
24 behaviour was not changing. Multiple representations at
25 levels up to and including Minister Joly and the Prime
26 Minister, multiple vectors of interference, as has been
27 described, and in the context of the publicity around *The*
28 *Globe* article, a good opportunity to do this with maximum

1 impact, not only vis a vis China, but also vis a vis other
2 countries that may be contemplating or engaged in foreign
3 interference in Canada.

4 So with all of that and the intelligence
5 picture that showed a pattern of behaviour by Mr. Zhao Wei
6 dating back, frankly, to when he arrived in the country some
7 years beforehand, not -- you know, there's degrees of foreign
8 -- or there's degrees of diplomatic behaviour and not all
9 clearcut, but certainly in a regime in which one doesn't even
10 have to give a reason for declaring someone PNG, we were very
11 confident that in choosing Mr. Zhao Wei, the Chinese side
12 would receive the appropriate message, and that's what we
13 did.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And can you
15 speak at all then to the PRC's response?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The PRC responded
17 exactly reciprocally. It quite rapidly, and as expected,
18 expelled a Canadian Consular official from the Consulate in
19 Shanghai of roughly the same level. So in the diplomatic
20 world, we took that as a sign that this was not going to be a
21 series of expulsions, but rather just a reciprocal expulsion,
22 and then kind of agreed to carry on.

23 To state that another way, China chose not to
24 escalate, and so we've moved beyond it.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Before we
26 leave the topic, it occurs to me I should ask you to explain
27 what it actually means to declare a diplomat *persona non*
28 *grata*?

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Diplomats have
2 privileges and immunities in their host country. That's
3 codified in the 1961 Vienna Convention. And those privileges
4 and immunities mean they're not subject to the laws of the
5 local jurisdiction. So classically, the things that get in
6 the newspaper are speeding tickets, and parking tickets, and
7 so on. Those are -- you have immunity from the local court
8 system, immunity from prosecution.

9 That is given to you as you come into the
10 country and become an accredited diplomat, and there's a list
11 on the Global Affairs website of everyone that is an
12 accredited diplomat, and those privileges and immunities end
13 in two ways. The first way is if you leave the country and
14 you turn in your diplomatic carnet, or your credentials,
15 you're off the list, and you no longer enjoy privileges and
16 immunities.

17 And the second way is if your host government
18 declares you *persona non grata*, usually giving you a matter
19 of days to leave the country, and on your way out, you
20 surrender your credentials and no longer have diplomatic
21 immunity.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And I think
23 you may have said earlier, but in case you didn't, sometimes
24 this can be done very publicly, and sometimes it could be
25 done sort of more quietly, never quite makes it into the
26 public domain?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely. It depends,
28 again, on the objective you're trying to achieve. Sometimes

1 it has to do with the personal behaviour of the diplomat.
2 Maybe that is foreign interference, maybe that is breaking
3 other Canadian laws, drunk driving is one that we take very
4 seriously in this country.

5 But it can also be done without any reference
6 to the personal behaviour of the diplomat. We expelled four
7 Russian diplomats following the poisoning of Mr. Skripal in
8 the U.K. several years ago. We did that in conjunction with
9 allies to show our opposition to the reprehensible act by the
10 Russian Government. So those four people that we expelled
11 obviously were not seriously implicated in what happened in
12 the U.K., but we used that as a diplomatic signal.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Moving on to
14 the next incident we're going to talk about, Ms. Court
15 Reporter, can I ask you to pull up WIT142? No, I'm sorry.
16 Wrong. WIT104. Starting at paragraph 37.

17 So the discussion here at paragraphs 37 to 43
18 is about the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

19 So Mr. Morrison, I think this will also go to
20 you.

21 Starting at paragraph 37 again, and between
22 37 and 43, it outlines the sequence or chronology of events.
23 So I'm hoping you can take us through that, from GAC's
24 perspective and your perspective specially?

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** In June of last year,
26 2023, Mr. Nijjar was murdered in the parking lot of his
27 temple on the Lower Mainland. There were immediate rumours,
28 at least, that this was somehow linked to the Government of

1 India. That was not the read of our security agencies, at
2 least at first. We then became aware of intelligence at the
3 end of July that indicated otherwise, and so began to more
4 actively explore a possible connection between Mr. Nijjar's
5 murder and the Government of India.

6 The then National Security Advisor, Jody
7 Thomas, as well as the Head of -- then Head of CSIS, David
8 Vigneault, were prescheduled to be in India later in August.
9 They used the opportunity of being in India to convey to
10 their Indian interlocutors that Canada was in possession of
11 intelligence suggesting a link between agents of the
12 Government of India -- or elements of the Government of India
13 and the murder of Mr. Nijjar.

14 That was -- any sort of link was denied.

15 Quite shortly after, at the beginning of
16 September last year, I went, Jody went, and David Vigneault
17 returned to India in the run up to their G20 Summit that they
18 were hosting to again speak with our Indian counterparts and
19 implore them to cooperate with us in investigating this
20 murder of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil.

21 We said, explicitly, in a series of meetings,
22 that we were confident that the truth would come out and it
23 would come out either via the Canadian law enforcement
24 investigation, via a parallel investigation that was going on
25 in the United States, or it would come out via a media leak,
26 and we wanted to try to get the Government of India to
27 collaborate with us to -- so that justice would be served and
28 so that it wouldn't happen again. And the Prime Minister

1 raised that directly with Prime Minister Modi during the G7
2 summit.

3 In the end, we were -- I'm sorry, during the
4 G20 summit in New Delhi in the first or second week of
5 September last year.

6 In the end, we were correct. The information
7 did come out. It came out via leaks. And it was after those
8 leaks that the Prime Minister spoke in the House of Commons
9 to say that Canada had credible intelligence about potential
10 links between the Government of India and the murder of Mr.
11 Nijjar.

12 The rest of the story is very public. It
13 involved the expulsion of 41 Canadian diplomats from New
14 Delhi. The associated effect led to us shuttering our three
15 consulates in other cities in India, and that's roughly where
16 things stand right now.

17 The law enforcement investigation is ongoing.
18 Four people have been arrested on the lower mainland and
19 charged -- I believe charged with murder.

20 So that's where things stand.

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So in contrast,
22 maybe, with the PRC's response to the PNG'ing of Mr. Zhao Wei
23 here, India's response was escalating.

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We PNG'd an intelligence
25 official here in Ottawa. They reciprocated by PNG'ing a
26 Canadian in New Delhi and then they escalated quite
27 forcefully.

28 They -- there was suddenly an online

1 information and influence campaign targeting our Prime
2 Minister. They said they were going to revoke the diplomatic
3 immunities of 41 Canadian diplomats, to which we responded,
4 "If you could unilaterally revoke them, they wouldn't be
5 immunities".

6 They nonetheless decided to pursue that
7 course of action and so, for the safety of our diplomats, we
8 didn't want in New Delhi absent privileges and immunities, we
9 reluctantly withdrew our cohort.

10 For a time, visas were frozen, and that led
11 to a complete interruption of all travel to and from India,
12 including business travel.

13 So thankfully, I think some of the elements
14 that underpin our relationship with India have been gradually
15 restored over the past nine or so months. We talked
16 initially about the importance of India as a -- the
17 importance of India geopolitically to the future security and
18 prosperity of Canadians.

19 We talked -- or I talked at the outset about
20 the Government of Canada's position on the territorial
21 integrity of India, which is absolute, and we will continue
22 working in the manner I described when I was talking about
23 the really hard work of diplomats is when you don't agree on
24 everything.

25 We are determined to continue working with
26 the Indians to restore some semblance of the relationship
27 that we've had, but we need some accountability for what
28 happened.

1 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Moving, then,
2 from that incident to the next one, the next one is what's
3 been known variously as PRC overseas stations, PRC overseas
4 police stations.

5 For this discussion, Ms. Court Reporter, can
6 I ask you to turn up WIT142 at paragraph 106?

7 So Mr. Epp, I may direct this to you. And
8 what I'd really like you to do is take us through again the
9 chronology, essentially, of how this occurred or how this
10 came to light, the overseas police stations, GAC's diplomatic
11 responses and discuss, really, what these stations were.

12 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd be happy to do so.

13 I mean, the document gives the dates and the
14 timeline, but effectively what happened was the Canadian
15 government as well as other governments around the world were
16 surprised to learn through a very deep-dive piece of research
17 done by a Spanish NGO known as Safeguard Defenders about what
18 I would describe as being kind of the latest form of tool
19 that the PRC was using for dual purposes, but including to
20 perpetrate transnational repression and foreign interference
21 of various kinds and, you know, they've become known as
22 overseas police stations.

23 The Canadian government, upon learning about
24 this phenomenon, did a couple of things.

25 First of all, working together with domestic
26 partners, our first business was to assess and validate this.
27 And you know, as an aside to a point made earlier, part of
28 our opportunity as a learning organization is to look for how

1 we can work with partners outside of government, but this was
2 a new partnership. And so you know, the validity, the
3 credibility of the information needed to be assessed.

4 And so you'll know from the time zone that,
5 over the course of a few weeks, working with the RCMP and
6 with the service, we validated, did -- the police stations
7 that were identified in Canada, did they exist, were they
8 doing what Safeguard Defenders said, could we validate the
9 information.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Epp, I'm just
11 going to interrupt you for one second there ---

12 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- because I'd
14 actually like another document pulled up.

15 So we'll go back to that chronology document,
16 CAN023929.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Sort of a more --
18 we've already seen it. It may not be entirely correct in
19 every sense, but it still does give a fairly good overview of
20 -- there we go.

21 Case 1 there is Chinese police stations, so
22 that may be helpful as you go through ---

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah, that's terrific.

24 It shows a little bit the sequence I've been
25 describing.

26 And so working with Philippe Lafortune, Mr.
27 Lafortune's shop, working across government, we sort of
28 verified the assessment.

1 We then began a series of diplomatic actions,
2 and I would say those were in parallel to our domestic
3 partners taking mitigation actions on -- and investigations
4 under their own stream.

5 In our case, it was to call in the PRC
6 Ambassador and a couple things. One was to convey formally
7 our absolute opposition to such activity on Canadian soil, to
8 ask the Chinese government to formally confirm whether these
9 exist and exist as part of their government ecosystem, and to
10 insist that they cease and desist.

11 The, you know, existence of these stations,
12 if I might zoom out for a second, was concerning to us for a
13 couple of reasons.

14 The PRC ecosystem, including both Party and
15 state apparatus and how they conduct foreign interference
16 abroad is probably more sophisticated than most foreign
17 interference actors using what we would call sort of grey
18 zone tactics, and so two things can be true at the same time.

19 What we learned about the overseas police
20 stations is that they came about and were useful during a
21 period coming through COVID when, for the Chinese diaspora
22 abroad, a lot of services they might normally need to go to
23 China to do, for example, marriage licences or to obtain
24 permission for a divorce, so on and so forth, they couldn't
25 do because of COVID and travel.

26 These so-called police stations were offering
27 what would in some ways appear to a diaspora as legitimate
28 services. They were being managed by subnational elements of

1 the Chinese government, so a provincial jurisdiction could
2 provide those sorts of services.

3 Notwithstanding the fact that it is not legal
4 under the Vienna Conventions to provide any form of
5 government services outside of the premises or the remits of
6 an embassy or a consulate, so offside in any case, but to the
7 public there might have been a legitimate zone in which these
8 were just functioning normal, useful services to dual
9 nationals, et cetera.

10 But it's also the case that, with that cover,
11 Safeguard Defenders assessed that foreign interference,
12 transnational repression, other objectives of the PRC
13 government, were being undertaken, coercion, access to
14 communities through these institutions. So in any case, on
15 all fronts, offsides, absolutely not tolerable. And we,
16 through the series of interventions that you see on the
17 screen, demanded of the Chinese Government in writing to
18 confirm their role in this, and to confirm that their -- that
19 this would cease and desist.

20 There's reference there to further
21 representations in November. We did at one point, and -- we
22 did at one point have a formal communication back from the
23 Chinese side, effectively, acknowledging that they were aware
24 of these by telling us that they had confirmed that they were
25 closed. In parallel, the RCMP was doing its own
26 investigations, as you'll see here. And in the mix, quite
27 apart from calling in the Chinese Ambassador, making
28 representations in China, making it clear that this activity

1 had to stop, we also used that, as we've described earlier in
2 this ongoing scaling up of demonstrating to the Chinese
3 Government that any form of foreign interference on Canadian
4 soil would not be tolerated. We took this opportunity to
5 exact a particular consequence on the Chinese operations in
6 Canada by refusing a long sought for creation of a new
7 position for a Communist Party liaison officer. We said
8 that's never going to happen, that we will not agree to that
9 because of the activities that your government has been
10 undertaken [sic], and we refused visa for a particular
11 individual who we had concerns about.

12 I think that gets you through the initial
13 phase of the steps, but I would say in parallel to this,
14 because GAC's role, obviously not a domestic role, an
15 international role is not just bilateral. We used what we
16 learned in the Canadian instance and actively played, I would
17 say, a leadership role across multiple platforms of like-
18 minded in the G7 with Five Eye partners, making presentations
19 to likeminded to say here's what we've learned, here's what
20 in coordination with the RCMP we're doing, and so on and so
21 forth.

22 It also provided an opportunity, I would say,
23 including through very active work, commendable work, I would
24 say, by members of Parliament to put focus on this issue, and
25 working through discussions on Parliament briefings to be
26 able to raise public awareness, so that in whatever future
27 formulation, something grey zone like this would be seen,
28 recognized for what it is, reported in, and, effectively,

1 neutered. So the public education opportunity here was also
2 one that we used.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Just to go
4 back on a couple of elements that you brought out there, so
5 Canada was not the only country in which these types of
6 stations were operating; correct?

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** It was not.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And you
9 mentioned that it was -- the stations may have been organized
10 at the subnational level as opposed to the national level of
11 the PRC. So and I believe, Mr. Morrison, in one of the
12 engagements we've had before, you noted that the PRC master
13 may not even have been aware that these happened until he was
14 démarched by GAC; is that correct?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So what does
17 that tell us about how the PRC operates in terms of -- I
18 suppose they have their own federalism issues; is that right?

19 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Well, I would say two things
20 are important here. One, the PRC Party state has a very
21 coordinated approach to pursuing the national interests and
22 the interests of the Party abroad, but it's a large country
23 and it has diffuse capacity. And whether it's the MPS, the
24 Ministry of Public Security, or the Ministry of State
25 Security, or even offices, subnational offices that are
26 managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called Foreign
27 Affairs Offices, they're often given tasks or asked to
28 experiment with particular missions. It's rare in most

1 foreign ministries, but I would say also in the case of the
2 Chinese MFA that somebody in Beijing in a position in the MFA
3 or even their ambassador will know everything that's going on
4 all the time, including by partner departments, which have a
5 mission or a mandate to undertake work, including abroad. So
6 it's possible that the PRC Embassy wasn't entirely tracking
7 what the MSS and the MPS were doing through subnational
8 governments. But it's our understanding that the police
9 station activity was not only officially endorsed, it was, in
10 a sense, advertised on Chinese social media as a pilot, as a
11 best practice by those subnational governments, talking about
12 how they were able to provide these services abroad, and so
13 on and so forth.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And lastly, I
15 think you mentioned already the sort of dual purpose of these
16 stations in the sense that they were service providers of a
17 certain sort, also potentially tools for transnational
18 repression. And you mentioned that even the service
19 providers, they're offside the Vienna Convention. Can you
20 just spend a moment explaining that?

21 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah, and this was part of
22 our representations to the Chinese Government. I would add,
23 and I'm not reading quickly here, but it is the case that
24 when we first called the ambassador in, we made it clear that
25 we expected him to come in for this démarche with the
26 accredited declared police liaison officer at the Chinese
27 Embassy. And we made it very clear that, irrespective of
28 whether they were aware of these, we held them accountable

1 because our accreditation to activities by any branch or any
2 level of the Chinese Government on Canadian soil is limited
3 to the Vienna Conventions to their formal representation in
4 the form of their embassies and their consulates. Anything
5 beyond that, whether they knew or didn't know, is their
6 accountability and their responsibility. And so, you know,
7 they, I think as I explained earlier, at some point came
8 back, as we asked them to, to respond to our questions in
9 writing and to acknowledge that they had to look into it and
10 that they had -- they confirmed that these were shut down.

11 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Epp? Can you for
12 the -- mostly for the benefit of those that are following the
13 Commission's work explain a little bit what is the Vienna
14 Convention?

15 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So I am certainly not the
16 expert in our department on the matter, but I think I'll give
17 the Coles notes, if I might, that hopefully my kids might
18 understand as well. These are two Conventions, pieces of
19 international law, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic
20 Relations and on Consular Relations. They're differentiated
21 only insofar as the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic
22 Relations, among other things, spells out the provisions,
23 privileges and immunities and responsibilities, both for
24 sending and host state when diplomats are accredited to a
25 foreign country. The immunities are full. They cover the
26 full sort of existence of diplomats under diplomatic
27 immunities under the Vienna Conventions.

28 Vienna Convention for Consular Relations is

1 much more limited. There's historic reasons for this, but it
2 is germane insofar as if you are assigned, as I previously
3 have been, as a head of mission to a consulate, my activities
4 at that consulate in Shanghai or in Guangzhou, or those of my
5 staff are only covered under the Vienna Conventions with
6 privileges and immunities insofar as they are activities that
7 pertain to our mandate, issuing visas, helping Canadians who
8 need help abroad, promoting trade relations. And they
9 pertain only to our formal activities in the consulate or in
10 the carrying out of those duties. They do not cover us from,
11 you know, what might happen with a car accident on the
12 weekend, and so they're quite distinct. Those two are kind
13 of bedrock international rules of the road, if I might say,
14 to help governments navigate how and where and with what
15 privileges we assign people to represent us abroad.

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Can I just add that they
17 were passed in 1961, but they codified centuries of practice,
18 going back to kind of medieval times when different states
19 would need the assurance of safe passage. If they were going
20 to go and negotiate an end to the war, you didn't want the
21 other party kidnapping your negotiators. So they -- that's
22 kind of the basis of diplomatic immunity. In the same period
23 in the UK, they passed a law because a Russian Count, who was
24 the ambassador to the UK, kept being bothered by a bailiff
25 for gambling debts. And this was annoying to the King, who
26 needed to be able to talk to Russia. So the concept of
27 absolute immunity from local jurisdiction grew from there and
28 was codified and signed onto by almost every state in the

1 world after 1961.

2 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And at the risk of
3 stating the obvious again, I think for the benefit of those
4 that are following at work, a country that is a signatory to
5 such a Convention has to respect, actually, all the
6 obligations provided for in the Convention.

7 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely, it's
8 international law.

9 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** And if I could just
10 add one more thing?

11 It's also very important that in addition to
12 the immunities piece that is spelled out in the Vienna
13 Conventions, it's also spelled out what the appropriate
14 activities of diplomats are. And so I think that gives some
15 clarity. And in Canada's case we actually have codified both
16 of these Conventions in an Act of Parliament in the *Foreign*
17 *Missions and International Organizations Act*. So it's also
18 written into Canadian law.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So picking up on
20 that, Ms. Termorshuizen, actually, we know that GAC will
21 sometimes send out circulars reminding Missions within Canada
22 of what their obligations are, including before elections, is
23 that correct?

24 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Correct.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Turning back,
26 now, to specific incidents. We're going to go to some
27 disinformation campaigns. And if we just scroll down,
28 actually, on this document, we'll see the chronology. It's

1 Case 4, the first one which is a recent -- relatively recent
2 disinformation campaign targeting MP Chong.

3 Ms. Denham, I'll again ask you some questions
4 with respect to this specifically.

5 But first, Ms. Court reporter, can you take
6 that document down? This one gives the overall chronology,
7 but I'll ask you to pull up CAN24019.

8 This, Ms. Denham, is the RRM Open Data
9 Analysis:

10 "WeChat account activity targeting
11 Canadian parliamentarian suggests
12 likely foreign state involvement."

13 So taking us through this, can we just start
14 with what happened; what was this about?

15 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So the RRM -- so at
16 this time, this was one of the time periods where the RRM had
17 -- RRM Canada was participating in monitoring by-elections,
18 and that they were participating in SITE, monitoring the by-
19 elections. And while they were going through the monitoring
20 of the by-elections -- again, when you're doing this type of
21 monitoring you're searching for information relating to
22 Canadian elections and you're doing certain search terms that
23 are politically relevant. And when they were doing that
24 search, not related to the by-election, results came up that
25 made the team aware of suspicious information, manipulation,
26 that had happened against MP Chong.

27 The time period here -- again, because it's
28 online, they were able to see the time period. So it was

1 historic in nature from May 4th to the 13th, even though they
2 were watching for the by-elections. So again, that's a
3 really important distinction; it's not at all related to the
4 by-election but they were able to identify it because of the
5 searches that they were doing.

6 At the time, they were not able to focus on
7 the analysis that was taking place because we were
8 prioritizing the work on the by-election, which is important
9 to note. Once the by-election was over, the team was then
10 able to do the analysis of what they could see.

11 And so this is the report that then
12 summarizes that. I think overall what I would say, it gives
13 some articulation of what was seen, the coordinated content,
14 the timing. The bottom line here being that this represents
15 RRM Canada's ability to take what was seen within a very
16 condensed time period. There was -- they were able to apply,
17 there were different indicators related to disinformation and
18 linkages to potential foreign actors.

19 In this instance, they were able to actually
20 map 72 accounts that participated in this information
21 campaign of which one-third of those accounts had links to
22 the PRC. The rest of the two-thirds of the accounts, their
23 linkages were more opaque, but essentially they were seeing
24 accounts that had never before commented on Canadian
25 politics, so influencers and different accounts, but for that
26 specific time period were participating or were reflecting
27 some of the narratives.

28 So that, again, this is where you start to

1 pull together the indicators that are time-specific. There
2 is narratives that are almost the same or very similar used
3 by accounts that do have a linkage to the PRC directly, and
4 amplified or there is a participation by accounts that had
5 never before commented.

6 So this is where the RRM, as you read through
7 the report, our level of confidence of being able to actually
8 indicate the linkages to the PRC was high. This is in stark
9 contrast to any of the reporting that we had done during the
10 previous election period. We've heard -- again, we've had
11 lots of testimony here about information campaigns with Kenny
12 Chiu in 2021.

13 This is an excellent example of the
14 difference in confidence, because these are terms that I use,
15 but maybe not understood. So how I would describe it is in
16 the case of Kenny Chiu with the information that the RRM had,
17 they could identify four accounts that were sort of a source
18 of some of the information, but none of those accounts could
19 they directly attribute to the PRC. And the other accounts
20 that were interacting with it, although a low volume, again,
21 this is where I think I've testified previously that it could
22 have just -- it was -- we had no links to the PRC; therefore,
23 while the information may have been inaccurate, it could, in
24 all likelihood, have just been an exchange amongst Canadians
25 or interested people in a political process.

26 In this instance, it is what we would
27 describe as a clear case of time-limited accounts that were
28 attributed to the PRC, amplifying information and trying to

1 sort of augment that amplification in inauthentic ways.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you.
3 That was a very helpful overview.

4 Ms. Court Reporter, I'll just ask up to call
5 up now WIT142, starting around paragraph 45.

6 So Ms. Denham, you've contrasted -- you've
7 explained the linkage to the PRC and the probability of that
8 linkage here, and you've contrasted that with the
9 disinformation against Kenny Chiu in GE44.

10 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** M'hm.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** What actions did GAC
12 take, then, in response to this particular campaign? And I
13 think they're described starting at paragraph 45.

14 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Oh yeah. So this -- again,
15 because this was one of the first times that the RRM Canada
16 team was able to have a high level of confidence, in terms of
17 a disinformation campaign taking place, this is where we then
18 worked through the governance structure that has been
19 established to make recommendations of actions.

20 So in preparing for that, we obviously had to
21 write the reports, complete all of the thorough analysis, and
22 we start to put together recommended actions. So as I've
23 previously testified, based on the analysis we then think of,
24 "Well, what are the objectives we need to achieve with this?
25 How is that best to take place?" I would say that this was
26 the first time that RRM Canada was actually recommending that
27 we should publicize our findings within Canada, and so the
28 team put together a recommended package as to what that would

1 be. So here's the report, here's our analysis, here's our
2 recommendation based on the objectives we think we should
3 achieve, and that was recommended up to the DM CIR, the newly
4 established Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence
5 Response. So that was where we made the recommendation to DM
6 CIR in terms of moving forward.

7 Once we had approval through DM CIR, then I
8 think through this and through a number of other information
9 that's been released, we were able to issue the public
10 statement, the report. We engaged with Mr. Chong, and we
11 translated the report into Mandarin, so that it could
12 actually be shared with communities that could have been
13 impacted to understand. Again, the objective of increasing
14 education for all Canadians to make sure that that was
15 accessible to understand and learn about this tactic that had
16 been used.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay, thank you.
18 And you mentioned that as part of that, you -- GAC debriefed
19 Mr. Chong personally.

20 So I think Ms. Termorshuizen, it was you who
21 actually spoke to Mr. Chong?

22 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Correct.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Can you just speak
24 to that and why that was an important thing to do?

25 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** So it was very
26 important to do because it was clear, as Ms. Denham
27 described, that this was actually a very specific campaign to
28 discredit Mr. Chong. And so it was important, as we thought

1 about what the appropriate actions would be, that he would be
2 made aware of this campaign.

3 We also wanted to reassure him the campaign
4 didn't suggest any type of threat against him or his family,
5 so there was no danger, from what we could see, but it was
6 important that he was aware of it. And we also wanted to
7 explain to him some of the things that he might be able to do
8 to protect himself from these kinds of campaigns.

9 We also -- because we wanted to go public on
10 this to educate Canadians on this, but also to have a level
11 of transparency about the kinds of foreign interference that
12 could happen, it was very important that Mr. Chong himself
13 knew about it before he would see something in the public
14 domain.

15 And then finally, we wanted to let him know
16 that we were engaging the Chinese Government on this, so we
17 démarched the ambassador about this. So it was very clear to
18 Mr. Chong that we had also taken this up with the government
19 that we deemed -- had a high probability of engagement in
20 this. And we also finally wanted to let him know that were
21 going to be engaging with the company that was responsible
22 for WeChat, which the team subsequently did.

23 So really an opportunity to ensure that he
24 was fully aware as the individual who was most affected.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And you
26 mentioned there the engagement with Tencent, I believe it is?

27 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Yes, it is.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And sounds

1 like there wasn't much reaction on Tencent's part to that?

2 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So that was by the RRM
3 Canada team. They did reach out to Tencent and you are
4 correct, I mean, they -- we shared the information, we
5 expressed our concerns.

6 Again, when you're engaging with the social
7 media platforms, we share the information, but it's for the
8 platform to decide actions that could be taken. I.e., is it
9 against their terms of service? And we have quite a positive
10 relationship with many of the platforms, when we share the
11 information and they take action based on their terms of
12 service.

13 In this one, there was -- for Tencent, they,
14 you know, thanked us for the information, but that was the
15 end of the interaction with Tencent.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Well the next
17 incident I'm going to ask you about is actually already on
18 the screen, but I'm going to pull up another document for it.
19 So this is a spamouflage campaign.

20 The document I would like pulled up here is
21 CAN25903.

22 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN025903 0001:**

23 Probable PRC "Spamouflage" Campaign
24 Targets Dozens of Canadian MPs in
25 DisInformation Campaign, as well as
26 Chinese-language Commentator in
27 Vancouver

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Maybe while that's

1 getting pulled up, Ms. Denham, can you explain what
2 spamouflage is?

3 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So spamouflage, I
4 think in the last -- any -- there was the explanation, but
5 essentially spamouflage is a combination of the word spam and
6 camouflage.

7 I think we're all familiar with what spam is,
8 which is a large volume, often by automated bots or hijacked
9 social media accounts, where they're trying to flood the
10 information or they're trying to post many, many times, and
11 many of us can detect that when we now see spam.

12 But the camouflage part is that they're
13 taking certain narratives and they're again flooding it, but
14 trying to put it on to social media accounts that may have --
15 maybe they're talking about cultural issues, or in this case
16 it may be members of Parliament, et cetera. So they're
17 trying to insert that in a large volume of spam into accounts
18 that would not normally be talking about those subjects.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So sort of a
20 spray approach?

21 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** It's a spray of information
22 with one of the intents being, you know, the power of getting
23 disinformation -- or one of the powers can be you pump it out
24 in large volumes and if somebody actually picks it up and
25 starts to talk about it, you have been -- like, that is
26 actually where you can turn it into what can look like a more
27 natural conversation, or that people start to believe what's
28 said.

1 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

2 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So spamouflage is a well
3 documented technique. It is not seen to be particularly
4 effective at this point. That is evolving. As I've already
5 said, these spaces evolve rather quickly. But at the time,
6 it was not particularly effective because a lot of the
7 translation, the words that are being used, the translation
8 isn't very good, but it is documented that it's a tactic used
9 by the PRC to move from, you know, using Chinese language in
10 WeChat to trying to get those narratives sprayed into other
11 language -- other platforms that are English or other
12 dominant languages.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So I'll ask
14 you then to just sort of take us through the chronology of
15 this particular spamouflage campaign that was detected in
16 September '23 in terms of what was it, what was it attempting
17 to achieve, was it effective, and what did GAC do about it?

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So this one is
19 another excellent example where -- of how the RRM, G7 RRM
20 actually works, because we first got the tip off from a
21 partner within the G7 RRM who has done a lot of research on
22 spamouflage, and they had started to see references related
23 to Canada. And so they actually provided that information to
24 us, which enabled the RRM Canada team to start to do the deep
25 dive. And in fact, that's where they were able to find the
26 targeting or the information that had been -- so the tactic
27 that had been used to target the Prime Minister, the
28 opposition leader, various MPs.

1 But as they were digging in, of course you
2 start to see how is that taking place? And on this
3 particular campaign, it was primarily targeting an
4 individual, a Canadian individual in Vancouver, his name is
5 there, Mr. Liu. He had been very -- he has strong opinions
6 about the PRC and had been very vocal about those opinions,
7 and so what had happened is that his persona, his persona had
8 been sort of taken over. It wasn't his official accounts,
9 but they had duplicated them and started to create content
10 that looked like he was the one that was actually saying very
11 disparaging remarks about the political individuals, the
12 political actors. So again, you can see there, it was about
13 referencing political corruption, sexual scandals.

14 This was not anything that Mr. Lui had ever
15 said; right? So they're using his persona to try and create
16 content against the political individuals.

17 In terms of intent, this is where, based on
18 the analysis of the RRM Canada team, while it was targeting
19 the spam, the spreading of information was targeted against
20 political accounts, we actually think that the intent was to
21 discredit Mr. Liu. He'd been very critical of the PRC and by
22 using this type of inflammatory language, you do a few
23 things. You can discredit the individual, but you can also,
24 if it has an impact, you can have, potentially, those
25 political actors not wanting to engage or listen to some of
26 the criticisms that this particular individual was doing. So
27 we actually think the primary target was to discredit Mr.
28 Liu. It was done through information that was posted to

1 various MPs' platforms, the accounts, but that was the
2 primary target.

3 The last part of your question was what did
4 we do about it. So again, it was doing the full analysis of
5 the campaign. And we had actually learned quite a bit, going
6 through the process of disclosure on the MP Chong incident,
7 and so the team already -- you know, we started to understand
8 what does it actually take to be able to release this
9 information publicly? So the team then proceeded to put
10 together the report, the analysis, we put together the
11 recommendations as to the potential action, we went through
12 the objectives again, and we understood the real value not
13 only in identifying and letting the MPs know about it, again
14 they will have seen it, but the importance of engaging with
15 Mr. Liu himself, so that he could know that we had identified
16 the campaign and that he -- we could share that information
17 with him, and again, made the report public, made a public
18 statement about it.

19 And we engaged with the social media
20 platforms with the same approach, which is we share the
21 information with the social media platforms, if they deem
22 that it was not in compliance with their terms of service,
23 they take the content down. And in this instance, a very
24 positive reaction from the social media platforms.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Just to close
26 off on that, I'll ask Ms. Court Clerk to pull up CAN048037.

27 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN048037:**

28 Government of Canada's Framework for

1 Public Attribution of Responsibility
2 for Malicious Cyber Activity

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And while she's
4 doing that, so just to go back on some of what you said, Ms.
5 Denham, sounds like if there was sort of a dual purpose here,
6 one of those purposes was really transnational repression
7 against this particular dissident, ---

8 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** M'hm.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- and that may
10 have been almost the dominant purpose of this. So less an
11 instance of political foreign interference than a way of
12 getting at this dissident? Is that fair?

13 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes. We absolutely did see
14 this as a form of transnational repression leveraging the
15 disinformation tactic.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And I think
17 you said it's -- it wasn't super effective, necessarily, as a
18 political interference tactic, but may have been very
19 impactful for the individual involved?

20 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely. And I think
21 you can see from the top of this paper -- and again, I hadn't
22 seen this paper until -- this document until we started
23 preparing for this, because this was a summary of lessons
24 learned that was done within the team. Just for that
25 context. But right at the top of the document, I did call
26 Mr. Liu to share that information, as we had done with the
27 spamouflage campaign, and in his words, you can see there the
28 fact that we had followed up on his case and called out the

1 PRC, it may have saved his life.

2 So the impact for the individual, as we had
3 assessed, we assessed it had been likely very high. In the
4 conversations, he relayed that it was very high for him. And
5 that meant that was hugely important for him to know that we
6 had identified it and that we had engaged with the PRC on
7 this issue.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. You're ahead
9 of me.

10 So this is a lessons learned from
11 spamouflage.

12 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I was going to ask
14 you what lessons may have been learned from the experience
15 with that spamouflage.

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yeah. So again, this is --
17 this was internal to the team, so just for reference, this
18 would be an officer that writes this, the team's having
19 conversations and they want to document it. It's a best
20 practice, obviously, to do that so that we can continue to
21 improve as we want to learn and do better every time. And so
22 this is representing the conversations that the team had in
23 terms of some of their lessons.

24 I think some of the ones I would point out,
25 we absolutely saw a real value in this case as well as MP
26 Chong in reaching out to the individual that was impacted, so
27 that needs to be acknowledged and that fades into our future
28 decision-making on recommended actions.

1 Translating it into simplified Chinese so
2 that it's accessible to the communities that may -- that may
3 have seen this and so that they can also understand the
4 tactic. We've always -- we've been engaging with social
5 media platforms for a number of years, and so this is
6 actually representing that we're continuing to improve this.

7 It was -- you know, in the first early days
8 of the RRM Canada team, it was sometimes really hard to
9 figure out who to connect with within a social media platform
10 where actually we have those relationships now. When we do
11 call to share the information, they know the RRM Canada team,
12 they're familiar with it, so it makes it easier for that
13 communication with all. Yes.

14 And then the processes -- as we scroll down,
15 processes and approvals, again, this is reflecting some of
16 the team, some of -- not surprising, some of their
17 frustrations about how fast things may move sometimes, but
18 also thinking through how they can improve the products and
19 the recommendations that they're putting forward in a way
20 that can make things move faster.

21 So I'm sure I'll be asked about different
22 parts of this, but just to contextualize, there's a reference
23 there to the frustration with DM CIR.

24 Again, this is -- these are officers and part
25 of the team that they don't get to participate in DM CIR.
26 They actually -- most of them don't actually have the
27 clearance level to see the other content that would be on the
28 agenda, so they're not familiar with the process itself.

1 So as an officer, it's always important to
2 hear where they're feeling the frustrations. While I didn't
3 see this document, I did engage with conversations with the
4 team where they expressed some of these concerns and then I
5 was actually able to relay DM CIR is a new entity, you know,
6 they're also learning how to move forward, but what we need
7 to focus on as a team is how can we get the best products
8 together to make the strongest recommendations to move as
9 fast as possible. That's what we want to be able to do to
10 support the governance process for their continued
11 improvements.

12 So that's essentially what you see here, is a
13 combination of what the team thought they could improve on.
14 It gives an opportunity for them to also learn about how the
15 system works and, yeah, that would be the summary of how I
16 would contextualize that document.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

18 We can take that document down now.

19 So that's all we're going to get into in
20 terms of specific incidents, but the last series of questions
21 I'd like to ask, and these are probably mostly for you, Mr.
22 Morrison, are more general and maybe more existential, about
23 some discussions that have come up repeatedly in the
24 Commission's proceedings, what is foreign interference and
25 what is foreign interference differentiated from something
26 you were talking about at the beginning of your testimony
27 here, which is lawful advocacy on behalf of a state. So
28 foreign influence versus foreign interference. Definitional

1 issues, differing perspectives within government.

2 So can I ask you to speak to that a little
3 bit, and specifically with reference to those different
4 perspectives that may be coming from different aspects of
5 government?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Certainly.

7 And there's lots of information that I
8 believe has been made available on the, frankly, sometimes
9 challenging distinction between foreign influence, which is
10 what all countries wish to have -- that's what diplomats get
11 paid for -- and foreign interference, which crosses a line
12 into unacceptable behaviour for diplomats.

13 So CSIS defines -- or the definition that we
14 have been using for foreign interference, so on the wrong
15 side of the line, has to do with behaviour that is coercive
16 or clandestine or covert.

17 So the -- so all diplomats do more than go to
18 cocktail parties, which is the sort of stereotypical thing
19 that we get accused of.

20 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I hope it's part of it.

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We do go to a fair
22 number of receptions. We're supposed to be there working
23 because a lot of -- I described at the beginning that one of
24 the core functions of a diplomat abroad is to know what's
25 going on in the country and report back.

26 So there's lots of hospitality, there are
27 lots of receptions, there are lots of events that are
28 attended, and so one forms one's network and once that

1 network is formed, one plumbs the network for all kinds of
2 information that is then sent back.

3 I also said that a key part of representation
4 is advocacy and projecting and promoting Canada's interests,
5 primarily where it comes to prosperity and security.

6 So there's a side of diplomacy that is less
7 well known than the kind of cocktail party going, and it can
8 be a contact sport. It can be going into the corners with
9 our elbows up when we have a clear goal that we're trying to
10 achieve.

11 And an example of that was when we were
12 negotiating for the renewal of the -- what we call the new
13 NAFTA, the new trade treaty with the United States and
14 Mexico, as we advocated forcefully at the national level in
15 the United States but also at state and municipal level when
16 necessary for Canada's interests and why that particular
17 treaty needed to work for all three countries.

18 So there are examples in -- elsewhere in the
19 documentation about our LGBTQI advocacy in Uganda, which did
20 not make us very popular with the government, but we felt
21 deeply about it. And there are other examples. I won't go
22 into them all. But when a national interest or a value that
23 Canadians hold strongly is at stake, we can go very hard.

24 We do not do things that are covert, we do
25 not do things that are clandestine, and we do not do things
26 that are coercive because that would be foreign interference.

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And again,
28 coming back to the discussions that have been had within the

1 Commission's proceedings, we've had several exchanges on
2 particular instances that may or may not be foreign
3 interference.

4 One thing we know is that in the CSIS
5 Institutional Report that the Commission requested, there
6 were a number of suspected instances or identified instances
7 of foreign interference.

8 And if we'll just pull up CAN.DOC44 for one
9 second as a reference point.

10 --- EXHIBIT No. CAN.DOC.0044 :

11 Canadian Security Intelligence
12 Service (CSIS) Stage 2 Institutional
13 Report

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Essentially, the
15 Commission asked the government to provide a list of
16 significant instances and foreign interference into its
17 democratic institutions and electoral processes during the
18 Commission's period of review. And we understand from Mr.
19 Basler's testimony -- Mr. Bo Basler of CSIS -- last week that
20 the way this unfolded was CSIS looked through its reporting
21 and, from all of its reporting on the subject, identified a
22 certain number of specific instances, and these were then
23 debated amongst -- probably at the Deputy Minister level
24 amongst various government agencies to come down to a list of
25 initially seven and then finally six.

26 So Mr. Morrison, I imagine you were involved
27 in some of these conversations, and I'm wondering if you can
28 take us through that process from your perspective.

1 through slightly different eyes is a feature and not a bug in
2 our system. I am happy to live in a country in which an
3 agency such as CSIS with a mandate to focus on threats
4 pursues that mandate with vigour, which is to say that CSIS
5 has a lens, and it looks at activity here in Canada and
6 elsewhere in terms of what harm could come to Canada and to
7 Canadians. GAC takes a broader view. The aperture is wider.
8 We described at the outset when we were introducing ourselves
9 the experience that the people at this table at least bring
10 to bear on international relations, on diplomatic activity,
11 and on what constitutes legitimate diplomatic activity and
12 where the lines get crossed. So I do think that this entire
13 process has been healthy for our community in building a
14 greater degree of shared understanding.

15 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And maybe
16 just to take one concrete example of this discussion, you've
17 mentioned before, and it'll be in one of your witness
18 summaries, that the PRC's response to the Uyghur motion in
19 Canada may not necessarily, from GAC's perspective, be
20 foreign interference. Can you explain that?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** There was a Uyghur -- or
22 a motion put forward by MP Michael Chong in February, I
23 believe, of 2021, or at least it was coming to a vote in
24 February of 2021, that would declare the activities taking
25 place in Xinjiang in China against the Uyghur population to
26 be genocide. This motion was building, it was going to be
27 put to a vote. There's a summary, I believe, in the public
28 documents prepared for this Commission. In the period up to

1 and including the vote, China pulled out all stops to try to
2 swing the vote in its direction. They -- officials of the
3 Chinese Government, the embassy here, consulates in different
4 countries called MPs. They called members of the diaspora
5 community that they knew were contacts of MPs, and they tried
6 to convince, tried to influence MPs to vote against this
7 motion. It wasn't a successful diplomatic campaign, since
8 the motion passed 266 to 0 by my recollection.

9 You know, afterwards, I think that the folks
10 in Beijing wondered how this was possible, a unanimous vote,
11 or a vote of that magnitude, and questions were asked, I
12 think it's fair to say, as to why certain people had voted
13 certain ways. In the background to all of that, Canada,
14 along with partner countries, sanctioned, I believe, four
15 individuals and one entity operating in Xinjiang, and China
16 vowed to -- vowed publicly it would retaliate, and, in fact,
17 it did retaliate by sanctioning MP Chong, as well as members
18 of the -- of a subcommittee in the House of Parliament.

19 I go into the sanctioning bit because it's I
20 think very important to understand that there was -- that
21 sanctions, we might not like them, but they are part of the
22 diplomatic toolkit. Canada sanctions people all the time.
23 Alexandre mentioned the number of Russians that we've
24 sanctioned is approximately 3,000. We have sanctioned people
25 from Haiti, people from China, people from a range of
26 countries.

27 So after the motion, there was some tit for
28 tat sanctioning that Canada and China engaged in. And we had

1 to discuss with our colleagues at CSIS that, in fact,
2 economic sanctions of the type that China deployed against
3 Canada were a legitimate tool of state craft. We do it.
4 They're allowed to do it. And that sometimes those sanctions
5 involve not only the principal, but the principal's family
6 members. It depends on the individual sanction regime.
7 Canada doesn't sanction family members, at least as part of a
8 package. The United States and China do.

9 So there was -- in the -- to get back to your
10 question, in the community, we had to educate each other on
11 the sanctions tool as part of the diplomatic toolkit.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** You mentioned that
13 you're glad that we live in a society where a security
14 service such as CSIS pursues its mandate with vigour. When
15 Mr. Vigneault was here last week, when CSIS was here, he
16 mentioned that he was glad that he lived in a society where -
17 - and I'll quote the bit from the transcript:

18 "[No interpretation]."

19 So, essentially, that Mr. Vigneault said he
20 was glad that the security service doesn't necessarily have
21 the determinative last word on these questions. Can you
22 comment on that a little bit?

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Our system is set up
24 such that the security services provide an input into
25 decision-making. Sometimes the security services have
26 absolute rock-solid information, so that that input can be a
27 large part of any debate about what should -- what actions
28 should take place. Sometimes it is inconclusive based on a

1 single source. I'm on record elsewhere as saying I'm glad we
2 live in a country where even inconclusive or incomplete
3 pictures are painted because I think it makes us safer, but I
4 completely agree with David Vigneault that it would not be a
5 healthy system if the intel had the final say. We have a
6 system of triage and weighing, and the role of the National
7 Security and Intelligence Advisor comes to play in that.
8 There is a community that meets regularly. We've testified
9 to that in previous sessions of this public inquiry. The
10 community hashes things out, and for all of the reasons we
11 know about a diversity of views being healthy, I think David
12 is absolutely right. You get the best outcome if you hash
13 things out rather than, for example, if the intelligence
14 agencies have the automatic final say.

15 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I have one question.
16 Given these different viewpoints, what do you do when you
17 receive intelligence, or even a report from CSIS, suggesting
18 foreign interference? Are you taking that at face value, or
19 are you on your part doing something else to come to your own
20 conclusion?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It's kind of *sui*
22 *generis*, you know, some things you take at face value because
23 they're absolutely unequivocal. Sometimes you will look at
24 something, and I'm now speaking as Deputy Minister of Foreign
25 Affairs, sometimes you'll look at something and think, well
26 that is really alarming. I have a fairly high degree of
27 confidence that the domestic agencies will be on it. And we
28 have -- we have strengthened our system of ensuring that the

1 appropriate people are taking the appropriate action through
2 this mechanism called DM CIR.

3 There is, and I think in a healthy system
4 always room for a little bit of skepticism. I think it's
5 fair game to say, well, what's the quality of the sourcing on
6 that? And my colleagues at CSIS at the senior level appear
7 to not take offence at things like that. It's part of the
8 healthy cut and thrust of trying to get accurate information
9 to try to take the best decisions that we can.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

11 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** If I may?

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes.

13 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** And just also to
14 complete it, there's various processes as well that sometimes
15 let's say any intelligence organization provide a specific
16 report itself that becomes a data point; right? So at one
17 point, not only do we go through our governance process as
18 described by Mr. Morrison right there, but the assessment
19 community will also gather, and looking at past intelligence
20 we have on let's say a similar issue the different things, to
21 now try to paint a broader picture other the phenomenon
22 itself to assess it and kind of situate the estimate as well.
23 And then we go back into the governance process in order to
24 reconsider the issue itself.

25 So it's just not having a single piece on a
26 single day, but rather to at least keep it, regardless of
27 whether it was conclusive or inconclusive, and consider it in
28 further product assessing intelligence.

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Just one further. It
2 depends a little bit, or a can depend a little bit on whether
3 it's HUMINT or signals intelligence. Signals intelligence is
4 often a verbatim recording of a conversation, whereas HUMINT
5 is often someone's account of a conversation or an event.
6 But in both cases, our intelligence colleagues make us aware
7 that the information may be designed to influence us not just
8 inform us.

9 So if you have an intercept of a telephone
10 conversation, you don't know necessarily who's on the call,
11 or whether the person on the call is who you think that
12 person is, or whether what they're saying they're saying
13 because they know you're listening. So in terms of your
14 grain of salt, it really depends on the context.

15 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** You also may have an
17 analyst's interpretation of whatever was said, which could be
18 right or wrong?

19 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Exactly.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Speaking of
21 assessments, Mr. Morrison, I'm now going to ask you about
22 something that actually happened before you were Minister of
23 -- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and while you were the
24 Acting National Security Advisor, and that's a document
25 that's come to be known as the PCO special report.

26 So I will just ask you to turn up, Ms. Court
27 Reporter, WIT138, paragraphs 4 to 10. This is just the
28 summary of your *in camera* evidence on this. So scrolling

1 down to paragraph forward zooming out a little bit will allow
2 us to sort of situate where all this happened.

3 But, Mr. Morrison, can you explain from your
4 perspective as you were the person who commissioned,
5 essentially, this report, how that happened, why that
6 happened, and what happened with it from your perspective?

7 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The story begins with a
8 CSIS intelligence assessment on Chinese foreign interference
9 activities in Canada. That's also part of the record and
10 that assessment, I think, is dated the 20th of July 2021.
11 And it's kind of a roll up document, it's lengthy, it's 9
12 pages long, and it is a document that in the second page --
13 or on, sorry, the second paragraph, it says the purpose of
14 this document is to establish a baseline of understanding
15 about Chinese foreign interference in Canada.

16 And this is a document that arrived in my
17 NSIA office while I was away in the summer of 2021. I read
18 it for the first time in September of 2021 and it, I thought,
19 was very thought provoking, but to me it left a series of
20 important questions unanswered. It spoke at some length --
21 and again, a lot of it is -- has been here in a slightly
22 redacted form. It spoke at some length about the PRCs
23 capabilities and intentions, including with respect to the
24 United Front Workers Department. So capabilities and
25 intentions to do foreign interference in Canada.

26 It left me curious about not just
27 capabilities and intentions but actual results. China had
28 been at this for some time, and I was wanting to know where

1 their successes were, if they were working on
2 parliamentarians, were they winning? If they were engaged in
3 other kinds of activity that was inappropriate what were the
4 concrete examples of that? Was it at the national level?
5 Was it at the provincial level? Was it at the municipal
6 level? And so on.

7 So I asked my colleagues within the NSIA part
8 of the Privy Council office, to do some follow on research
9 and to come back to me with a level of granularity and
10 concrete examples that would allow me to have -- to gain a
11 better understanding, not of capability and intent, but of
12 actual what has been accomplished.

13 And I was trying to frankly, size the
14 problem. There is a lot of national security issues. There
15 were a lot of national security issues boiling over in the
16 fall of 2021. We were dealing with Afghanistan, and
17 Ethiopia, and a whole number of other pressing international
18 security issues. And I was fairly new to the role, and I was
19 wanting more information.

20 So I commissioned this report, which as you
21 mentioned, has become known as the special report, and I was
22 shown a draft in mid-December 2021, almost at the same time I
23 was shuffled out of the Privy Council office to become Deputy
24 Minister of International Trade. So I lost sight of the
25 final product.

26 I will say a couple of things however, and of
27 course I've read now. It's important for the purposes of
28 this Inquiry to know that this special report did not speak

1 to the best of my understanding, to the contents. This
2 report was considered special because it represented the
3 first time, or one of the first times, that the Intelligence
4 Assessment Secretariat at PCO had collaborated on an
5 assessment product with CSIS. So it was special in terms of
6 the process rather than in terms of actually what it said.
7 And I believe my colleague, former colleague, Martin Green,
8 who was in charge of this, will be coming before the
9 Commission shortly and that is my recollection of why it is -
10 - why it was called special.

11 The other thing that is important about the
12 report is that my intended audience when I commissioned it
13 was me. I reacted to CSIS' July 2021 report by wanting a
14 deeper dive.

15 Much has been made subsequently, including by
16 review bodies, as to why this document didn't make it to X
17 person in the political level, or Y person in the political
18 level. It's just important to understand that when I was
19 NSIA, I didn't know how long I was going to be NSIA. I was
20 asked to do the job for six weeks and it ended up being more
21 than six months. So I commissioned it to increase my own
22 understanding of the threat of foreign interference by the
23 People's Republic of China.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. I think at
25 some point in your evidence you noted, and I think it's in
26 your Stage 1 Addendum Interview Summary, that you agreed with
27 the decision of the NSIA at the time not to provide this
28 report to the Prime Minister. So I have two questions

1 following on that.

2 First, do you have actual knowledge that
3 there was such a decision taken? Or is that taken from the
4 description of the events in the NSIRA report?

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I have no knowledge of
6 Jody Thomas' decision-making. I've read that it was not
7 provided to the Prime Minister, but I don't know why.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I just know that it
10 didn't reach him, and I saw that corroborated in his own
11 testimony. He's read it now, but he hadn't read it at that
12 time.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And in your view, it
14 didn't have to be provided to the Prime Minister. Why is
15 that?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely not, because
17 as the commissioning person, I was looking for something, as
18 I said, that had a certain amount of granularity, a certain
19 amount of telling us what it would look like if it were
20 happening, what it would look like if members of Parliament
21 or other prominent Canadians were being suborned, what it
22 would look like if -- how would we know if transnational
23 repression was widespread? You know, what are the
24 indicators? How can we scale and size the problem? Because
25 until you know that, I don't see how you can decide what to
26 do about it.

27 And you will see in that report that there's
28 some cross -- there's some comparative examples I recall from

1 Australia and perhaps other jurisdictions. So I thought that
2 was a very useful part of the document.

3 When I read a draft in mid-December, I didn't
4 think it yet hit the mark that I was looking for, so I
5 referred it back to the team for further work. And having
6 read it now, or in the process leading to our appearances
7 before you, I'm not certain it revealed anything that was
8 significantly different than what was already known. So on
9 that basis, I offered up in previous testimony that if I had
10 still been in the seat, I'm not certain that I would have
11 forwarded it on to the political level either.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. The other
13 document I want to ask you about, and I realize I'm running a
14 little overtime here, but Madam Commissioner, I'll ask for
15 the indulgence?

16 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** There's no problem.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Is something
18 that's come to be known as the targeting paper mentioned in a
19 variety of, again, review body reports.

20 So this I think we can scroll now to
21 paragraph 16. I believe that's where the discussion -- it's
22 a brief discussion of the targeting paper in this summary.

23 So just to situate you, Mr. Morrison, I know
24 you know this, but the targeting paper was a document
25 initially prepared by a CSIS analyst in 2021 about how the
26 PRC identifies individuals, and more specifically
27 parliamentarians, for targeting, targets for influence. It
28 wasn't published or disseminated then in 2021, but it was

1 published in February 2023, and shortly thereafter it was
2 made inaccessible.

3 So what I'd like to ask you about all of this
4 is this notion of targeting parliamentarians and what that
5 means in this context?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I became aware of this
7 document in around the time that it was published. I think
8 it was February of 2023. I read it and I did not find it
9 alarming because in the world of diplomacy, when you're
10 trying to get things done, you have to know who you're going
11 to work with, work on, target, in order to get things done.

12 So I have routinely said, and I know this is
13 a view shared by many of my colleagues, that if there are
14 Canadian embassies around the world that don't have this kind
15 of target list, I don't think they're doing their jobs.

16 So this gets back to the notion of the
17 difference between foreign interference and foreign
18 influence. One being legitimate, one not being legitimate.

19 You need to keep lists in order to track your
20 work.

21 Now, obviously, in Canada, knowing that
22 you're on the list of an adversarial foreign power would be
23 very unsettling. But the question, I think, is the use of
24 that list. The keeping of the list, in and of itself, is not
25 foreign interference. It's what that -- it's what that list
26 is used for.

27 So I expect that our Embassy in Washington
28 and our High Commission in London, depending on the issue,

1 has a -- I hope they have a series of lists of engagements
2 that they have planned in order to sway decision-makers to
3 one way or the other.

4 I will add that I sometimes question the
5 degree to which Chinese officials in Canada fully understand
6 our system. Fully understand how pluralistic it is. I won't
7 be alone at this table in having received telephone calls
8 from members of the Embassy, up to the Ambassador,
9 complaining about stories in the press, or saying, "I hope
10 you'll do all you can to ensure that the Senate motion goes
11 this way or that way." And you have to say, "I'm in the
12 executive. Those other guys, they do their -- they play a
13 different role in our democracy."

14 It's never been apparent to me, speaking very
15 frankly, whether the Chinese officials that I deal with don't
16 understand, or whether their bosses at home don't understand
17 and they need to say they called me and asked me to do
18 something that is totally beyond my remand or my powers to
19 do. I can't control what is in the press.

20 So in this case, I think it's fair to say
21 that China, up until relatively recently, enjoyed a fairly
22 positive reputation and reception in this country and in this
23 town. And I might get the numbers slightly wrong, but pre-
24 detention of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, the positives
25 in Canadian polling for China were up, I think in the high
26 60s, 70s. Afterwards, they were in single digits. I think
27 they went down to nine and are now around 11 or 12.

28 If you are a diplomatic mission and the tide

1 has turned against you to such an extent, you need to do
2 something differently. And I think it's probably fair to say
3 that China's diplomatic toolkit in Ottawa, until very
4 recently, was largely restricted to people like those sitting
5 at this table. They would call up the Ministry of Foreign
6 Affairs, they would take to the trade contacts. They didn't
7 really have to have a legislative strategy because there
8 weren't -- there was no Uyghur motion. There were no -- or
9 not a strong pattern of precedents for that, so when both the
10 House and the Senate started contemplating motions that cut
11 to what China really cares about, which are its Five Poisons,
12 commentary about Hong Kong and democracy and Xinjiang and a
13 couple of others, they needed a new strategy.

14 And I'm quite certain that you -- that the
15 first place you would start for that new strategy would be
16 having a list of parliamentarians.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Keeping on, then,
18 with this theme of the differing perspectives on foreign
19 interference, just two questions I want to ask you last.

20 And Ms. Court Clerk, I'll ask you to pull up
21 now CAN44228.

22 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN044228 R01 0001:**

23 Deputy Minister Committee for
24 Intelligence Response (DMCIR) Meeting
25 Minutes

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** To situation you,
27 Mr. Morrison, these are minutes from an October 12th, 2023 DM
28 CIR meeting.

1 If we scroll down to page 2, at the end of
2 page 2 -- these are draft minutes, but there's a discussion
3 at this meeting. And I believe the context for this was the
4 overseas stations.

5 If we can just scroll down a little bit more,
6 Ms. Court Clerk, so we can see starting at "GAC advised
7 that", a discussion here on the definition of foreign
8 interference, the understanding of foreign interference.

9 And you'll see GAC called for a level set on
10 what FI is and is not, and noting that this is not unrelated
11 to a country's geopolitical shifts. And then it goes on.

12 So Mr. Morrison, we know that GAC here refers
13 to you. And can you just help us understand what was going
14 on in this specific context, this conversation between Deputy
15 Ministers?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I don't actually recall
17 this meeting. The notes say that I was there, so I assume I
18 was.

19 I'll tell you what I think was probably going
20 on.

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fair enough.

22 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The -- and it cuts right
23 back to my earlier comments on the difference between foreign
24 interference and foreign influence.

25 The geopolitical shifts that the paragraph
26 refers to I think probably means the fact that China, which
27 until recently we would not have described as a rising
28 disruptive power, as I think we describe it in the

1 geopolitical -- or in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, there's been
2 a lot of change internationally. And as I just indicated,
3 views on China have hardened perceptibly in the Canadian
4 public and I think it's also fair to say in the Canadian
5 policy-making establishment.

6 That has led to some of the debates that we
7 were just alluding to as to whether a given activity is
8 foreign interference or foreign influence. And so again,
9 without perfect recall of this particular meeting, calling
10 for a level set, I think I probably meant the kind of
11 exercise that we have now gone through with members of the
12 community as a result of this Inquiry in hammering out a
13 greater shared understanding of where those lines are.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We can take that
15 down now.

16 Ms. Court Clerk, you can take the document
17 down.

18 The very last question I want to ask you, Mr.
19 Morrison, arises out of the Commission's investigation into
20 the NSICOP Report.

21 So we examined CSIS last week on this, and
22 one of the things that arose from that investigation, and I
23 think it was specifically with respect to a TRM that CSIS had
24 conducted, and the outcome report of that TRM indicated that
25 with respect to parliamentarians who were being briefed
26 pursuant to this TRM, CSIS noted that the reaction in some
27 instances was that MPs were not necessarily sure about what
28 conduct was appropriate in terms of their dealings with

1 foreign officials and what conduct was inappropriate, which
2 plays into the idea of whether an MP was witting, semi-
3 witting, et cetera, everything that's discussed in the NSICOP
4 Report.

5 And I'm wondering if you can situate us a
6 little bit in that space in terms of what those rules are and
7 what parliamentarians' understanding of them is and whether
8 there's any movement that could be made there and any role
9 that GAC might play in educating parliamentarians and others
10 as to what we've been talking about today, the rules of
11 diplomacy.

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The last document dealt
13 with geopolitical shifts, and it would be -- I said at the
14 outset I've kind of been in this business for 35 years. I've
15 never seen any period like we're going through right now in
16 terms of the speed of change and old assumptions being thrown
17 up into the air.

18 So during the Cold War, people knew which
19 countries they could engage with and they couldn't engage
20 with. There was a thing, maybe it still exists, called
21 scheduled countries, a list of 30-odd countries, and you knew
22 you needed to be hyper aware if approached by one of those
23 countries.

24 Thankfully, most of that ended with the end
25 of the Cold War and Canadians, including parliamentarians,
26 have enjoyed a period of quite remarkable peace and
27 prosperity.

28 The geopolitical shifts, however, are taking

1 us back into a world that is not nearly as friendly to
2 Canadians and to Canada's core interests. And frankly, we
3 have some catching up to do in terms of the national security
4 awareness within the Canadian public and also within the
5 Canadian Parliament.

6 So when I was Acting National Security
7 Advisor following the 2021 election, one of my first things I
8 was asked to do was to go before the new Cabinet at a retreat
9 and to talk to them about how individual members were now
10 likely to be more -- they were likely to be targets, they
11 were likely -- foreign countries were likely to pay them a
12 lot more attention, including here in Ottawa via their
13 diplomatic missions.

14 I wasn't asked to do that to all
15 parliamentarians. It was only the Cabinet.

16 I do think it would be -- I don't know who
17 would be called upon to do it. GAC would be very pleased to
18 play a role. But I do think more could be done in
19 sensitizing parliamentarians to what it's like to interact
20 with embassy officials here in Ottawa, in their offices, on
21 the social scene. Most MPs aren't from the national capital
22 region and most MPs that get elected have probably never been
23 invited to a dinner at a diplomat's house, so I think we
24 could probably go further in -- or the system could go
25 further in alerting MPs to, you know, what is acceptable and
26 where diplomatic behaviour might cross the line.

27 I'll say one further thing, and that is that
28 -- and it's in keeping with the notion that the world has

1 changed very quickly. And that is that I think Global
2 Affairs Canada can and should do more in working with
3 ambassadors and their teams here in town to make certain they
4 know exactly where we consider the lines because influence
5 and interference, you know, the -- people talk about a grey
6 zone.

7 I think we should and will be crystal clear
8 with foreign missions here in town and their consulates
9 throughout the country as to what we consider to be
10 acceptable diplomatic activity and exactly where we draw the
11 line.

12 It's worth mentioning that the -- we're
13 preparing right now for the next General Election. We know
14 it's going to take place at some time in the next year.

15 We are proactively not just sending a
16 circular notice reminding all missions of their obligations
17 under the Vienna Convention; we've actually -- we're actually
18 convening all missions at the head of mission level to Global
19 Affairs in November to go over exactly where the lines are
20 when it comes to a Canadian General Election.

21 So bottom line is I think that Canadians can
22 be confident that there's a system in place and that that
23 system is working, and it worked through the last couple of
24 general elections, but equally the threat is still there and
25 it's growing, and I hope that this exercise that we're all
26 engaged in now will also give Canadians confidence that we
27 are committed, as the Executive arm of the government, to
28 staying abreast of the changing threat environment.

1 Artificially intelligence -- artificial
2 intelligence-enabled FIMI, I think, is a major threat factor
3 and I'm sure we'll see some of that in our next election.
4 Transnational repression is another area where I think we
5 need to know a lot more. But the commitment from certainly
6 Global Affairs Canada, and I think I can speak for other
7 departments that are implicated, is that we are -- we will be
8 learning, organizations will be stitched up as an
9 administration, and Canadians should have confidence that we
10 are evolving along with the threats.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Those are my
12 questions.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And it's now time for
14 lunch, but you'll come back after lunch, and we'll resume at
15 2:30.

16 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

17 This sitting of the Commission is now in
18 recess until 2:30 p.m.

19 --- Upon recessing at 1:09 p.m.

20 --- Upon resuming at 2:31 p.m.

21 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

22 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
23 Commission is now back in session.

24 The time is 2:31 p.m.

25 **--- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed:**

26 **--- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed:**

27 **--- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed:**

28 **--- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed:**

1 --- MR. WELDON CARL EPP, Resumed:

2 --- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed:

3 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: So first one is counsel
4 for Michael Chong.

5 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GIB van ERT:

6 MR. GIB van ERT: My questions concern Mr.
7 Morrison's evidence.

8 Mr. Morrison, the Commission has heard
9 several times now, and I know you're aware of it as well,
10 that there were three CSIS intelligence products concerning
11 Michael Chong that were sent by CSIS to many senior people in
12 Ottawa in early 2021. You at that time, as you've said this
13 morning, were the Foreign and Defence Policy Advisor. The DM
14 CIR report tells us that you were on that distribution list.

15 As I understand your evidence from this
16 morning and from the summaries that you adopted, you did not
17 consider that the concerns that CSIS were raising amounted to
18 true instances of foreign interference. Have I understood
19 your evidence correctly?

20 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No.

21 MR. GIB van ERT: No, you didn't, or no, I've
22 misunderstood?

23 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No, you have not
24 completely characterized what I was trying to say. Without
25 -- and I don't think I'm allowed to get into the specifics of
26 those three documents. What we have put in the summary --
27 and this is a consensus view, it includes CSIS and the other
28 parts of the country's intelligence apparatus -- is that

1 there was no foreign interference committed by Zhao Wei with
2 respect to Michael Chong.

3 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. Well, let me
4 take you to your witness statement.

5 If the Court Operator would put up WIT138,
6 please, and it's at paragraph 20, please.

7 All right. Paragraph 20:

8 "Mr. Morrison stated that the best
9 example of an instance of differing
10 perspectives was illustrated by the
11 CSIS reporting in relation to the PRC
12 response to the Uyghur Motion
13 discussed above. Mr. Morrison said
14 that much of the intelligence he saw
15 on the PRC's response framed the
16 response as [foreign interference],
17 when in his view, such activities
18 were legitimate diplomacy."

19 That's your evidence, right? That's what you
20 adopted this morning.

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay, right. So that's
23 what I'm trying to get at. And so given that your view was
24 that this was legitimate diplomacy, rather than FI, you
25 disagreed with the Service about this point, right?

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No, and I'm -- this will
27 be a difficult dialogue because I know exactly what the CSIS
28 intelligence reports say and I'm not certain they are part of

1 the evidence.

2 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Let me show you some
3 because I want to avoid that difficulty. We all appreciate
4 that this is not the forum for certain kinds of disclosures.

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** So if the Court Operator
7 will turn up CAN3465_R01.

8 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN003465 R01:**

9 Defensive briefings to two Members of
10 Parliament regarding PRC foreign
11 interference activity PCO

12 **MR. GIB van ERT:** This isn't one of the three
13 instruments; this is actually the IMU from the 30th of May,
14 but I think it will help us get to this point. So this ---

15 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And if I may, I just
16 want to warn you; take your time to make sure that if an
17 objection has to be raised by the AG that they will have the
18 time to do that, based on national security. Or if you feel
19 uncomfortable divulging something because you're not sure,
20 just let me know.

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Okay, thank you.

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** The Commissioner is
23 becoming wily to my tricks.

24 All right. So the IMU, the subject line
25 right at the top, "Defensive briefings to two Members of
26 Parliament regarding...foreign interference activity." All
27 right?

28 And then if you'll go to page 2, please,

1 Court Operator? Thank you.

2 It advises under the wording, "Issue":

3 "CSIS will be conducting defensive
4 briefings to [two MPs] to sensitize
5 both on foreign interference threats
6 posed by...[PRC]."

7 And I'll just go on and show you all the
8 points where foreign interference is mentioned; all right?
9 Still in this page 2 -- thank you. Yes, the background.

10 "PRC maintains an active interest in
11 MPs Chong and Chiu. CSIS assesses
12 that both are [something] targets of
13 PRC foreign interference threat
14 actors." (As read)

15 So CSIS's assessment is that they are targets
16 of foreign interference. And then it goes on, the next
17 paragraph -- thank you -- halfway through,

18 "Chong has been personally affiliated
19 with many efforts to highlight PRC's
20 threat activities and Chiu is the MP
21 of a riding." (As read)

22 And then,

23 "CSIS' [blank] interest in the two
24 MPs from multiple PRC threat actors,
25 including the Ministry of State
26 Security." (As read)

27 So what I'm trying to get at here is that I
28 understand from this document and others that the Commission

1 has seen, that PRC considered this to be foreign
2 interference. I understand that you didn't agree, but I want
3 to just be clear about this. You had a disagreement with
4 CSIS about whether or not this was foreign interference.

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Let me say that I was
6 not tracking this particular issue in 2021, so I had no
7 disagreement at all with CSIS in 2021 because I didn't begin
8 to track the issue until it broke into the public domain a
9 couple of years later in 2023. I will also point out that
10 this is a CSIS report. I've already testified this morning
11 that there have been different perspectives on what
12 constitutes foreign interference versus foreign influence.
13 I've also testified earlier today that the process of
14 producing the summaries about major instances of foreign
15 interference helped to bring the community together around a
16 common view as to what is interference and what is influence,
17 and I would point out that CSIS was very much a part of those
18 deliberations.

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Look, I think I'm going to
20 have to take you back to the document I just showed you at
21 paragraph 20. If the Court Operator would turn up WIT 138
22 again, please, paragraph 20 again. You're speaking here in
23 the past tense. You've just told me that you didn't form a
24 view in 2021, but that's not what paragraph 20 says. You say
25 here,

26 "Mr. Morrison said that much of the
27 intelligence he saw..." (As read)

28 That's past tense.

1 "...on the PRC's response was framed
2 as FI, when, in his view, such
3 activities were legitimate
4 diplomacy." (As read)

5 Your view at the time, Sir, as I understand
6 your evidence -- you can recant it now if you like -- but you
7 formed the view at the time that CSIS was wrong. This wasn't
8 foreign interference. This was legitimate diplomacy.

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I did not form a view at
10 the time because I was not involved in this -- in those
11 series of reports ---

12 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. When did you --
13 -

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** --- in the spring of ---

15 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- form that view?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** My views on foreign
17 interference and my deep dive into foreign interference began
18 in -- later in the year in 2021 ---

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right.

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** --- when I became Acting
21 National Security Advisor, and I've already testified today
22 about the process that led to the so-called special report.

23 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right.

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Here, and this is a
25 document that if I read the top of it, which we scrolled
26 through very quickly, is based upon my interview or in-camera
27 testimony of July or August of this year. In that testimony
28 or interview, we were asked about the Uyghur Motion, and I've

1 already testified this morning that prior to the Uyghur
2 Motion, there was a lot of active diplomacy, which was not
3 successful, and that after the Uyghur Motion, China took
4 steps to sanction MPs.

5 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right.

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** And ---

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** And, sorry, just to stop
8 you there, whenever you formed the view, at some point or
9 other, you came to think that that kind of sanctioning was
10 not foreign interference and that CSIS was mistaken to think
11 otherwise.

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I've testified earlier
13 today that the application of economic sanctions is not
14 foreign interference.

15 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. But that's not ---

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Canada does it ---

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- what I'm getting at.

18 I'm going to ask you one more time and please ---

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** But just let ---

20 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- please answer ---

21 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- let him finish ---

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- this question ---

23 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- his answer and come
24 back with your question. Just I think in all fairness he has
25 to finish ---

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** But I am ---

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- the sentence.

28 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- going to ask you,

1 Commissioner, for help in insisting that Mr. Morrison answer
2 my question.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** This is why I'm saying
4 after his answer, if you feel that he has not answered, you
5 can ask your question one more time, but ---

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I may need your help to.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- just make sure to
8 let him finish his sentence.

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I was going to finish
10 very quickly. I was simply going to point out that economic
11 sanctions are part of the diplomatic toolkit deployed by many
12 countries, including China and including Canada.

13 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Mr. Morrison, is it your
14 opinion that CSIS, when it characterized the threat posed to
15 Mr. Chong and his family as foreign interference, is it your
16 opinion that CSIS was wrong about that and that it was
17 instead legitimate diplomatic activity? That's a yes ---

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It would ---

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- or no question, Sir.

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It may be a yes or no
21 question, but this is a complex issue, and I have -- I am
22 aware that a set of documents can say multiple things about
23 multiple people. And the consensus view of the security and
24 intelligence community in this country is that Mr. Zhao Wei
25 did not engage in foreign interference activities with
26 respect to Michael Chong.

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Commissioner, the question
28 I asked the witness was not what the consensus view is. I

1 want to know what Mr. Morrison's view was, in particular, did
2 he disagree with CSIS. It's a very straightforward question.
3 I am asking you to please direct the witness to answer the
4 question I've asked.

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I disagree with the
6 characterization of economic sanctions as foreign
7 interference. I am not allowed to say whatever else might
8 have been in those documents.

9 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Let me put it this way.
10 If, as CSIS appears to have assessed, the collection of
11 information about Michael Chong and his family was done
12 clandestinely, or covertly, or deceptively, do you agree that
13 it would then cross the line from legitimate foreign
14 influence and become foreign interference?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Anything that is done
16 covertly, clandestinely, or coercively does cross the line.

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you. So the mere
18 collection of information about Mr. Chong and his family, if
19 it's not done from open sources -- because I understand your
20 point. What I took you to be saying in your summaries is --
21 and indeed this morning, Canada's diplomatic core all the
22 time when in missions abroad will learn more about local
23 politicians and try to understand who they are, what their
24 interests are. If they have family in this country, you'd be
25 interested in that. All of that is legitimate, so long as it
26 is done in an open way and it's not done covertly or
27 clandestinely or deceptively. Have I understood that right?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

1 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. So right. And so if
2 the collection was otherwise then open and done in the clear,
3 then it is foreign interference. I think we're on the same
4 page on that. Let me ask you this question. Mr. Zhao was,
5 of course, a diplomat here, so, presumably, he was an
6 employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the
7 Chinese equivalent of GAC?

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

9 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. If he was
10 sending the information that he was collecting about Mr.
11 Chong and his family back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
12 there's no particular problem with that, necessarily; right?
13 In the same way that if our mission in Denmark sends
14 information about a Danish MP to Ottawa, there's nothing
15 impermissible about that in principle.

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely.

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. If instead Mr. Zhao
18 was sharing that information with the Ministry of State
19 Security in China, that would be a different matter all
20 together. Don't you agree?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It may or may not be.

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** It may or may not be. All
23 right.

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** In China ---

25 **MR. GIB van ERT:** But it could very well be.

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** If I can just finish.

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes.

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** In China, the Ministry

1 of State Security, and perhaps other Ministries, are allowed
2 to initiate economic sanctions. Doesn't have to stay within
3 the foreign ministry lane. So it really depends on the
4 intended use of the information.

5 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I understand the Ministry
6 of State Security to be the PRC's foreign intelligence
7 agency, meaning its spy espionage service; isn't that right?

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I believe it engages in
9 spying and espionage, I don't -- I'm not aware, others would
10 be, of its broader remit. I do know that it can be involved
11 under China's legislation in economic sanctions.

12 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. And so your
13 point being that if this was all limited to the imposition of
14 economic sanctions on Mr. Chong, it's within the bounds of
15 the Vienna Convention?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. If that's not true,
18 it crosses the line?

19 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** If it is done
20 clandestinely, covertly, or coercively.

21 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes. Those considerations
22 are the considerations under section 2(b) of the *CSIS Act* in
23 its definition of threats to the security of Canada; isn't
24 that right?

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I will take your word
26 for it.

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I can call it up for you if
28 you'd like.

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I don't know that -- I
2 don't know the *CSIS Act*.

3 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sure. Let's pull it up.
4 The Court Operator, please CAN.DOC17. Thank
5 you.

6 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN.DOC.0017:**

7 Canadian Security Intelligence
8 Service (CSIS) Institutional Report -
9 unclassified

10 **MR. GIB van ERT:** And it's right on page 1.
11 Just scrolling down a little. A little more. There we are.

12 "The term 'threats to the security of
13 Canada' is defined in section 2 of
14 the [*CSIS*] Act to mean..."

15 And it's (b) that matters:

16 "foreign-influenced activities within
17 or relating to Canada..."

18 And I'll just stop there to say if all
19 Parliament said was that, that would be offside international
20 law, because influence per say is not problematic, but you've
21 got to go on; right?

22 "foreign-influenced activities within
23 or relating to Canada that are
24 detrimental to the interests of
25 Canada and are clandestine or
26 deceptive..."

27 This was the point you were making earlier.

28 "...or involve a threat to any person..."

1 Right. So again, my suggestion to you, sir,
2 was that these are the considerations that govern CSIS as
3 well. It is looking for is the thing that is being done
4 being done in a way that involves clandestine or deceptive
5 activity or a threat to any person?

6 And so when CSIS assessed that that was true
7 in Mr. Chong's case, it was asking itself the right question.
8 Even you agreed with that. The question is whether this went
9 beyond ordinary influence of local politicians to be
10 something that's clandestine or deceptive.

11 So CSIS -- what I'm trying to get at, sir, is
12 that CSIS assessed, we've seen it in the documents, that this
13 was foreign interference, and it was referring to its own
14 statute, surely, because that's the only power it has. But
15 you assessed it differently; right?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** You are continuing to
17 try to put me back into 2021, so I'm going to have to
18 continue to tell you ---

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Let me correct that then.
20 You assess it differently now?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I believe that CSIS
22 assesses it differently now as well. That's the purpose of
23 the Consolidated Summary. I will say that the kind of intel
24 report that you're referring to but that we can't discuss
25 right now, goes through less of a rigorous stress testing
26 than the interaction we have just had with the entire
27 community on the difference between foreign interference and
28 foreign influence.

1 And I would also point out that there is a
2 broader narrative here which we tried to bring out around the
3 issue of tit for tat economic sanctions. And what is
4 absolutely true is that we sanctioned Chinese officials, they
5 threatened to retaliate, they did retaliate, and Mr. Chong
6 and other members of Parliament were subjected to sanctions.

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes, I think we're all
8 agreed that if this were just about economic sanctions, it's
9 not contrary to international law and it couldn't be
10 characterized as foreign interference, but when CSIS sent
11 those memos, including the IMU I showed you, it was
12 describing it as foreign interference. So I think that
13 speaks for itself.

14 But we're going to have to move on, because
15 my time is draining away here.

16 In the witness statements, there is an
17 observation to the effect that the issue of whether or not
18 Mr. Chong and his family were being targeted was not elevated
19 to the Deputy Minister's Intelligence Committee. Do you
20 recall that? That that wasn't done? No one took any steps
21 to elevate the Chong issue to the Deputy Ministers
22 Intelligence Committee.

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I believe that's
24 correct.

25 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right.

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I believe that's what
27 Vincent Rigby testified to.

28 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes, that's right. And

1 could you explain to the Commissioner who had the power to
2 elevate it to that committee?

3 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Any Deputy Minister that
4 was a member of the Committee could bring intelligence before
5 that Committee.

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. And Mr. Rigby was
7 an NSIA at the time.

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

9 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Could he have done it as
10 well?

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes, Mr. Rigby -- any
12 member was empowered to bring intelligence before the
13 Committee.

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. You weren't a
15 member at the time, if I understand correctly?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It would depend on the
17 exact time frame.

18 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'm talking about early
19 2021.

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I don't even know -- I
21 don't ---

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** You were Foreign Policy
23 Advisor ---

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

25 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- to the Prime Minister
26 at that time?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I occasionally went to
28 what was then called DMIC. Under the way that that that

1 particular committee operated, we usually stress tested much
2 broader pieces of analysis. The committee that it would go
3 to now is called DM CIR, Deputy Ministers Committee on
4 Intelligence Response. So they had different mandates. The
5 newer mandate -- the newer committee has been set up to
6 ensure that any intelligence that demands response by an
7 individual agency or collectively is brought to the senior-
8 most -- the attention of the senior-most officials. That
9 wasn't the case for the Deputy Ministers Intelligence
10 Committee that was operative in the spring of 2021.

11 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. Fine.

12 If the Court Operator would turn up WIT138,
13 please? Paragraph 15, please. Thank you.

14 It says here:

15 "Mr. Morrison testified [...] from his
16 interactions with representatives of
17 the PRC, his view is that the PRC
18 feels totally misunderstood by Canada
19 [and it's] trying to rehabilitate
20 [its] reputation..."

21 And then at paragraph 16, concerning the --
22 oh, just leave it there, please. Thank you.

23 Concerning the targeting paper. And you
24 spoke to this this morning. You say you --

25 "...the PRC is not used to dealing with
26 the legislative branch in Canada, and
27 they are unfamiliar with how it
28 works. They are used to [dealing

1 with] the executive..."

2 Sir, I want to suggest to you that that is
3 totally infantilizing of a country, which by all accounts,
4 all the witnesses that have come before us, is a
5 sophisticated, powerful, complex adversary, extremely
6 knowledgeable about matters, and surely is capable of taking
7 on board the sorts of things that 12 years old all over this
8 country learn about how the democratic process works in this
9 country. It's just simply not possible, sir, to suggest that
10 PRC, with all their talent, and ability, and sophistication,
11 can't figure out how legislatures work in democratic
12 countries.

13 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I stand by what I said
14 today and in the summary. My experience is captured in what
15 I've already said.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** You go on in this paragraph
17 to say:

18 "As Canada's stance towards China has
19 hardened..."

20 And I want to suggest to you that it's surely
21 exactly backwards. Surely it's China's stance towards Canada
22 that has hardened. Are you aware of a single instance of
23 Canada committing foreign interference on Chinese soil?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No.

25 **MR. GIB van ERT:** No. Neither am I. And so
26 witnesses have repeatedly told the Commission that Canada,
27 far from being hard, is the weakest link in the Five Eyes,
28 that our culture is susceptible to foreign interference

1 because we are soft, that we need to increase our resilience.
2 But you seem to be saying that it's the other way around and
3 that we're being a little too hard on China, and as a result,
4 they feel misunderstood.

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Two things can be true
6 at the same time. I think we should be very robust in our
7 foreign interference mechanisms, and we've tried to testify
8 to how we have adapted, we've tried to testify today into how
9 we've adapted.

10 And I do not disagree that China is a
11 powerful, often adversarial, country that has interests that
12 are increasingly divergent from our own.

13 But it can also be true that China feels
14 totally misunderstood by Canada and other countries and that
15 is my professional opinion, garnered from my various
16 interactions with Chinese diplomats in Beijing, in Canada,
17 and a range of discussions with foreign interlocutors at very
18 senior levels in Washington, in London, and elsewhere.

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'll ask the Court Operator
20 to put up WIT145. And it's paragraph 3, please?

21 We see this in paragraph 3 and also in
22 paragraph 4. And in fact, you used this phrase this morning.
23 You talk about "PRC's activities in Xinjiang". It's about
24 eight lines down in paragraph 3, and it's also at the very
25 end of paragraph 4, "PRC's activities in Xinjiang". What
26 activities in Xinjiang are you referring to, sir?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The consensus view by
28 the international community including the United Nations, is

1 that China is engaging in activities that include -- are
2 tantamount to concentration camps. There is child labour.
3 I'm not an expert on Xinjiang, but it is a very pressing
4 international issue, and Canada has made its view on the
5 situation in Xinjiang, as it's often called, clear
6 repeatedly.

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes.

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That's what it meant by
9 activities in Xinjiang.

10 **MR. GIB van ERT:** In fact, I think you said
11 this morning that the Parliament -- the House of Commons
12 voted 266 to nil to describe those activities as genocide.
13 Is that right?

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

15 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Why didn't you just call it
16 genocide?

17 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Genocide has an
18 extraordinarily high legal threshold. Again, I'm not an
19 international lawyer. I have a personal conviction based
20 upon recent events in the Middle East that the legal
21 threshold for genocide is high for a reason. People bandy
22 the term about in my view, inappropriately.

23 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Did Parliament bandy it
24 about inappropriately in your view?

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not going to offer
26 an opinion on Parliament will do what Parliament does. I am
27 not -- cannot offer a view on whether what is going on there
28 is genocide or not.

1 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. Let's go please
2 to WIT104, paragraph 27.

3 So this concerns the decision to deem Wei
4 Zhao a *persona non grata*. And you've explained here that
5 there was a sequence of events and numerous démarches and so
6 on. And you've giving what you understand to be the
7 background to the decision to PNG Wei Zhao. What I
8 understand you to be saying here is that the Government of
9 Canada knew long before, maybe years, two years before the
10 PNG decision, that Wei Zhao was a foreign interference threat
11 actor. Did the Canadian Government, in your view, know that
12 Wei Zhao was engaged in foreign interference month, even
13 years before the decision to PNG him?

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think the security
15 services knew, or had the view that Mr. Zhao Wei was engaging
16 in activities that crossed the line into foreign
17 interference. Yes, he arrived in 2018, and my understanding
18 is that as early as 2019 he came to the attention of the
19 security services. So yes, there was a view within some
20 elements of the security apparatus that he was not engaged in
21 only diplomatic activity.

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** But it didn't make its way
23 to the political executive until *The Globe* story came out?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The -- there are many
25 streams of information, and many streams of information on --
26 that are collected by intelligence agencies. There was no
27 particular -- my colleague Phil Lafortune, has said there was
28 no particular smoking gun when it came to Mr. Zhao Wei, when

1 we looked at it as Global Affairs Canada. When we got to the
2 stage of looking at individual names, we saw a pattern of
3 activity that made us comfortable in the context of all of
4 our other discussions with China about foreign interference,
5 with PNGing Mr. Zhao Wei.

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Commissioner, I am nearly
7 done, but I expect I will probably need about four more
8 minutes.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Okay. Go ahead.

10 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you.

11 If you'll pull up -- Court Operator, if
12 you'll please put up CAN33567? We saw this this morning.
13 This was your advice to the Minister about the decision to
14 PNG Wei Zhao. The Canadian public, I think it is fair to
15 say, understood that on the 8th of May when the Minister
16 announced that Wei Zhao was *persona non grata*, the government
17 had taken that decisive step in response to the threat to Mr.
18 Chong and his family. But what I've understood you to say
19 this morning is that it really didn't have anything to do
20 with Michael Chong and his family and the targeting, it was
21 other reasons. Have I got your evidence right about that?

22 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The evidence is that Mr.
23 Zhao Wei did not engage in foreign interference activities
24 with respect to Michael Chong. We've gone on a considerable
25 length this morning about how we deploy the tool of an
26 expulsion, and we were very comfortable after considering a
27 number of alternatives in terms of the number of people to
28 expel and who to expel, we were very comfortable expelling

1 the person we did.

2 **MR. GIB van ERT:** So we had all understood, I
3 dare say, that this was in response to the story that Michael
4 Chong and his family were being targeted, but you say no
5 actually, it wasn't in response to that, it was for other
6 reasons. That's the gist of your evidence to the
7 Commissioner; isn't it?

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes, it is.

9 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. This document that I
10 have pulled up, if you look at the second paragraph in the
11 middle, it says -- well, actually, let me just show you the
12 first paragraph. It says, "The memo outlines recommended
13 next steps". And it says:

14 "...specifically on the reported conduct of
15 an accredited...diplomat..."

16 I take reported to mean in *The Globe and*
17 *Mail*. Is that what that refers to, sir?

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm sorry, which
19 sentence?

20 **MR. GIB van ERT:** It's the second sentence in
21 the first paragraph:

22 "...specifically on the reported
23 conduct of an
24 accredited...diplomat..."

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Okay. Yes.

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes. And that report is
27 referring to the media report; right?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

1 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. And then it says:

2 "Most notably, the PRC official
3 [that] has been the subject of media
4 reports suggesting he..."

5 Conducted FI, and then it goes on. Right.

6 So -- and then let me show you paragraph 2, in the middle you
7 say this:

8 "While elements of recent media
9 reporting about Mr. Zhao's activities
10 are not accurate..."

11 And then you go on. Are you able to say what
12 elements of the reporting were inaccurate?

13 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No. What I am allowed
14 to say is that he was not expelled for foreign interference
15 with respect to Michael Chong.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. All right.

17 In your witness summaries, and you alluded to
18 it again this morning -- in fact I think Mr. Lafortune
19 referred to it as well, you described that after *The Globe*
20 reporting came out, some intelligence that had been received
21 by Global Affairs in 2021, but hadn't moved beyond the
22 working level, I believe was the phrase that was used, was
23 looked at again -- I'm not asking you to tell me what that
24 was. And the consequence of that was that it completed the
25 picture about these suspicions. Was that missing piece about
26 the activities of Michael Chan?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No.

28 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. And finally,

1 sir, if there had never been a story in *The Globe and Mail* on
2 the 1st of May, there's no reason to think that while Wei
3 Zhao would have been PNGed on the 8th of May. Isn't that
4 right?

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No, that's not correct.
6 We outlined ---

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Was it in the works
8 already?

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We outlined ---

10 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Before the story came out?

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We outlined in
12 considerable detail this morning a series of escalatory steps
13 that we were taking with China. We discussed as a department
14 months before May the possibility that this would end in the
15 expulsion of diplomats. That was the direction that it was
16 trending. The activity we were concerned about was not
17 ceasing, so all options were on the table.

18 As I testified when asked about this question
19 on direct earlier today, *The Globe* story on the 1st provided
20 us with an opportunity to do so on terms favourable to us to
21 achieve maximum impact both with China and with other
22 countries that might be watching, and we took that
23 opportunity.

24 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I just want to make sure
25 I've understood that answer.

26 So is it your evidence to the Commissioner
27 that discussions were ongoing to PNG Wei Zhao before the
28 story in *The Globe* came out?

1 Maître Choudhry.

2 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:

3 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good morning. For the
4 record, I'm Sujit Choudhry. I'm counsel to Jenny Kwan.
5 Thank you for coming today.

6 I'd like to begin with a document that Ms.
7 Chaudhury put up. It's CAN23929.

8 Great. And if we could scroll down, I hope
9 I've called the right document. If I haven't, I apologize.

10 Yes, there we go. Okay. So those
11 statistics.

12 So I just want to take you to the statistics
13 about démarche and just get you to confirm that there were 48
14 representations to the PRC at all levels on the issue of
15 foreign interference, surveillance and issues involving the
16 security of Canada. And I just want to note that that's a
17 broader category than just foreign interference.

18 And then in particular, it says there there
19 were 31 engagements, including four formal démarches on
20 foreign interference. Is that accurate?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yes. Okay.

23 Great, thank you.

24 Okay. And I just want to confirm that in
25 this particular document, you list kind of four case studies,
26 if I could, or four cases. And those are the Chinese police
27 stations, the PNG in relation to Mr. Wei, spamouflage and
28 also the events in relation to MP Chong. Is that right?

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

2 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay, good. So now I'd
3 like to go, please, to another document that Commission
4 counsel pulled up. It's CAN47008.

5 And so I want to dig into this document a
6 bit, which provides a bit more specificity about some of
7 those communicates and démarches.

8 And so the first point is just a point of
9 clarification. So this document uses the term "diplomatic
10 notes", not "démarche". I understand that "démarche" is the
11 diplomatic term of art or diplomatic note, or are those meant
12 to be distinct things?

13 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** They're distinct things.

14 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Could you explain just
15 for the record?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** A démarche can be
17 anything from a telephone call that is not just social,
18 you're actually putting across a formal message on behalf of
19 your government. It can come in a telephone call.

20 It can -- it's a little bit more serious if
21 you ask to go into the foreign ministry to make the démarche.
22 It's more serious if you make the démarche in writing. That
23 would be via a diplomatic note.

24 The level of seriousness is also determined
25 by the level at which you go in. Are you asking to talk to
26 the Director or the Director-General, the Deputy Minister?
27 So it's -- it is a diplomatic term from way back, and it has
28 a very expansive meaning.

1 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good. That's helpful.

2 So just to kind of put a point on it, so a
3 diplomatic note is a species or a subcategory of the umbrella
4 category of a démarche. Is that fair?

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Diplomatic notes are how
6 countries talk to each other ---

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure.

8 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** --- and yes, it is a
9 form of démarche. It's a formalized démarche.

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So I just wanted to note
11 that in the previous document, it described 48
12 communications, démarches, if we can use that term, and this
13 one -- this document refers to 31. And so the other 17, just
14 so we understand, were those in relation to foreign
15 interference or other issues?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'll ask my colleague
17 who's in charge of these things to respond.

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yes. Mr. Epp, please.

19 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Would it be possible to
20 scroll the document?

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure. So that's -- that
22 was in the previous -- we can pull up -- should we call up
23 the previous one?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** If you could, please.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yes, sure. It's
26 CAN23929.

27 And if we could just scroll down on that
28 document again to the summary again, that'd be great. I'd be

1 grateful.

2 Thank you.

3 There you go, sir.

4 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So I'm sorry, again, you
5 want -- the 17 ---

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah.

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** --- you're referring to ---

8 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Forty-eight (48) minus
9 31.

10 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah. So 48
11 representations, 31 on formal -- on foreign interference
12 specifically.

13 I mean, this was a point in time, and more
14 démarches have been made since, but if I understand your
15 question, you're wondering how many of them were generally
16 about foreign interference and how many of them were
17 specifically about ---

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Right.

19 **MR. WELDON EPP:** --- elements?

20 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Well, there's 48 in
21 general and there's 31 about foreign interference. I'm just
22 wondering, were the 17 others about foreign interference as
23 well, or were they about other things?

24 And if you don't know, that's fine.

25 **MR. WELDON EPP:** No. The note -- this cheat
26 sheet summarizes that they're -- the 48 representations which
27 included both formal démarches, included engagements, it
28 included dip notes, those 48 representations at all levels,

1 so that included meetings, bilateral meetings, as opposed to
2 calling the ambassador in for a démarche. It might have
3 included talking points in a meeting.

4 All 48 of those were on the issue of foreign
5 interference.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. That's helpful.

7 So then if we could just go back to the other
8 document. Sorry, Mr. Registrar -- or Madam Registrar.

9 It's -- again, it's 47008.

10 At the bottom of page 1 and onto page 2,
11 there is an itemization of particular instances of diplomatic
12 representations. And so I want to ask some questions about
13 these, and if you can't answer on the grounds of national
14 security either, please do indicate so that we can have that
15 for the record.

16 So the 17th of January, 2022, it says that
17 there was a meeting in which foreign interference that were
18 explicitly raised concerns about the activities of the United
19 Front Work Department in Canada. So I have some questions
20 about that communication.

21 Did that communication involve the activities
22 of the United Front Department using proxies in the Chinese
23 diaspora in Canada?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** That meeting, so, is a great
25 example from the list of 48 of something we wouldn't have
26 described as a démarche, but it was an engagement. It was a
27 regularly scheduled engagement or a mechanism that pre-
28 existed and hadn't been scheduled in a long time. And it was

1 a Deputy Minister level formal bilateral consultation in
2 which we spent three hours, in this case virtual because
3 COVID was still impacting travel, between our Deputy Minister
4 of Foreign Affairs at the time, Marta Morgan, and her
5 counterpart going through quite an extensive bilateral
6 agenda, of which -- of which foreign interference was put on
7 the agenda by us and in which we, at that level, raised our
8 concerns around the activity of the United Front Work
9 Department in Canada.

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I want to dig into
11 what you said about that if you can.

12 So did you raise with them specifically the
13 allegation that's now a matter of public record that the Work
14 Department worked through proxies in the Chinese diaspora in
15 Canada? Do you put that to them in that meeting?

16 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I was in the meeting. It
17 was several years ago. But to the best of my recollection,
18 our Deputy Minister did not go into that granularity, nor
19 would we have expected her to. We were making the point
20 about the agency, that particular agency of the Communist
21 Party in any sense undertaking its mandate in Canada being
22 offsites, the counterpart, our counterparts, the Chinese MFA,
23 are very familiar with how the United Front Work Department
24 goes about doing its work abroad.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** All right. Fair enough.
26 So then let's move on to the 8th of July 2022. There it says
27 that there was a meeting on the margins of the G20 in Bali
28 that raised Chinese coercive behaviour. So let's -- I want

1 to ask about that. Coercion against whom and what kind of
2 coercion? Can you please let the Commissioner know?

3 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'm trying to find it in a
4 list here.

5 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** It's at the very top of
6 the page, sir.

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** There we are. Thank you.

8 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah, sorry. The type
9 is small. If we could maybe enlarge it a bit? It's even
10 hard for me.

11 Is that easier for you?

12 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Thank you. So I was not in
13 my current role at the time, so I don't recall, but I will
14 say that we had a consistent dialogue at all levels,
15 including with our foreign ministers, to make it clear to
16 them that notwithstanding the fact that the Two Michaels had
17 returned, that the activity that had been undertaken by China
18 coercively through Canadian citizens, hostage taking
19 diplomacy, as well as through other economic coercion, which
20 was still ongoing at that time, was unacceptable. So I will
21 assume, given the talking points I have seen, that the whole
22 package, economic, hostage taking diplomacy, and therefore
23 Canada's leadership encountering that through the arbitrary
24 detention initiative would have been part of their
25 conversation.

26 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Well let's move
27 on then. So September 1st, 2022:

28 "Note Verbale delivered on

1 intimidation of Canadians,
2 interference in internal and
3 legislative process.”

4 I want to go through those point by point.
5 What precise intimidation of Canadians were discussed in this
6 Note Verbale?

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So I will not be able to
8 recall here, without reference to the document, the specifics
9 of those -- of the intimidation raised.

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** What interference in
11 internal process ---

12 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Can I maybe ---

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I'm sorry.

14 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Can I maybe help here?
15 I'll refer to the item right above the September 1st. I also
16 am not aware of the particular point raised in September 1st,
17 but I -- the DMA referred to on 31 August was me. I was
18 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time and
19 met with Ambassador Cong and it says -- that's the Chinese
20 Ambassador, for those who aren't familiar with his name, and
21 it says I spoke about foreign interference issues at the
22 particular time, and I can't name names, but there were
23 specific cases of intimidation of specific individuals in the
24 diaspora community that were raised by me as an issue of
25 unacceptable behaviour by the Government of the People's
26 Republic of China.

27 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay.

28 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So it may be that that was

1 followed up by a Note Verbale, but I can confirm that the
2 foreign interference issues raised by me were about specific
3 individuals in the diaspora.

4 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** That's helpful. Thank
5 you. Are you able to say, and if you aren't, please say so,
6 what type of intimidation you're referencing? Physical? Was
7 it economic? Are you able to provide any detail at all?

8 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I think it would probably
9 be inappropriate to provide detail, but we had been given
10 information about specific individuals who felt that they
11 were being coerced by government officials.

12 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay.

13 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** And so this was raised with
14 the Chinese Government.

15 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And so I just
16 want to note for the record that perhaps that might be
17 something the Commission wishes to follow up on in-camera.

18 So can we just go back then to the meeting on
19 the -- to the Note Verbale on September 1st? It talked about
20 interference in legislative process. Are you able to shed
21 light on what type of interference in Canada's legislative
22 process was raised in that Note Verbale?

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** No, I'd have to see the -- I
24 can't recall.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So you can't recall.
26 Okay. So and then -- so I want to talk about, in the
27 remaining time, some other specific incidents that are now a
28 matter of public record that aren't specifically referenced

1 in this document or in the previous document I showed you.

2 So the first, as you know, is that it is now
3 widely alleged that the PRC interfered in the Liberal Party
4 nomination in Don Valley North in 2019, and that has been a
5 topic of considerable interest this inquiry.

6 Can any of you tell the Commission whether
7 that particular incident has ever been raised by the
8 Government of Canada directly with the People's Republic of
9 China in one of its dozens of communications with them on
10 foreign interference?

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not aware.

12 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Not aware. Okay. Has -
13 - I also then want to turn to the incident involving ATP31
14 and the hacking of the -- or the attempted hacking of the
15 email accounts of various Senators and members of Parliament,
16 and as you can probably tell, the thread here that concerns
17 some of these questions is the issue of parliamentary
18 privilege, and so I guess the question is, has the Government
19 of Canada and any one of these dozens of communications with
20 the People's Republic of China ever raised the issue of the
21 APT31 attack against members of IPAC?

22 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Well what I can say, I
23 can't speak to whether it was raised at different occasions,
24 but I can say the one that you're referencing in 2021, at
25 that time, the -- we've already referred to the cyber
26 attribution framework. It was not initiated. GAC was not
27 involved in that. So at that time, again, you'd have to ask
28 others for the specifics. I understand that perhaps we spoke

1 earlier of the impact, so I think there was the attempt, but
2 I'm not sure on the actual impact of that. And so at that
3 time, Global Affairs was not involved in it.

4 However, we have continued, of course,
5 engagements and discussions in the community, in the cyber
6 community, about APT31.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure. So just maybe I
8 can finish up on this, because I'm almost out of time. So if
9 I understand your evidence correctly, at the time that the
10 APT31 attack happened, GAC didn't yet have this framework in
11 place regarding public attribution. I understand that. But
12 what I'm wondering is, was GAC not made aware by CSIS, and we
13 have evidence that CSIS was aware in 2021 of this attack,
14 that this attack could be attributed to APT31?

15 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So in fact, the attribution
16 framework was in place, but it wasn't triggered.

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I see.

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, if there's a
19 department that wants to initiate the attribution framework,
20 any of the departments can initiate it. At that time, GAC
21 was not asked to initiate the attribution framework.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And then one last
23 question about that, if I could. So I think the issue is not
24 so much the public attribution, it's whether this issue was
25 nonetheless privately raised with the People's Republic of
26 China at any point by the Government of Canada? And if you
27 can't -- if you don't know, then that's -- please just state
28 that for the record.

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I would say that to the
2 extent that I was involved and others more senior to me were
3 involved, the issues that we routinely raised had to do with
4 police stations, spy balloons, and the behaviour of
5 diplomats. So I cannot say we never raised cyber, but I'm
6 not aware of -- I certainly didn't.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Good. Thank you
8 for your time. Thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.
10 Counsel for Erin O'Toole.

11 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Hi, Commissioner. My
12 questions with respect to RRM were addressed yesterday or
13 during Commission counsel's examination. Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.
15 Human Rights Coalition.

16 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SARAH TEICH:**

17 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Good afternoon. Can we
18 please pull up CAN7791_0001? Thank you.

19 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN007791 0001:**

20 Annex 2 - Summary of GAC Authorities
21 as it relates to Foreign Interference

22 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** This is a summary of Global
23 Affairs Canada authorities related to foreign interference.

24 I'm actually going to refer to this document
25 throughout my questions until almost the very end, so Madam
26 Court Operator, please feel free to just keep it on the
27 screen.

28 I'm going to take you through this document

1 and ask you some questions about these authorities to better
2 understand what's available and what has been done in
3 relation to numerous diaspora communities.

4 I'm going to start towards the bottom, so if
5 we can please scroll down to bullet 5, which is at the bottom
6 of page 2?

7 This section discusses the *Special Economic*
8 *Measures Act*. Now as this section notes, *SEMA* does not make
9 specific mention of foreign interference, but it's included
10 here because sanctions are part of the toolkit that GAC uses
11 to respond to malicious behaviour. And, of course, there are
12 other sanction regimes not included in this document. The
13 *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act*,
14 otherwise known as the Sergei Magnitsky Law and the *United*
15 *Nations Act*; is that right?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

17 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Since the sanctions that
18 were previously imposed on Eritrea under the *United Nations*
19 *Act* were lifted several years ago, there are currently no
20 sanctions on Eritrean human rights violators; is that right?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I have no knowledge.

22 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Does anyone have knowledge
23 to answer that question?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No.

25 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Given what we heard
26 in diaspora panels earlier this week from Ghezae Hagos Berhe
27 of the Eritrean community about ongoing repression by the
28 Eritrean regime both at home and abroad, including in Canada,

1 do you think it would be valuable to have sanctions on gross
2 human rights violators from the Eritrean regime?

3 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That would be a question
4 for the political level to decide. I will say that it has
5 not come across my radar screen in the two years that I've
6 been on the job.

7 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. We heard earlier
8 this week from Sieru Kebede of the Tigrayan community that
9 both the Ethiopian and the Eritrean governments launched, and
10 I'll quote,

11 "...extensive propaganda campaigns,
12 making it difficult for people to
13 grasp the true extent of the crisis
14 in Tigray." (As read)

15 Similar accounts of mis- and disinformation
16 were shared by Mr. Hagos Berhe. Now the last sentence here
17 under bullet number five indicates that,

18 "The *Special Economics Measures Act*
19 has been used to respond to the
20 participation in or support the
21 information manipulation
22 campaigns..." (As read)

23 And it says in brackets "(i.e. Russian
24 invasion of Ukraine)". Would the *Special Economic Measures*
25 *Act* not by the same logic be useful to respond to the
26 perpetration of information manipulation by the Ethiopian
27 and/or Eritrean governments?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** This is a very heavy

1 tool. It involves regulation, so it's not something that is
2 done routinely, if I can put it that way. There is a tool
3 we're using increasingly frequently, particularly with
4 respect to Russia and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Iran. It
5 is -- I wouldn't say a tool of last resort, but it's a heavy,
6 heavy tool, if you look at what we tried to say earlier today
7 about the diplomatic toolkit. We begin with démarches and
8 other kinds of engagement. So I think I'll take the spirit
9 of your question to be, you know, is there more that can be
10 done. And I'm sure there is. It would be a leap of -- a
11 considerable leap to jump straight to sanctions.

12 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Can we jump back up
13 on this document to point number one? And that's the Crown
14 prerogative. Bullet one, page one. Thank you.

15 Given what we heard again earlier this week
16 from Mr. Hagos Berhe about the Eritrean Consulate's
17 involvement in foreign interference in transnational
18 repression, do you think it would be valuable to use one or
19 more of these powers in relation to the Eritrean Consulate or
20 Consular officials?

21 And you can actually scroll down a bit. I'm
22 referring to the bullet points under links to foreign
23 interference. Any one of these powers.

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think that the
25 principle to keep in mind here is that we are, as a
26 government -- or the government, and we as an administration
27 are evolving our toolkit that -- to deal with all kinds of
28 foreign interference across the country, perpetrated by

1 whoever is engaging in it. I think a benefit of this process
2 is that it is throwing additional light on transnational
3 repression. And in my ending remarks right before lunchtime,
4 I deliberately said that I think two issues that require
5 further attention are artificial intelligence enabled mis-
6 and disinformation as a growing threat to Canada, and the
7 other one is transnational repression. We know a range of
8 countries engage in it. The ones that we know the most about
9 are the ones that have been summarized in the country
10 summaries that form a part of this process. We don't know as
11 much I think as we should about the scale and the scope. And
12 I think this -- the testimony of the people you've mentioned
13 and others have -- has helped our system understand where it
14 needs to focus more.

15 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Now I'm going to
16 switch text for a moment and ask you about the People's
17 Republic of China, in particular, what's been done to respond
18 to their repression of Hongkongers, Tibetan speakers and
19 Falon Gong practitioners. Can we please scroll back down to
20 bullet number five? So back to the *Special Economic Measures*
21 Act. So I understand that the *Special Economic Measures Act*
22 has been used to respond to gross and systematic human rights
23 violations committed in China, and that's happened through
24 the passage of the *SEMA* China Regulations; is that right?

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

26 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** And that was passed in 2021
27 and included in the schedule to the Regulations four
28 individuals and one entity; is that right?

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

2 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** The named individuals and
3 one entity were included in response to their human rights
4 violations committed against Uyghurs; right?

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

6 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** No individuals or entities
7 have been sanctioned in response to human rights violations
8 committed against Falon Gong practitioners; is that right?

9 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

10 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** No individuals or entities
11 have been sanctioned in response to human rights violations
12 committed against Hongkongers; is that right?

13 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

14 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** And finally, no individuals
15 or entities have been sanctioned in response to human rights
16 violations committed against Tibetans; is that right?

17 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

18 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Would it be valuable to
19 include in the schedule to the *SEMA* China Regulations
20 individuals and entities with responsibility for gross human
21 rights violations committed against these groups?

22 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Again, that is a
23 question that ultimately the political level would decide
24 upon. I've already given an answer to suggest that this is a
25 tool that is used much more sparingly than the regular tools
26 of diplomacy being dialogue, engagement, formal meetings,
27 informal meetings. I was in Beijing in April to have a full
28 set of bilateral consultations, and we went through the range

1 of our foreign -- of our human rights concerns with the
2 country, including with respect to all of the areas that you
3 just mentioned. My point is it's a leap from there all the
4 way to using the *SEMA* Regulation.

5 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Moving on to bullet
6 -- well, what should be six, presumably, but it's listed here
7 under one, *Export and Import Permits Act*. This provides
8 Canada, as it notes,

9 "..."with an additional mechanism for
10 controlling trade of arms and dual-
11 use goods."

12 And then under the subheading links to
13 foreign interference, this notes that this can,

14 "...reduce the risk that goods and
15 technologies could be leveraged by
16 foreign powers to conduct foreign
17 interference activities targeting
18 Canada or its likeminded partners."

19 (As read)

20 Can this Act also be used to control the
21 imports of technology that can be leveraged by foreign powers
22 to conduct foreign interference activities?

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I don't know. I've --
24 my personal experience with it has always been on the export
25 control side, so I don't know its applicability to the import
26 regime.

27 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Well, I'll assume
28 for a moment -- let's assume for a moment that it can do

1 that. Would it be valuable, in your opinion, to have import
2 controls in place to control imports from surveillance
3 technology companies linked to the PRC?

4 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That's highly
5 speculative. I -- you know, exports and imports are the
6 result of decisions taken by private sector entities, so I
7 don't think we have an import control regime that I'm aware
8 of that could be used in this set of circumstances. So I
9 entirely sympathize with the intent of your question, but I'm
10 not certain we have the appropriate instrument.

11 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Just going a bit
12 further with my example here, would you agree that if
13 technology from PRC linked surveillance technology companies
14 were to be used in Canadian government buildings, this would
15 constitute a national security risk?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think Canada has
17 become increasingly mindful of the risks associated with
18 certain technologies that are -- that come from China. And I
19 think everyone knows the example of our decision -- the
20 government's decision on 5G and the implications that that
21 had.

22 So I do believe that in a world of just
23 looking at the decisions the United States is taking on
24 things like cranes, and perhaps electric vehicles, there is
25 bound to be more of a discussion about the link between the
26 import of some technologies and national security concerns in
27 the future than there has been in the past.

28 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Maybe I could also

1 add too, that there are national security provisions around
2 government procurement. That's not in the purview of Global
3 Affairs Canada, but that is another area where there is an
4 opportunity to exercise due diligence about the kinds of
5 things that would, for instance, come into government
6 buildings.

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** May I add something, just to
8 compliment a question you had earlier on your import
9 question? There is a piece of legislation that enables us to
10 ban the import of certain products and that is actually the
11 *Special Economic Measures Act*. So under certain
12 circumstances, a certain regime and set of regulations can
13 target certain goods, specific goods coming from certain
14 countries. And it's for example, what we've done with
15 banning the import of Russian diamonds.

16 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Thank you. Does
17 anyone else have anything to add on this question? Okay,
18 we'll move on.

19 We heard from Katpana Nagendra as part of the
20 diaspora panels earlier this week, that it is and I'll quote:

21 "...imperative that Canada takes
22 decisive actions to hold the Sri
23 Lankan government accountable..."

24 Ms. Nagendra stated that:

25 "The Sri Lankan government's ongoing
26 interference in the lives of Tamil
27 Canadians will only cease once they
28 are held fully accountable...As long

1 as they continue to operate with
2 impunity, feeling shielded from
3 repercussions for their war crimes,
4 human rights violations, they will
5 persist in using intimidation tactics
6 against Tamil activists in Canada.”

7 She stated that:

8 “The fact that they believe they are
9 getting away with their crimes
10 emboldens them to target those who
11 oppose their actions and advocate for
12 justice.”

13 One of the mechanisms she recommended be used
14 our sanctions laws. In 2023, as I understand it, Canada
15 passed the Special Economic Measures Sri Lanka Regulations
16 and added to the schedule to those regulations for Sri Lankan
17 individuals. Is that right?

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

19 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Given the continued need to
20 provide justice for Tamil victims and survivors, as we heard
21 from Ms. Nagendra, would it be valuable to include additional
22 individuals and entities in the schedule to these
23 regulations?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I’m going to turn to my
25 Sri Lanka expert.

26 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think it’s a valid
27 question. I understand the spirit of it. I think to
28 understand there is an ongoing assessment process and

1 dialogue. That dialogue includes interlocutors from Canadian
2 society, diaspora, human right experts. But it also includes
3 our dialogue with the Sri Lankan government.

4 There was recent elections. That country has
5 been very much hit and has had to step back with respect to
6 its economic stability. And so, the effectiveness of
7 additional sanctions as a tool towards moving that country
8 towards more comprehensive reconciliation would be assessed
9 on an ongoing basis.

10 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay.

11 Can we please pull up HRC126? I'm finally
12 done with this document.

13 **--- EXHIBIT No. HRC0000126:**

14 Opinion: Cuba's authoritarian a
15 threat to democracy

16 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** This is an opinion piece
17 written by myself and Michael Lima. It was published in *The*
18 *Hub* on July 13th, 2022. And this piece opens with
19 discussions about authoritarian alliances, and I'll just draw
20 your attention to the second sentence for now, just still on
21 Page 1, I believe, if you could scroll down a little bit.
22 Oh, sorry, a little bit up, still on page 1. We write:

23 "A collaboration between autocrats
24 makes them stronger, and more
25 effective at surveilling, isolating,
26 and persecuting human rights
27 defenders."

28 We then go on to discuss two such alliance,

1 the alliance between Cuba and China, and the alliance between
2 Cuba and Russia. What has Global Affairs done in response to
3 Cuba's authoritarianism and its links to other autocratic
4 regimes, such as China and Russia, that are engaging in
5 repression including transnational repression?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Canada has an active
7 engagement with Cuba and has had that in an uninterrupted way
8 since the 1950s. The relationship has gone through ups and
9 downs. It's well known that Canada was alone in the
10 hemisphere other than Mexico, not to break relations with
11 Cuba following the revolution in 1961.

12 It is an area where we differ from our large
13 neighbor to the South. One of the reasons that -- or one of
14 the benefits to having stayed in Cuba all these years is that
15 we can engage in an open and very frank discussion with the
16 Cubans on issues of human rights. And I here in particular,
17 point to the prisoners that are the folks that were locked
18 up, I believe in the summer of 2020 or 2021 after protesting.

19 So we engage on issues of human rights with
20 Cuba at all opportunities, and I have personally conducted
21 the kind of bilateral consultations as we call them, with
22 Cuba on a number of occasions at my senior counterpart level.
23 And we also discuss their relations with other authoritarian
24 states like Russia, like Venezuela, and like China. There's
25 a limit to our influence, but the channels of diplomacy are
26 very much open.

27 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay.

28 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Can I add a word to the

1 Deputy's response?

2 With respect to China, I think in my
3 testimony earlier this morning we talked about how the
4 government updated its China framework. One thing I didn't
5 mention in the morning was that in that process the
6 Government of Canada reinvested in expanding our capacity to
7 work on Canadian interests that are impacted by China.

8 That meant additional capacity at GAC among
9 others, and one of the ways that capacity has been used is to
10 focus on China's global impact, including in the "global
11 south" including in the hemisphere. And we've done that in a
12 number of ways, but the key link to your question is through
13 training our heads of mission going to Cuba, but going to
14 anywhere in the world, in making sure that their political
15 officers are plugged in and know where to get information,
16 know what sort of trends, trend lines, kind of impact they
17 were concerned about, to report on.

18 We're in a learning -- as a learning
19 organization we are in the process of reinvesting in looking
20 not only China's impact on Canada-China, but also China's
21 impact on Cuba and our interests around the world, to your
22 point.

23 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. If we can scroll
24 down to page 9? We write here:

25 "Besides Cuba's key authoritarian
26 alliances with Russia and China, the
27 Cuban regime has a disastrous record
28 of human rights abuses. Cuba is one

1 of the oldest dictatorships in the
2 world, and the regime has
3 increasingly cracked down on human
4 rights defenders. Following the July
5 2021 pro-democratic protests, the
6 Cuban regime jailed so many political
7 prisoners that it now has more
8 arbitrarily detained than Venezuela
9 and Nicaragua combined."

10 Given these gross and systematic human rights
11 violations, in particular the longstanding nature of them,
12 why is it that you think -- why is it that you believe that
13 this different approach to Cuba I'll call it, as opposed to
14 China, continues to make sense if there doesn't seem to have
15 been much improvement?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not certain we have
17 a different approach to Cuba than we do to China. We are in
18 both cases concerned at the nature of their governance. We
19 have made no secret about that. But as I tried to say in the
20 beginning of my direct testimony, the essence of diplomacy is
21 being able to have a dialogue with countries even when you
22 don't agree with them.

23 So we don't agree with some of the things
24 that Cuba does. I already mentioned the detention of
25 protesters that took place in the summer of 2021, and we
26 don't agree with many of the things that China does. But the
27 channels of diplomacy are open, and we believe that's the
28 best way to serve Canada's interests.

1 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. And just to confirm,
2 there are no targeted sanctions against Cuban human rights
3 violators at present; right?

4 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That is correct.

5 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. No further
6 questions.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

8 We'll take a 15 minutes' break. We'll come
9 back at 4:00.

10 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

11 This sitting of the Commission is now in
12 recess until 4:00 p.m.

13 --- Upon recessing at 3:47 p.m./

14 --- Upon resuming at 4:07 p.m./

15 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

16 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
17 Commission is now back in session.

18 The time is 4:07 p.m.

19 --- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed:

20 --- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed:

21 --- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed:

22 --- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed:

23 --- MR. WELDON CARL EPP, Resumed:

24 --- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed:

25 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Singh for the Sikh
26 Coalition.

27 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. PRABJOT SINGH:

28 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you, Commissioner,

1 and to the panellists as well. My name is Prabjot Singh for
2 the Sikh Coalition.

3 Mr. Epp, I'm going to direct most of my
4 questions to yourself, as you're the ADM for the Indo-
5 Pacific, but I welcome your colleagues, Mr. Morrison or
6 anybody else, to definitely jump in if you have anything to
7 add.

8 And just from the outset, I want to note, I
9 don't think there will be many, but there might be a couple
10 of questions where I anticipate we might be kind of entering
11 some territory where we're talking about some national
12 security sensitive information that we can't share in a
13 public setting. If you can just flag that you're not able to
14 answer, that -- and let Madam Commissioner know, if she needs
15 to follow up, she can do that, and we can move on from there.

16 So I'm not trying to trick you or trip you up
17 or anything like that.

18 So Mr. Epp, the Commission has heard from a
19 number of witnesses from the security and intelligence
20 community over the past week who have discussed India's
21 foreign interference tactics and objectives. So just to kind
22 of situate ourselves, is it fair to say that India engages in
23 disinformation, electoral interference, transnational
24 repression and other forms of foreign interference activity?

25 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd say it's fair to say
26 India engages in diverse forms through diverse vectors of
27 foreign interference. I won't say yes to all of those
28 individually, but ---

1 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Yeah, that's fair.

2 And in terms of India's objectives, it's
3 seeking to counter what it perceives as anti-India activities
4 that take place in Canada and is trying to influence Canadian
5 officials to adopt pro-India policy positions. Is that fair?

6 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd say that's partially
7 fair. I think we do also see evidence of India undertaking
8 activity that crosses the line from influence into
9 interference with respect to its interests vis-à-vis its
10 neighbour, Pakistan.

11 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you for that
12 clarification. And so we saw a SITE report -- and I can pull
13 it up if it's helpful for you, but my comment ---

14 **MR. WELDON EPP:** That would be great.

15 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** --- or my question is
16 kind of vague. In general terms, India seeks to use foreign
17 interference tactics in certain scenarios where it amplifies
18 a singular narrative or hammers home consistent messaging to
19 pursue its interests; is that fair?

20 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think it's fair to say
21 that that's one of the tactics that it uses, yes.

22 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And when we talk about
23 countering activities by diaspora communities, we saw a SITE
24 report that cited the farmers' protest in 2021 and lawful
25 advocacy for Khalistan as specific examples of diaspora
26 community activities that India seeks to counter through its
27 foreign interference. Is that fair?

28 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think that is one of the

1 examples. I don't know if you did want to pull up the SITE
2 report, ---

3 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure.

4 **MR. WELDON EPP:** --- it'll help.

5 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** CAN47436, and we can
6 scroll down to page 7.

7 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN047436:**

8 Key Points for SITE Briefing to
9 Political Parties

10 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Thank you.

11 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** I just want to kind of
12 situate India's foreign interference activities with these
13 two examples.

14 If you see in that first bullet point, or
15 well I guess the first sub-bullet, towards the end it talks
16 about agricultural -- or protests against agricultural
17 reforms, "...in late 2021 and lawful advocacy for issues such
18 as an independent Khalistan."

19 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah, and I think if I might
20 add more than just a sort of a straight-up yes, I think what
21 we have seen is that -- and I think it's important to situate
22 that India's perspective on the activities of some of these
23 diaspora communities is so fundamentally different from ours.
24 It comes from a particular national security construct, and
25 many of the decision-makers in India who direct their foreign
26 policy, their national policy, but also agencies that conduct
27 activity, including transnational repression, were formed
28 during a period when this was a real hot conflict on their

1 soil.

2 And so when they see activities in foreign
3 countries, including Canada, by these groups they look at it
4 very differently than we do. We look at it within the
5 construct of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, the
6 ability of Canadians of all backgrounds to be able to express
7 their opinions, and be safe in doing so, and that's where --
8 exactly where we start to see lines being crossed.

9 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Yeah, thank you for that,
10 that context is helpful. India is looking at a lot of these
11 issues and activities from a national security lens and
12 targeting them for a securitized response, whereas Canada
13 sees a lot of these activities as fundamental *Charter* Rights
14 that are protected in Canada; correct?

15 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think that's a fair
16 characterization.

17 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

18 If we can bring up COMM149, and go to page 34
19 of the PDF?

20 **--- EXHIBIT No. COM0000149:**

21 NSICOP - Special report into the
22 allegations associated with Prime
23 Minister Trudeau's official visit to
24 India in February 2018

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** I just want to take you
26 back to the Prime Minister's 2018 trip to India. Looking at
27 the NSICOP Report, and so right there we see paragraph 73 and
28 74; that's dealing with NSIA Daniel Jean's media briefing at

1 that time to counter disinformation in kind of live time.

2 So paragraph 73 towards the end there talks
3 about how the NSIA determined there was a:

4 "...high probability of an
5 orchestrated disinformation campaign
6 to [target] Canada..."

7 And the next paragraph goes on to talk about
8 he attempted:

9 "...to counter what he believed [was]
10 orchestrated efforts to fabricate a
11 false narrative,..."

12 Does that correspond with your understanding
13 of some of the issues that came up during that trip?

14 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I can answer it indirectly.
15 I was in China, in Shanghai at the time; not in my current
16 role, not dealing with India. But what I can tell you is
17 that the reported concerns here, the experience that Canada
18 had with that kind of an all -- like, a full-court press
19 disinformation campaign. That was not the only time. And as
20 the Deputy mentioned earlier with respect to Canada's
21 experience in our bilateral relations with India just in the
22 last year, we have seen similar orchestrated disinformation
23 campaigns.

24 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Are you able to elaborate
25 on any of those orchestrated disinformation campaigns?

26 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Well, I mean, just to be
27 quite precise I think that we saw a very obvious and
28 noticeable uptick in disinformation directed at the Prime

1 Minister, and at Canada generally, in and around the timing
2 of the statements that the Prime Minister made in Parliament
3 last year.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And a lot of those
5 messages, again, similar to the 2018 kind of example,
6 targeted the Prime Minister specifically as sympathizing with
7 aspirations for Khalistan, trying to tie the Sikh community
8 and the Canadian government as supposedly sympathizing with
9 allegations of extremism, what they see as a national
10 security threat; is that fair?

11 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Again, I think it's fair to
12 say that the character of the -- and the content of these
13 disinformation campaigns -- and by the way, India has, let's
14 just say, a formidable capacity to work with its national
15 media to undertake these campaigns, not just against Canada
16 but against other, say, neighbouring countries, et cetera.
17 That part is not new. And what's also not new is that their
18 motivation in doing this is, as you put it, very much driven
19 by a securitized national security construct. It's
20 consistent with the visit in 2018; it's consistent with what
21 we're experiencing now.

22 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And so when we're talking
23 about these orchestrated disinformation campaigns,
24 specifically as they pertain to diaspora communities, the
25 Sikh community specifically, that's tied to these allegations
26 of extremism or terrorism, would you agree that the impacts
27 on a very highly visible minority being tied to allegations
28 of extremism and this prejudicial biases around this

1 narrative, would have the impact of really alienating them
2 from public life in certain ways?

3 **MR. WELDON EPP:** What I would say, and I'm
4 saying this as a Canadian, as an individual, not from a GAC
5 perch, insofar as GAC's mandate is not to have that dialogue,
6 not to have those consultations; that's the domain of Public
7 Safety and some of those partners to better understand the
8 impact of these kind of campaigns on the security,
9 domestically, in Canada of Canadians. We leave that to our
10 partners. But I would say that I'm absolutely sympathetic to
11 Canadians of any heritage who would come under a sustained
12 misinformation campaign.

13 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And so going a step
14 further beyond misinformation campaigns, we heard from RCMP
15 witnesses yesterday that their Indian counterparts often
16 bring information to the attention of the RCMP, pressuring
17 them to prosecute residents and citizens of Canada for
18 engaging in activity that's protected by the Charter because
19 they see it as criminal activity. And I would imagine in
20 your role as ADM of Indo-Pacific, interacting with your
21 Indian counterparts, you would see similar requests
22 pertaining to extradition or other examples as well?

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Listen, we've had many
24 conversations, as your question frames, diplomatically with
25 our Indian counterparts around how to ensure that legitimate
26 bilateral cooperation on matters of transnational crime,
27 extremism, terrorism, that those conversations can happen,
28 and where appropriate that our justice departments and our

1 colleagues from policing can share information, again when
2 it's appropriate and when it meets the threshold of Canadian
3 law, such that we can cooperate on dealing with transnational
4 crime.

5 And I would add, any country with which we
6 have bilateral relations and from which we have a community
7 of almost 2 million Canadians who count their heritage as
8 linked to that country, just by sheer numbers we can assume
9 there will be some bad elements, some transnational crime.
10 And so it's really important to have credible lawful
11 bilateral tools that work. And I would say in this regard
12 that while it often gets overlooked, including by our Indian
13 counterparts, there have been occasions where our extradition
14 treaty with India has been used because in our ongoing
15 dialogue and our ongoing working groups between the RCMP and
16 their counterparts, between our departments of justice, the
17 evidence that's been provided has met Canadian evidentiary
18 thresholds.

19 I would say that's been more an exception
20 than the rule. It has often been the case that the Indian
21 side will share information that may be useful in an Indian
22 court of law, in terms of prosecuting behaviour that,
23 frankly, in Canada might be lawful, but unless it meets the
24 evidentiary threshold in Canada, our Department of Justice
25 simply can't move on it. So we have an ongoing dialogue, and
26 even in my short time in this particular role, there have
27 been discussions bilaterally, both between our MFAs, but also
28 between the line departments.

1 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** And I think -- just one
2 quick rider on that.

3 We have an ongoing dialogue with Indian
4 personnel here and in Delhi on everything Weldon just
5 mentioned, but also on Canada's commitment to free speech.
6 And the term that is often used is "awful but lawful".

7 There are things that many of us would prefer
8 not to see, but they are protected by the *Charter*, and so
9 things that are criminal in India are legal here. And that
10 is the subject of much back and forth between the Government
11 of India and our own government as we try to explain our
12 values and our realities.

13 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. That's very
14 helpful.

15 And so just to kind of, I think, summarize,
16 it's your position, Mr. Epp and Mr. Morrison, that Canada's
17 tools of legal cooperation, prosecution, criminal
18 investigation cannot be misused by foreign states to target
19 *Charter* protected speech and activities; fair?

20 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think that's fair.

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

22 So I'm going to shift gears and talk a little
23 bit about GAC's response to foreign interference now. And I
24 want to specifically take you back to 2017.

25 I'm going to suggest to you that in 2017,
26 CSIS observed a highly sophisticated and active intelligence
27 network that was being developed in Ottawa and Vancouver that
28 was getting quite aggressive targeting the Sikh community and

1 when CSIS approached its partners, including GAC officials,
2 because it wanted to engage in threat reduction measures to
3 counter this network, a number of officials, including the
4 GAC representative, encouraged CSIS to pull back. And as a
5 result, CSIS scaled down its intervention and virtually left
6 that Vancouver network in place without any disruption.

7 Is that something that you're able to confirm
8 publicly today?

9 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I wouldn't be able to
10 confirm. I have no knowledge of that. That pre-dates my
11 time anywhere close to this file.

12 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Mr. Morrison, are you
13 able to confirm any details around that?

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I've never heard of this
15 incident and I'm not aware that we have any documents.

16 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure. If we can bring up
17 TSC14, please.

18 **--- EXHIBIT No. TSC0000014:**

19 Indian Consulate networks targeting
20 Sikhs in Vancouver continued
21 "unabated" when Ottawa gutted CSIS
22 probe in 2017: top secret record

23 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So this is a media report
24 from September 2023, last year. And if we just scroll down
25 near the bottom.

26 So this is by Sam Cooper, who reviewed the
27 2019 NSICOP annual report, and he reported on -- if you keep
28 scrolling down.

1 Right. If you go a little bit -- yeah, a
2 little bit higher.

3 Right there is totally fine.

4 So he reports on seeing an unredacted version
5 of the report and talks about this intelligence network and
6 CSIS's intentions to engage in threat reduction measures and
7 the reasons for why it was pulled back.

8 So specifically, if you see kind of where
9 that blue line is where there's a pull-out quote, it talks
10 about the potential for a GAC representative in those
11 discussions to inform senior Indian diplomats about the
12 network, and then quotes the 2019 NSICP report, stating, "For
13 its part, Global Affairs did not raise Mr. Singh's
14 activities". Mr. Singh is referring to the intelligence
15 operative:

16 "...to senior Indian diplomats...
17 because it had concerns that
18 preparations for the PM's trip to
19 Indian were reaching a critical point
20 and may be negatively affected by
21 such an intervention."

22 So my question is, are you confirm that GAC
23 pulled out from this because of the potential diplomatic
24 consequences, but it doesn't seem like you're able to talk
25 about that fact scenario?

26 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd like to make the point
27 which is that not in any way to speculate, but to speak to
28 our own experience, is that to the testimony from this

1 morning, the decision on when to use what kind of diplomatic
2 tool to send a signal, to try to discourage or defeat foreign
3 interference is context specific and has to balance other
4 vectors for doing so.

5 So for example, it may have been the case and
6 certainly, on my time in the file, we sometimes look to
7 ensure that senior level meetings -- in this case we're
8 talking about the Prime Minister, but it could be by Minister
9 -- do go forward such that we can use that opportunity to
10 raise those very issues at a senior level.

11 It's one thing to raise it at the level of an
12 ADM. It's more effective to cut through interagency,
13 reporting up and not. You know, when you're going straight
14 to a foreign Minister or a Minister for Interior Affairs or
15 the Prime Minister, you're landing your point and you're
16 getting it across.

17 We sometimes will choose to save those issues
18 for a summit meeting or for a bilateral, and so we'll always
19 be weighing what's our actual intended outcome and what's
20 effective at that point in time given the context.

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

22 If we could bring up COM15 ---

23 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** So many questions
24 about the different measures.

25 I'll switch in English. I see you don't have
26 your translation, so.

27 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. I really
28 appreciate that.

1 I apologize.

2 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** That's not an issue.
3 Just teaching you a little bit of French here.

4 I basically just want to give you an idea
5 about what is the role of Global Affairs Canada when it comes
6 to CSIS threat reduction measures. It's a little bit
7 different than how we are picturing here.

8 Basically, Global Affairs Canada, when it
9 comes to a CSIS threat reduction measure, its role is to
10 participate in what we call the risk assessment process. So
11 CSIS has various pillars. They're looking at all their
12 activity and they need to calculate the risk, whether it's
13 reputational, legal. And of course, the pillar is called the
14 foreign policy risk assessment, so this is where Global
15 Affairs Canada comes into that situation.

16 So if a TRM is proposed that has a nexus with
17 foreign policy, we will do a foreign policy risk assessment.

18 Should the risk of any of those pillars is
19 deemed to be less than high, then the approval will rest with
20 CSIS. Global Affairs Canada only have a role in approving or
21 not a threat reduction measure only once. One of those
22 pillars is deemed high, and that point the Deputy Ministers
23 or Minister of Foreign Affairs needs to approve, as well as
24 the Minister of Public Safety, the TRM to go forward itself.
25 So it's only in that type of situation.

26 Now, I was not in my position at that time of
27 that risk, but I do not recall any documents that indicate
28 that such TRM was reached in those years of a high level.

1 And that would have been the only moment where Global Affairs
2 Canada could have -- would have been required to approve the
3 TRM in order to go forward.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you for that.

5 And Madam Commissioner, I see that I'm
6 getting close to my time. If I could ask for indulgence for
7 another three minutes, I think it's a really incisive and
8 important ---

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** For three minutes, you
10 can go ahead.

11 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

12 If you could pull up COM155.

13 **--- EXHIBIT No. COM0000155:**

14 NSICOP - Annual Report 2019

15 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So I just want to pull
16 up the public redacted version of the 2019 report just
17 because as we're discussing, you know, everybody on the
18 panel, from what I surmise, was not in your respective roles
19 at that time. I'm not privy to the information that's in the
20 unredacted report, so all we're kind of -- we're looking at
21 trying to see what we have access to in the public domain and
22 try to understand better what decisions were made at
23 different points.

24 If we can go to page 122 of the PDF, please,
25 paragraphs 283 and 284.

26 So this report goes into -- yeah, right there
27 is totally fine.

28 So this report goes into specific examples in

1 Russia and China, and one example that's completely redacted
2 that I would suggest is pertaining to India, that reviews
3 interference efforts as well as Canada's response mechanisms.

4 So I'm going to draw your attention to
5 paragraph 283.

6 Mr. Epp, if you can see the middle there
7 towards the righthand side, it says, "For example". Do you
8 see that there?

9 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yes.

10 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Are you able to read that
11 section into the record for me and give my throat a little
12 bit of a break?

13 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Just the one sentence?

14 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Just the -- from "For
15 example, GAC's mandate" all the way till the end of that
16 paragraph.

17 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. I'd be happy to.

18 "For example, GAC's mandate is to
19 represent Canada's interests abroad.
20 Among other things, it is responsible
21 for managing diplomatic relations,
22 addressing consular issues and
23 promoting international trade. It
24 also possesses and implements the
25 majority of Canada's tools to respond
26 to foreign interference, a threat
27 that manifests itself in a domestic
28 context."

1 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

2 And I want to pick up from there. On
3 paragraph 284, the members who drafted the report continue in
4 saying that:

5 "In short, GAC is on the foreign
6 policy end of a domestic security
7 problem. Its leadership on
8 determining if and how to respond to
9 foreign interference means that
10 foreign policy considerations, which
11 are often clear and immediate [and it
12 gives a redacted example] will take
13 precedence over considerations of
14 domestic harms, which are often vague
15 and long term..."

16 So I just want to flag that as this is the --
17 for individuals who were cleared to actually assess and
18 review the details of that specific situation, this is the
19 conclusion they came to.

20 And in terms of those examples that are
21 redacted there, it talks about importing a commodity from
22 Canada and it also talks about a state's activities which
23 undermine free speech. I want to suggest that the example
24 there is referring to India agreeing to import canola, and on
25 the inverse of that, is acknowledging how India's targeting
26 of the Sikh community undermined free speech. I imagine
27 you're not able to confirm that?

28 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'm not able to confirm it,

1 but I would say, with respect, it's not that -- your
2 synthesis and conclusion from that paragraph has not been my
3 experience working at GAC. That's not the calculus through
4 which we as a department, together with domestic partners,
5 reach decisions about the variety of tools we use and when we
6 use them. It's not that one interest automatically trumps
7 others. So I would in any case, not reach the conclusion
8 that's implied here, with respect to the authors.

9 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Okay. But for the
10 members who were privy to those details, that is the
11 conclusion that they did draw. I'd be really curious to
12 delve into it, but I'm really running out of time now.

13 So I just want to end is this, as we're
14 looking back at India's foreign interference activities that
15 have clearly escalated, and you have alluded to that they
16 have been consistently problematic on a number of fronts over
17 the past years. We're looking at a situation where a foreign
18 state last year assassinated a Canadian citizen on Canadian
19 soil because of his political views.

20 And I want to ask and put it to you that in
21 doing, kind of taking stock internally as members of GAC, has
22 there been any internal review or reflection on steps that
23 could have been taken earlier to avoid us getting the
24 situation where India was so emboldened to take that kind of
25 a step? You know, should Indian foreign interference have
26 been a public conversation and acknowledged publicly much
27 earlier? Were there other examples of interventions or
28 diplomatic interventions that could have taken place earlier?

1 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I would say my ability to
2 answer that question is very much limited by the fact that I
3 cannot state the conclusion you have, as the RCMP
4 investigations continue to be underway. Diplomacy also
5 continues to be underway, but until those investigations are
6 done, we have allegations based on intelligence, there is
7 diplomacy, there are investigations, there's been no verdict
8 on the involvement of the Indian government. So we are
9 waiting for the RCMP to continue their work.

10 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.
11 Madam Commissioner, if I can ask one final
12 follow up?

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Really final, if it's a
14 short one.

15 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Yes, this is the last
16 one.

17 Mr. Morrison or Mr. Epp, do you have any
18 comments you can share to shed some light for Madam
19 Commissioner, on points of potential vulnerability or where
20 you think Canada could have reacted and responded to Indian
21 foreign interference differently or more strongly in the
22 past?

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We can always do better.
24 I can't think off the fly of a particular point, which I
25 think was your question. What I tried to say in my -- at the
26 end of my direct testimony before lunch is that we are, as
27 GAC, try to be a learning organization. I think I can say
28 that for the entire federal government. The threat is

1 evolving and our tactics for dealing with -- our strategy and
2 tactics for dealing with the threat will also evolve.

3 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Mr. Epp?

4 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'll leave it at that.

5 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. Those are all
6 my questions.

7 Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

9 Mr. Sirois for the Russian Canadian
10 Democratic Alliance.

11 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

12 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Yes, good afternoon,
13 slash evening.

14 I'd like to ask the Court Operator to pull
15 RCD74, please.

16 **--- EXHIBIT No. RCD0000074:**

17 Countering disinformation with facts
18 - Russian invasion of Ukraine

19 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** It is a print version
20 of a webpage I found on the GAC -- on GAC's website called
21 "Countering disinformation with facts". Are you aware about
22 this initiative?

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes.

24 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ms. Denham, you're in
25 charge of that project?

26 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** No, no. This is through
27 our communications team and working with the Privy Council
28 communications teams. But we're very well aware of this

1 website.

2 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. Can you explain
3 its purpose?

4 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure.

5 So the purpose as I understand it, again, not
6 led by myself, but in conversations about disinformation and
7 particularly pertaining to Russia's invasion of Ukraine,
8 there was a lot of this information that was circulating
9 globally. Again, an intent of this information is to
10 undermine, to break the international alliance, the
11 commitment to Ukraine, and also to break trust between
12 governments and their population.

13 And so, there was a lot of this information
14 that Russia was amplifying internationally, and because of
15 that sheer volume one of the strategies that was agreed upon
16 across the Government of Canada was that these narratives
17 were so rampant that it was really important to be able to
18 actually show the fact base. So when you have a certain
19 narrative, what are the facts that actually support the
20 reality.

21 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** For the benefits of
22 Canadians as well?

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** For the benefits of
24 Canadians. Other countries do this as well, the UK does an
25 excellent example of this. Ukraine itself is actually very,
26 very, good at doing this type of counter narrative or pre-
27 bunking.

28 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And so, this web page

1 is for Canadians, and are the lies listed here acceptable
2 diplomatic behavior, is it considered as foreign interference
3 by GAC?

4 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So these narratives, again
5 this is this information that was aiming at Russia's invasion
6 of Ukraine. So again, the target being Ukraine, Ukrainian
7 citizens, breaking the international resolve. So this
8 information as a tactic is a form of foreign interference,
9 but it is not considered -- again, it wasn't Russia's
10 targeting of Canadians specifically, it was Russia's
11 narrative targeting the invasion of Ukraine.

12 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** But Canadians are
13 exposed to these narratives, and you felt ---

14 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely.

15 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** --- GAC felt the need
16 to post?

17 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** It's -- yes. It's a viable
18 tool that can be used to actually fill the narrative space
19 with the facts at play.

20 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And when I put in
21 this, as you can see from the screenshot, there was 116
22 entries. But this is just a sample, right, there are many
23 other lies that are undetected or otherwise not listed there?
24 Is that right?

25 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** This would be a sampling of
26 the main narratives. There would have been agreement as to
27 what are those main narratives that are circulating, and what
28 would be the facts that need to be put out against those

1 narratives.

2 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And I saw that other
3 departments are contributing to this register. I saw
4 National Defence and CSE. For which department is in charge
5 of determining what is true and what is false among these
6 narratives? Do you know?

7 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, there isn't -- it
8 isn't sort of a truth or false. Again, this is where people
9 -- well there's a lot of conversations about, you know,
10 should governments be a truth police, that's not it. In
11 reality, this is about putting out the facts as to what NATO
12 is, that isn't about true or trying to put a different set of
13 information out there. It's just to be very clear to
14 Canadians exactly what NATO is.

15 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, I'm confused.
16 Because you say it's not about truth or false claims. But
17 here we see clearly "Russia's false claims". Russia claims
18 that NATO is a threat to Russia:

19 "The facts:
20 NATO is a defensive Alliance that
21 does not seek confrontation."

22 In the heading, well the small description
23 above this -- the entries themselves, we see:

24 "Below, you will find a sample of the
25 many lies by the Russian regime about
26 its invasion of Ukraine, along with
27 the truth."

28 So it is about truth or false. The

1 government is acting as arbiter of truth. And I'm not saying
2 it's a bad thing to the country, I'm just saying that's what
3 is happening here.

4 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, I'm not
5 responsible for penning that, but at the end of the day, you
6 know this is about the facts, right? It is putting out the
7 facts into the public sphere.

8 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. And you agree
9 it's important that the facts are out there for the public to
10 learn the truth about the war in Ukraine for instance?

11 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I agree it's definitely one
12 of the approaches that can be used. It doesn't always have
13 to be the government that's putting out the facts, there's a
14 lot of fact checkers, there's a lot of NGOs, there's a lot of
15 different communities, of course, that actually take on this
16 role.

17 So it doesn't always have to be governments,
18 nor in some circumstances should it be. But of course, you
19 know, in a world where populations are faced with a lot of
20 inaccurate information, when there's a contribution that can
21 be made to providing the facts of the situation it is one
22 tool that could be used.

23 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So government has a
24 responsibility, although not the only one, but is certainly
25 one of the actors that has a responsibility of debunking
26 certain false narratives?

27 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I wouldn't describe it as a
28 responsibility. I would say that it is one of the tools that

1 could be used, and it depends on the circumstance. So again,
2 while it was decided to use it in the instance of Russia's
3 invasion of Ukraine, it does not mean that the government
4 should be aiming to fact check every piece of information
5 that circulates within the Canadian environment.

6 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you, I
7 appreciate that.

8 Would you agree that these narratives can
9 influence how Canadians think and vote about important issues
10 of national security, such as Canada's support for NATO
11 defence spending or support for Ukraine?

12 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I think how Canadians
13 consume information and the information that is consumed can
14 inform some of their views.

15 But there is actually a lot of research that
16 says it's very, very difficult to actually say the impact.
17 There could be a lot of factors that actually influence or
18 impact how Canadians vote on different issues. And so,
19 again, there's a lot of information or reasons that I vote in
20 different ways. It doesn't mean that it is -- it does not
21 mean that information in and of itself will change somebody's
22 opinion. It may be one factor amongst many.

23 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Mr. Morrison, you
24 talked about earlier during examination, about an incident
25 approach rather than -- and you seemed to indicate that you
26 preferred a more broader view of foreign interference for
27 instance.

28 And if we take each of these false claims on

1 their own as incidents, do you agree that we are kind of
2 missing the bigger pictures of them? For instance, 116
3 entries over two years -- two years period, and having the
4 Russian propaganda that happened during the freedom convoy
5 for instance, or other instances of propaganda from other
6 countries as well, do you think that there's a need to have a
7 broader picture of propaganda as well, and disinformation, to
8 really understand what's the impact of foreign interference
9 in Canada?

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** So there's a lot there.
11 What I testified to this morning was that in the process that
12 the senior most levels of our security and intelligence
13 community underwent recently, to decide which examples
14 amongst a large number of candidates we should actually
15 stipulate for the Commission were major instances of
16 potential foreign interference, that I think all involved
17 learned things.

18 I think that some elements of the community
19 learned a little bit more about diplomacy, and distinctions
20 that can usefully be made between foreign influence and
21 foreign interference. And what I had tried to say, was that
22 I learned that in addition to evaluating whether any one
23 incident constitutes in and of itself foreign interference,
24 one needs to take into account repeated -- if that's how it
25 plays out -- repeated instances and the corrosive effect that
26 that can have overtime.

27 So tying what I actually said to your
28 question, I completely agree with my colleague, Ms. Denham,

1 that it is useful to have inaccurate content on important
2 issues fact checked. And whether that is an NGO, or in this
3 case the Canadian government, I hope that it does -- that
4 having a place where the real facts can be checked or
5 evaluated helps people form their views. But it's just been
6 testified how that isn't exactly a science.

7 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. Thank you.

8 I'd like to move on now to a slightly
9 different issue. Still this information, but if we can pull
10 up RCD20 now?

11 **--- EXHIBIT No. RCD00000020:**

12 Tenet Youtube videos

13 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Just still Russian
14 propaganda, but very different way and different messages as
15 well. I'll be talking about the Tenet Media operation. I'm
16 sure you've all heard that through media reports.

17 This is the -- as you know, just a brief
18 summary for the record. It's a social media company that was
19 set up by Russian operatives and Canadians aimed at
20 influencing Americans and Canadians thoughts.

21 So here we have the 50 or so videos targeting
22 Canadians specifically. I would like to scroll down a little
23 bit more because I'm always showing the first video at the
24 top, but I'd like to just show different examples this time.
25 Can we scroll down a little bit, please? Yeah, right after
26 that one. That's good.

27 So you see, that's a good example, I think.
28 You see "Canada is becoming A COMMUNIST HELLHOLE", some

1 interview with influencer. "BREAD LINES ARE RETURNING?",
2 supposedly in Canada. There's a communist flag there.
3 "TRUDEAU'S GROCERY WAR".

4 So obviously, Canada is not becoming a
5 communist hellhole. This is false. I think we can all agree
6 on that. And I hope we can all agree on that. But I'm
7 wondering, why is it more difficult for RRM Canada, or GAC,
8 or anyone else in government to identify this sort of
9 narrative as being Russian propaganda, or Russian false
10 narrative aimed at influencing how Canadians think and vote,
11 rather than the false narratives about Ukraine? Why is one
12 treated differently than the other? Is there good reason for
13 that?

14 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** There's a lot of inaccurate
15 information on the Internet. We see it every day. I would
16 remind that the mandate of the RRM is about threats to
17 democracy and focusing on disinformation, RRM Canada, on
18 focusing on disinformation. And our mandate is actually to
19 watch these tactics as they play out internationally.

20 So again, RRM had an understanding, RRM
21 Canada an understanding of how Russia was pumping
22 disinformation into the ecosystem as it pertained to Ukraine,
23 because we are watching internationally to watch how those
24 campaigns are playing out. We do not have a mandate to look
25 internal to Canada, except when we are initiated to support
26 SITE in the context of federal elections and in by-elections.
27 And so, this would not be for RRM to investigate instances
28 of, you know, inaccurate information in the Canadian

1 ecosystem.

2 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, what if I told
3 you that there was four by-elections, four, during that time
4 that this operation took place?

5 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I don't have the time -- I
6 wouldn't be able to validate that. I mean that would be -- I
7 wouldn't be able to validate that. I can't speak to that.

8 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** No, no. But I'm
9 telling you it's a fact. Like this operation set up in
10 November 2023 and there has been four by-elections, so RRM
11 Canada was looking internally. I'm just wondering whether
12 the messages are more difficult to detect, because it targets
13 Canada's political issues rather than international issues.
14 Is it something that's a consideration for RRM Canada? I'm
15 just wondering why it can go undetected for so long?

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So I spoke to this earlier.
17 Again, RRM Canada is a small team, and we have a limited
18 capability. So in the context of elections, I gave an
19 example of what we would be looking for. And again, we're
20 doing searches against the candidates in an election
21 themselves, the issues that may be playing out in that
22 election itself. And we watch for whether there is any
23 patterns that those issues that are pertinent to that
24 particular byelection or those candidates are -- if there's
25 any indication of narratives related to that election, are
26 those political issues that are suspicious in nature and may
27 trigger further review.

28 So again, we're not looking at all

1 information within Canada that could have anything to do with
2 Canada, while it takes place during an election or a by-
3 election, right? It has to be very specific, and that is
4 really where we focus on the mandate of RRM and how we can
5 support the by elections.

6 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you. We can
7 pull the document down. I'll be asking questions now on the
8 government's response following these events.

9 So as we know there have been pretty
10 significant, I think we can agree on that as well, foreign
11 interference operations targeting Canadians. There are 50
12 videos or so specifically targeting Canadian issues. I'm
13 wondering, what has been the Government of Canada's
14 diplomatic response towards Russia? Because Russian
15 operatives set up that network initially, and it helped
16 operate the network and produce the videos and so on,
17 according to the US Department of Justice indictment.

18 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Commissioner, [no
19 interpretation].

20 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** [No interpretation].

21 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** [No interpretation].

22 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** I will try to speak
23 French [no interpretation].

24 Are you referring to this particular
25 campaign?

26 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I'm referring to the
27 operation of Tenet Media.

28 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** You want to know what

1 was the nature of the interaction with the Russian
2 government?

3 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Yes, are there any
4 *persona non grata*? There was a statement by Mélanie Joly,
5 Minister of Global Affairs. So what was done?

6 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Well, I think that it
7 started a long-term interactions that we had with the Russian
8 government over the past few months and past few years.
9 Remember that we were one of the first countries to impose
10 sanctions against entities promoting disinformation. To this
11 day we have about 125 persons and 40 entities which were
12 listed under the *Special Economic Measures Act*, particularly
13 for their involvement in disinformation campaign regarding
14 Ukraine. So RT and Sputnik were sanctioned in March 2022, so
15 during the first wave of sanctions which were announced
16 against Russia. And their ability to broadcast in Canada
17 were revoked by the CRTC.

18 So as I said earlier today, our
19 communications with the Russian government are very rare,
20 particularly at my level with the Russian Ambassador. We
21 only engage in exceptional cases on issues involving our
22 strongest interests. So regarding the specific campaign,
23 I've had no interaction with the Russian government
24 represented by the Embassy here in Ottawa, and I will say
25 that this is part of a long line of reprimands and reproaches
26 towards Russia.

27 What is also important to point out for the
28 benefit of the Commission is that the Canadian landscape is

1 far less fertile than what we find in Eastern European
2 countries or elsewhere. So these disinformation campaigns
3 can have an efficient impact.

4 Look at the evolution of public surveys about
5 Ukraine versus Russia. Very few people are convinced, are
6 really buying into this narrative which is false. So it
7 means that our communications with the Russian government and
8 the resilience of Canadians, it means that such false
9 statements have far less impact in Canada.

10 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I would like us to
11 move to RCD52.

12 **--- EXHIBIT No. RCD0000052:**

13 Canadian Vulnerability to Russian
14 Narratives About Ukraine

15 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I think this is an
16 important point, maybe it was a fact before the war in
17 Ukraine about more and more studies based on a study by the
18 Angus Reid Institute, which was published on July 8, 2024.
19 It's titled, "Canadian Vulnerability to Russian Narratives
20 about Ukraine". So this institute is well-recognized.

21 So you see the three bullets, so that we can
22 have a discussion on the fact -- when you say that Canada is
23 not a fertile ground, I don't agree with that.

24 "Most Canadians have been exposed to
25 Russian FIMI narratives, with 71% of
26 Canadians having heard at least one
27 of the narratives, with an average
28 exposure of 2.1 narratives.

1 A substantial portion of Canadians
2 exposed to Kremlin narratives believe
3 them to be true or are unsure of
4 their falsehood.”

5 And:

6 “We found a marked difference in
7 susceptibility to Russian
8 disinformation along political
9 lines.”

10 So my question is that if you say that Canada
11 is not a fertile ground, do you believe that it was true
12 before the war in Ukraine, but now that Russian has
13 identifies its propaganda, can your assessment be different?

14 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** No, I disagree.
15 According to my personal experiences and with also surveys,
16 well, I can't comment on the methodology which was used in
17 this particular survey, but I recently saw surveys that were
18 published by the Pew Center in a large majority of NATO
19 countries showing that Canada was one of the countries in
20 which the percentage of the population which understood the
21 role and the objectives of NATO and which did not believe the
22 Russian narrative to the effect that NATO initiated the
23 conflict, Canada was among the countries that were the most
24 convinced about the facts and about the truth. It was in the
25 high 60 percent.

26 So I don't really know this particular
27 research or the methodology which was used, but this is not
28 consistent with the anecdotal or scientific information that

1 is available to me.

2 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Madam Commissioner, I
3 know you were very patient with my other colleagues. Could
4 you please give me additional time?

5 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes, totally.

6 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you.

7 So to follow along the same line, I think
8 that this particular study is very relevant, but we can take
9 it down; we don't have time to look at it any further. But I
10 would like to continue with you, Mr. Lévêque, if you'll allow
11 me.

12 In your interview summary with the
13 Commission, there was a question to the effect that -- oh, in
14 English?

15 "Russia lacks the interest to spread
16 disinformation in Canada." (As read)

17 [No interpretation] and considering that 50
18 videos were produced on Canadian issues that were supposed to
19 be viewed by 500,000 Canadians, so would you maintain your
20 assessment that Russia is not interested in influencing
21 Canadians?

22 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** I would like to make
23 a distinction between Russian interests in interfering in
24 Canadian democratic and electoral processes in Canada, it is
25 very clear according to all the surveys we have received,
26 including some particular departments, that Russia is not as
27 interested in Canada as in other countries.

28 When it comes to Ukraine, of course is not

1 non-existent; it exists and you're good examples of it. But
2 what I would like to say is that 500,000 viewings,
3 considering the impact it may have in several countries in
4 Eastern Europe where there are politicians which are already
5 sympathetic to Russian positions; I'm thinking of Slovakia,
6 Serbia, Poland, so I would like to maintain that Canada is
7 certainly not immune but is less susceptible to this
8 influence because -- I'll come back to this -- we have a
9 ground which is less fertile because of a better level of
10 awareness or a mix of facts-checking carried out by several
11 organizations. But I continue to observe that our territory
12 is far less fertile for this interference.

13 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So Russian
14 interference has been an issue for a long time, particularly
15 with the presidential election in 2016. You're talking about
16 a long process of involvement with the Russian Embassy on
17 such issues and discussions and reprimands, even sanctions
18 targeting Russia. So considering that this is still
19 occurring today, so the Tenet Media operations took place in
20 2023, 2024, isn't that proof that such sanctions are
21 ineffective and that we need a new approach with Russia?

22 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Well, a word about
23 the sanctions. There is a lot of debate about how to define
24 the support for a regime of sanctions, but I don't think that
25 nobody would claim that it is expected that sanctions would
26 have an immediate impact and would immediately modify the
27 behaviour we're trying to change. So the sanctions have to
28 be carried out over the long term, and they have to be

1 adopted by as many countries as possible.

2 Secondly, in our regime of sanctions, and I
3 would return to the *Special Economic Measures Act*, there is
4 no trigger which would allow us to use foreign interference
5 as the trigger to announce sanctions. Both triggers, the
6 main two triggers are human rights violations and
7 destabilization or threatening the international peace and
8 order. So the sanction regime is not the best tool when it
9 comes to domestic foreign interference attempts, but we have
10 found enough information in the public domain to list 125
11 individuals and 40 entities which were promoting
12 disinformation and lies to a point where it was thought to
13 destabilize the country and to threaten peace and
14 international order.

15 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Mr. Sirois, I would
16 like to comment. [No interpretation] excellent for the
17 Commission because we talked a lot about the tools which
18 Global Affairs Canada has to counter foreign interference. I
19 will not comment on Tenet. I understand the steps that were
20 taken by the Department of Justice in Canada, and of course,
21 the Department of Justice in the US, sorry, and I know that
22 Mr. LeBlanc and the Justice Department have already made
23 comments here.

24 So I would like to discuss the various tools
25 at the federal level, to continue our measures against
26 disinformation by alias *Russia Today*. And you mentioned a
27 statement recently made by Minister Joly, and it's a good
28 example of how different tools of Global Affairs Canada can

1 have an impact.

2 So what you mentioned as a statement by
3 Minister Joly are a set of highly classified information
4 which were declassified in order to be shared with Canadians
5 and the rest of the world about what we perceive about RT and
6 about its activities.

7 You're quite right that RT is carrying out a
8 disinformation and propaganda campaign, not just about the
9 situation in Ukraine, but about electoral processes,
10 particularly about Eastern Europe and about Moldova, which is
11 an egregious example which the Minister also commented upon
12 in the past.

13 Unfortunately, the problem with RT is even
14 worse than that. It's not only disinformation and
15 propaganda, they are at a next level. There's interference
16 with some Eastern European elections, but also they've begun
17 to use initiatives in order to fund the war effort, the
18 Russian war effort in Ukraine.

19 They've also used cyber proxies. They've
20 used cyber proxies that we know that in the past they have
21 participated in cybernetic incidents against Canadian
22 infrastructure and we know full well that following the
23 sanctions, that Mr. Lévêque laid out these sanctions were
24 taken up elsewhere in the world. They started to create
25 platforms that officially are independent from RT to continue
26 with the propaganda.

27 And you're correct when you say that globally
28 these platforms do have an impact. We have analyzed, and we

1 noticed that they've generated more clicks on their platforms
2 than some international media.

3 So what can we do? The first thing that we
4 did at that point we need to use the abilities of the
5 intelligence communities and to declassify some things.
6 Also, we've coordinated our actions with the American and the
7 UK government to send out a very strong message. And,
8 finally, what we're doing as well, despite that it's a
9 national security issue, we use diplomatic channels in
10 coordination with the US and the British government in order
11 to shed light on this phenomenon that RT -- rather, the
12 challenge that RT represents in this framework of
13 disinformation and propaganda. And this also includes other
14 countries such as developing countries, for example, so to
15 shed some light on this.

16 And it's important for Canada to continue
17 with this. There are many of these countries, for example,
18 where an RT represents most of the information available for
19 these countries. So not only is the idea to take the
20 appropriate measures for Canada, but for Foreign Affairs,
21 we're working with our allies not only to work with our
22 closest allies, the NATO countries, Eastern European
23 countries, but other countries in development.

24 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

25 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you very much.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Chantler for the
27 Concern Group.

28 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. NEIL CHANTLER:**

1 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Good afternoon, Madam
2 Commissioner. Good afternoon, panellists. Neil Chantler for
3 the Chinese Canadian Concern Group.

4 I'm going to start on a subject that you
5 haven't been asked about today, and that is China's interest
6 in our Arctic. I think these questions are probably most
7 appropriate for Assistant Deputy Lévêque.

8 Various public reports have indicated that
9 China has a significant growing interest in the Canadian
10 Arctic and that it is crossing the line between influence and
11 interference with respect to this issue. Can you please
12 briefly -- I have many other issues to cover, but briefly
13 comment on China's apparent interest in the Canadian Arctic,
14 whether GAC sees the PRC as posing a threat to Canadian
15 Arctic sovereignty and what diplomatic engagements GAC has
16 had with Chinese officials in respect of Canada's Arctic?

17 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Global Affairs Canada
18 is absolutely seized of this, and seized very clearly through
19 what the PRC has been doing, its interest in the Arctic.

20 What I would say, first of all, Minister Joly
21 has mentioned this publicly recently, it has pushed us to
22 review, do an in-depth and update of our Arctic strategy, and
23 particularly the foreign policy part of the Arctic. And
24 that's something that will be released very soon. And I
25 would say it takes a much more conscious view of how the
26 Arctic is now the stage for geopolitical competition.

27 And so a number of -- without wanting to pre-
28 empt the issuance of that document, a number of lines of

1 activity will be revealed in that sense.

2 Another really important aspect of our
3 actions, and GAC is leading the way along with Department of
4 National Defence and intelligence and security agencies, is
5 working with Indigenous and northern communities to raise
6 their awareness. Often we're talking about very small
7 communities that don't have necessarily access to what we
8 see, that don't have a way of interpreting and understanding
9 what some mild overtures might look like coming from from
10 China and other countries, so it's a real partnership.

11 It's we need to learn from them in seeing
12 what they see on the ground and then, in return, help them
13 interpret how some investments or offers to develop
14 infrastructure, et cetera might be tools used and might have
15 ulterior motives.

16 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** That's very helpful.
17 Thank you.

18 I'm going to turn subjects to the overseas
19 police stations, and these questions may be best directed to
20 Mr. Epp.

21 One of the most concerning aspects of this
22 particular case of foreign interference seems to be that it
23 didn't come to light as a result of our own security and
24 intelligence agencies' detection. We learned about these
25 overseas police stations through an NGO's report out of
26 Spain. And so in the context of this public inquiry, which
27 is tasked with determining Canada's capacity to detect and
28 deter foreign interference, I think it would be helpful to

1 understand GAC's perspective on how these overseas police
2 stations avoided detection here in Canada.

3 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think it's an excellent
4 question because I think there can be different
5 interpretations of whether -- I take your point that that
6 would be troubling on one level, but I would want to clarify
7 that no government globally identified this as an issue and
8 Safeguard Defenders' report was not a report about these
9 occurrences in Canada. It was about these occurrences
10 globally.

11 I take a slightly different view, which is,
12 particularly when dealing with highly sophisticated and
13 globally impactful states like the PRC, I think we have to
14 anticipate in the future, as we saw with Safeguard Defenders'
15 report, that any evolving and learning approach to robustly
16 and firmly pushing back against foreign interference cannot
17 sufficiently be managed by the government. It has to be
18 managed through active cooperation with sophisticated non-
19 governmental private sector, et cetera groups.

20 I think the Safeguard Defenders' report was
21 an excellent example where that NGO, within its own mandate,
22 did a deep dive and surfaced a phenomenon that hadn't been
23 tracked by any government, to our knowledge, including the
24 Canadian government, but that we responded to very quickly
25 and continue to track, the RCMP is still investigating and
26 tracking these phenomena in Canada.

27 And the last thing I would say is that it's
28 particularly important to have that whole of society

1 approach, awareness raising, capacity building to addressing
2 these kind of grey zone vectors for foreign interference
3 because that's what they are. And as I explained in my
4 testimony earlier, something can look kind of legitimate.
5 For diplomats we would have picked out right away if we'd
6 walked into a strip mall with one of these offering
7 subnational government services from Fujian province and
8 said, "Well, that's -- you know, that's off kilter," and we
9 would have reported in. But for a lot of Canadians, quite
10 reasonably, they don't know the niceties of the Vienna
11 Conventions. So the combination of non-governmental
12 organizations, who may pick up on this information, doing
13 sophisticated analysis, and bringing it to light I actually
14 think is an important part of how we evolve as threat --
15 state threat actors evolve their own forums and tools because
16 the next iteration may not be a police station, it may be
17 something else, and if we're just playing whack-a-mole with
18 the last iteration we're going to miss the next. So we have
19 to work with a whole-society approach.

20 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** You expect fully that if
21 the RCMP had received reports about these overseas police
22 stations prior to September 2022 when the report came out you
23 would have been informed about it?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I am confident that if any
25 of our domestic partners had identified these activities or
26 these sort of manifestations of grey zone activity, that it
27 would have been brought through the interdepartmental
28 community. I probably would have heard of it first from my

1 colleague, Phil Lafortune, and we would have discussed it
2 interdepartmentally, yes.

3 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Just to provide
4 additional comment of what Mr. Epp just mentioned, in
5 situation where, let's say, the RCMP notice the activity of a
6 foreign state for which it has question, it will reach out
7 quickly to us to ask if such activity has been formally
8 accredited to our Office of Protocol. So that would be their
9 first question. They're also going to be wondering if indeed
10 it has been accredited [sic], do those individual enjoy the
11 immunities, and so on and so forth.

12 So while we would not get information should
13 an criminal investigation is launched, the first step of the
14 RCMP would be quickly to reach out to us to verify that
15 information about accreditation, and if there is such
16 accreditation, which was not the case here -- if there is
17 such accreditation, then what are the exact immunities that
18 those officials been ---

19 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you.

20 Moving to GAC's response to the overseas
21 police stations. We've heard evidence today that -- at least
22 perhaps from Mr. Morrison or Ms. Termorshuizen, GAC's
23 response was diplomatic in nature, of course, and in
24 parallel, the RCMP pursued the matter through the normal
25 course of investigation.

26 My question for you is, those are two very
27 different paths to follow, and is there a concern that one
28 might affect the other? Was there any conversation between

1 GAC and the RCMP about what each of you were doing, and was
2 there a concern held by GAC that a brute-force approach on
3 the policing side might interfere with the delicate
4 diplomatic negotiations that you are undertaking, meeting
5 with the Ambassador and so on?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'll start; Cindy can
7 jump in.

8 I wouldn't consider them delicate diplomatic
9 negotiations. This is offside and so we demanded
10 explanations, and our goal was to have any illegitimate
11 activity shut down. That's the diplomatic outcome we were
12 pursuing.

13 I can't speak -- I did read what the RCMP
14 said it was trying to accomplish, including by doing things
15 overly rather than as part of an investigation.

16 My overall sense is our Government of Canada
17 objective was to stop this from happening and so we were
18 pursuing the same objective as the RCMP.

19 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Yeah, the only
20 thing I would add to that is that, you know, we've talked
21 about this a number of times over the course of the day. The
22 Government of Canada has a toolkit that different departments
23 have pieces of that you could deploy in these types of
24 situations. And in this particular situation, it was
25 absolutely appropriate that both Global Affairs and the RCMP
26 use the tools at their disposal to address this issue, and
27 there was a significant coordination and communication
28 between us in doing so.

1 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Mr. Morrison, you
2 anticipated some of why I'd asked the question, and that was
3 that from one perspective, the RCMP's response to the
4 overseas police stations was very diplomatic; it was very
5 soft. They didn't move in and covertly investigate and
6 gather evidence and pursue criminal charges, at least as far
7 as we know publicly. Their approach was to, as we heard in
8 their evidence the other day, try and be present; park in
9 front of the station, and try and engage and show the
10 community that the police were aware of the situation. And
11 that's a much softer response than they might have employed
12 had this been some other kind of organized crime going on, I
13 suggest.

14 And I wonder if that was as a result of some
15 dialogue with GAC, but I take it it wasn't; is that correct?

16 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not aware of GAC at
17 all shaping how the RCMP went -- decided to go about its
18 disruption activities. I will say at a kind of threshold
19 level, as Weldon has said, these appeared to be dual-use
20 physical locations, providing government services at the kind
21 of provincial level; Weldon mentioned a couple, marriage
22 certificates and so on, but also houses or vectors for
23 transnational repression.

24 So I think it's probably fair to say that we,
25 being unaware of them, also needed to establish their
26 presence; we needed to look into exactly what was going on.
27 And as the Foreign Ministry, we needed to call out China on
28 an egregious violation of its -- of the Vienna Convention and

1 Canadian sovereignty. And in so doing, we asked the Chinese
2 government about their likely reaction if a Canadian province
3 decided to open an outlet somewhere in China without the
4 permission of the national government.

5 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** I'd like to address a
6 couple more issues in the limited time I have.

7 Could the Court Operator please called up
8 CAN044228? There's an "_R01" as well.

9 This document was shown to you earlier today.
10 These are the DM CIR, I think you pronounced it, meeting
11 minutes from October 12th, 2023. If we go down to the middle
12 of -- sorry, the bottom of page 2 where it says, "GAC advised
13 that..." -- there is it, the last paragraph:

14 "...per the original Spanish NGO
15 report on PRC OPS, many OPS have been
16 successful in convincing people to
17 return to China, and that the PCR
18 [sic] likes these tools."

19 You can scroll down a little further. "In
20 GAC's view..." -- and, again, Mr. Morrison, I take it this is
21 your view; you're the GAC attendee at this meeting:

22 "...we should not interpret OPS as
23 about us, but as about PRC views of
24 Chinese people abroad, and expected
25 loyalties."

26 What did you mean by "Us" there? Who are you
27 drawing a distinction between?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Again, I don't actually

1 recall the meeting very well, but it was obviously the --
2 this obviously is an account of what I had said. The -- I
3 had read the Safeguard Defenders' report, and I had -- was
4 very curious as to the very significant number of people
5 that, according to the report, had returned to China or had
6 been encouraged, enticed, coerced -- I don't know -- to
7 return to China as a result of the presence of these police
8 stations. So in the -- again, I do not recall the nuances of
9 the discussion, but I think I was encouraging colleagues to
10 try to fully understand that for China -- unlike other
11 countries, China, I have learned from my China expert
12 colleagues, takes a different view of diaspora than many
13 others do. We believe if you're a Canadian and you move
14 abroad, you -- that's your free choice.

15 China, for reasons that I at first found very
16 puzzling, seems to believe that if you move abroad and even
17 become, say, a Canadian citizen or a Spanish citizen or a
18 Dutch citizen or dual, for example, they still have some kind
19 of claim on you. And that's just a very different view of
20 diaspora, it's a very different view of citizenship
21 obligations than we have.

22 So I believe what I was trying to do is to
23 encourage greater understanding of why these existed because
24 I was struggling with that notion myself.

25 Again, as the foreign Ministry, our number
26 one priority was to have them cease operations because they
27 are illegitimate. It sounds like I was just musing after
28 having read the report as to why they existed in the first

1 place.

2 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Is there anything you or
3 the other panellists can say to us in this forum about the
4 ongoing threat of these stations and anything that the
5 diaspora should be concerned about?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We will and are as a
7 community remaining very vigilant. I've said elsewhere in my
8 testimony that I think, at the end of the day, Canadians can
9 be confident in elections, they can be confident in their
10 parliamentarians, they can be confident in our democratic
11 processes. But the two areas where I think much more work is
12 required are artificial intelligence and its impact on mis-
13 and disinformation and transnational repression. And to the
14 extent that these stations are part of the PRC's
15 transnational repression toolkit, we will remain very active
16 and very vigilant.

17 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you.

18 Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

20 Last, but not least, the Attorney General.

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:**

22 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Madam
23 Commissioner. Whether I'm least depends on the day, but I'm
24 sure everyone is happy to see me standing up here because it
25 means we're almost at the end of the day, and that happiness
26 is certainly not least among the witnesses.

27 I'm Helene Robertson, counsel for the
28 Attorney General.

1 So I just had a few questions for you, and
2 I'll start with you, Ms. Denham.

3 You discussed with Commission counsel the
4 cyber framework and the fact that there is no equivalent
5 framework for disinformation. In that respect, I was
6 wondering if you could explain a little bit, and briefly, how
7 you would refer to a public announcement about disinformation
8 and if there's any distinction -- any importance about the
9 terminology in those announcements.

10 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So again, we did
11 talk at length about the attribution framework and going
12 through the assessments and there's an ability to do a
13 technical assessment to actually look for the evidence of any
14 breach and tie it to the international norms and legal
15 framework, but disinformation, there's a few key messages
16 that I hope everyone has taken away. And actually, the
17 Deputy just referred to it again.

18 Disinformation, the environment is very, very
19 complex and it's getting harder, and AI and the different
20 tools are going to make that even more difficult.

21 And so what we've learned over time is,
22 again, to focus on understanding what the tactics are, how
23 are they evolving, focusing on those tactics and we frame it
24 now more around disclosures, so move away from this concept
25 that you can directly attribute.

26 You know, cyber, you have the evidence,
27 you're able to cite the international norms and laws.
28 Disinformation, a disclosure is more about making sure

1 there's information available about the tactics that are
2 being used because we may not, in all instances, be able to
3 be able to identify exactly which country or if there was a
4 foreign entity because of the complexity and the intersection
5 and intermingling with regular Canadians communicating and
6 global populations.

7 So I encourage the team and the community
8 when we're talking about this to look at it more as
9 disclosures and how can we use disclosures to increase
10 education around what people should be aware of.

11 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you.

12 Moving on, again, Ms. Denham, you spoke with
13 Commission counsel about the role of RRM in monitoring the
14 domestic information environment during elections and by-
15 elections, and you'd spoken with some of the other counsel
16 about that as well. When you were talking in the email that
17 you were shown at the beginning -- and I can have it pulled
18 again, but I think I don't need to. I think you know the one
19 that we're talking about. What were you suggesting would
20 happen vis a vis monitoring the domestic information
21 environment?

22 Were you suggesting, for example, that it
23 should stop entirely if Global Affairs were to move out of
24 that space?

25 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** No, not at all. What I was
26 indicating in the email is that I think we've actually proven
27 the importance of monitoring that space, that the RRM Canada
28 team has done that very well, and we've been contributing to

1 that since that capability began, but that given, again, the
2 complexity and the understanding of the severity or the
3 importance of this threat within a domestic landscape, that
4 there needs to be a conversation and decisions within the
5 Government of Canada as to where that capability should
6 exist.

7 And that was the point. I think we
8 absolutely need to build on what we've proven on the
9 importance of understanding this landscape, but it shouldn't
10 be the responsibility of a Foreign Affairs department to be
11 watching within the domestic landscape on a permanent basis.

12 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** And do you see a role
13 for Canada -- the RRM Canada team in moving that towards a
14 different entity doing that monitoring? Do you see a role
15 for yourselves in that transition?

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes. There was two things
17 that I suggested in that email. One was that I actually did
18 say RRM Canada should remain on SITE, on the SITE construct,
19 and that was again to be able to harvest the learnings that
20 we were gaining internationally about those tactics and the
21 threats that we were seeing and be able to share that with
22 our domestic entities as an early warning so that they could
23 be watching for it domestically.

24 I then -- I also suggested that, given we
25 have this capability and we have built this capability over a
26 number of years, that we would want to -- we would be more
27 than willing to support any department when the decision is
28 made as to where that domestic capability should exist, that

1 we would be more than happy to work with that department to
2 learn from us.

3 Again, we sort of leapfrog and build on what
4 we've learned on how to build that capability and the tools
5 and the analysis and some of our ways to actually do
6 disclosures that we'd be happy to support any department in
7 building that capability.

8 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you.

9 Deputy Minister Morrison, you had a
10 discussion with the Commission about the assessment of
11 intelligence provided to Global Affairs by CSIS and you
12 stated that sometimes it was healthy to have a sceptical
13 mindset when approaching intelligence.

14 If you are sceptical of intelligence because
15 of, for example, indicators of reliability, that sort of
16 thing, what would you do? Would you ignore it, for example?
17 What would be your steps if you had some questions about that
18 intelligence?

19 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Most of the raw
20 intelligence products that I see do have caveats on them, on
21 the sourcing, on the reliability of the sourcing. And people
22 are people. When something comes around and even in some of
23 the things we discussed today, things that are now taken as
24 fact in the discourse that we're currently having are, in
25 some cases, based on a single piece of uncorroborated
26 intelligence so we actually don't know whether Thing X or
27 Thing Y happened or didn't happen. But as conversations and
28 discourse takes over, it quickly becomes accepted fact.

1 So in a case like that or where there was
2 just general reason for scepticism, there are a couple of
3 different interdepartmental bodies, of which I am a member,
4 where concerns could be raised.

5 In some cases, I would talk to my colleague,
6 Philippe Lafortune, and ask for what's behind this. Is there
7 more? Is there something that I'm not seeing? And you know,
8 odds are I -- my initial impression was mistaken.

9 But I do think that as David Vigneault
10 testified, it's not appropriate for the intelligence agencies
11 to have the final word on any or on most issues. Most issues
12 benefit from a cross-disciplinary stress test, and I think a
13 little bit of scepticism helps produce better outcomes. And
14 I must say at the senior levels I've never seen anyone that
15 has expressed scepticism. I've never seen -- the views can
16 be litigated, but I've seen them not taken seriously.

17 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you very much.

18 Ms. Denham, I'm going to come back to you,
19 and it's just about the WeChat campaign involving MP Michael
20 Chong you were speaking with, originally, the Commission
21 counsel with.

22 You mentioned during that conversation that
23 Kenny Chiu incident that took place during the general
24 election of 2021, and that there were four accounts involved
25 there. And a question that I had for you is, do you know
26 whose accounts those were and how active they were, in terms
27 of commenting on Canadian politics before the 2021 election?

28 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** The accounts that I was

1 referring to were Chinese Canadian news outlets that were
2 within the WeChat environment. And so on the reporting from
3 RRM Canada, they weren't able to make direct link between
4 those Chinese Canadian news agencies and the PRC.

5 In terms of level of volume, again, a Chinese
6 Canadian news outlet during an election period would be --
7 it's not unexpected that they would be commenting on Canadian
8 politics. I can't speak to before the election period as,
9 again, RRM Canada wouldn't have been monitoring that, but the
10 main thing here is we couldn't make the links to the PRC. It
11 was a low level of -- there was a low level of interaction
12 with that information. And so at that point we had a low
13 level of confidence that it was actually clandestine, covert,
14 coordinated in any way.

15 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you. And for
16 the 2024 campaign that you were talking about, what was the
17 timing of that campaign?

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** That campaign, and I wrote
19 it down again, that was between May 4th and May 13th when it
20 actually took place. Again, we weren't able to identify it
21 till later, but that targeted timeline was actually coincided
22 with when Zhao Wei was PNG. So, again, that's the piece
23 where you have an event, you then see a very coordinated
24 campaign with 72 accounts for which you're actually able to
25 make a link to the PRC; that is a completely different
26 circumstance, and what coordinated activity looks like in a
27 disinformation event.

28 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** And did that ---

1 **MR. WELDON EPP:** And it was 2023, not 2024.

2 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Oh sorry.

3 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Twenty twenty-three
4 (2023), thank you very much.

5 And was that timing important, in terms of
6 your assessment of the campaign?

7 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Well, there was a few
8 parts. One was the PNG of Zhao Wei, because we were trying
9 to contextualize this as to why would that type of campaign
10 have been launched around that timeframe.

11 But are you talking about the timing in terms
12 of the volume of activity that's happening, or I'm not ---

13 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Just did you do assess
14 that there was a link between the PNG of Zhao Wei and that
15 campaign involving ---

16 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Oh, that was part of the
17 analysis as a consideration. Again, in terms of when you're
18 trying to understand or try to put that analysis around it,
19 as to we're seeing this information campaign, what else could
20 be happening around that time? The team did include the
21 analysis that that was around the time period of the PNG.

22 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Okay, thank you.

23 And I just have one last final area to ask a
24 question of, really all of you, anyone who wants to engage is
25 welcome to do so, and it's a general question.

26 From your perspective as a foreign affairs
27 department, how would you character the amount of foreign
28 interference targeting Canada's domestic processes as

1 compared to those that you're seeing in other countries?

2 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I can take a swing at
3 that.

4 So my testimony in multiple *fora* has been
5 that Canada has a baseline of foreign interference that we
6 need to take account of, but that in the two federal
7 elections that are covered by this Commission of Inquiry, we
8 did not see a spike in foreign interference activities,
9 either in 2019 or in 2021.

10 I think it's probably fair to say that that
11 baseline is rising. But we have, frankly, not been targeted,
12 our elections have not been targeted, in the way that the
13 BREXIT Referendum was targeted; in the way that the French
14 presidential election of 2017, I believe, was targeted; in a
15 way that the US 2016 election is being targeted; in a way
16 that the current US election is evidently being targeted,
17 mainly with mis- and disinformation; in a way that Moldova
18 has been targeted; in a way that Taiwan has been targeted,
19 and you can go on.

20 So we have been, as Canada, I think, very
21 lucky. We've also been a leader in putting in place some
22 defensive mechanisms that have, I think, proven quite
23 effective.

24 But the threat is evolving. I am -- if I'm
25 in my current position at the time of the next election, I'll
26 be a member of the Panel of Five, and I will say we are
27 actively preparing for the next election, whenever it comes.

28 The threats are developing and so we -- our

1 defences -- our defensive mechanisms will also have to
2 develop. That's -- so compared internationally we've been, I
3 think, thoughtful but also probably a little bit lucky. And
4 we'll -- but we'll be prepared in case we're not as lucky
5 next time around.

6 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Those are my
7 questions. Thank you very much.

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you very much.
9 Ms. Chaudhury, re-examination?

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** No re-examination
11 but I understand that Ms. McBain-Ashfield has one very small
12 housekeeping item to take care of.

13 **MS. EMILY McBAIN-ASHFIELD:** Thank you,
14 Commissioner.

15 So this morning a few of the witnesses
16 adopted an addendum to their Stage 1 interview summary, and
17 it was WIT114. And at the time, we didn't have the French
18 version; we now do. So just for the record, that is
19 WIT114.FR.

20 **--- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000114.FR:**

21 Addendum au résumé d'entrevue -
22 Affaires mondiales Canada

23 **MS. EMILY McBAIN-ASHFIELD:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you very much.

25 So let me thank you. Honestly it was very,
26 very interesting, and you have been very generous in sharing
27 your experience, your knowledge, and your views.

28 I think the last thing I have to do is just

1 to wish you all a good weekend, and try to think about other
2 things than foreign interference but could be difficult.
3 Thank you.

4 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

5 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
6 Commission is adjourned until Monday, the 7th of October 2024
7 at 9:30 a.m.

8 --- Upon adjourning at 5:37 p.m.

9

10 **C E R T I F I C A T I O N**

11

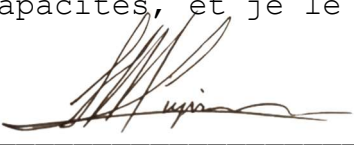
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