



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

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Mathieu Desquilbet

Iranian Canadian Congress

Dimitri Lascaris

## V

### Table of Content / Table des matières

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	1
<b>MS. TARA DENHAM, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	2
<b>MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Sworn/Assermentée</b>	2
<b>MR. DAVID MORRISON, Sworn/Assermenté</b>	2
<b>MR. WELDON EPP, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	2
<b>MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Affirmed/sous affirmation solennelle</b>	3
Examination in-Chief by/Interrogatoire en-chef par Ms. Shantona Chaudhury	3
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Gib van Ert	113
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Sujit Choudhry	138
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Ms. Sarah Teich	149
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Prabjot Singh	164
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Guillaume Sirois	183
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Neil Chantler	204
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Ms. Helen Robertson	214

**VI**  
**Exhibit List / Liste des pièces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
WIT0000104.EN	Interview Summary: Global Affairs Canada (David Morrison, Alexandre Lévêque, Weldon Epp, Philippe Lafortune & Tara Denham)	4
WIT0000104.FR	Résumé d'entrevue : Affaires mondiales Canada (David Morrison, Alexandre Lévêque, Weldon Epp, Philippe Lafortune et Tara Denham)	4
WIT0000093.EN	Interview Summary: David Morrison	4
WIT0000093.FR	Résumé d'entrevue : David Morrison	5
WIT0000142	In Camera Examination Summary: Global Affairs Canada (David Morrison, Cindy Termorshuizen, Alexandre Lévêque, Weldon Epp, Philippe Lafortune and Tara Denham)	5
WIT0000138	In Camera Examination Summary: David Morrison	5
WIT0000138.FR	Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos : David Morrison	5
WIT0000114	Addendum to Interview Summary: Marta Morgan, Cindy Termorshuizen, Philippe Lafortune, Tara Denham, Gallit Dobner	6
WIT0000145	Addendum to In Camera Examination Summary: Former NSIAs: David Morrison, Vincent Rigby, Michael MacDonald and Greta Bossenmaier	6
WIT0000146	Addendum to Interview Summary: Vincent Rigby, David Morrison, Michael MacDonald, Martin Green Interview Summary	7
CAN.DOC.000030	Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference - Institutional Report - Part C - Global Affairs Canada	7
CAN.DOC.000031	Enquête Publique sur l'Ingérence Étrangère - Rapport Institutionnel - Partie C - Affaires Mondiales Canada	7
CAN047008_0001	Diplomatic Notes	29

**VII**  
**Exhibit List / Liste des pièces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
CAN031488	RE: RRM Canada within SITE - need to evolve based on changing mandates	38
CAN044468_0001	Government of Canada's Framework for Public Attribution of Responsibility for Malicious Cyber Activity	41
CAN023929_0001	GAC Response to Foreign Interference - China Chronology/Cheat Sheet	49
CAN033567_0001	Foreign Interference by PRC Diplomat	56
CAN025903_0001	Probable PRC "Spamouflage" Campaign Targets Dozens of Canadian MPs in DisInformation Campaign, as well as Chinese-language Commentator in Vancouver	80
CAN048037	Lessons Learned: Spamouflage (2023-10-24)	84
CAN.DOC.0044	Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Stage 2 Institutional Report	91
CAN044228_R01_0001	Deputy Minister Committee for Intelligence Response (DMCIR) Meeting Minutes	106
CAN003465_R01	Defensive briefings to two Members of Parliament regarding PRC foreign interference activity PCO	115
CAN.DOC.0017	Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Institutional Report – unclassified	124
CAN007791_0001	Annex 2 - Summary of GAC Authorities as it relates to Foreign Interference	150
HRC0000126	Opinion: Cuba's authoritarian a threat to democracy	159
CAN047436	Key Points for SITE Briefing to Political Parties	166
COM0000149	NSICOP - Special report into the allegations associated with Prime Minister Trudeau's official visit to India in February 2018	168
TSC0000014	Indian Consulate networks targeting Sikhs in Vancouver continued "unabated" when Ottawa gutted CSIS probe in 2017: top secret record	174

**VIII**  
**Exhibit List / Liste des pièces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
COM0000155	NSICOP - Annual Report 2019	178
RCD0000074	Countering disinformation with facts - Russian invasion of Ukraine	183
RCD0000020	Tenet Youtube videos	190
RCD0000052	Canadian Vulnerability to Russian Narratives About Ukraine	196
WIT0000114.FR	Addendum au résumé d'entrevue – Affaires mondiales Canada	223



Ottawa, Ontario

--- L'audience débute le vendredi 4 octobre 2024 à 9 h 35

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

**THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre, s'il vous plait.

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

Cette séance de la Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est en cours. La Commissaire Hogue préside.

The time is 9:35 a.m. Il est 9 h 35.

**COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Bonjour. On a une salle pleine ce matin.

Alosr, débutons, Maitre Chaudhury.

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Bien sûr. Bonjour, Madame la Commissaire.

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. On commence avec Monsieur Lafortune.

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

**M. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Mon nom est Philippe Lafortune. Mon de famille : L-A-F-O-R-T-U-N-E.

**LE GREFFIER:** Parfait. Merci.

**--- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:**

1 LE GREFFIER: Merci.

2 And I will get Ms. Denham.

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

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

6 --- MS. TARA DENHAM, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle :

7 THE REGISTRAR: Now for Ms. Termorshuizen.  
8 Can you please state your full name and spell your last name  
9 for the record?

10 MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN: Cindy  
11 Termorshuizen. T-E-R-M-O-R-S-H-U-I-Z-E-N.

12 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

13 --- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Affirmed/Sous affirmation  
14 solennelle:

15 THE REGISTRAR: All right. And now for  
16 Mr. Morrison. Could you please state your full name and  
17 spell your last name for the record?

18 MR. DAVID MORRISON: David Morrison. M-O-R-  
19 R-I-S-O-N.

20 --- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Sworn/Assermenté:

21 THE REGISTRAR: All right. And now for Mr.  
22 Epp. Could you please state your full name and spell your  
23 last name for the record?

24 MR. WELDON EPP: Weldon Carl Epp. Last name  
25 is E-P-P.

26 --- MR. WELDON EPP, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:

27 LE GREFFIER: Et Monsieur Lévêque, pourriez-  
28 vous s'il vous plait indiquer votre nom complet et épeler

1 votre nom de famille pour la transcription sténographique?

2 M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE: Bonjour. Alexandre  
3 Lévêque, L-é-v-ê-q-u-e.

4 --- M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Affirmed/Sous affirmation  
5 solennelle:

6 LE GREFFIER: Merci beaucoup.  
7 Counsel, you may proceed.

8 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN CHEF PAR  
9 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:

10 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Thank you.

11 Witnesses, we have about two and a half hours  
12 this morning and a lot of ground to cover, so we're going to  
13 get started with what's unfortunately going to be some  
14 slightly messy housekeeping, but we'll get it out of the way  
15 as soon as we can.

16 So there are four Stage 2 witness summaries  
17 to enter into evidence. Given that there are four of them,  
18 I'm just going to ask each of you in turn to confirm that  
19 you've reviewed them for accuracy, that to the extent they  
20 provide information that you provided, you're prepared to  
21 adopt them as part of your evidence before the Commission.

22 And so the first one, and Ms. Court Reporter,  
23 you don't need to pull all of these up. There are quite a  
24 few of them, is WIT104, the GAC Stage 2 Interview Summary,  
25 WIT104.FR is the French version. The second one is WIT93,  
26 David Morrison's Stage 2 Interview Summary, WIT93.FR is the  
27 French version. Fourth one is WIT142, the GAC Stage 2 In-  
28 Camera Examination Summary, and then there's WIT138, which is

1 David Morrison's Stage 2 In-Camera Examination Summary.

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

5 Monsieur Lévêque?

6 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Je confirme.

7 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Parfait. Monsieur  
8 Epp?

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

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

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

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

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

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Ms. Denham?

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

16 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Monsieur Lafortune?

17 **M. PHILLIPE LAFORTUNE:** Je confirme.

18 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000104.EN:**

19 Interview Summary: Global Affairs  
20 Canada (David Morrison, Alexandre  
21 Lévêque, Weldon Epp, Philippe  
22 Lafortune & Tara Denham)

23 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000104.FR:**

24 Résumé d'entrevue : Affaires  
25 mondiales Canada (David Morrison,  
26 Alexandre Lévêque, Weldon Epp,  
27 Philippe Lafortune et Tara Denham)

28 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000093.EN:**

1 Interview Summary: David Morrison

2 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000093.FR:

3 Résumé d'entrevue : David Morrison

4 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000142:

5 In Camera Examination Summary: Global  
6 Affairs Canada (David Morrison, Cindy  
7 Termorshuizen, Alexandre Lévêque,  
8 Weldon Epp, Philippe Lafortune and  
9 Tara Denham)

10 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000138:

11 In Camera Examination Summary: David  
12 Morrison

13 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000138.FR:

14 Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos :  
15 David Morrison

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Parfait. Okay.

17 Stage 1 summaries are going to be even messier because not  
18 all of the individuals who were involved in those proceedings  
19 are here today.

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

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

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

6 Ms. Denham?

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

8 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Monsieur Lafortune?

9 **M. PHILLIPE LAFORTUNE:** Je confirme.

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

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

12 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000114:**

13 Addendum to Interview Summary: Marta  
14 Morgan, Cindy Termorshuizen, Philippe  
15 Lafortune, Tara Denham, Gallit Dobner

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

17 Second one is the addendum to the in-camera examination of  
18 the former NSIAs. Mr. Morrison, this concerns you. It's  
19 WIT145. And then there's the addendum to the interview  
20 summary of the former NSIAs, which is WIT146.

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

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

24 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000145:**

25 Addendum to In Camera Examination  
26 Summary: Former NSIAs: David  
27 Morrison, Vincent Rigby, Michael  
28 MacDonald and Greta Bossenmaier

1 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000146:

2 Addendum to Interview Summary:  
3 Vincent Rigby, David Morrison,  
4 Michael MacDonald, Martin Green  
5 Interview Summary

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

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

13 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.000030:

14 Public Inquiry Into Foreign  
15 Interference - Institutional Report -  
16 Part C - Global Affairs Canada

17 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.000031:

18 Enquête Publique sur l'Ingérence  
19 Étrangère - Rapport Institutionnel -  
20 Partie C - Affaires Mondiales Canada

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. Okay.  
22 Record time.

23 Witnesses, I'll ask you to start now by  
24 introducing yourselves. And in doing so, your current  
25 positions, the positions you've held since 2018, which is the  
26 Commission's period of review, and also feel free to tell us  
27 about any other relevant positions or roles you've had that  
28 may be relevant to the Commission's work and to the

1 discussions that we're having today.

2 Mr. Lévêque?

3 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Bonjour. Good  
4 morning. I'm currently the Assistant Deputy Minister  
5 responsible for Europe, the Middle East, and the Arctic.  
6 I've held previous positions between 2018 and today. The one  
7 prior to that was Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic  
8 Policy, and before that, I served at PCO in the Foreign  
9 Defence Policy Secretariat.

10 I have been in the foreign service for 26  
11 years. I've had many postings abroad on most continents,  
12 including in multilateral fora, and I've served as a  
13 Commissioner Ambassador in East Africa.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Merci.

15 Mr. Epp?

16 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So my current position is as  
17 Assistant Deputy Minister for the Indo-Pacific. I've had,  
18 like my colleague, I think 27 years as a career foreign  
19 service officer with five assignments in Asia. I've had four  
20 assignments in the PRC and Taiwan, one in Indonesia. I speak  
21 Mandarin and I speak Bahasa. And I've worked in other roles  
22 within GAC. I've had two assignments as a Head of Mission in  
23 Mainland China and I've worked in a policy branch also in  
24 Global Affairs Canada. Thanks.

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

26 Mr. Morrison?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Thank you. I am  
28 currently the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. I'm going



1 not try and do it in reverse order. In 2018, I was the  
2 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. In early 2019,  
3 I became the Prime Minister's Foreign and Defence Policy  
4 Advisor and served concurrently as the -- his G7 Sherpa. In  
5 2022, I was appointed as Deputy Minister of International  
6 Trade. And later that year, in October of 2022, I was  
7 appointed to my current role.

8 I've been in and around Global Affairs and  
9 international affairs in general for 35 years. I've also  
10 served on most continents. Some experience in Asia, in North  
11 Korea. I've served in Cuba. And I have extensive experience  
12 in the UN system.

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

14 Ms. Termorshuizen?

15 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Thank you. I'm  
16 currently the Deputy Minister for the G7 Summit and Personal  
17 Representative for the Prime Minister for the G7 and G20  
18 Summits.

19 Between January 2022 and June 2024, I was  
20 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and previously  
21 I spent most of my career working on international security  
22 issues and on Indo-Pacific issues. My most recent diplomatic  
23 assignment was as Deputy Head of Mission at the Canadian  
24 Embassy in Beijing.

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

26 Ms. Denham?

27 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So I've been serving in the  
28 department for over 20 years. I'll also do the reverse

1      order. So again, a lot of my experience is also in  
2      international security, international programming, democracy,  
3      human rights protection. I've served in Afghanistan. But  
4      for the purposes of this Inquiry, I was the Director of the  
5      Digital Inclusion Lab from 2017 to 2019. And that is the  
6      team that houses the Rapid Response Mechanism and I actually  
7      was leading the creation of that mechanism during our G7  
8      presidency.

9                      And then most recently, from 2022 to 2024, I  
10     was the Director General of the Office of Human Rights,  
11     Freedoms, and Inclusion, which houses the Digital Inclusion  
12     Lab and the Rapid Response Mechanism.

13                     I'm currently now the Assistant Deputy  
14     Minister of Emergency Management (Legal and Consular  
15     Affairs).

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

17                     **M. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Philippe Lafortune.  
18     Je suis le directeur général des renseignements au ministère  
19     des Affaires étrangères depuis septembre 2022. L'ensemble de  
20     ma carrière, en fait, a été dédié aux enjeux de défense  
21     nationale, de sécurité nationale, de renseignement et de  
22     relations internationales au Bureau du Conseil privé et à la  
23     défense nationale. Et finalement, j'ai eu l'opportunité  
24     d'avoir aussi une position diplomatique pendant deux ans à la  
25     délégation du Canada auprès de l'ONU de 2009 et 2011.

26                     **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Parfait. Merci.

27                     Okay. So we're going to start with some  
28     fairly general questions. And I think overall, the

1      examination will probably proceed from the general to the  
2      specific.

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

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

11                     GAC is Canada's foreign ministry. It's  
12     actually an amalgamation of a trade ministry, a development  
13     ministry, and the classical foreign ministry. So in terms of  
14     mandates, GAC promotes Canada's international trade around  
15     the world, promotes Canada's international assistance around  
16     the world. We give grants and contributions of about \$6  
17     billion a year.

18                     It protects Canadians around the world. Tara  
19     is now in charge of the branch that looks after Canadians who  
20     find themselves in difficulties, such as those in Lebanon  
21     right now. And the core diplomatic function, which is  
22     managing relations with countries to which Canadians are  
23     posted, as well as managing Canada's representation within  
24     the multilateral organisations, NATO, the UN, the OECD.

25                     The roles fulfilled overseas are multiple,  
26     but you could think of them in a couple of different buckets.  
27     The primary one is promoting and protecting the interests of  
28     Canada and of Canadians around the world. So Canadian

1      diplomats in country advocate, they help Canadian companies  
2      sell things, they work with their counterparts in country on  
3      international security measures designed to keep Canadians  
4      safe at home.

5                      So broadly speaking, the work of Canadian  
6      diplomats overseas is driven by the imperative of Canadian  
7      prosperity and Canadian security.

8                      Another key role that Canadian diplomats play  
9      abroad is that they are the eyes and ears of Canada as to  
10     what is going on in a given country, or within a given  
11     international organization. So many of our colleagues abroad  
12     do a vast amount of diplomatic reporting back to  
13     headquarters, so that the folks that serve here in the  
14     national Capital Region are as aware as they can be as to the  
15     nuances of what may be going on abroad. And that's obviously  
16     critical in places like the Middle East right now.

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

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

25                     So all countries send diplomats abroad. And  
26     as I tried to say, the core role is to manage the  
27     relationship if you're posted to a country or an  
28     international organization. My term which is in the summary,

1      is of the essence of diplomacy being managing challenging  
2      relationships. There's a lot of analogies to our personal  
3      relationships. It's easy to get along when you agree on  
4      everything, it's a lot harder to manage a relationship which  
5      is contentious, because you see the world in different ways,  
6      or you have obstacles. That's when diplomacy really comes  
7      into play.

8                      So we see the world mainly in the same way as  
9      our friends in the United States, but certainly in our  
10     trading relationship we don't. And so often we are at  
11     loggerheads and our trade negotiators and our diplomats have  
12     to manage very tough patches within the context of an overall  
13     relationship which works very well.

14                     When it comes to a country like China, or  
15     more recently India, our diplomats have to be really on their  
16     toes because those are two very significant countries in the  
17     world. They are very different from each other, but both of  
18     them will be important to the future of Canadians' prosperity  
19     and security. So our diplomats are called upon to manage  
20     relations with those countries in a way that serves the best  
21     interests of Canadians.

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

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

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

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

14            And in that strategy the government laid out  
15 an updated assessment of Canada's interests; of China as an  
16 actor in the world; China as an inescapably impactful,  
17 important, player in the world that in many ways is  
18 increasingly divergent from Canadian values and interests.  
19 But also inescapable as a partner in working on things that  
20 we both care about.

21            And, you know, that document -- I won't go  
22 into details -- but describes four areas of work in which  
23 that updated assessment and that approach are meaningful.  
24 And then those four areas of work there's a section  
25 describing domestic interests given our framework for  
26 relations with the PRC, and that document talks about foreign  
27 interference, countering PRC foreign interference, as a  
28 priority for the government in that document.

1            It is the case that the experience of having  
2 two Canadian citizens effectively used for coercive  
3 diplomacy, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, had a major  
4 impact not only on bilateral relations, but I would argue on  
5 the view of Canadians with respect to the PRC. And so,  
6 that's had a major impact on our formal government to  
7 government relations.

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

14           Those channels are used to firmly raise  
15 Canadian concerns, Canadian objections, and Canadian  
16 intentions to manage activities by the PRC that we find  
17 against our interests, and also to seek areas where our joint  
18 interests require collaboration. And this has been done, for  
19 example, with respect to global biodiversity, by jointly  
20 hosting COP15 in Montreal a little over a year ago, and there  
21 continue to be areas and interests where Canada and China  
22 will need to work together.

23           So pragmatic diplomacy, it's about channels  
24 that are open. But it's about being clear eyed and ready to  
25 defend our interests, both through diplomacy and through  
26 domestic partners who have other tools with respect to  
27 foreign interference.

28           **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. And

1 we'll get into some of the specifics of how those tools have  
2 been used later on.

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

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Canada and India are  
7 partners going back many, many, decades. India is an  
8 increasingly significant global player, and Canada is taking  
9 account of that in its policies. There have been speed bumps  
10 in our relationship with India dating most significantly back  
11 to 1980 and the Air India bombing, and Indian concerns since  
12 that time that Canada does not take their national security  
13 concerns seriously enough. Here I'm referring to a movement  
14 around a territory which is called Khalistan by some people.  
15 Canada's policy is very clearly that India's territorial  
16 integrity must be respected. There's one India and that's  
17 been made very clear. Nonetheless, there are advocates for a  
18 Khalistani homeland in different countries in the world, and  
19 that -- including here in Canada, and that has been a  
20 longstanding irritant in our relations with India.

21 Things were on the upswing as we approached  
22 the Indian-hosted G20 Summit. We were working on a free  
23 trade agreement with India. Many ministers were visiting  
24 India. There are very deep investment ties going both ways  
25 and very deep people -- people ties. There are -- there is a  
26 very significant Indian diaspora here in Canada and very  
27 clear Canadian interest in India. Things were knocked  
28 sideways in June of last year with the murder of a Canadian



1      citizen on Canadian soil in the Lower Mainland, and that set  
2      in train a series of events culminating in the expulsion of  
3      41 Canadian diplomats from New Delhi last fall. And,  
4      frankly, we're still trying to sort through what the next  
5      steps are in our relationship with India. We have open  
6      channels. We're continuing to talk to them for the reasons  
7      that Weldon just mentioned, but we are in a complicated  
8      place.

9                      Do you have anything to add, Weldon?

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

12                     Ms. Court Clerk, can I ask you to pull WIT  
13      142 up again and just leave it on the screen? Go to  
14      paragraphs 26 and 27, please.

15                     So, M. Lévesque, the next one is for you, and  
16      it's Iran, which I think has been described as perhaps the  
17      most limited relationship that Canada has. What can you tell  
18      us about our relationship with Iran?

19                     **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Thank you. I would  
20      agree with this statement. I would qualify the relationship  
21      we have with Iran as being in a deep freeze, and it has been  
22      so for a very long time. This is based on decades of  
23      behaviour from the Iranian regime that we have found  
24      objectionable, particularly along two main axes. One of them  
25      is their appalling human rights' record, and this is nothing  
26      new. It has really started after the Islamic Revolution of  
27      1979, but has gotten worse over time, particularly with  
28      regard to the treatment of women and minorities in Iran. The

1 second axis is Iran's over support for terrorist groups that  
2 destabilize in a very significant way peace and security in  
3 the Middle East, groups that you've all heard of like Hamas,  
4 like Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and more recently  
5 we're heard a lot about the Houthis in Yemen.

6 So these two axes have forced Canada through  
7 the years to isolate, and we're far from the only country  
8 having done so, isolating Iran, applying and imposing  
9 sanctions, economic sanctions, and more recently, having  
10 declared the Iranian Government a state sponsor of terrorism,  
11 and even more recently, having listed the IRGC as a terrorist  
12 organization.

13 Things got into an even deeper freeze in  
14 2012, when Canada made the decision to completely sever  
15 diplomatic relations with Iran by withdrawing all of our  
16 diplomats, closing our embassy in Tehran, and expelling all  
17 Iranian diplomats in Ottawa.

18 So I would say that now we have very, very  
19 limited contacts, no -- virtually no official government-to-  
20 government contacts, with very few exceptions when the topic  
21 can be on either human rights, which tends to be  
22 unidirectional and us reproaching their record, making sure  
23 it is made public, and when there are discussions about  
24 nuclear proliferation and Iran's nuclear program. In order  
25 to have some basis for communication, because as my  
26 colleagues have said, when diplomats are no longer in each  
27 other's countries, we have no channels of communication, so  
28 we do act for really basic essential things like basic

1 consular information and services through what we call  
2 protecting powers, and Italy plays that role for Canada in  
3 Iran, and Switzerland plays that role for Iran in Canada.

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

9 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Absolutely. Like  
10 many relationships, it has evolved over time, and I would say  
11 that after the end of the Cold War, there was progressive,  
12 prudent, growing engagement and relationship, particularly on  
13 things like the destruction and elimination of stockpiles of  
14 weapons that have been accumulated in former Soviet  
15 Republics.

16 Trust between the two countries really broke  
17 down in 2014 when Russia invaded Crimea, and a lot of  
18 distancing started taking place, much fewer engagements.  
19 Visits were completely cancelled. The one area that remained  
20 a relatively productive one was in the context of the Arctic.  
21 Russia is our neighbour through the Arctic Ocean, and through  
22 the Arctic Council, collaboration and similar goals allowed  
23 for a productive relationship. But things completely broke  
24 down in 2022 with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and at  
25 that point, severe restrictions were put on our official  
26 contact.

27 We maintain a presence in Moscow. Russia  
28 maintains a presence in Ottawa, as well as in consulates in

1 Montreal and Toronto, but our interaction is mostly, as you  
2 said, adversarial and reproaches publicly and privately  
3 actions that are taken, particularly in the information  
4 space, particularly, of course, with regards to its war of  
5 aggression in Ukraine. And there too, an unprecedented  
6 number of sanctions have been imposed on Russia. We're now  
7 at over 3,000 entities and individuals in Russia, or in  
8 Belarus, and in neighbouring countries that contribute to  
9 Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We had some  
11 diaspora panels speak to the Commission the other day, and  
12 one of the panelists raised the question of why are there  
13 still Russian diplomats in Canada, I was wondering if you can  
14 speak to that, specifically why we still have Russian  
15 diplomats here, and given that they've been alleged to have  
16 engaged in adversary mis and disinformation activities, what  
17 are the relations between GAC and the Russian Embassy on that  
18 front as well?

19 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Absolutely. This is  
20 a deliberate choice, and the choice that the government has  
21 made is to maintain a Russian presence in Canada and to  
22 maintain a Canadian presence in Russia, because without the  
23 presence of these diplomats, you cut off all ability to have  
24 communication, and that ability to communicate also gives us  
25 a chance to convey informal and formal reprimands. You can't  
26 bring a country to account if you don't have official  
27 channels of communication, and that is mostly what we've used  
28 these channels of communication for. Now having said this,

1 and I'm sure we'll cover more of this today, there is a full  
2 suite of tools in the diplomatic toolkit, and none of them  
3 are out of the question or beyond consideration. So these  
4 are live discussions, and as relationship evolves, we always  
5 reserve the right to access some of these tools.

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

10 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. Canada and Pakistan  
11 have had longstanding and comprehensive relations. They're  
12 quite constructive. But it has been challenging in recent  
13 years due to political and economic instability within  
14 Pakistan to pursue all of our objectives. I would say, you  
15 know, for the Canadian public, probably aware, two key areas  
16 of cooperation, longstanding development assistance to  
17 Pakistan and really focused on helping Pakistan catch up, you  
18 know, what are fairly significant lagging indicators in  
19 development terms on things like women and girls.

20 And that's an area of focus for the  
21 Government of Canada, but we've also worked very closely in  
22 recent years with the Government of Pakistan which hosts the  
23 largest or one of the largest communities of refugees, mainly  
24 Afghan refugees. And Canada's been a longstanding partner  
25 and has worked in recent years with the Government of  
26 Pakistan to facilitate refugee flow to Canada and to ease  
27 pressure on them.

28 And so you know, those are some of the core

1      areas where we work, although we also have significant  
2      investments in Pakistan as well.

3                    I would say that with respect to foreign  
4      interference, we have regularly had challenges in managing  
5      the -- you know, Pakistan's interests in terms of visitors to  
6      Canada, including with respect to diplomats in Canada, partly  
7      because of our concern about the risk of foreign interference  
8      activities, and so that has created some structural issues  
9      with respect to visa issuance more generally, and that's been  
10     an irritant.

11                   Finally, I would just say that Canada takes a  
12     dim view and we take action to counter activities by  
13     countries from South Asia to pursue their regional rivalries  
14     within Canada and within communities of Canadians with that  
15     heritage.

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

17                   Moving on to another area -- this one's now  
18     for you, M. Lafortune, I want to talk about GAC's  
19     intelligence mandate.

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

23                   The first topic I want you to address, M.  
24     Lafortune, is GAC as a producer of intelligence.

25                   So I understand that GAC has a limited role  
26     as a collector of intelligence, and this goes back to  
27     something that Mr. Morrison was alluding to earlier. But its  
28     main two programs of collection of information would be

1 intelligence liaison officers and the global security  
2 reporting program.

3 So can you explain those to us, please.

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

10 You have your collector. A good example in  
11 the Canadian system is CSIS and CSE, obviously. You have  
12 your assessment community that assess intelligence. And you  
13 have, obviously, your consumer of intelligence.

14 Mainly, Global Affairs falls in the two last  
15 buckets itself.

16 So on the first one, when it comes to  
17 producing intelligence, Global Affairs Canada, due to its  
18 intelligence requirement very specific to foreign policy, has  
19 a team that -- of folks that assess intelligence for two  
20 purposes.

21 Purpose number one is to assess intelligence  
22 to provide what we call base threat assessment to ensure that  
23 we're able to evaluate the threat to our mission abroad and  
24 inform our security colleagues in their work in taking  
25 appropriate measures to protect Canadian assets abroad. And  
26 then, obviously, the second role of assessment is more  
27 strategic intelligence assessment that aims to inform and  
28 support policy centre at Global Affairs in developing foreign

1 policy issues or options or decision-making process itself.

2 So on that part, we have a team that do  
3 produce intelligence assessment by analyzing all types of  
4 intelligence received from the Canadian intelligence  
5 community or foreign partners itself.

6 As Global Affairs Canada with the community  
7 plays a role in terms of foreign intelligence engagement  
8 abroad, we have a very small program of intelligence liaison  
9 officers abroad that are posted into like-minded countries,  
10 and they do represent Canada's intelligence community from a  
11 foreign policy perspective.

12 For example, should someone like the NSIA  
13 needs to engage with one of our key partners or during a  
14 visit or a meeting, the intelligence liaison officer will  
15 support the Privy Council Office in having that kind of  
16 engagement.

17 But the ILO also -- we call them ILO --  
18 participate in those capitals to briefing from the host  
19 country's intelligence community and they report back to not  
20 only Global Affairs Canada, but to the Canadian intelligence  
21 community on those briefings they receive from intelligence  
22 partners as well, providing another source of intelligence on  
23 issues of interest to Canada itself.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So those would be  
25 declared intelligence officers.

26 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** They are not  
27 intelligence officers, to be absolutely clear. They are  
28 diplomats that does intelligence liaison role itself, but



1 yes, they are absolutely declared and accredited to the host  
2 country on that front.

3 Finally, I would say in terms of very, very  
4 limited collection itself, I mentioned that, obviously, the  
5 department has responsibility in terms of duty of care  
6 abroad, so that requires certain technical information when  
7 it comes to ensure that we're protected from espionage  
8 threats abroad. So we have a team of technicians, for  
9 example, that will go to our mission to verify and collect  
10 information at the premise of our mission itself that there's  
11 no attempt by foreign countries to do espionage at our  
12 specific missions itself.

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

15 The final thing I would say is that kind of  
16 office, they're very specific when it comes to intelligence.  
17 It's really to support again one, if not the biggest client,  
18 consumer of foreign intelligence that Global Affairs Canada  
19 is due to its mandate and representation when it comes to  
20 foreign policy.

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

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

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So most of  
26 its foreign intelligence will come in either through -- from  
27 Five Eyes partners or through GAC reporting or intelligence  
28 collected within Canada under CSIS's section 16 mandate. Is

1 that accurate?

2 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** So CSIS section 16,  
3 indeed, provide foreign intelligence that is collected within  
4 Canada, and both the Minister of National Defence and the  
5 Minister of Foreign Affairs can request the support of the  
6 service to provide that type of foreign intelligence.

7 Canada also have other means, to be clear, to  
8 itself to have foreign intelligence. The Communications  
9 Security Establishment are known for signal intelligence  
10 collection, do collect foreign intelligence and is an  
11 important provider of intelligence to Global Affairs Canada  
12 due to its mandate itself.

13 It is true that Canada does not have a  
14 foreign intelligence HUMINT agency, but I would point out, as  
15 I'm sure you discussed with the service, that when it comes  
16 to security intelligence and the security of Canada, they do  
17 have a mandate abroad to collect intelligence based on the  
18 section 12 of their mandate, so they are represented abroad  
19 just for security intelligence.

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

21 Moving on now to a different topic, which is  
22 GAC's tools and responses to foreign intelligence, so  
23 diplomatic responses to foreign interference.

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

26 There we go. Just scroll down a bit more  
27 where you see "Detect, Encounter", and probably a long list  
28 under that.

1 So zoom out so we can see that whole list,  
2 please.

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

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

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

14 And if you'll allow, I might just zoom out  
15 really quickly so the list has some order to it.

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

21 One of them is really about bilateral  
22 responsive actions, and a lot of those are there and I'll  
23 talk about the quiet actions and tools we take versus ones  
24 that might be more public in responding bilaterally to  
25 foreign interference.

26 And second tray or second category of tools  
27 that GAC has, if you would, are more in the zone of proactive  
28 policy program tools.

1 And a third is with respect to how we partner  
2 with others, both other governments through multilateral  
3 tables, G7, Five Eyes; or frankly with whole society, with  
4 NGOs, with experts that have capacity.

5 So, in the first category, to illustrate,  
6 when we respond to foreign interference, or choose to, you  
7 know, apply a tool in the GAC toolkit, you'll see on the list  
8 here we have quite an optional, you know, a range of options  
9 that go from quiet tools, so demarches, we call in the  
10 ambassador, we use a bilateral meeting or a bilateral visit,  
11 we ask for something formally on an agenda. So, raising  
12 foreign interference and communicating that officially.

13 We can also do so through written form,  
14 through diplomatic notes. It's possible to do those and then  
15 also have, following the meeting, a public version of that.  
16 That raises the temperature, it raises the impact in certain  
17 ways, and it communicates the same message but to a broader  
18 audience. Not just the government quietly, but to the  
19 Canadian public, to other audiences.

20 And you see that also with respect to more, I  
21 would say, impactful tools than simply signaling. Those  
22 tools include things like denial of visas for diplomats,  
23 denial of positions. Of course, much of that can be conveyed  
24 quietly, but we have the optionality of talking about that  
25 publicly and saying, here's why we're doing that, of having  
26 ministers tweet about that or communicate why that decision  
27 was taken.

28 And if you think of it as a spectrum, work

1 your way through this list all the way through a spectrum  
2 that gets you to arguably even more visible impactful tools,  
3 like declaring a diplomat persona non grata. It is the case  
4 that sometimes happens without big public fanfare, but  
5 typically it's known and it's communicated publicly. So, the  
6 audience isn't just quite diplomacy to the government but  
7 also to the broader Canadian public or international  
8 audience; sometimes used to then deter others, other  
9 countries who would be potential perpetrators, from doing the  
10 same thing.

11 Moving further on the scale of the GAC  
12 toolkit, in this case you get to options like closing down  
13 diplomatic missions, and frankly in the case of countries  
14 like Iran, of severing diplomatic relations entirely.

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

18 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN047008 0001:**

19 Diplomatic Notes

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Mr. Epp, I think  
21 this is most likely for you.

22 This is the document that appears to  
23 summarize, essentially, engagements between GAC and the PRC  
24 between -- probably starting from 2021 here.

25 So Ms. Court Clerk, if you can zoom out so we  
26 can see more of that page? We'll see it refers to four  
27 diplomatic notes have been sent. And then if we scroll down  
28 to diplomatic representations, engagement with the embassy,

1 there's a whole list. Just keep scrolling down, please.  
2 Thirty-one (31) representations it says, and then it lists  
3 them all. Many, many, many, in 2022, 2023. Keep scrolling  
4 down just so we have an idea what's in this document.

5 And I think it ends there with a comparison  
6 of how many diplomats are here versus how many diplomats are  
7 there, and a description of the footprint.

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

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

15 And I just want to make the point that as  
16 mentioned earlier, it is the case that the Government of  
17 Canada, global affairs as a partner among others,  
18 systematically raises and pushes back, and finds ways to  
19 raise the cost to countries that would perpetrate foreign  
20 interference in Canada. And so, that list sort of gets to  
21 how we went about doing that, particularly in the period  
22 following the return of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor to Canada.

23 Because people can appreciate until that  
24 point although we did raise regularly concerns about foreign  
25 interference, and although we had already denied visas to  
26 PRC, would be PRC diplomats to Canada for reasons of concern  
27 about foreign interference, our priority was on facilitating  
28 the return at the earliest possibility of Mr. Kovrig and Mr.

1 Spavor to Canada. But in the immediate aftermath -- it's in  
2 this list -- of their return, foreign interference as a core  
3 irritant and core issue for Canada PRC relations moved very  
4 much to the forefront of our diplomacy.

5 We used regularly scheduled diplomatic  
6 vehicles, like a bilateral consultation at the Deputy  
7 Minister level, to raise it as a key issue. To raise  
8 specifics, like the fact that the activity of the United  
9 Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China was not  
10 welcome in Canada. And we used a series of diplomatic notes  
11 and meetings to consistently at all levels, including as this  
12 note mentions, up to the level of the Prime Minister, make  
13 sure the Chinese government understood that this was a top  
14 concern and a top, if you would, sort of, barrier to  
15 improving relations.

16 During that period, China may or may not have  
17 wanted to pick up on our message. During that period,  
18 activities such as the issue of overseas police stations in  
19 Canada, which were illegal under the *Vienna Conventions*, and  
20 were a grey zone activity that we had concern about, issues  
21 such as Chinese spy balloons in Canadian sovereign airspace;  
22 all of these let us to increase it, sort of, use of tools  
23 such as the denial of the creation of a position for a  
24 diplomat in the Chinese embassy, denial of visas.

25 And throughout that period, I would just  
26 emphasize there was always a live consideration, or a live  
27 discussion, about other aspects in that scale of tools that I  
28 previously mentioned. More public diplomacy, for example,

1 there was active work with our partners internationally  
2 through the G7 and through other tables, to increasingly  
3 publicly talk about our opposition to PRC transnational  
4 repression and foreign interference. There was discussion  
5 about the possibility at some point, if we felt it useful, of  
6 using PNG as a tool to send a very strong signal to the  
7 Chinese.

8 So that discussion was very live, and I think  
9 the list that you pulled up just shows the regular, sort of,  
10 the battle rhythm if you would, of diplomatic activity to  
11 make that message clear, convey clear consequences, and show  
12 that if that activity didn't stop there would be further  
13 consequences.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We're going to get  
15 back to very specific examples of a PNG later on. But right  
16 now, I just want to shift gears for a moment and talk about  
17 the RRM.

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

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

26 And so, that decision can be taken to send a  
27 signal to the country. It does not have to be tied to the  
28 activity of an individual. And it's the prerogative of the



1 host government to decide if we choose to PNG a foreign  
2 diplomat, whether we communicate the reasons for that or we  
3 don't communicate the reasons for that.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And usually, and I  
5 understand there is no strict rule. But usually, if Canada  
6 decides to declare someone PNG, what is the foreign country  
7 reaction? To do the same to our diplomats based abroad, or -  
8 -?

9 **MR. WELDON EPP:** It is usually the case that  
10 countries will respond reciprocally by PNGing a Canadian  
11 diplomat.

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

14 **MR. WELDON EPP:** No, they don't. And in many  
15 cases, the presumed reason has nothing to do with the  
16 activity of the Canadian diplomat and everything to do with  
17 simply reciprocally exacting a cost from the Canadian  
18 government.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Can I add one point?  
21 And that is simply this is a long list of diplomatic tools  
22 against a chronology. The point I would like to add is this  
23 is not a full representation of what was going on between  
24 Canada and China at the time. So when you look at what  
25 you're going to do you need to look at that bigger picture as  
26 well. This was -- all of this played out at the same time as  
27 we were taking -- the government was taking a decision on 5G  
28 telecoms. It was all playing out at a time when the

1 government was taking multiple decisions on Chinese foreign  
2 investment in Canada. And if you're China, you're seeing all  
3 of this through the same lens, even though in -- as  
4 presented, this is one work stream. It's a much bigger  
5 relationship that we're trying to manage at the same time and  
6 so what you do and when you do it needs to take account of  
7 the broader picture.

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

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

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

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

21 In 2018, by that point there had been a lot  
22 of documentation -- documented cases of the use of  
23 disinformation as a threat vector against democracies. So  
24 the U.S. had done a documentation of 2016 in their elections.  
25 You had had the Macron leaks in 2017. And the U.K. had also  
26 done documentation of the use of disinformation within their  
27 Brexit referendum.

28 So with that context, there was a lot of

1 conversations at the time in needing to be more aware of what  
2 that threat looked like. What was the threat now that  
3 democracies faced?

4 And so Canada took that opportunity to reach  
5 agreement with the G7 that we needed to work together. We  
6 called it the Rapid Response Mechanism.

7 I think a few things that are key is that  
8 this -- the main focus was to be able to share information  
9 quickly, again a rapidly changing environment and threat. So  
10 how could we share that information? What were we seeing?  
11 What were we learning? It was -- disinformation was an area  
12 of focus and disinformation was publicly available. So it  
13 did give an opportunity that as a collective, as the G7, we  
14 could share, as soon as possible, the threats, the tactics,  
15 and what we were learning. And also what we were learning  
16 about how to detect the tools we were using, et cetera.

17 So again, it was about threats to democracy,  
18 but because of the context, an initial area of focus was  
19 disinformation.

20 To give a sense of how that actually becomes  
21 operational, so under -- again, Canada had the presidency of  
22 the G7 and there was definitely a real interest to make sure  
23 that unlike some G7 initiatives where you announce a working  
24 group or a focus on a particular issue and it may only last  
25 for the duration of that presidency year, or it may -- that  
26 leadership may move from one presidency to the next, which  
27 can sort of result in maybe a change in approach or the  
28 rhythm of focus may change over time, Canada offered, and it

1 was accepted, that we should lead the G7 RRM on an ongoing  
2 basis. We lead the Secretariat for the Rapid Response  
3 Mechanism, the G7 RRM.

4 What that provided was one Canadian  
5 leadership on a very important and evolving issue of concern,  
6 and it provided consistency of focus across the G7 to make  
7 sure that we were always building on what we were doing so we  
8 could continue to build our capabilities, we could continue  
9 to learn of the areas of interest, and we could continue to  
10 improve the information sharing.

11 What that then requires is we have the  
12 leadership of that, but to enable that information sharing,  
13 each country identifies a focal point. So this was your  
14 question of the divergence of different countries or how they  
15 may approach it.

16 Each country may, within their national  
17 system, have certain expertise or areas of interest where  
18 they want that information flow to be most effective. Like,  
19 the idea of a focal point is if we get information, we can  
20 quickly share it with the right part of another government  
21 entity. And that's where the focal points are the discretion  
22 of each G7 member to identify, and that's where you get  
23 different representation.

24 For Canada, that is within Global Affairs.  
25 We have an RRM Canada team, which I can explain, but other  
26 countries, for example Germany, their representative is the  
27 equivalent of -- is in their Ministry of Interior, which  
28 would be the equivalent of our Public Safety. Other teams

1 have it within their communications teams. So it depends on  
2 the area of focus, and therefore that's the focal point.

3 That then dictates some of the threats or the  
4 information that would be shared. So Germany is very  
5 interested in subnational threats. What is it looking within  
6 their national ecosystem and therefore on some of the working  
7 groups where the focus is on subnational threats, Canada's  
8 representation is actually Public Safety. Right? So we're  
9 making the connections with across the RRM -- the G7.

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

13 RRM Canada, and this is where some of the  
14 confusion comes, RRM Canada is then a particular expertise we  
15 developed within Global Affairs Canada.

16 So when this was created, as I said, there  
17 was a particular interest of disinformation. At that time,  
18 Global Affairs, we had actually just recently started to  
19 build this capability to understand how to map the  
20 disinformation landscape. So our area of interest,  
21 domestically, within Canada, and wanting to learn that threat  
22 space, was being able to understand disinformation tactics  
23 that were happening overseas, how were different countries  
24 using that threat, how is it becoming more visible, so that  
25 we could learn about it ourselves. And so that is when you  
26 talk about RRM Canada and our analytical capability. That is  
27 a particular team within Global Affairs.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. And we

1 know that as part of the plan to protect Canada's democracy,  
2 that online monitoring capability has been turned inwards for  
3 the purposes of monitoring elections, general elections, and  
4 now by-elections as well.

5 MS. TARA DENHAM: M'hm.

6 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: And we had some  
7 discussions with Ms. Wettlaufer yesterday about whether that  
8 was really what RRM's resources should be devoted to. So  
9 I'll ask you about that discussion as well, Ms. Denham, with  
10 reference to a document, CAN31488, please.

11 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN031488:

12 RE: RRM Canada within SITE - need to  
13 evolve based on changing mandates

14 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: So to situate you,  
15 Ms. Denham, what the document is that's going to be pulled up  
16 is an email that you authored in May 2023.

17 MS. TARA DENHAM: Yes.

18 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: And I think if we  
19 scroll down a little bit to page 2, we'll see the context of  
20 the discussion. There.

21 "Bottom line: I believe we need to  
22 continue to socialize the need to  
23 review the mandates in SITE with the  
24 end objective of removing domestic  
25 monitoring responsibilities [for  
26 RRM]."

27 And then I guess asking for support at the  
28 ADM and DM levels. And then the next bullet down, you have a

1 proposal about RRM remaining part of SITE, but no longer  
2 being responsible for that online monitoring.

3 So can you speak to the concerns there and  
4 where those discussions are?

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

11 So when we were -- when we established this  
12 mandate, as I said, our focus of the G7 RRM was threats to  
13 democracy and understanding that international landscape, and  
14 that was the mandate that we were given, which was for Global  
15 Affairs Canada to look outwards and understand that threat  
16 landscape.

17 But of course, I think what it represents is  
18 the reality that things change really quickly, the threat  
19 space is changing, and if the Government of Canada has a new  
20 and emerging capability to be able to detect and understand  
21 disinformation, we were asked to contribute to SITE as a  
22 founding member, and I think that makes absolute sense. We  
23 had that capability at the time and it hadn't been  
24 established anywhere else.

25 What you're seeing here is a number of years  
26 later, we have continued to increase this capability, but as  
27 a whole, as a community, we've all increased our  
28 understanding about the threat space, and where the RRM was a

1 new capability and sort of piloting that, I think we've  
2 demonstrated that there is a real value to understanding the  
3 disinformation landscape.

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

10 So I was suggesting, and this conversation  
11 has continued, as it should, we have filled this capability.  
12 We need to have a conversation about how that capability  
13 should continue and in what form within the Government of  
14 Canada.

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

21 If we're learning about what Russia's doing  
22 in other countries or China or other threat actors, we  
23 absolutely want to share the information. That should  
24 continue. But we need to have the conversation about  
25 monitoring the domestic landscape, which a foreign department  
26 should not be leading on that. However, we will always  
27 support while and as that capability is developed.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And those, we



1 understand, are ongoing discussions.

2 MS. TARA DENHAM: Yes, absolutely.

3 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Okay. The next  
4 topic I'd like to address with you briefly is cyber  
5 attribution.

6 So Ms. Court Clerk, if I can ask you to turn  
7 up CAN044468.

8 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN044468 0001:

9 Government of Canada's Framework for  
10 Public Attribution of Responsibility  
11 for Malicious Cyber Activity

12 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Ms. Denham, this is  
13 something you're very familiar with, I'm sure, the Cyber  
14 Attribution Framework.

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

18 MS. TARA DENHAM: Absolutely.

19 So this is our framework for cyber  
20 attribution. It is a process that is led by Global Affairs  
21 Canada but involves a number of departments based on their  
22 areas of expertise and responsibilities. And this was put in  
23 place in 2019.

24 And how the framework is used is ---

25 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Sorry, Ms. Denham.  
26 I'll just interrupt ---

27 MS. TARA DENHAM: Sure.

28 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: --- you for one

1      second to explain cyber attribution, we're talking about  
2      cyber acts as opposed to information manipulation. Is that  
3      right?

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

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

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

7                    There is -- yes. There's often a confusion  
8      that this information or that we could use these  
9      interchangeably, and I can explain why that wouldn't be the  
10     case.

11                    Actually, you know, one of the bases is in  
12     2015, there was actually the UN -- we did reach agreement  
13     within the UN system on a framework for responsible state  
14     behaviour in cyber space. Again, at that time, you can  
15     imagine the negotiations.

16                    We've referred to the importance of  
17     negotiations in a multilateral system. There was a  
18     recognition that we needed to have agreed-upon norms so that  
19     we could have responsible behaviour within the cyber space  
20     which was rapidly changing at that time as well.

21                    So the UN put that in place in 2015.

22                    In 2018, Canada, along with other countries,  
23     but a lot of Canadian leadership, did a lot of work to  
24     articulate that international law applied in cyber space as  
25     applicable elsewhere.

26                    With those two key pieces of a UN framework  
27     and the agreement that international law applies in cyber  
28     space, this was developed and introduced in 2019 so that we

1 could actually have a clear process when there was a cyber  
2 incident that was significant -- so again, not every cyber  
3 incident, but a cyber incident that could have a significant  
4 impact, be it an example, potentially targeting of critical  
5 infrastructure or some of these elements that could take down  
6 significant portions or could impact Canadian security of  
7 Canadian society.

8 We would have a framework established as to  
9 how we would go through the process to make sure, if we were  
10 going to actually call it out, and what were some of the  
11 actions.

12 But when you go through -- so this is the  
13 assess. We have to assess what happened. We have to  
14 consult. We make recommendations.

15 As you move through this document, you can  
16 actually see what are those important steps that have to be  
17 taken.

18 And we're scrolling.

19 So I'll start. One of them is, and a really  
20 important part, is the technical assessment. You know, this  
21 is with CSIS and CSE, and they work together to actually do a  
22 technical assessment, what was -- what did take place, do  
23 they have the evidence, the intelligence to actually  
24 demonstrate that a cyber incident took place. They have to  
25 do that documentation and they have to indicate whether there  
26 was a foreign -- you know, who was the actor behind it.

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Do they assess whether  
28 the threat had an impact, an actual impact, or that is

1 irrelevant as soon as there has been an attempt?

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

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

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

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I see.

14 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Just because there's an  
15 incident doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a  
16 significant impact or that something has been broken or that  
17 something has occurred.

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

20 Another important part is that there has to  
21 be an international legal assessment. I referenced the  
22 documents there at the core, which is the UN framework of  
23 responsible state behaviour and international law.

24 Again, malicious cyber activity does not  
25 necessarily mean it violates the agreed-upon international  
26 norms or international law. There may be activities that we  
27 may not like, but it does not mean that it has actually  
28 violated international law.

1           There's also a consultation with our domestic  
2 entities, Public Safety and National Defence, as to whether  
3 the incident would have any impact on any of their  
4 activities. And then that comes in with Global Affairs and  
5 we work with the whole community to do the full assessment  
6 along with a foreign policy assessment.

7           And we've heard a lot here already about  
8 needing to take into consideration, you know, what are the  
9 impacts on the bilateral relations, where are other countries  
10 at, what are their positions, are other countries willing to  
11 make a statement with us. If all of these assessments are  
12 that something happened, that we have an indication of the  
13 actor, that we have the evidence and actually did it violate  
14 international law, then we would make a recommendation as to  
15 what type of action should be taken.

16           I would note that this was put in place in  
17 2019 and one of our lessons that we're working through right  
18 now is at the top it actually talks about the fact that this  
19 is a public cyber attribution framework. I just want to make  
20 clear that one of the lessons that it doesn't always have to  
21 be public.

22           I think we've heard from Weldon and the  
23 Deputy, there's a lot of actions that we can take, and  
24 sometimes, depending on the objective you're trying to  
25 achieve, public attribution may not be the most effective  
26 means at that time. It may be that we want to work with  
27 other countries to engage directly with a country to indicate  
28 that we've seen certain actions. Like we have to, again, do

1 the same analysis.

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

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And what is the utility  
9 of making the attribution public?

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

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

18 It is that consolidation of a strong  
19 international grouping that is calling out behaviour that we  
20 have all agreed not to conduct, right. So that is putting on  
21 notice, it's calling out a country or an actor against those  
22 agreed-upon norms.

23 Another objective could be in a public space  
24 around education, making people aware that this is an action  
25 that has taken place.

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

1 And you could want to achieve a couple of  
2 those all at once, call out the actor, work with our allies  
3 to be very strong against this particular type of behaviour,  
4 educate international audiences, educate Canadian audiences.  
5 It could be a multitude of those. But you do think through  
6 in your analysis to recommend an action.

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

12 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely. That's  
13 correct.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And the last  
15 thing I'll ask you to comment on, you've already alluded to,  
16 actually, Ms. Denham, but there's no similar attribution  
17 framework for foreign information manipulation interference,  
18 FIMI. And I think you've noted there's no international  
19 convention on that. Is that the reason? Can you speak to  
20 that?

21 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yeah, so there's an  
22 international agreement, and I don't think in an environment  
23 in a multilateral setting we would ever be able to reach a  
24 definition of what disinformation or foreign information and  
25 acts that are acceptable or not, but that does not preclude  
26 Canada from wanting to continue to push this space forward.  
27 So we advocate for our Declaration on Information and  
28 Integrity. That's an example where we ask other countries to

1 sign onto this Declaration. And if countries sign on, one of  
2 those -- within that Declaration, one of the acts is to not  
3 participate in and to call out activities of foreign  
4 information manipulation, in an attempt to get more and more  
5 countries to agree that they won't participate in it, but  
6 they will join in calling it out. So we don't always have to  
7 rely on -- you know, it's not -- I don't think we would reach  
8 a UN agreement, but there's other means by which we can get  
9 countries to agree on wanting to take action. So that would  
10 be, you know, just an example of another area of Canadian  
11 leadership in this space.

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Is it a good moment for  
13 the break?

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** It's perfect because  
15 I'm about to start in on specifics, so I'll do that when we  
16 come back.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll take a 20-  
18 minutes break.

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

20 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,  
21 s'il vous plaît.

22 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
23 recess until 11:10. Cette séance de la Commission est  
24 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 11 h 10.

25 --- Upon recessing at 10:48 a.m./

26 --- La séance est suspendue à 10 h 48

27 --- Upon resuming at 11:14 a.m./

28 --- La séance est reprise à 11 h 14



1 THE REGISTRAR: Order please. À l'ordre, s'il  
2 vous plait.

3 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
4 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la  
5 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en  
6 session.

7 The time is 11:14 a.m. Il est 11 h 14.

8 --- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
9 affirmation :

10 --- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation :

11 --- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed/Sous le même serment :

12 --- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

13 --- MR. WELDON EPP, Resumed/ Sous la même affirmation :

14 --- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
15 affirmation :

16 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF/EXAMINATION EN-CHEF PAR  
17 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY (cont'd/suite):

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

25 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN023929 0001:

26 GAC Response to Foreign Interference  
27 - China Chronology/Cheat Sheet

28 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: And just scroll down

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

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

18 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Yes.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I-N-D? Okay.  
20 Government acronyms are bad. Diplomatic acronyms are a whole  
21 other level. Any case, so there's an assessment produced  
22 there on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in relation to Zhao Wei. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the  
23 Intelligence receives a package of reports from CSIS dating  
24 back to 2021 and produces an updated assessment. And on May  
25 4<sup>th</sup>, the Minister of Foreign Affairs summons the PRC  
26 ambassador for an in-person demarche, and eventually, Mr.  
27 Zhao Wei of PNG on May 8<sup>th</sup>. So I don't know if, Mr. Epp or  
28 Mr. Morrison, you prefer to take us through those events from

1 GAC's perspective?

2 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I can try. I was having  
3 a side conversation here about whether it was actually Mina,  
4 Minister Joly, or somebody else, who summoned the PRC  
5 ambassador. I think it was not MINA, I think it was me.

6 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: I think you might be  
7 right about that.

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

11 "...publicly declares Zhao Wei PNG  
12 for his role in targeting a Canadian  
13 MP and his family."

14 That's also an error.

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

22 In the spring of 2023, we began or continued  
23 internal deliberations about the lack of progress and what we  
24 needed to see from the Chinese side. And as Mr. Epp  
25 testified this morning, left all options on the table  
26 including the persona non grata tool. The *Globe and Mail*  
27 published an article which is reflected on this timeline I  
28 believe, on the 1st of May. After that, we sought -- as GAC,

1 we sought additional information on Mr. Zhao Wei.

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

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

18 We engaged in some diplomacy here in Ottawa,  
19 and our ambassador to China did the same thing in Beijing in  
20 an effort to try to convince the Chinese side that Mr. Zhao  
21 Wei's position had become untenable and to encourage them to  
22 voluntarily withdraw him. The benefit of that would be that  
23 we wouldn't have a tit for tat expulsion. That was an effort  
24 that ultimately failed, and so the key point was arrived at -  
25 - I've lost the date, around the 8th or 9th of May -- when I  
26 signed a memo to Minister Joly to recommending the expulsion  
27 of Mr. Zhao Wei.

28 That is a document that's available publicly,

1      or at least the front page of it is. It makes it clear that  
2      elements of what had been reported in the media were not  
3      correct, but that we were still fully confident that we would  
4      achieve our diplomatic objective in expelling Mr. Zhao Wei.  
5      So that was the recommendation I made to the minister.

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

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

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

24                    **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Sure. As I  
25     mentioned at the beginning of my presentation, one of the key  
26     roles of my function is to provide the intelligence that  
27     support policy decision making at Global Affairs Canada. And  
28     while my colleagues from the Asia branch under the leadership

1 of Mr. Epp, were at that point considering policy options in  
2 terms of various actions the government could do in relation  
3 to the situation that was happening on foreign interference,  
4 we were at that point looking at all of the intelligence we  
5 had in our holding in terms of Mr. Zhao Wei or any kind of  
6 related to foreign interference itself.

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

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

26 All that specific intelligence itself, it was  
27 not see change, it was not something very -- that was  
28 changing tremendously our assessment. But it was completing

1      the picture about how Mr. Zhao Wei functions and what exactly  
2      was his role and responsibility. So that was enabling us to  
3      provide further granularity, further detail on that specific  
4      issue itself. So very complimentary of what we already have.

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

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

10                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

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

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

23                   The second thing I would say is that as we  
24      evolve into issues of foreign interference, there's even  
25      further and further conversation about why this intelligent  
26      is limited to certain individuals and why it's not.

27                   So for example, if I see a very sensitive  
28      intelligence that is only limited to let's say myself and the

1 Deputy Minister, but looking at it I realize that it is  
2 material to the work of Me Lévêque for example, then I will  
3 have a conversation right away with the provider of that  
4 intelligence to make sure that we can expand the readership  
5 of that specific intelligence itself.

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

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

16 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN033567 0001:**

17 Foreign Interference by PRC Diplomat

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

23 "...the PRC official has been the  
24 subject of media reports suggesting  
25 he has conducted [FI] activities  
26 against a sitting member of  
27 Parliament..."

28 Then it says:



1 "The PRC conducts a range of foreign  
2 [...] activities in Canada."

3 And it goes through some of the previous  
4 diplomatic engagements. Then says:

5 "While elements of the recent media  
6 reporting about Mr. Zhao's activities  
7 are not accurate, there is no  
8 question that PRC interference  
9 activities [...] have continued..."

10 And in the end, you recommend that he be  
11 declared persona non grata.

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

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

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

15 Okay. So just to sum up then, from GAC's perspective,  
16 declaring Mr. Zhao Wei persona non grata was the culmination  
17 of ---

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely. We -- as  
19 has been outlined, this was an ongoing discussion, the  
20 behaviour was not changing. Multiple representations at  
21 levels up to and including Minister Joly and the Prime  
22 Minister, multiple vectors of interference, as has been  
23 described, and in the context of the publicity around the  
24 Globe article, a good opportunity to do this with maximum  
25 impact, not only vis a vis China, but also vis a vis other  
26 countries that may be contemplating or engaged in foreign  
27 interference in Canada.

28 So with all of that and the intelligence

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

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

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

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

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

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Diplomats have  
26 privileges and immunities in their host country. That's  
27 codified in the *1961 Vienna Convention*. And those privileges  
28 and immunities mean they're not subject to the laws of the

1      local jurisdiction. So classically, the things that get in  
2      the newspaper are speeding tickets, and parking tickets, and  
3      so on. Those are -- you have immunity from the local court  
4      system, immunity from prosecution.

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

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

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

23                     **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely. It depends,  
24     again, on the objective you're trying to achieve. Sometimes  
25     it has to do with the personal behaviour of the diplomat.  
26     Maybe that is foreign interference, maybe that is breaking  
27     other Canadian laws, drunk driving is one that we take very  
28     seriously in this country.

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

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

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

15 So Mr. Morrison, I think this will also go to  
16 you.

17 Starting at paragraph 37 again, and between  
18 37 and 43, it outlines the sequence or chronology of events.  
19 So I'm hoping you can take us through that, from GAC's  
20 perspective and your perspective specially?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** In June of last year,  
22 2023, Mr. Nijjar was murdered in the parking lot of his  
23 temple on the Lower Mainland. There were immediate rumours,  
24 at least, that this was somehow linked to the Government of  
25 India. That was not the read of our security agencies, at  
26 least at first. We then became aware of intelligence at the  
27 end of July that indicated otherwise, and so began to more  
28 actively explore a possible connection between Mr. Nijjar's

1 murder and the Government of India.

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

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

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

17 We said, explicitly, in a series of meetings,  
18 that we were confident that the truth would come out and it  
19 would come out either via the Canadian law enforcement  
20 investigation, via a parallel investigation that was going on  
21 in the United States, or it would come out via a media leak,  
22 and we wanted to try to get the Government of India to  
23 collaborate with us to -- so that justice would be served and  
24 so that it wouldn't happen again. And the Prime Minister  
25 raised that directly with Prime Minister Modi during the G7  
26 summit.

27 In the end, we were -- I'm sorry, during the  
28 G20 summit in New Delhi in the first or second week of

1 September last year.

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

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

13 The law enforcement investigation is ongoing.  
14 Four people have been arrested on the lower mainland and  
15 charged -- I believe charged with murder.

16 So that's where things stand.

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

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We PNG'd an intelligence  
21 official here in Ottawa. They reciprocated by PNG'ing a  
22 Canadian in New Delhi and then they escalated quite  
23 forcefully.

24 They -- there was suddenly an online  
25 information and influence campaign targeting our Prime  
26 Minister. They said they were going to revoke the diplomatic  
27 immunities of 41 Canadian diplomats, to which we responded,  
28 "If you could unilaterally revoke them, they wouldn't be

1 immunities”.

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

6 For a time, visas were frozen, and that led  
7 to a complete interruption of all travel to and from India,  
8 including business travel.

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

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

21 We are determined to continue working with  
22 the Indians to restore some semblance of the relationship  
23 that we've had, but we need some accountability for what  
24 happened.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Moving, then,  
26 from that incident to the next one, the next one is what's  
27 been known variously as PRC overseas stations, PRC overseas  
28 police stations.

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

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

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

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

19 The Canadian government, upon learning about  
20 this phenomenon, did a couple of things.

21 First of all, working together with domestic  
22 partners, our first business was to assess and validate this.  
23 And you know, as an aside to a point made earlier, part of  
24 our opportunity as a learning organization is to look for how  
25 we can work with partners outside of government, but this was  
26 a new partnership. And so you know, the validity, the  
27 credibility of the information needed to be assessed.

28 And so you'll know from the time zone that,



1 over the course of a few weeks, working with the RCMP and  
2 with the service, we validated, did -- the police stations  
3 that were identified in Canada, did they exist, were they  
4 doing what Safeguard Defenders said, could we validate the  
5 information.

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

8 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah.

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

11 So we'll go back to that chronology document,  
12 CAN023929.

13 Sort of a more -- we've already seen it. It  
14 may not be entirely correct in every sense, but it still does  
15 give a fairly good overview of -- there we go.

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

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

19 It shows a little bit the sequence I've been  
20 describing.

21 And so working with Philippe Lafortune, Mr.  
22 Lafortune's shop, working across government, we sort of  
23 verified the assessment.

24 We then began a series of diplomatic actions,  
25 and I would say those were in parallel to our domestic  
26 partners taking mitigation actions on -- and investigations  
27 under their own stream.

28 In our case, it was to call in the PRC

1 Ambassador and a couple things. One was to convey formally  
2 our absolute opposition to such activity on Canadian soil, to  
3 ask the Chinese government to formally confirm whether these  
4 exist and exist as part of their government ecosystem, and to  
5 insist that they cease and desist.

6 The, you know, existence of these stations,  
7 if I might zoom out for a second, was concerning to us for a  
8 couple of reasons.

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

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

21 These so-called police stations were offering  
22 what would in some ways appear to a diaspora as legitimate  
23 services. They were being managed by subnational elements of  
24 the Chinese government, so a provincial jurisdiction could  
25 provide those sorts of services.

26 Notwithstanding the fact that it is not legal  
27 under the Vienna Conventions to provide any form of  
28 government services outside of the premises or the remits of

1 an embassy or a consulate, so offside in any case, but to the  
2 public there might have been a legitimate zone in which these  
3 were just functioning normal, useful services to dual  
4 nationals, et cetera.

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

15 There's reference there to further  
16 representations in November. We did at one point, and -- we  
17 did at one point have a formal communication back from the  
18 Chinese side, effectively, acknowledging that they were aware  
19 of these by telling us that they had confirmed that they were  
20 closed. In parallel, the RCMP was doing its own  
21 investigations, as you'll see here. And in the mix, quite  
22 apart from calling in the Chinese Ambassador, making  
23 representations in China, making it clear that this activity  
24 had to stop, we also used that, as we've described earlier in  
25 this ongoing scaling up of demonstrating to the Chinese  
26 Government that any form of foreign interference on Canadian  
27 soil would not be tolerated. We took this opportunity to  
28 exact a particular consequence on the Chinese operations in

1 Canada by refusing a long sought for creation of a new  
2 position for a Communist Party liaison officer. We said  
3 that's never going to happen, that we will not agree to that  
4 because of the activities that your government has been  
5 undertaken [sic], and we refused visa for a particular  
6 individual who we had concerns about.

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

17 It also provided an opportunity, I would say,  
18 including through very active work, commendable work, I would  
19 say, by members of Parliament to put focus on this issue, and  
20 working through discussions on Parliament briefings to be  
21 able to raise public awareness, so that in whatever future  
22 formulation, something grey zone like this would be seen,  
23 recognized for what it is, reported in, and, effectively,  
24 neutered. So the public education opportunity here was also  
25 one that we used.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Just to go  
27 back on a couple of elements that you brought out there, so  
28 Canada was not the only country in which these types of

1 stations were operating; correct?

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

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

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

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

14 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Well, I would say two things  
15 are important here. One, the PRC Party state has a very  
16 coordinated approach to pursuing the national interests and  
17 the interests of the Party abroad, but it's a large country  
18 and it has diffuse capacity. And whether it's the MPS, the  
19 Ministry of Public Security, or the Ministry of State  
20 Security, or even offices, subnational offices that are  
21 managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called Foreign  
22 Affairs Offices, they're often given tasks or asked to  
23 experiment with particular missions. It's rare in most  
24 foreign ministries, but I would say also in the case of the  
25 Chinese MFA that somebody in Beijing in a position in the MFA  
26 or even their ambassador will know everything that's going on  
27 all the time, including by partner departments, which have a  
28 mission or a mandate to undertake work, including abroad. So

1 it's possible that the PRC Embassy wasn't entirely tracking  
2 what the MSS and the MPS were doing through subnational  
3 governments. But it's our understanding that the police  
4 station activity was not only officially endorsed, it was, in  
5 a sense, advertised on Chinese social media as a pilot, as a  
6 best practice by those subnational governments, talking about  
7 how they were able to provide these services abroad, and so  
8 on and so forth.

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

16 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah, and this was part of  
17 our representations to the Chinese Government. I would add,  
18 and I'm not reading quickly here, but it is the case that  
19 when we first called the ambassador in, we made it clear that  
20 we expected him to come in for this demarche with the  
21 accredited declared police liaison officer at the Chinese  
22 Embassy. And we made it very clear that, irrespective of  
23 whether they were aware of these, we held them accountable  
24 because our accreditation to activities by any branch or any  
25 level of the Chinese Government on Canadian soil is limited  
26 to the Vienna Conventions to their formal representation in  
27 the form of their embassies and their consulates. Anything  
28 beyond that, whether they knew or didn't know, is their

1      accountability and their responsibility. And so, you know,  
2      they, I think as I explained earlier, at some point came  
3      back, as we asked them to, to respond to our questions in  
4      writing and to acknowledge that they had to look into it and  
5      that they had -- they confirmed that these were shut down.

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

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

23                   Vienna Convention for Consular Relations is  
24      much more limited. There's historic reasons for this, but it  
25      is germane insofar as if you are assigned, as I previously  
26      have been, as a head of mission to a consulate, my activities  
27      at that consulate in Shanghai or in Guangzhou, or those of my  
28      staff are only covered under the Vienna Conventions with

1 privileges and immunities insofar as they are activities that  
2 pertain to our mandate, issuing visas, helping Canadians who  
3 need help abroad, promoting trade relations. And they  
4 pertain only to our formal activities in the consulate or in  
5 the carrying out of those duties. They do not cover us from,  
6 you know, what might happen with a car accident on the  
7 weekend, and so they're quite distinct. Those two are kind  
8 of bedrock international rules of the road, if I might say,  
9 to help governments navigate how and where and with what  
10 privileges we assign people to represent us abroad.

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

25 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And at the risk of  
26 stating the obvious again, I think for the benefit of those  
27 that are following at work, a country that is a signatory to  
28 such a Convention has to respect, actually, all the



1 obligations provided for in the Convention.

2 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely, it's  
3 international law.

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

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

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So picking up on  
15 that, Ms. Termorshuizen, actually, we know that GAC will  
16 sometimes send out circulars reminding Missions within Canada  
17 of what their obligations are, including before elections, is  
18 that correct?

19 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Correct.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Turning back,  
21 now, to specific incidents. We're going to go to some  
22 disinformation campaigns. And if we just scroll down,  
23 actually, on this document, we'll see the chronology. It's  
24 Case 4, the first one which is a recent -- relatively recent  
25 disinformation campaign targeting MP Chong.

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

28 But first, Ms. Court reporter, can you take

1      that document down? This one gives the overall chronology,  
2      but I'll ask you to pull up CAN24019.

3                      This, Ms. Denham, is the RRM Open Data  
4      Analysis:

5                                      "WeChat account activity targeting  
6                                      Canadian parliamentarian suggests  
7                                      likely foreign state involvement."

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

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

22                      The time period here -- again, because it's  
23      online, they were able to see the time period. So it was  
24      historic in nature from May 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>, even though they  
25      were watching for the by-elections. So again, that's a  
26      really important distinction; it's not at all related to the  
27      by-election but they were able to identify it because of the  
28      searches that they were doing.

1            At the time, they were not able to focus on  
2            the analysis that was taking place because we were  
3            prioritizing the work on the by-election, which is important  
4            to note. Once the by-election was over, the team was then  
5            able to do the analysis of what they could see.

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

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

23           So that, again, this is where you start to  
24           pull together the indicators that are time-specific. There  
25           is narratives that are almost the same or very similar used  
26           by accounts that do have a linkage to the PRC directly, and  
27           amplified or there is a participation by accounts that had  
28           never before commented.

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

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

21 In this instance, it is what we would  
22 describe as a clear case of time-limited accounts that were  
23 attributed to the PRC, amplifying information and trying to  
24 sort of augment that amplification in inauthentic ways.

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you.  
26 That was a very helpful overview.

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

1 So Ms. Denham, you've contrasted -- you've  
2 explained the linkage to the PRC and the probability of that  
3 linkage here, and you've contrasted that with the  
4 disinformation against Kenny Chiu in GE44.

5 MS. TARA DENHAM: M'hm.

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

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

15 So in preparing for that, we obviously had to  
16 write the reports, complete all of the thorough analysis, and  
17 we start to put together recommended actions. So as I've  
18 previously testified, based on the analysis we then think of,  
19 "Well, what are the objectives we need to achieve with this?  
20 How is that best to take place?" I would say that this was  
21 the first time that RRM Canada was actually recommending that  
22 we should publicize our findings within Canada, and so the  
23 team put together a recommended package as to what that would  
24 be. So here's the report, here's our analysis, here's our  
25 recommendation based on the objectives we think we should  
26 achieve, and that was recommended up to the DM CIR, the newly  
27 established Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence  
28 Response. So that was where we made the recommendation to DM

1 CIR in terms of moving forward.

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

12           **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay, thank you.  
13 And you mentioned that as part of that, you -- GAC debriefed  
14 Mr. Chong personally.

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

17           **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Correct.

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

20           **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** So it was very  
21 important to do because it was clear, as Ms. Denham  
22 described, that this was actually a very specific campaign to  
23 discredit Mr. Chong. And so it was important, as we thought  
24 about what the appropriate actions would be, that he would be  
25 made aware of this campaign.

26           We also wanted to reassure him the campaign  
27 didn't suggest any type of threat against him or his family,  
28 so there was no danger, from what we could see, but it was



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

8 In this one, there was -- for Tencent, they,  
9 you know, thanked us for the information, but that was the  
10 end of the interaction with Tencent.

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

15 The document I would like pulled up here is  
16 CAN25903.

17 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN025903 0001:**

18 Probable PRC "Spamouflage" Campaign  
19 Targets Dozens of Canadian MPs in  
20 DisInformation Campaign, as well as  
21 Chinese-language Commentator in  
22 Vancouver

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Maybe while that's  
24 getting pulled up, Ms. Denham, can you explain what  
25 spamouflage is?

26 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So spamouflage, I  
27 think in the last -- any -- there was the explanation, but  
28 essentially spamouflage is a combination of the word spam and



1 camouflage.

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

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

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So sort of a  
15 spray approach?

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

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

25 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So spamouflage is a well  
26 documented technique. It is not seen to be particularly  
27 effective at this point. That is evolving. As I've already  
28 said, these spaces evolve rather quickly. But at the time,

1 it was not particularly effective because a lot of the  
2 translation, the words that are being used, the translation  
3 isn't very good, but it is documented that it's a tactic used  
4 by the PRC to move from, you know, using Chinese language in  
5 WeChat to trying to get those narratives sprayed into other  
6 language -- other platforms that are English or other  
7 dominant languages.

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

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

24 But as they were digging in, of course you  
25 start to see how is that taking place? And on this  
26 particular campaign, it was primarily targeting an  
27 individual, a Canadian individual in Vancouver, his name is  
28 there, Mr. Liu. He had been very -- he has strong opinions

1 about the PRC and had been very vocal about those opinions,  
2 and so what had happened is that his persona, his persona had  
3 been sort of taken over. It wasn't his official accounts,  
4 but they had duplicated them and started to create content  
5 that looked like he was the one that was actually saying very  
6 disparaging remarks about the political individuals, the  
7 political actors. So again, you can see there, it was about  
8 referencing political corruption, sexual scandals.

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

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

26 The last part of your question was what did  
27 we do about it. So again, it was doing the full analysis of  
28 the campaign. And we had actually learned quite a bit, going

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

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

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

22 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN048037:**

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

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And while she's  
27 doing that, so just to go back on some of what you said, Ms.  
28 Denham, sounds like if there was sort of a dual purpose here,

1 one of those purposes was really transnational repression  
2 against this particular dissident, ---

3 MS. TARA DENHAM: M'hm.

4 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: --- and that may  
5 have been almost the dominant purpose of this. So less an  
6 instance of political foreign interference than a way of  
7 getting at this dissident? Is that fair?

8 MS. TARA DENHAM: Yes. We absolutely did see  
9 this as a form of transnational repression leveraging the  
10 disinformation tactic.

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

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

25 So the impact for the individual, as we had  
26 assessed, we assessed it had been likely very high. In the  
27 conversations, he relayed that it was very high for him. And  
28 that meant that was hugely important for him to know that we

1 had identified it and that we had engaged with the PRC on  
2 this issue.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. You're ahead  
4 of me.

5 So this is a lessons learned from  
6 Spamouflage.

7 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I was going to ask  
9 you what lessons may have been learned from the experience  
10 with that Spamouflage.

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

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

24 Translating it into simplified Chinese so  
25 that it's accessible to the communities that may -- that may  
26 have seen this and so that they can also understand the  
27 tactic. We've always -- we've been engaging with social  
28 media platforms for a number of years, and so this is

1 actually representing that we're continuing to improve this.

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

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

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

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

24 So as an officer, it's always important to  
25 hear where they're feeling the frustrations. While I didn't  
26 see this document, I did engage with conversations with the  
27 team where they expressed some of these concerns and then I  
28 was actually able to relay DM CIR is a new entity, you know,

1 they're also learning how to move forward, but what we need  
2 to focus on as a team is how can we get the best products  
3 together to make the strongest recommendations to move as  
4 fast as possible. That's what we want to be able to do to  
5 support the governance process for their continued  
6 improvements.

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

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

13 We can take that document down now.

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

25 So can I ask you to speak to that a little  
26 bit, and specifically with reference to those different  
27 perspectives that may be coming from different aspects of  
28 government?



1 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Certainly.

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

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

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

15 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: I hope it's part of it.

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

21 So there's lots of hospitality, there are  
22 lots of receptions, there are lots of events that are  
23 attended, and so one forms one's network and once that  
24 network is formed, one plumbs the network for all kinds of  
25 information that is then sent back.

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

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

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

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

19 We do not do things that are covert, we do  
20 not do things that are clandestine, and we do not do things  
21 that are coercive because that would be foreign interference.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And again,  
23 coming back to the discussions that have been had within the  
24 Commission's proceedings, we've had several exchanges on  
25 particular instances that may or may not be foreign  
26 interference.

27 One thing we know is that in the CSIS  
28 Institutional Report that the Commission requested, there

1 were a number of suspected instances or identified instances  
2 of foreign interference.

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

5 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.0044 :

6 Canadian Security Intelligence  
7 Service (CSIS) Stage 2 Institutional  
8 Report

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

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

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** So I think Bo probably  
25 has dark circles under his eyes and I know I do because this  
26 was a long, but I think very worthwhile, perspective in  
27 bringing into a single room senior-most people in government  
28 that are dealing with this issue and actually going case by

1      case. And you are correct that the number of instances  
2      initially brought into the room was very high, in the  
3      hundreds. I think when I became involved, it was down to  
4      about 60, and after the stress test of this interdepartmental  
5      effort at the Deputy Minister level focused on CSIS's  
6      definition of what is actually foreign interference as  
7      opposed to foreign influence. We ended up at seven and then  
8      six instances of major potential foreign interference.

9              So what was learned during the process? I  
10     think that -- I hope I can say that our colleagues from the  
11     security agencies gained a greater appreciation of what is  
12     considered legitimate diplomatic activity and what is not. I  
13     certainly, as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, gained a  
14     greater appreciation of the fact that a single instance is  
15     sometimes the wrong focus. You have to look at foreign  
16     interference as a -- not as a snapshot, but as a movie reel,  
17     which can be seen over time. And what starts as influence  
18     may at some point cross the line into interference. There is  
19     a cumulative corrosive effect of inappropriate actions by  
20     diplomats in Canada. So I hope I can say the perspectives  
21     melded and came down to the list that is in the document on  
22     the screen.

23             I will say that this -- seeing the world  
24     through slightly different eyes is a feature and not a bug in  
25     our system. I am happy to live in a country in which an  
26     agency such as CSIS with a mandate to focus on threats  
27     pursues that mandate with vigour, which is to say that CSIS  
28     has a lens, and it looks at activity here in Canada and

1      elsewhere in terms of what harm could come to Canada and to  
2      Canadians. GAC takes a broader view. The aperture is wider.  
3      We described at the outset when we were introducing ourselves  
4      the experience that the people at this table at least bring  
5      to bear on international relations, on diplomatic activity,  
6      and on what constitutes legitimate diplomatic activity and  
7      where the lines get crossed. So I do think that this entire  
8      process has been healthy for our community in building a  
9      greater degree of shared understanding.

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

16            **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** There was a Uyghur -- or  
17      a motion put forward by MP Michael Chong in February, I  
18      believe, of 2021, or at least it was coming to a vote in  
19      February of 2021, that would declare the activities taking  
20      place in Xinjiang in China against the Uyghur population to  
21      be genocide. This motion was building, it was going to be  
22      put to a vote. There's a summary, I believe, in the public  
23      documents prepared for this Commission. In the period up to  
24      and including the vote, China pulled out all stops to try to  
25      swing the vote in its direction. They -- officials of the  
26      Chinese Government, the embassy here, consulates in different  
27      countries called MPs. They called members of the diaspora  
28      community that they knew were contacts of MPs, and they tried

1 to convince, tried to influence MPs to vote against this  
2 motion. It wasn't a successful diplomatic campaign, since  
3 the motion passed 266 to 0 by my recollection.

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

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

22 So after the motion, there was some tit for  
23 tat sanctioning that Canada and China engaged in. And we had  
24 to discuss with our colleagues at CSIS that, in fact,  
25 economic sanctions of the type that China deployed against  
26 Canada were a legitimate tool of state craft. We do it.  
27 They're allowed to do it. And that sometimes those sanctions  
28 involve not only the principal, but the principal's family

1 members. It depends on the individual sanction regime.  
2 Canada doesn't sanction family members, at least as part of a  
3 package. The United States and China do.

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

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

13 « Je crois que c'est important dans  
14 une démocratie qu'un service de  
15 renseignement ne soit pas la seule  
16 voix ou la voix qui va déterminer...  
17 qui va être déterminante sur tous les  
18 enjeux. »

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./PIÈCE 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. À l'ordre,  
17 s'il vous plaît.

18 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
19 recess until 2:30 p.m. Cette séance de la Commission est  
20 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 14 h 30

21 --- Upon recessing at 1:09 p.m./

22 --- La séance est suspendue à 13 h 09

23 --- Upon resuming at 2:31 p.m./

24 --- La séance est reprise à 14 h 31

25 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,  
26 s'il vous plaît.

27 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
28 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la



1 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en  
2 session.

3 The time is 2:31 p.m. Il est 14 h 31.

4 --- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
5 affirmation :

6 --- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation :

7 --- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed/Sous le même serment :

8 --- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

9 --- MR. WELDON EPP, Resumed/ Sous la même affirmation :

10 --- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
11 affirmation :

12 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: So first one is counsel  
13 for Michael Chong.

14 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR  
15 MR. GIB van ERT:

16 MR. GIB van ERT: My questions concern Mr.  
17 Morrison's evidence.

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

25 As I understand your evidence from this  
26 morning and from the summaries that you adopted, you did not  
27 consider that the concerns that CSIS were raising amounted to  
28 true instances of foreign interference. Have I understood

1 your evidence correctly?

2 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No.

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

5 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No, you have not  
6 completely characterized what I was trying to say. Without  
7 -- and I don't think I'm allowed to get into the specifics of  
8 those three documents. What we have put in the summary --  
9 and this is a consensus view, it includes CSIS and the other  
10 parts of the country's intelligence apparatus -- is that  
11 there was no foreign interference committed by Zhao Wei with  
12 respect to Michael Chong.

13 MR. GIB van ERT: All right. Well, let me  
14 take you to your witness statement.

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

17 All right. Paragraph 20:

18 "Mr. Morrison stated that the best  
19 example of an instance of differing  
20 perspectives was illustrated by the  
21 CSIS reporting in relation to the PRC  
22 response to the Uyghur Motion  
23 discussed above. Mr. Morrison said  
24 that much of the intelligence he saw  
25 on the PRC's response framed the  
26 response as [foreign interference],  
27 when in his view, such activities  
28 were legitimate diplomacy."

1 That's your evidence, right? That's what you  
2 adopted this morning.

3 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

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

8 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No, and I'm -- this will  
9 be a difficult dialogue because I know exactly what the CSIS  
10 intelligence reports say and I'm not certain they are part of  
11 the evidence.

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

15 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

16 MR. GIB van ERT: So if the Court Operator  
17 will turn up CAN3465\_R01.

18 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN003465 R01:

19 Defensive briefings to two Members of  
20 Parliament regarding PRC foreign  
21 interference activity PCO

22 MR. GIB van ERT: This isn't one of the three  
23 instruments; this is actually the IMU from the 30<sup>th</sup> of May,  
24 but I think it will help us get to this point. So this ---

25 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: And if I may, I just  
26 want to warn you; take your time to make sure that if an  
27 objection has to be raised by the AG that they will have the  
28 time to do that, based on national security. Or if you feel

1 uncomfortable divulging something because you're not sure,  
2 just let me know.

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

4 **MR. GIB van ERT:** The Commissioner is  
5 becoming wily to my tricks.

6 All right. So the IMU, the subject line  
7 right at the top, "Defensive briefings to two Members of  
8 Parliament regarding...foreign interference activity." All  
9 right?

10 And then if you'll go to page 2, please,  
11 Court Operator? Thank you.

12 It advises under the wording, "Issue":

13 "CSIS will be conducting defensive  
14 briefings to [two MPs] to sensitize  
15 both on foreign interference threats  
16 posed by... [PRC]."

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

20 "PRC maintains an active interest in  
21 MPs Chong and Chiu. CSIS assesses  
22 that both are [something] targets of  
23 PRC foreign interference threat  
24 actors." (As read)

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

28 "Chong has been personally affiliated

1 with many efforts to highlight PRC's  
2 threat activities and Chiu is the MP  
3 of a riding." (As read)

4 And then,

5 "CSIS' [blank] interest in the two  
6 MPs from multiple PRC threat actors,  
7 including the Ministry of State  
8 Security." (As read)

9 So what I'm trying to get at here is that I  
10 understand from this document and others that the Commission  
11 has seen, that PRC considered this to be foreign  
12 interference. I understand that you didn't agree, but I want  
13 to just be clear about this. You had a disagreement with  
14 CSIS about whether or not this was foreign interference.

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

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

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

10                   That's past tense.

11                           "...on the PRC's response was framed  
12 as FI, when, in his view, such  
13 activities were legitimate  
14 diplomacy." (As read)

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

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

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

23 -

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

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

26           **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** My views on foreign  
27 interference and my deep dive into foreign interference began  
28 in -- later in the year in 2021 ---

1 MR. GIB van ERT: All right.

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

5 MR. GIB van ERT: Right.

6 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Here, and this is a  
7 document that if I read the top of it, which we scrolled  
8 through very quickly, is based upon my interview or in-camera  
9 testimony of July or August of this year. In that testimony  
10 or interview, we were asked about the Uyghur Motion, and I've  
11 already testified this morning that prior to the Uyghur  
12 Motion, there was a lot of active diplomacy, which was not  
13 successful, and that after the Uyghur Motion, China took  
14 steps to sanction MPs.

15 MR. GIB van ERT: Right.

16 MR. DAVID MORRISON: And ---

17 MR. GIB van ERT: And, sorry, just to stop  
18 you there, whenever you formed the view, at some point or  
19 other, you came to think that that kind of sanctioning was  
20 not foreign interference and that CSIS was mistaken to think  
21 otherwise.

22 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I've testified earlier  
23 today that the application of economic sanctions is not  
24 foreign interference.

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

26 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Canada does it ---

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

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

1 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: But just let ---

2 MR. GIB van ERT: --- please answer ---

3 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: --- let him finish ---

4 MR. GIB van ERT: --- this question ---

5 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: --- his answer and come  
6 back with your question. Just I think in all fairness he has  
7 to finish ---

8 MR. GIB van ERT: But I am ---

9 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: --- the sentence.

10 MR. GIB van ERT: --- going to ask you,  
11 Commissioner, for help in insisting that Mr. Morrison answer  
12 my question.

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

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

17 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: --- just make sure to  
18 let him finish his sentence.

19 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I was going to finish  
20 very quickly. I was simply going to point out that economic  
21 sanctions are part of the diplomatic toolkit deployed by many  
22 countries, including China and including Canada.

23 MR. GIB van ERT: Mr. Morrison, is it your  
24 opinion that CSIS, when it characterized the threat posed to  
25 Mr. Chong and his family as foreign interference, is it your  
26 opinion that CSIS was wrong about that and that it was  
27 instead legitimate diplomatic activity? That's a yes ---

28 MR. DAVID MORRISON: It would ---



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

2 MR. DAVID MORRISON: It may be a yes or no  
3 question, but this is a complex issue, and I have -- I am  
4 aware that a set of documents can say multiple things about  
5 multiple people. And the consensus view of the security and  
6 intelligence community in this country is that Mr. Zhao Wei  
7 did not engage in foreign interference activities with  
8 respect to Michael Chong.

9 MR. GIB van ERT: Commissioner, the question  
10 I asked the witness was not what the consensus view is. I  
11 want to know what Mr. Morrison's view was, in particular, did  
12 he disagree with CSIS. It's a very straightforward question.  
13 I am asking you to please direct the witness to answer the  
14 question I've asked.

15 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I disagree with the  
16 characterization of economic sanctions as foreign  
17 interference. I am not allowed to say whatever else might  
18 have been in those documents.

19 MR. GIB van ERT: Let me put it this way.  
20 If, as CSIS appears to have assessed, the collection of  
21 information about Michael Chong and his family was done  
22 clandestinely, or covertly, or deceptively, do you agree that  
23 it would then cross the line from legitimate foreign  
24 influence and become foreign interference?

25 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Anything that is done  
26 covertly, clandestinely, or coercively does cross the line.

27 MR. GIB van ERT: Thank you. So the mere  
28 collection of information about Mr. Chong and his family, if

1 it's not done from open sources -- because I understand your  
2 point. What I took you to be saying in your summaries is --  
3 and indeed this morning, Canada's diplomatic core all the  
4 time when in missions abroad will learn more about local  
5 politicians and try to understand who they are, what their  
6 interests are. If they have family in this country, you'd be  
7 interested in that. All of that is legitimate, so long as it  
8 is done in an open way and it's not done covertly or  
9 clandestinely or deceptively. Have I understood that right?

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

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

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

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

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Absolutely.

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. If instead Mr. Zhao  
28 was sharing that information with the Ministry of State

1 Security in China, that would be a different matter all  
2 together. Don't you agree?

3 MR. DAVID MORRISON: It may or may not be.

4 MR. GIB van ERT: It may or may not be. All  
5 right.

6 MR. DAVID MORRISON: In China ---

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

8 MR. DAVID MORRISON: If I can just finish.

9 MR. GIB van ERT: Yes.

10 MR. DAVID MORRISON: In China, the Ministry  
11 of State Security, and perhaps other Ministries, are allowed  
12 to initiate economic sanctions. Doesn't have to stay within  
13 the foreign ministry lane. So it really depends on the  
14 intended use of the information.

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

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

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

26 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

27 MR. GIB van ERT: Right. If that's not true,  
28 it crosses the line?

1 MR. DAVID MORRISON: If it is done  
2 clandestinely, covertly, or coercively.

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

7 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I will take your word  
8 for it.

9 MR. GIB van ERT: I can call it up for you if  
10 you'd like.

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

13 MR. GIB van ERT: Sure. Let's pull it up.  
14 The Court Operator, please CAN.DOC17. Thank  
15 you.

16 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.0017:

17 Canadian Security Intelligence  
18 Service (CSIS) Institutional Report -  
19 unclassified

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

22 "The term 'threats to the security of  
23 Canada' is defined in section 2 of  
24 the [*CSIS*] Act to mean..."

25 And it's (b) that matters:

26 "foreign-influenced activities within  
27 or relating to Canada..."

28 And I'll just stop there to say if all

1 Parliament said was that, that would be offside international  
2 law, because influence per say is not problematic, but you've  
3 got to go on; right?

4 "foreign-influenced activities within  
5 or relating to Canada that are  
6 detrimental to the interests of  
7 Canada and are clandestine or  
8 deceptive..."

9 This was the point you were making earlier.

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

11 Right. So again, my suggestion to you, sir,  
12 was that these are the considerations that govern CSIS as  
13 well. It is looking for is the thing that is being done  
14 being done in a way that involves clandestine or deceptive  
15 activity or a threat to any person?

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

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

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

1 MR. GIB van ERT: Let me correct that then.  
2 You assess it differently now?

3 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I believe that CSIS  
4 assesses it differently now as well. That's the purpose of  
5 the Consolidated Summary. I will say that the kind of intel  
6 report that you're referring to but that we can't discuss  
7 right now, goes through less of a rigorous stress testing  
8 than the interaction we have just had with the entire  
9 community on the difference between foreign interference and  
10 foreign influence.

11 And I would also point out that there is a  
12 broader narrative here which we tried to bring out around the  
13 issue of tit for tat economic sanctions. And what is  
14 absolutely true is that we sanctioned Chinese officials, they  
15 threatened to retaliate, they did retaliate, and Mr. Chong  
16 and other members of Parliament were subjected to sanctions.

17 MR. GIB van ERT: Yes, I think we're all  
18 agreed that if this were just about economic sanctions, it's  
19 not contrary to international law and it couldn't be  
20 characterized as foreign interference, but when CSIS sent  
21 those memos, including the IMU I showed you, it was  
22 describing it as foreign interference. So I think that  
23 speaks for itself.

24 But we're going to have to move on, because  
25 my time is draining away here.

26 In the witness statements, there is an  
27 observation to the effect that the issue of whether or not  
28 Mr. Chong and his family were being targeted was not elevated

1 to the Deputy Minister's Intelligence Committee. Do you  
2 recall that? That that wasn't done? No one took any steps  
3 to elevate the Chong issue to the Deputy Ministers  
4 Intelligence Committee.

5 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I believe that's  
6 correct.

7 MR. GIB van ERT: All right.

8 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I believe that's what  
9 Vincent Rigby testified to.

10 MR. GIB van ERT: Yes, that's right. And  
11 could you explain to the Commissioner who had the power to  
12 elevate it to that committee?

13 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Any Deputy Minister that  
14 was a member of the Committee could bring intelligence before  
15 that Committee.

16 MR. GIB van ERT: Right. And Mr. Rigby was  
17 an NSIA at the time.

18 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

19 MR. GIB van ERT: Could he have done it as  
20 well?

21 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes, Mr. Rigby -- any  
22 member was empowered to bring intelligence before the  
23 Committee.

24 MR. GIB van ERT: Right. You weren't a  
25 member at the time, if I understand correctly?

26 MR. DAVID MORRISON: It would depend on the  
27 exact time frame.

28 MR. GIB van ERT: I'm talking about early

1 2021.

2 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I don't even know -- I  
3 don't ---

4 MR. GIB van ERT: You were Foreign Policy  
5 Advisor ---

6 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

7 MR. GIB van ERT: --- to the Prime Minister  
8 at that time?

9 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I occasionally went to  
10 what was then called DMIC. Under the way that that that  
11 particular committee operated, we usually stress tested much  
12 broader pieces of analysis. The committee that it would go  
13 to now is called DM CIR, Deputy Ministers Committee on  
14 Intelligence Response. So they had different mandates. The  
15 newer mandate -- the newer committee has been set up to  
16 ensure that any intelligence that demands response by an  
17 individual agency or collectively is brought to the senior-  
18 most -- the attention of the senior-most officials. That  
19 wasn't the case for the Deputy Ministers Intelligence  
20 Committee that was operative in the spring of 2021.

21 MR. GIB van ERT: All right. Fine.

22 If the Court Operator would turn up WIT138,  
23 please? Paragraph 15, please. Thank you.

24 It says here:

25 "Mr. Morrison testified [...] from his  
26 interactions with representatives of  
27 the PRC, his view is that the PRC  
28 feels totally misunderstood by Canada



1 [and it's] trying to rehabilitate  
2 [its] reputation..."

3 And then at paragraph 16, concerning the --  
4 oh, just leave it there, please. Thank you.

5 Concerning the targeting paper. And you  
6 spoke to this this morning. You say you --

7 "...the PRC is not used to dealing with  
8 the legislative branch in Canada, and  
9 they are unfamiliar with how it  
10 works. They are used to [dealing  
11 with] the executive..."

12 Sir, I want to suggest to you that that is  
13 totally infantilizing of a country, which by all accounts,  
14 all the witnesses that have come before us, is a  
15 sophisticated, powerful, complex adversary, extremely  
16 knowledgeable about matters, and surely is capable of taking  
17 on board the sorts of things that 12 years old all over this  
18 country learn about how the democratic process works in this  
19 country. It's just simply not possible, sir, to suggest that  
20 PRC, with all their talent, and ability, and sophistication,  
21 can't figure out how legislatures work in democratic  
22 countries.

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I stand by what I said  
24 today and in the summary. My experience is captured in what  
25 I've already said.

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** You go on in this paragraph  
27 to say:

28 "As Canada's stance towards China has

1 hardened..."

2 And I want to suggest to you that it's surely  
3 exactly backwards. Surely it's China's stance towards Canada  
4 that has hardened. Are you aware of a single instance of  
5 Canada committing foreign interference on Chinese soil?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No.

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** No. Neither am I. And so  
8 witnesses have repeatedly told the Commission that Canada,  
9 far from being hard, is the weakest link in the Five Eyes,  
10 that our culture is susceptible to foreign interference  
11 because we are soft, that we need to increase our resilience.  
12 But you seem to be saying that it's the other way around and  
13 that we're being a little too hard on China, and as a result,  
14 they feel misunderstood.

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Two things can be true  
16 at the same time. I think we should be very robust in our  
17 foreign interference mechanisms, and we've tried to testify  
18 to how we have adapted, we've tried to testify today into how  
19 we've adapted.

20 And I do not disagree that China is a  
21 powerful, often adversarial, country that has interests that  
22 are increasingly divergent from our own.

23 But it can also be true that China feels  
24 totally misunderstood by Canada and other countries and that  
25 is my professional opinion, garnered from my various  
26 interactions with Chinese diplomats in Beijing, in Canada,  
27 and a range of discussions with foreign interlocutors at very  
28 senior levels in Washington, in London, and elsewhere.

1 MR. GIB van ERT: I'll ask the Court Operator  
2 to put up WIT145. And it's paragraph 3, please?

3 We see this in paragraph 3 and also in  
4 paragraph 4. And in fact, you used this phrase this morning.  
5 You talk about "PRC's activities in Xinjiang". It's about  
6 eight lines down in paragraph 3, and it's also at the very  
7 end of paragraph 4, "PRC's activities in Xinjiang". What  
8 activities in Xinjiang are you referring to, sir?

9 MR. DAVID MORRISON: The consensus view by  
10 the international community including the United Nations, is  
11 that China is engaging in activities that include -- are  
12 tantamount to concentration camps. There is child labour.  
13 I'm not an expert on Xinjiang, but it is a very pressing  
14 international issue, and Canada has made its view on the  
15 situation in Xinjiang, as it's often called, clear  
16 repeatedly.

17 MR. GIB van ERT: Yes.

18 MR. DAVID MORRISON: That's what it meant by  
19 activities in Xinjiang.

20 MR. GIB van ERT: In fact, I think you said  
21 this morning that the Parliament -- the House of Commons  
22 voted 266 to nil to describe those activities as genocide.  
23 Is that right?

24 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

25 MR. GIB van ERT: Why didn't you just call it  
26 genocide?

27 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Genocide has an  
28 extraordinarily high legal threshold. Again, I'm not an

1 international lawyer. I have a personal conviction based  
2 upon recent events in the Middle East that the legal  
3 threshold for genocide is high for a reason. People bandy  
4 the term about in my view, inappropriately.

5 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Did Parliament bandy it  
6 about inappropriately in your view?

7 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not going to offer  
8 an opinion on Parliament will do what Parliament does. I am  
9 not -- cannot offer a view on whether what is going on there  
10 is genocide or not.

11 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. Let's go please  
12 to WIT104, paragraph 27.

13 So this concerns the decision to deem Wei  
14 Zhao a persona non grata. And you've explained here that  
15 there was a sequence of events and numerous démarches and so  
16 on. And you've giving what you understand to be the  
17 background to the decision to PNG Wei Zhao. What I  
18 understand you to be saying here is that the Government of  
19 Canada knew long before, maybe years, two years before the  
20 PNG decision, that Wei Zhao was a foreign interference threat  
21 actor. Did the Canadian Government, in your view, know that  
22 Wei Zhao was engaged in foreign interference month, even  
23 years before the decision to PNG him?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think the security  
25 services knew, or had the view that Mr. Zhao Wei was engaging  
26 in activities that crossed the line into foreign  
27 interference. Yes, he arrived in 2018, and my understanding  
28 is that as early as 2019 he came to the attention of the

1 security services. So yes, there was a view within some  
2 elements of the security apparatus that he was not engaged in  
3 only diplomatic activity.

4 **MR. GIB van ERT:** But it didn't make its way  
5 to the political executive until the *Globe* story came out?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The -- there are many  
7 streams of information, and many streams of information on --  
8 that are collected by intelligence agencies. There was no  
9 particular -- my colleague Phil Lafortune, has said there was  
10 no particular smoking gun when it came to Mr. Zhao Wei, when  
11 we looked at it as Global Affairs Canada. When we got to the  
12 stage of looking at individual names, we saw a pattern of  
13 activity that made us comfortable in the context of all of  
14 our other discussions with China about foreign interference,  
15 with PNGing Mr. Zhao Wei.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Commissioner, I am nearly  
17 done, but I expect I will probably need about four more  
18 minutes.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Okay. Go ahead.

20 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you.

21 If you'll pull up -- Court Operator, if  
22 you'll please put up CAN33567? We saw this this morning.  
23 This was your advice to the Minister about the decision to  
24 PNG Wei Zhao. The Canadian public, I think it is fair to  
25 say, understood that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May when the Minister  
26 announced that Wei Zhao was persona non grata, the government  
27 had taken that decisive step in response to the threat to Mr.  
28 Chong and his family. But what I've understood you to say

1 this morning is that it really didn't have anything to do  
2 with Michael Chong and his family and the targeting, it was  
3 other reasons. Have I got your evidence right about that?

4 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** The evidence is that Mr.  
5 Zhao Wei did not engage in foreign interference activities  
6 with respect to Michael Chong. We've gone on a considerable  
7 length this morning about how we deploy the tool of an  
8 expulsion, and we were very comfortable after considering a  
9 number of alternatives in terms of the number of people to  
10 expel and who to expel, we were very comfortable expelling  
11 the person we did.

12 **MR. GIB van ERT:** So we had all understood, I  
13 dare say, that this was in response to the story that Michael  
14 Chong and his family were being targeted, but you say no  
15 actually, it wasn't in response to that, it was for other  
16 reasons. That's the gist of your evidence to the  
17 Commissioner; isn't it?

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes, it is.

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. This document that I  
20 have pulled up, if you look at the second paragraph in the  
21 middle, it says -- well, actually, let me just show you the  
22 first paragraph. It says, "The memo outlines recommended  
23 next steps". And it says, "...specifically on the reported  
24 conduct of an accredited...diplomat...". I take reported to  
25 mean in the *Globe and Mail*. Is that what that refers to,  
26 sir?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm sorry, which  
28 sentence?

1 MR. GIB van ERT: It's the second sentence in  
2 the first paragraph:

3 "...specifically on the reported  
4 conduct of an  
5 accredited...diplomat..."

6 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Okay. Yes.

7 MR. GIB van ERT: Yes. And that report is  
8 referring to the media report; right?

9 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

10 MR. GIB van ERT: Okay. And then it says:

11 "Most notably, the PRC official  
12 [that] has been the subject of media  
13 reports suggesting he..."

14 Conducted FI, and then it goes on. Right.  
15 So -- and then let me show you paragraph 2, in the middle you  
16 say this:

17 "While elements of recent media  
18 reporting about Mr. Zhao's activities  
19 are not accurate..."

20 And then you go on. Are you able to say what  
21 elements of the reporting were inaccurate?

22 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No. What I am allowed  
23 to say is that he was not expelled for foreign interference  
24 with respect to Michael Chong.

25 MR. GIB van ERT: Right. All right.

26 In your witness summaries, and you alluded to  
27 it again this morning -- in fact I think Monsieur Lafortune  
28 referred to it as well, you described that after the *Globe*

1 reporting came out, some intelligence that had been received  
2 by Global Affairs in 2021, but hadn't moved beyond the  
3 working level, I believe was the phrase that was used, was  
4 looked at again -- I'm not asking you to tell me what that  
5 was. And the consequence of that was that it completed the  
6 picture about these suspicions. Was that missing piece about  
7 the activities of Michael Chan?

8 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No.

9 MR. GIB van ERT: All right. And finally,  
10 sir, if there had never been a story in the *Globe and Mail* on  
11 the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, there's no reason to think that while Wei  
12 Zhao would have been PNGed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. Isn't that  
13 right?

14 MR. DAVID MORRISON: No, that's not correct.  
15 We outlined ---

16 MR. GIB van ERT: Was it in the works  
17 already?

18 MR. DAVID MORRISON: We outlined ---

19 MR. GIB van ERT: Before the story came out?

20 MR. DAVID MORRISON: We outlined in  
21 considerable detail this morning a series of escalatory steps  
22 that we were taking with China. We discussed as a department  
23 months before May the possibility that this would end in the  
24 expulsion of diplomats. That was the direction that it was  
25 trending. The activity we were concerned about was not  
26 ceasing, so all options were on the table.

27 As I testified when asked about this question  
28 on direct earlier today, the *Globe* story on the 1st provided



1 us with an opportunity to do so on terms favourable to us to  
2 achieve maximum impact both with China and with other  
3 countries that might be watching, and we took that  
4 opportunity.

5 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I just want to make sure  
6 I've understood that answer.

7 So is it your evidence to the Commissioner  
8 that discussions were ongoing to PNG Wei Zhao before the  
9 story in the Globe came out?

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No, it is not.

11 **MR. GIB van ERT:** No.

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** It is my evidence ---

13 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I didn't think it could be.

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** --- to the Commissioner  
15 that discussions about using the PNG tool were ongoing months  
16 before the Globe and Mail article.

17 We hadn't reached the stage of saying who or  
18 how many because ---

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'm sorry. I'll just stop  
20 you there.

21 So using the tool, but not necessarily  
22 against Wei Zhao and after the publication.

23 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Maybe against Wei Zhao,  
24 maybe against someone else.

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

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** As I also testified this  
27 morning, after the publication it was pretty clear that his  
28 position had become untenable in Canada and we looked at, if

1 we're going to play this card, will it be him, will it be  
2 someone else, will it be more than one person. And after  
3 some deliberation, we settled on a single person, and that  
4 person was Zhao Wei.

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

6 Commissioner, thank you for your indulgence.  
7 Mr. Morrison, thank you for your answers.

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

9 Next counsel is counsel for Jenny Kwan,  
10 Maître Choudhry.

11 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

12 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:**

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good morning. For the  
14 record, I'm Sujit Choudhry. I'm counsel to Jenny Kwan.  
15 Thank you for coming today.

16 I'd like to begin with a document that Ms.  
17 Chaudhury put up. It's CAN23929.

18 Great. And if we could scroll down, I hope  
19 I've called the right document. If I haven't, I apologize.

20 Yes, there we go. Okay. So those  
21 statistics.

22 So I just want to take you to the statistics  
23 about démarche and just get you to confirm that there were 48  
24 representations to the PRC at all levels on the issue of  
25 foreign interference, surveillance and issues involving the  
26 security of Canada. And I just want to note that that's a  
27 broader category than just foreign interference.

28 And then in particular, it says there there

1 were 31 engagements, including four formal démarches on  
2 foreign interference. Is that accurate?

3 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

4 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Yes. Okay.

5 Great, thank you.

6 Okay. And I just want to confirm that in  
7 this particular document, you list kind of four case studies,  
8 if I could, or four cases. And those are the Chinese police  
9 stations, the PNG in relation to Mr. Wei, Spamouflage and  
10 also the events in relation to MP Chong. Is that right?

11 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

12 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Okay, good. So now I'd  
13 like to go, please, to another document that Commission  
14 counsel pulled up. It's CAN47008.

15 And so I want to dig into this document a  
16 bit, which provides a bit more specificity about some of  
17 those communicates and démarches.

18 And so the first point is just a point of  
19 clarification. So this document uses the term "diplomatic  
20 notes", not "démarche". I understand that "démarche" is the  
21 diplomatic term of art or diplomatic note, or are those meant  
22 to be distinct things?

23 MR. DAVID MORRISON: They're distinct things.

24 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Could you explain just  
25 for the record?

26 MR. DAVID MORRISON: A démarche can be  
27 anything from a telephone call that is not just social,  
28 you're actually putting across a formal message on behalf of

1 your government. It can come in a telephone call.

2 It can -- it's a little bit more serious if  
3 you ask to go into the foreign ministry to make the démarche.  
4 It's more serious if you make the démarche in writing. That  
5 would be via a diplomatic note.

6 The level of seriousness is also determined  
7 by the level at which you go in. Are you asking to talk to  
8 the Director or the Director-General, the Deputy Minister?  
9 So it's -- it is a diplomatic term from way back, and it has  
10 a very expansive meaning.

11 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good. That's helpful.

12 So just to kind of put a point on it, so a  
13 diplomatic note is a species or a subcategory of the umbrella  
14 category of a démarche. Is that fair?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Diplomatic notes are how  
16 countries talk to each other ---

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure.

18 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** --- and yes, it is a  
19 form of démarche. It's a formalized démarche.

20 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So I just wanted to note  
21 that in the previous document, it described 48  
22 communications, démarches, if we can use that term, and this  
23 one -- this document refers to 31. And so the other 17, just  
24 so we understand, were those in relation to foreign  
25 interference or other issues?

26 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'll ask my colleague  
27 who's in charge of these things to respond.

28 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yes. Mr. Epp, please.

1 MR. WELDON EPP: Would it be possible to  
2 scroll the document?

3 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Sure. So that's -- that  
4 was in the previous -- we can pull up -- should we call up  
5 the previous one?

6 MR. WELDON EPP: If you could, please.

7 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Yes, sure. It's  
8 CAN23929.

9 And if we could just scroll down on that  
10 document again to the summary again, that'd be great. I'd be  
11 grateful.

12 Thank you.

13 There you go, sir.

14 MR. WELDON EPP: So I'm sorry, again, you  
15 want -- the 17 ---

16 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Yeah.

17 MR. WELDON EPP: --- you're referring to ---

18 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Forty-eight (48) minus  
19 31.

20 MR. WELDON EPP: Yeah. So 48  
21 representations, 31 on formal -- on foreign interference  
22 specifically.

23 I mean, this was a point in time, and more  
24 démarches have been made since, but if I understand your  
25 question, you're wondering how many of them were generally  
26 about foreign interference and how many of them were  
27 specifically about ---

28 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Right.

1 MR. WELDON EPP: --- elements?

2 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Well, there's 48 in  
3 general and there's 31 about foreign interference. I'm just  
4 wondering, were the 17 others about foreign interference as  
5 well, or were they about other things?

6 And if you don't know, that's fine.

7 MR. WELDON EPP: No. The note -- this cheat  
8 sheet summarizes that they're -- the 48 representations which  
9 included both formal démarches, included engagements, it  
10 included dip notes, those 48 representations at all levels,  
11 so that included meetings, bilateral meetings, as opposed to  
12 calling the ambassador in for a démarche. It might have  
13 included talking points in a meeting.

14 All 48 of those were on the issue of foreign  
15 interference.

16 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Okay. That's helpful.

17 So then if we could just go back to the other  
18 document. Sorry, Mr. Registrar -- or Madam Registrar.

19 It's -- again, it's 47008.

20 At the bottom of page 1 and onto page 2,  
21 there is an itemization of particular instances of diplomatic  
22 representations. And so I want to ask some questions about  
23 these, and if you can't answer on the grounds of national  
24 security either, please do indicate so that we can have that  
25 for the record.

26 So the 17th of January, 2022, it says that  
27 there was a meeting in which foreign interference that were  
28 explicitly raised concerns about the activities of the United

1 Front Work Department in Canada. So I have some questions  
2 about that communication.

3 Did that communication involve the activities  
4 of the United Front Department using proxies in the Chinese  
5 diaspora in Canada?

6 **MR. WELDON EPP:** That meeting, so, is a great  
7 example from the list of 48 of something we wouldn't have  
8 described as a démarche, but it was an engagement. It was a  
9 regularly scheduled engagement or a mechanism that pre-  
10 existed and hadn't been scheduled in a long time. And it was  
11 a Deputy Minister level formal bilateral consultation in  
12 which we spent three hours, in this case virtual because  
13 COVID was still impacting travel, between our Deputy Minister  
14 of Foreign Affairs at the time, Marta Morgan, and her  
15 counterpart going through quite an extensive bilateral  
16 agenda, of which -- of which foreign interference was put on  
17 the agenda by us and in which we, at that level, raised our  
18 concerns around the activity of the United Front Work  
19 Department in Canada.

20 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I want to dig into  
21 what you said about that if you can.

22 So did you raise with them specifically the  
23 allegation that's now a matter of public record that the Work  
24 Department worked through proxies in the Chinese diaspora in  
25 Canada? Do you put that to them in that meeting?

26 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I was in the meeting. It  
27 was several years ago. But to the best of my recollection,  
28 our Deputy Minister did not go into that granularity, nor

1 would we have expected her to. We were making the point  
2 about the agency, that particular agency of the Communist  
3 Party in any sense undertaking its mandate in Canada being  
4 offsites, the counterpart, our counterparts, the Chinese MFA,  
5 are very familiar with how the United Front Work Department  
6 goes about doing its work abroad.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** All right. Fair enough.  
8 So then let's move on to the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. There it says  
9 that there was a meeting on the margins of the G20 in Bali  
10 that raised Chinese coercive behaviour. So let's -- I want  
11 to ask about that. Coercion against whom and what kind of  
12 coercion? Can you please let the Commissioner know?

13 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'm trying to find it in a  
14 list here.

15 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** It's at the very top of  
16 the page, sir.

17 **MR. WELDON EPP:** There we are. Thank you.

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah, sorry. The type  
19 is small. If we could maybe enlarge it a bit? It's even  
20 hard for me.

21 Is that easier for you?

22 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Thank you. So I was not in  
23 my current role at the time, so I don't recall, but I will  
24 say that we had a consistent dialogue at all levels,  
25 including with our foreign ministers, to make it clear to  
26 them that notwithstanding the fact that the Two Michaels had  
27 returned, that the activity that had been undertaken by China  
28 coercively through Canadian citizens, hostage taking



1 diplomacy, as well as through other economic coercion, which  
2 was still ongoing at that time, was unacceptable. So I will  
3 assume, given the talking points I have seen, that the whole  
4 package, economic, hostage taking diplomacy, and therefore  
5 Canada's leadership encountering that through the arbitrary  
6 detention initiative would have been part of their  
7 conversation.

8 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Well let's move  
9 on then. So September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022:

10 "Note Verbale delivered on  
11 intimidation of Canadians,  
12 interference in internal and  
13 legislative process."

14 I want to go through those point by point.  
15 What precise intimidation of Canadians were discussed in this  
16 Note Verbale?

17 **MR. WELDON EPP:** So I will not be able to  
18 recall here, without reference to the document, the specifics  
19 of those -- of the intimidation raised.

20 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** What interference in  
21 internal process ---

22 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Can I maybe ---

23 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I'm sorry.

24 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Can I maybe help here?  
25 I'll refer to the item right above the September 1<sup>st</sup>. I also  
26 am not aware of the particular point raised in September 1<sup>st</sup>,  
27 but I -- the DMA referred to on 31 August was me. I was  
28 Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time and

1 met with Ambassador Cong and it says -- that's the Chinese  
2 Ambassador, for those who aren't familiar with his name, and  
3 it says I spoke about foreign interference issues at the  
4 particular time, and I can't name names, but there were  
5 specific cases of intimidation of specific individuals in the  
6 diaspora community that were raised by me as an issue of  
7 unacceptable behaviour by the Government of the People's  
8 Republic of China.

9 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay.

10 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So it may be that that was  
11 followed up by a Note Verbale, but I can confirm that the  
12 foreign interference issues raised by me were about specific  
13 individuals in the diaspora.

14 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** That's helpful. Thank  
15 you. Are you able to say, and if you aren't, please say so,  
16 what type of intimidation you're referencing? Physical? Was  
17 it economic? Are you able to provide any detail at all?

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I think it would probably  
19 be inappropriate to provide detail, but we had been given  
20 information about specific individuals who felt that they  
21 were being coerced by government officials.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay.

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** And so this was raised with  
24 the Chinese Government.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And so I just  
26 want to note for the record that perhaps that might be  
27 something the Commission wishes to follow up on in-camera.

28 So can we just go back then to the meeting on

1 the -- to the Note Verbale on September 1<sup>st</sup>? It talked about  
2 interference in legislative process. Are you able to shed  
3 light on what type of interference in Canada's legislative  
4 process was raised in that Note Verbale?

5 **MR. WELDON EPP:** No, I'd have to see the -- I  
6 can't recall.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So you can't recall.  
8 Okay. So and then -- so I want to talk about, in the  
9 remaining time, some other specific incidents that are now a  
10 matter of public record that aren't specifically referenced  
11 in this document or in the previous document I showed you.

12 So the first, as you know, is that it is now  
13 widely alleged that the PRC interfered in the Liberal Party  
14 nomination in Don Valley North in 2019, and that has been a  
15 topic of considerable interest this inquiry.

16 Can any of you tell the Commission whether  
17 that particular incident has ever been raised by the  
18 Government of Canada directly with the People's Republic of  
19 China in one of its dozens of communications with them on  
20 foreign interference?

21 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not aware.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Not aware. Okay. Has -  
23 - I also then want to turn to the incident involving ATP31  
24 and the hacking of the -- or the attempted hacking of the  
25 email accounts of various Senators and members of Parliament,  
26 and as you can probably tell, the thread here that concerns  
27 some of these questions is the issue of parliamentary  
28 privilege, and so I guess the question is, has the Government

1 of Canada and any one of these dozens of communications with  
2 the People's Republic of China ever raised the issue of the  
3 APT31 attack against members of IPAC?

4 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Well what I can say, I  
5 can't speak to whether it was raised at different occasions,  
6 but I can say the one that you're referencing in 2021, at  
7 that time, the -- we've already referred to the cyber  
8 attribution framework. It was not initiated. GAC was not  
9 involved in that. so at that time, again, you'd have to ask  
10 others for the specifics. I understand that perhaps we spoke  
11 earlier of the impact, so I think there was the attempt, but  
12 I'm not sure on the actual impact of that. And so at that  
13 time, Global Affairs was not involved in it.

14 However, we have continued, of course,  
15 engagements and discussions in the community, in the cyber  
16 community, about APT31.

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure. So just maybe I  
18 can finish up on this, because I'm almost out of time. So if  
19 I understand your evidence correctly, at the time that the  
20 APT31 attack happened, GAC didn't yet have this framework in  
21 place regarding public attribution. I understand that. But  
22 what I'm wondering is, was GAC not made aware by CSIS, and we  
23 have evidence that CSIS was aware in 2021 of this attack,  
24 that this attack could be attributed to APT31?

25 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So in fact, the attribution  
26 framework was in place, but it wasn't triggered.

27 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I see.

28 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, if there's a

1 department that wants to initiate the attribution framework,  
2 any of the departments can initiate it. At that time, GAC  
3 was not asked to initiate the attribution framework.

4 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And then one last  
5 question about that, if I could. So I think the issue is not  
6 so much the public attribution, it's whether this issue was  
7 nonetheless privately raised with the People's Republic of  
8 China at any point by the Government of Canada? And if you  
9 can't -- if you don't know, then that's -- please just state  
10 that for the record.

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I would say that to the  
12 extent that I was involved and others more senior to me were  
13 involved, the issues that we routinely raised had to do with  
14 police stations, spy balloons, and the behaviour of  
15 diplomats. So I cannot say we never raised cyber, but I'm  
16 not aware of -- I certainly didn't.

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Good. Thank you  
18 for your time. Thank you.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.  
20 Counsel for Erin O'Toole.

21 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Hi, Commissioner. My  
22 questions with respect to RRM were addressed yesterday or  
23 during Commission counsel's examination. Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.  
25 Human Rights Coalition.

26 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

27 **MS. SARAH TEICH:**

28 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Good afternoon. Can we

1 please pull up CAN7791\_0001? Thank you.

2 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN007791 0001:

3 Annex 2 - Summary of GAC Authorities  
4 as it relates to Foreign Interference

5 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** This is a summary of Global  
6 Affairs Canada authorities related to foreign interference.

7 I'm actually going to refer to this document  
8 throughout my questions until almost the very end, so Madam  
9 Court Operator, please feel free to just keep it on the  
10 screen.

11 I'm going to take you through this document  
12 and ask you some questions about these authorities to better  
13 understand what's available and what has been done in  
14 relation to numerous diaspora communities.

15 I'm going to start towards the bottom, so if  
16 we can please scroll down to bullet 5, which is at the bottom  
17 of page 2?

18 This section discusses the *Special Economic*  
19 *Measures Act*. Now as this section notes, *SEMA* does not make  
20 specific mention of foreign interference, but it's included  
21 here because sanctions are part of the toolkit that GAC uses  
22 to respond to malicious behaviour. And, of course, there are  
23 other sanction regimes not included in this document. The  
24 *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act*,  
25 otherwise known as the Sergei Magnitsky Law and the *United*  
26 *Nations Act*; is that right?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

28 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Since the sanctions that

1 were previously imposed on Eritrea under the *United Nations*  
2 *Act* were lifted several years ago, there are currently no  
3 sanctions on Eritrean human rights violators; is that right?

4 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I have no knowledge.

5 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Does anyone have knowledge  
6 to answer that question?

7 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** No.

8 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Given what we heard  
9 in diaspora panels earlier this week from Ghezae Hagos Berhe  
10 of the Eritrean community about ongoing repression by the  
11 Eritrean regime both at home and abroad, including in Canada,  
12 do you think it would be valuable to have sanctions on gross  
13 human rights violators from the Eritrean regime?

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That would be a question  
15 for the political level to decide. I will say that it has  
16 not come across my radar screen in the two years that I've  
17 been on the job.

18 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. We heard earlier  
19 this week from Sieru Kebede of the Tigrinya community that  
20 both the Ethiopian and the Eritrean governments launched, and  
21 I'll quote,

22 "...extensive propaganda campaigns,  
23 making it difficult for people to  
24 grasp the true extent of the crisis  
25 in Tigray." (As read)

26 Similar accounts of mis and disinformation  
27 were shared by Mr. Hagos Berhe. Now the last sentence here  
28 under bullet number five indicates that,

1 "The *Special Economics Measures Act*  
2 has been used to respond to the  
3 participation in or support the  
4 information manipulation  
5 campaigns..." (As read)

6 And it says in brackets "(i.e. Russian  
7 invasion of Ukraine)". Would the *Special Economic Measures*  
8 *Act* not by the same logic be useful to respond to the  
9 perpetration of information manipulation by the Ethiopian  
10 and/or Eritrean governments?

11 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** This is a very heavy  
12 tool. It involves regulation, so it's not something that is  
13 done routinely, if I can put it that way. There is a tool  
14 we're using increasingly frequently, particularly with  
15 respect to Russia and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Iran. It  
16 is -- I wouldn't say a tool of last resort, but it's a heavy,  
17 heavy tool, if you look at what we tried to say earlier today  
18 about the diplomatic toolkit. We begin with démarches and  
19 other kinds of engagement. So I think I'll take the spirit  
20 of your question to be, you know, is there more that can be  
21 done. And I'm sure there is. It would be a leap of -- a  
22 considerable leap to jump straight to sanctions.

23 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Can we jump back up  
24 on this document to point number one? And that's the Crown  
25 prerogative. Bullet one, page one. Thank you.

26 Given what we heard again earlier this week  
27 from Mr. Hagos Berhe about the Eritrean Consulate's  
28 involvement in foreign interference in transnational



1 repression, do you think it would be valuable to use one or  
2 more of these powers in relation to the Eritrean Consulate or  
3 Consular officials?

4 And you can actually scroll down a bit. I'm  
5 referring to the bullet points under links to foreign  
6 interference. Any one of these powers.

7 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think that the  
8 principle to keep in mind here is that we are, as a  
9 government -- or the government, and we as an administration  
10 are evolving our toolkit that -- to deal with all kinds of  
11 foreign interference across the country, perpetrated by  
12 whoever is engaging in it. I think a benefit of this process  
13 is that it is throwing additional light on transnational  
14 repression. And in my ending remarks right before lunchtime,  
15 I deliberately said that I think two issues that require  
16 further attention are artificial intelligence enabled mis and  
17 disinformation as a growing threat to Canada, and the other  
18 one is transnational repression. We know a range of  
19 countries engage in it. The ones that we know the most about  
20 are the ones that have been summarized in the country  
21 summaries that form a part of this process. We don't know as  
22 much I think as we should about the scale and the scope. And  
23 I think this -- the testimony of the people you've mentioned  
24 and others have -- has helped our system understand where it  
25 needs to focus more.

26 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Now I'm going to  
27 switch text for a moment and ask you about the People's  
28 Republic of China, in particular, what's been done to respond

1 to their repression of Hongkongers, Tibetan speakers and  
2 Falon Gong practitioners. Can we please scroll back down to  
3 bullet number five? So back to the *Special Economic Measures*  
4 *Act*. So I understand that the *Special Economic Measures Act*  
5 has been used to respond to gross and systematic human rights  
6 violations committed in China, and that's happened through  
7 the passage of the *SEMA* China Regulations; is that right?

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

9 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** And that was passed in 2021  
10 and included in the schedule to the Regulations four  
11 individuals and one entity; is that right?

12 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

13 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** The named individuals and  
14 one entity were included in response to their human rights  
15 violations committed against Uyghurs; right?

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

17 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** No individuals or entities  
18 have been sanctioned in response to human rights violations  
19 committed against Falon Gong practitioners; is that right?

20 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

21 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** No individuals or entities  
22 have been sanctioned in response to human rights violations  
23 committed against Hongkongers; is that right?

24 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Yes.

25 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** And finally, no individuals  
26 or entities have been sanctioned in response to human rights  
27 violations committed against Tibetans; is that right?

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

1 MS. SARAH TEICH: Would it be valuable to  
2 include in the schedule to the *SEMA* China Regulations  
3 individuals and entities with responsibility for gross human  
4 rights violations committed against these groups?

5 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Again, that is a  
6 question that ultimately the political level would decide  
7 upon. I've already given an answer to suggest that this is a  
8 tool that is used much more sparingly than the regular tools  
9 of diplomacy being dialogue, engagement, formal meetings,  
10 informal meetings. I was in Beijing in April to have a full  
11 set of bilateral consultations, and we went through the range  
12 of our foreign -- of our human rights concerns with the  
13 country, including with respect to all of the areas that you  
14 just mentioned. My point is it's a leap from there all the  
15 way to using the *SEMA* Regulation.

16 MS. SARAH TEICH: Okay. Moving on to bullet  
17 -- well, what should be six, presumably, but it's listed here  
18 under one, *Export and Import Permits Act*. This provides  
19 Canada, as it notes,

20 "...with an additional mechanism for  
21 controlling trade of arms and dual-  
22 use goods."

23 And then under the subheading links to  
24 foreign interference, this notes that this can,

25 "...reduce the risk that goods and  
26 technologies could be leveraged by  
27 foreign powers to conduct foreign  
28 interference activities targeting

1 Canada or its likeminded partners.”

2 (As read)

3 Can this Act also be used to control the  
4 imports of technology that can be leveraged by foreign powers  
5 to conduct foreign interference activities?

6 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I don't know. I've --  
7 my personal experience with it has always been on the export  
8 control side, so I don't know its applicability to the import  
9 regime.

10 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Well, I'll assume  
11 for a moment -- let's assume for a moment that it can do  
12 that. Would it be valuable, in your opinion, to have import  
13 controls in place to control imports from surveillance  
14 technology companies linked to the PRC?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That's highly  
16 speculative. I -- you know, exports and imports are the  
17 result of decisions taken by private sector entities, so I  
18 don't think we have an import control regime that I'm aware  
19 of that could be used in this set of circumstances. So I  
20 entirely sympathize with the intent of your question, but I'm  
21 not certain we have the appropriate instrument.

22 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Just going a bit  
23 further with my example here, would you agree that if  
24 technology from PRC linked surveillance technology companies  
25 were to be used in Canadian government buildings, this would  
26 constitute a national security risk?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I think Canada has  
28 become increasingly mindful of the risks associated with

1 certain technologies that are -- that come from China. And I  
2 think everyone knows the example of our decision -- the  
3 government's decision on 5G and the implications that that  
4 had.

5 So I do believe that in a world of just  
6 looking at the decisions the United States is taking on  
7 things like cranes, and perhaps electric vehicles, there is  
8 bound to be more of a discussion about the link between the  
9 import of some technologies and national security concerns in  
10 the future than there has been in the past.

11 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Maybe I could also  
12 add too, that there are national security provisions around  
13 government procurement. That's not in the purview of Global  
14 Affairs Canada, but that is another area where there is an  
15 opportunity to exercise due diligence about the kinds of  
16 things that would, for instance, come into government  
17 buildings.

18 **MR. WELDON EPP:** May I add something, just to  
19 compliment a question you had earlier on your import  
20 question? There is a piece of legislation that enables us to  
21 ban the import of certain products and that is actually the  
22 *Special Economic Measures Act*. So under certain  
23 circumstances, a certain regime and set of regulations can  
24 target certain goods, specific goods coming from certain  
25 countries. And it's for example, what we've done with  
26 banning the import of Russian diamonds.

27 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Thank you. Does  
28 anyone else have anything to add on this question? Okay,

1 we'll move on.

2 We heard from Katpana Nagendra as part of the  
3 diaspora panels earlier this week, that it is and I'll quote:

4 "...imperative that Canada takes  
5 decisive actions to hold the Sri  
6 Lankan government accountable..."

7 Ms. Nagendra stated that:

8 "The Sri Lankan government's ongoing  
9 interference in the lives of Tamil  
10 Canadians will only cease once they  
11 are held fully accountable...As long  
12 as they continue to operate with  
13 impunity, feeling shielded from  
14 repercussions for their war crimes,  
15 human rights violations, they will  
16 persist in using intimidation tactics  
17 against Tamil activists in Canada."

18 She stated that:

19 "The fact that they believe they are  
20 getting away with their crimes  
21 emboldens them to target those who  
22 oppose their actions and advocate for  
23 justice."

24 One of the mechanisms she recommended be used  
25 our sanctions laws. In 2023, as I understand it, Canada  
26 passed the Special Economic Measures Sri Lanka Regulations  
27 and added to the schedule to those regulations for Sri Lankan  
28 individuals. Is that right?

1 MR. DAVID MORRISON: Yes.

2 MS. SARAH TEICH: Given the continued need to  
3 provide justice for Tamil victims and survivors, as we heard  
4 from Ms. Nagendra, would it be valuable to include additional  
5 individuals and entities in the schedule to these  
6 regulations?

7 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I'm going to turn to my  
8 Sri Lanka expert.

9 MR. WELDON EPP: I think it's a valid  
10 question. I understand the spirit of it. I think to  
11 understand there is an ongoing assessment process and  
12 dialogue. That dialogue includes interlocutors from Canadian  
13 society, diaspora, human right experts. But it also includes  
14 our dialogue with the Sri Lankan government.

15 There was recent elections. That country has  
16 been very much hit and has had to step back with respect to  
17 its economic stability. And so, the effectiveness of  
18 additional sanctions as a tool towards moving that country  
19 towards more comprehensive reconciliation would be assessed  
20 on an ongoing basis.

21 MS. SARAH TEICH: Okay.

22 Can we please pull up HRC126? I'm finally  
23 done with this document.

24 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. HRC0000126:

25 Opinion: Cuba's authoritarian a  
26 threat to democracy

27 MS. SARAH TEICH: This is an opinion piece  
28 written by myself and Michael Lima. It was published in *The*

1 Hub on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022. And this piece opens with  
2 discussions about authoritarian alliances, and I'll just draw  
3 your attention to the second sentence for now, just still on  
4 Page 1, I believe, if you could scroll down a little bit.  
5 Oh, sorry, a little bit up, still on page 1. We write:

6 "A collaboration between autocrats  
7 makes them stronger, and more  
8 effective at surveilling, isolating,  
9 and persecuting human rights  
10 defenders."

11 We then go on to discuss two such alliance,  
12 the alliance between Cuba and China, and the alliance between  
13 Cuba and Russia. What has Global Affairs done in response to  
14 Cuba's authoritarianism and its links to other autocratic  
15 regimes, such as China and Russia, that are engaging in  
16 repression including transnational repression?

17 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Canada has an active  
18 engagement with Cuba and has had that in an uninterrupted way  
19 since the 1950s. The relationship has gone through ups and  
20 downs. It's well known that Canada was alone in the  
21 hemisphere other than Mexico, not to break relations with  
22 Cuba following the revolution in 1961.

23 It is an area where we differ from our large  
24 neighbor to the South. One of the reasons that -- or one of  
25 the benefits to having stayed in Cuba all these years is that  
26 we can engage in an open and very frank discussion with the  
27 Cubans on issues of human rights. And I here in particular,  
28 point to the prisoners that are the folks that were locked



1 up, I believe in the summer of 2020 or 2021 after protesting.

2 So we engage on issues of human rights with  
3 Cuba at all opportunities, and I have personally conducted  
4 the kind of bilateral consultations as we call them, with  
5 Cuba on a number of occasions at my senior counterpart level.  
6 And we also discuss their relations with other authoritarian  
7 states like Russia, like Venezuela, and like China. There's  
8 a limit to our influence, but the channels of diplomacy are  
9 very much open.

10 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay.

11 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Can I add a word to the  
12 Deputy's response?

13 With respect to China, I think in my  
14 testimony earlier this morning we talked about how the  
15 government updated its China framework. One thing I didn't  
16 mention in the morning was that in that process the  
17 Government of Canada reinvested in expanding our capacity to  
18 work on Canadian interests that are impacted by China.

19 That meant additional capacity at GAC among  
20 others, and one of the ways that capacity has been used is to  
21 focus on China's global impact, including in the "global  
22 south" including in the hemisphere. And we've done that in a  
23 number of ways, but the key link to your question is through  
24 training our heads of mission going to Cuba, but going to  
25 anywhere in the world, in making sure that their political  
26 officers are plugged in and know where to get information,  
27 know what sort of trends, trend lines, kind of impact they  
28 were concerned about, to report on.

1 We're in a learning -- as a learning  
2 organization we are in the process of reinvesting in looking  
3 not only China's impact on Canada-China, but also China's  
4 impact on Cuba and our interests around the world, to your  
5 point.

6 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. If we can scroll  
7 down to page 9? We write here:

8 "Besides Cuba's key authoritarian  
9 alliances with Russia and China, the  
10 Cuban regime has a disastrous record  
11 of human rights abuses. Cuba is one  
12 of the oldest dictatorships in the  
13 world, and the regime has  
14 increasingly cracked down on human  
15 rights defenders. Following the July  
16 2021 pro-democratic protests, the  
17 Cuban regime jailed so many political  
18 prisoners that it now has more  
19 arbitrarily detained than Venezuela  
20 and Nicaragua combined."

21 Given these gross and systematic human rights  
22 violations, in particular the longstanding nature of them,  
23 why is it that you think -- why is it that you believe that  
24 this different approach to Cuba I'll call it, as opposed to  
25 China, continues to make sense if there doesn't seem to have  
26 been much improvement?

27 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not certain we have  
28 a different approach to Cuba than we do to China. We are in

1 both cases concerned at the nature of their governance. We  
2 have made no secret about that. But as I tried to say in the  
3 beginning of my direct testimony, the essence of diplomacy is  
4 being able to have a dialogue with countries even when you  
5 don't agree with them.

6 So we don't agree with some of the things  
7 that Cuba does. I already mentioned the detention of  
8 protesters that took place in the summer of 2021, and we  
9 don't agree with many of the things that China does. But the  
10 channels of diplomacy are open, and we believe that's the  
11 best way to serve Canada's interests.

12 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. And just to confirm,  
13 there are no targeted sanctions against Cuban human rights  
14 violators at present; right?

15 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** That is correct.

16 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. No further  
17 questions.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

19 We'll take a 15 minutes' break. We'll come  
20 back at 4:00.

21 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,  
22 s'il vous plait.

23 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
24 recess until 4:00 p.m. Cette séance de la Commission est  
25 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 16 h 00.

26 --- Upon recessing at 3:47 p.m./

27 --- L'audience est suspendue à 15 h 47

28 --- Upon resuming at 4:07 p.m./

1 --- L'audience est reprise à 16 h 07

2 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,  
3 s'il vous plait.

4 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
5 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la  
6 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en  
7 session.

8 The time is 4:07 p.m. Il est 16 h 07.

9 --- MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
10 affirmation :

11 --- MS. TARA DENHAM, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation :

12 --- MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN, Resumed/Sous le même serment :

13 --- MR. DAVID MORRISON, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

14 --- MR. WELDON EPP, Resumed/ Sous la même affirmation :

15 --- MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE, Resumed/ Sous la même  
16 affirmation :

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Singh for the Sikh  
18 Coalition.

19 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR  
20 MR. PRABJOT SINGH:

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you, Commissioner,  
22 and to the panelists as well. My name is Prabjot Singh for  
23 the Sikh Coalition.

24 Mr. Epp, I'm going to direct most of my  
25 questions to yourself, as you're the ADM for the Indo-  
26 Pacific, but I welcome your colleagues, Mr. Morrison or  
27 anybody else, to definitely jump in if you have anything to  
28 add.

1 And just from the outset, I want to note, I  
2 don't think there will be many, but there might be a couple  
3 of questions where I anticipate we might be kind of entering  
4 some territory where we're talking about some national  
5 security sensitive information that we can't share in a  
6 public setting. If you can just flag that you're not able to  
7 answer, that -- and let Madam Commissioner know, if she needs  
8 to follow up, she can do that, and we can move on from there.

9 So I'm not trying to trick you or trip you up  
10 or anything like that.

11 So Mr. Epp, the Commission has heard from a  
12 number of witnesses from the security and intelligence  
13 community over the past week who have discussed India's  
14 foreign interference tactics and objectives. So just to kind  
15 of situate ourselves, is it fair to say that India engages in  
16 disinformation, electoral interference, transnational  
17 repression and other forms of foreign interference activity?

18 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd say it's fair to say  
19 India engages in diverse forms through diverse vectors of  
20 foreign interference. I won't say yes to all of those  
21 individually, but ---

22 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Yeah, that's fair.

23 And in terms of India's objectives, it's  
24 seeking to counter what it perceives as anti-India activities  
25 that take place in Canada and is trying to influence Canadian  
26 officials to adopt pro-India policy positions. Is that fair?

27 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'd say that's partially  
28 fair. I think we do also see evidence of India undertaking

1 activity that crosses the line from influence into  
2 interference with respect to its interests vis-à-vis its  
3 neighbour, Pakistan.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you for that  
5 clarification. And so we saw a SITE report -- and I can pull  
6 it up if it's helpful for you, but my comment ---

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** That would be great.

8 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** --- or my question is  
9 kind of vague. In general terms, India seeks to use foreign  
10 interference tactics in certain scenarios where it amplifies  
11 a singular narrative or hammers home consistent messaging to  
12 pursue its interests; is that fair?

13 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think it's fair to say  
14 that that's one of the tactics that it uses, yes.

15 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And when we talk about  
16 countering activities by diaspora communities, we saw a SITE  
17 report that cited the farmers' protest in 2021 and lawful  
18 advocacy for Khalistan as specific examples of diaspora  
19 community activities that India seeks to counter through its  
20 foreign interference. Is that fair?

21 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think that is one of the  
22 examples. I don't know if you did want to pull up the SITE  
23 report, ---

24 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure.

25 **MR. WELDON EPP:** --- it'll help.

26 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** CAN47436, and we can  
27 scroll down to page 7.

28 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN047436:**

1 Key Points for SITE Briefing to  
2 Political Parties

3 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Thank you.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** I just want to kind of  
5 situate India's foreign interference activities with these  
6 two examples.

7 If you see in that first bullet point, or  
8 well I guess the first sub-bullet, towards the end it talks  
9 about agricultural -- or protests against agricultural  
10 reforms, "...in late 2021 and lawful advocacy for issues such  
11 as an independent Khalistan."

12 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yeah, and I think if I might  
13 add more than just a sort of a straight-up yes, I think what  
14 we have seen is that -- and I think it's important to situate  
15 that India's perspective on the activities of some of these  
16 diaspora communities is so fundamentally different from ours.  
17 It comes from a particular national security construct, and  
18 many of the decision-makers in India who direct their foreign  
19 policy, their national policy, but also agencies that conduct  
20 activity, including transnational repression, were formed  
21 during a period when this was a real hot conflict on their  
22 soil.

23 And so when they see activities in foreign  
24 countries, including Canada, by these groups they look at it  
25 very differently than we do. We look at it within the  
26 construct of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, the  
27 ability of Canadians of all backgrounds to be able to express  
28 their opinions, and be safe in doing so, and that's where --

1 exactly where we start to see lines being crossed.

2 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: Yeah, thank you for that,  
3 that context is helpful. India is looking at a lot of these  
4 issues and activities from a national security lens and  
5 targeting them for a securitized response, whereas Canada  
6 sees a lot of these activities as fundamental *Charter* Rights  
7 that are protected in Canada; correct?

8 MR. WELDON EPP: I think that's a fair  
9 characterization.

10 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: Thank you.

11 If we can bring up COMM149, and go to page 34  
12 of the PDF?

13 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM0000149:

14 NSICOP - Special report into the  
15 allegations associated with Prime  
16 Minister Trudeau's official visit to  
17 India in February 2018

18 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: I just want to take you  
19 back to the Prime Minister's 2018 trip to India. Looking at  
20 the NSICOP Report, and so right there we see paragraph 73 and  
21 74; that's dealing with NSIA Daniel Jean's media briefing at  
22 that time to counter disinformation in kind of live time.

23 So paragraph 73 towards the end there talks  
24 about how the NSIA determined there was a:

25 "...high probability of an  
26 orchestrated disinformation campaign  
27 to [target] Canada..."

28 And the next paragraph goes on to talk about



1 he attempted:

2 "...to counter what he believed [was]  
3 orchestrated efforts to fabricate a  
4 false narrative,..."

5 Does that correspond with your understanding  
6 of some of the issues that came up during that trip?

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I can answer it indirectly.  
8 I was in China, in Shanghai at the time; not in my current  
9 role, not dealing with India. But what I can tell you is  
10 that the reported concerns here, the experience that Canada  
11 had with that kind of an all -- like, a full-court press  
12 disinformation campaign. That was not the only time. And as  
13 the Deputy mentioned earlier with respect to Canada's  
14 experience in our bilateral relations with India just in the  
15 last year, we have seen similar orchestrated disinformation  
16 campaigns.

17 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Are you able to elaborate  
18 on any of those orchestrated disinformation campaigns?

19 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Well, I mean, just to be  
20 quite precise I think that we saw a very obvious and  
21 noticeable uptick in disinformation directed at the Prime  
22 Minister, and at Canada generally, in and around the timing  
23 of the statements that the Prime Minister made in Parliament  
24 last year.

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And a lot of those  
26 messages, again, similar to the 2018 kind of example,  
27 targeted the Prime Minister specifically as sympathizing with  
28 aspirations for Khalistan, trying to tie the Sikh community

1 and the Canadian government as supposedly sympathizing with  
2 allegations of extremism, what they see as a national  
3 security threat; is that fair?

4 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Again, I think it's fair to  
5 say that the character of the -- and the content of these  
6 disinformation campaigns -- and by the way, India has, let's  
7 just say, a formidable capacity to work with its national  
8 media to undertake these campaigns, not just against Canada  
9 but against other, say, neighbouring countries, et cetera.  
10 That part is not new. And what's also not new is that their  
11 motivation in doing this is, as you put it, very much driven  
12 by a securitized national security construct. It's  
13 consistent with the visit in 2018; it's consistent with what  
14 we're experiencing now.

15 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And so when we're talking  
16 about these orchestrated disinformation campaigns,  
17 specifically as they pertain to diaspora communities, the  
18 Sikh community specifically, that's tied to these allegations  
19 of extremism or terrorism, would you agree that the impacts  
20 on a very highly visible minority being tied to allegations  
21 of extremism and this prejudicial biases around this  
22 narrative, would have the impact of really alienating them  
23 from public life in certain ways?

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** What I would say, and I'm  
25 saying this as a Canadian, as an individual, not from a GAC  
26 perch, insofar as GAC's mandate is not to have that dialogue,  
27 not to have those consultations; that's the domain of Public  
28 Safety and some of those partners to better understand the

1 impact of these kind of campaigns on the security,  
2 domestically, in Canada of Canadians. We leave that to our  
3 partners. But I would say that I'm absolutely sympathetic to  
4 Canadians of any heritage who would come under a sustained  
5 misinformation campaign.

6 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And so going a step  
7 further beyond misinformation campaigns, we heard from RCMP  
8 witnesses yesterday that their Indian counterparts often  
9 bring information to the attention of the RCMP, pressuring  
10 them to prosecute residents and citizens of Canada for  
11 engaging in activity that's protected by the Charter because  
12 they see it as criminal activity. And I would imagine in  
13 your role as ADM of Indo-Pacific, interacting with your  
14 Indian counterparts, you would see similar requests  
15 pertaining to extradition or other examples as well?

16 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Listen, we've had many  
17 conversations, as your question frames, diplomatically with  
18 our Indian counterparts around how to ensure that legitimate  
19 bilateral cooperation on matters of transnational crime,  
20 extremism, terrorism, that those conversations can happen,  
21 and where appropriate that our justice departments and our  
22 colleagues from policing can share information, again when  
23 it's appropriate and when it meets the threshold of Canadian  
24 law, such that we can cooperate on dealing with transnational  
25 crime.

26 And I would add, any country with which we  
27 have bilateral relations and from which we have a community  
28 of almost 2 million Canadians who count their heritage as

1      linked to that country, just by sheer numbers we can assume  
2      there will be some bad elements, some transnational crime.  
3      And so it's really important to have credible lawful  
4      bilateral tools that work. And I would say in this regard  
5      that while it often gets overlooked, including by our Indian  
6      counterparts, there have been occasions where our extradition  
7      treaty with India has been used because in our ongoing  
8      dialogue and our ongoing working groups between the RCMP and  
9      their counterparts, between our departments of justice, the  
10     evidence that's been provided has met Canadian evidentiary  
11     thresholds.

12                    I would say that's been more an exception  
13     than the rule. It has often been the case that the Indian  
14     side will share information that may be useful in an Indian  
15     court of law, in terms of prosecuting behaviour that,  
16     frankly, in Canada might be lawful, but unless it meets the  
17     evidentiary threshold in Canada, our Department of Justice  
18     simply can't move on it. So we have an ongoing dialogue, and  
19     even in my short time in this particular role, there have  
20     been discussions bilaterally, both between our MFAs, but also  
21     between the line departments.

22                    **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** And I think -- just one  
23     quick rider on that.

24                    We have an ongoing dialogue with Indian  
25     personnel here and in Delhi on everything Weldon just  
26     mentioned, but also on Canada's commitment to free speech.  
27     And the term that is often used is "awful but lawful".

28                    There are things that many of us would prefer

1      not to see, but they are protected by the *Charter*, and so  
2      things that are criminal in India are legal here. And that  
3      is the subject of much back and forth between the Government  
4      of India and our own government as we try to explain our  
5      values and our realities.

6                    **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. That's very  
7      helpful.

8                    And so just to kind of, I think, summarize,  
9      it's your position, Mr. Epp and Mr. Morrison, that Canada's  
10     tools of legal cooperation, prosecution, criminal  
11     investigation cannot be misused by foreign states to target  
12     *Charter* protected speech and activities; fair?

13                   **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think that's fair.

14                   **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

15                   So I'm going to shift gears and talk a little  
16     bit about GAC's response to foreign interference now. And I  
17     want to specifically take you back to 2017.

18                   I'm going to suggest to you that in 2017,  
19     CSIS observed a highly sophisticated and active intelligence  
20     network that was being developed in Ottawa and Vancouver that  
21     was getting quite aggressive targeting the Sikh community and  
22     when CSIS approached its partners, including GAC officials,  
23     because it wanted to engage in threat reduction measures to  
24     counter this network, a number of officials, including the  
25     GAC representative, encouraged CSIS to pull back. And as a  
26     result, CSIS scaled down its intervention and virtually left  
27     that Vancouver network in place without any disruption.

28                   Is that something that you're able to confirm

1 publicly today?

2 MR. WELDON EPP: I wouldn't be able to  
3 confirm. I have no knowledge of that. That pre-dates my  
4 time anywhere close to this file.

5 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: Mr. Morrison, are you  
6 able to confirm any details around that?

7 MR. DAVID MORRISON: I've never heard of this  
8 incident and I'm not aware that we have any documents.

9 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: Sure. If we can bring up  
10 TSC14, please.

11 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. TSC0000014:

12 Indian Consulate networks targeting  
13 Sikhs in Vancouver continued  
14 "unabated" when Ottawa gutted CSIS  
15 probe in 2017: top secret record

16 MR. PRABJOT SINGH: So this is a media report  
17 from September 2023, last year. And if we just scroll down  
18 near the bottom.

19 So this is by Sam Cooper, who reviewed the  
20 2019 NSICOP annual report, and he reported on -- if you keep  
21 scrolling down.

22 Right. If you go a little bit -- yeah, a  
23 little bit higher.

24 Right there is totally fine.

25 So he reports on seeing an unredacted version  
26 of the report and talks about this intelligence network and  
27 CSIS's intentions to engage in threat reduction measures and  
28 the reasons for why it was pulled back.



1 talking about the Prime Minister, but it could be by Minister  
2 -- do go forward such that we can use that opportunity to  
3 raise those very issues at a senior level.

4 It's one thing to raise it at the level of an  
5 ADM. It's more effective to cut through interagency,  
6 reporting up and not. You know, when you're going straight  
7 to a foreign Minister or a Minister for Interior Affairs or  
8 the Prime Minister, you're landing your point and you're  
9 getting it across.

10 We sometimes will choose to save those issues  
11 for a summit meeting or for a bilateral, and so we'll always  
12 be weighing what's our actual intended outcome and what's  
13 effective at that point in time given the context.

14 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

15 If we could bring up COM15 ---

16 **M. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Si je pouvais faire  
17 une autre observation, vous avez posé beaucoup de questions  
18 sur les différentes mesures...

19 I'll switch in English. I see you don't have  
20 your translation, so.

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. I really  
22 appreciate that.

23 I apologize.

24 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** That's not an issue.  
25 Just teaching you a little bit of French here.

26 I basically just want to give you an idea  
27 about what is the role of Global Affairs Canada when it comes  
28 to CSIS threat reduction measures. It's a little bit



1 different than how we are picturing here.

2 Basically, Global Affairs Canada, when it  
3 comes to a CSIS threat reduction measure, its role is to  
4 participate in what we call the risk assessment process. So  
5 CSIS has various pillars. They're looking at all their  
6 activity and they need to calculate the risk, whether it's  
7 reputational, legal. And of course, the pillar is called the  
8 foreign policy risk assessment, so this is where Global  
9 Affairs Canada comes into that situation.

10 So if a TRM is proposed that has a nexus with  
11 foreign policy, we will do a foreign policy risk assessment.

12 Should the risk of any of those pillars is  
13 deemed to be less than high, then the approval will rest with  
14 CSIS. Global Affairs Canada only have a role in approving or  
15 not a threat reduction measure only once. One of those  
16 pillars is deemed high, and that point the Deputy Ministers  
17 or Minister of Foreign Affairs needs to approve, as well as  
18 the Minister of Public Safety, the TRM to go forward itself.  
19 So it's only in that type of situation.

20 Now, I was not in my position at that time of  
21 that risk, but I do not recall any documents that indicate  
22 that such TRM was reached in those years of a high level.  
23 And that would have been the only moment where Global Affairs  
24 Canada could have -- would have been required to approve the  
25 TRM in order to go forward.

26 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you for that.

27 And Madam Commissioner, I see that I'm  
28 getting close to my time. If I could ask for indulgence for

1 another three minutes, I think it's a really incisive and  
2 important ---

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** For three minutes, you  
4 can go ahead.

5 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

6 If you could pull up COM155.

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM0000155:**

8 NSICOP - Annual Report 2019

9 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So I just want to pull up  
10 the public redacted version of the 2019 report just because  
11 as we're discussing, you know, everybody on the panel, from  
12 what I surmise, was not in your respective roles at that  
13 time. I'm not privy to the information that's in the  
14 unredacted report, so all we're kind of -- we're looking at  
15 trying to see what we have access to in the public domain and  
16 try to understand better what decisions were made at  
17 different points.

18 If we can go to page 122 of the PDF, please,  
19 paragraphs 283 and 284.

20 So this report goes into -- yeah, right there  
21 is totally fine.

22 So this report goes into specific examples in  
23 Russia and China, and one example that's completely redacted  
24 that I would suggest is pertaining to India, that reviews  
25 interference efforts as well as Canada's response mechanisms.

26 So I'm going to draw your attention to  
27 paragraph 283.

28 Mr. Epp, if you can see the middle there

1 towards the righthand side, it says, "For example". Do you  
2 see that there?

3 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Yes.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Are you able to read that  
5 section into the record for me and give my throat a little  
6 bit of a break?

7 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Just the one sentence?

8 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Just the -- from "For  
9 example, GAC's mandate" all the way till the end of that  
10 paragraph.

11 **MR. WELDON EPP:** Sure. I'd be happy to.

12 "For example, GAC's mandate is to  
13 represent Canada's interests abroad.  
14 Among other things, it is responsible  
15 for managing diplomatic relations,  
16 addressing consular issues and  
17 promoting international trade. It  
18 also possesses and implements the  
19 majority of Canada's tools to respond  
20 to foreign interference, a threat  
21 that manifests itself in a domestic  
22 context."

23 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

24 And I want to pick up from there. On  
25 paragraph 284, the members who drafted the report continue in  
26 saying that:

27 "In short, GAC is on the foreign  
28 policy end of a domestic security

1 problem. Its leadership on  
2 determining if and how to respond to  
3 foreign interference means that  
4 foreign policy considerations, which  
5 are often clear and immediate [and it  
6 gives a redacted example] will take  
7 precedence over considerations of  
8 domestic harms, which are often vague  
9 and long term..."

10 So I just want to flag that as this is the --  
11 for individuals who were cleared to actually assess and  
12 review the details of that specific situation, this is the  
13 conclusion they came to.

14 And in terms of those examples that are  
15 redacted there, it talks about importing a commodity from  
16 Canada and it also talks about a state's activities which  
17 undermine free speech. I want to suggest that the example  
18 there is referring to India agreeing to import canola, and on  
19 the inverse of that, is acknowledging how India's targeting  
20 of the Sikh community undermined free speech. I imagine  
21 you're not able to confirm that?

22 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'm not able to confirm it,  
23 but I would say, with respect, it's not that -- your  
24 synthesis and conclusion from that paragraph has not been my  
25 experience working at GAC. That's not the calculus through  
26 which we as a department, together with domestic partners,  
27 reach decisions about the variety of tools we use and when we  
28 use them. It's not that one interest automatically trumps

1 others. So I would in any case, not reach the conclusion  
2 that's implied here, with respect to the authors.

3 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Okay. But for the  
4 members who were privy to those details, that is the  
5 conclusion that they did draw. I'd be really curious to  
6 delve into it, but I'm really running out of time now.

7 So I just want to end is this, as we're  
8 looking back at India's foreign interference activities that  
9 have clearly escalated, and you have alluded to that they  
10 have been consistently problematic on a number of fronts over  
11 the past years. We're looking at a situation where a foreign  
12 state last year assassinated a Canadian citizen on Canadian  
13 soil because of his political views.

14 And I want to ask and put it to you that in  
15 doing, kind of taking stock internally as members of GAC, has  
16 there been any internal review or reflection on steps that  
17 could have been taken earlier to avoid us getting the  
18 situation where India was so emboldened to take that kind of  
19 a step? You know, should Indian foreign interference have  
20 been a public conversation and acknowledged publicly much  
21 earlier? Were there other examples of interventions or  
22 diplomatic interventions that could have taken place earlier?

23 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I would say my ability to  
24 answer that question is very much limited by the fact that I  
25 cannot state the conclusion you have, as the RCMP  
26 investigations continue to be underway. Diplomacy also  
27 continues to be underway, but until those investigations are  
28 done, we have allegations based on intelligence, there is

1 diplomacy, there are investigations, there's been no verdict  
2 on the involvement of the Indian government. So we are  
3 waiting for the RCMP to continue their work.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you.

5 Madam Commissioner, if I can ask one final  
6 follow up?

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Really final, if it's a  
8 short one.

9 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Yes, this is the last  
10 one.

11 Mr. Morrison or Mr. Epp, do you have any  
12 comments you can share to shed some light for Madam  
13 Commissioner, on points of potential vulnerability or where  
14 you think Canada could have reacted and responded to Indian  
15 foreign interference differently or more strongly in the  
16 past?

17 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We can always do better.  
18 I can't think off the fly of a particular point, which I  
19 think was your question. What I tried to say in my -- at the  
20 end of my direct testimony before lunch is that we are, as  
21 GAC, try to be a learning organization. I think I can say  
22 that for the entire federal government. The threat is  
23 evolving and our tactics for dealing with -- our strategy and  
24 tactics for dealing with the threat will also evolve.

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Mr. Epp?

26 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I'll leave it at that.

27 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. Those are all  
28 my questions.

1 Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

2 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you.

3 Mr. Sirois for the Russian Canadian  
4 Democratic Alliance.

5 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

6 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:

7 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Yes, good afternoon,  
8 slash evening.

9 I'd like to ask the Court Operator to pull  
10 RCD74, please.

11 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. RCD0000074:

12 Countering disinformation with facts  
13 - Russian invasion of Ukraine

14 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: It is a print version  
15 of a webpage I found on the GAC -- on GAC's website called  
16 "Countering disinformation with facts". Are you aware about  
17 this initiative?

18 MS. TARA DENHAM: Yes.

19 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Ms. Denham, you're in  
20 charge of that project?

21 MS. TARA DENHAM: No, no. This is through  
22 our communications team and working with the Privy Council  
23 communications teams. But we're very well aware of this  
24 website.

25 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Okay. Can you explain  
26 its purpose?

27 MS. TARA DENHAM: Sure.

28 So the purpose as I understand it, again, not

1 led by myself, but in conversations about disinformation and  
2 particularly pertaining to Russia's invasion of Ukraine,  
3 there was a lot of this information that was circulating  
4 globally. Again, an intent of this information is to  
5 undermine, to break the international alliance, the  
6 commitment to Ukraine, and also to break trust between  
7 governments and their population.

8 And so, there was a lot of this information  
9 that Russia was amplifying internationally, and because of  
10 that sheer volume one of the strategies that was agreed upon  
11 across the Government of Canada was that these narratives  
12 were so rampant that it was really important to be able to  
13 actually show the fact base. So when you have a certain  
14 narrative, what are the facts that actually support the  
15 reality.

16 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** For the benefits of  
17 Canadians as well?

18 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** For the benefits of  
19 Canadians. Other countries do this as well, the UK does an  
20 excellent example of this. Ukraine itself is actually very,  
21 very, good at doing this type of counter narrative or pre-  
22 bunking.

23 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And so, this web page  
24 is for Canadians, and are the lies listed here acceptable  
25 diplomatic behavior, is it considered as foreign interference  
26 by GAC?

27 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So these narratives, again  
28 this is this information that was aiming at Russia's invasion



1 of Ukraine. So again, the target being Ukraine, Ukrainian  
2 citizens, breaking the international resolve. So this  
3 information as a tactic is a form of foreign interference,  
4 but it is not considered -- again, it wasn't Russia's  
5 targeting of Canadians specifically, it was Russia's  
6 narrative targeting the invasion of Ukraine.

7 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** But Canadians are  
8 exposed to these narratives, and you felt ---

9 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Absolutely.

10 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** --- GAC felt the need  
11 to post?

12 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** It's -- yes. It's a viable  
13 tool that can be used to actually fill the narrative space  
14 with the facts at play.

15 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And when I put in  
16 this, as you can see from the screenshot, there was 116  
17 entries. But this is just a sample, right, there are many  
18 other lies that are undetected or otherwise not listed there?  
19 Is that right?

20 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** This would be a sampling of  
21 the main narratives. There would have been agreement as to  
22 what are those main narratives that are circulating, and what  
23 would be the facts that need to be put out against those  
24 narratives.

25 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And I saw that other  
26 departments are contributing to this register. I saw  
27 National Defence and CSE. For which department is in charge  
28 of determining what is true and what is false among these

1 narratives? Do you know?

2 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, there isn't -- it  
3 isn't sort of a truth or false. Again, this is where people  
4 -- well there's a lot of conversations about, you know,  
5 should governments be a truth police, that's not it. In  
6 reality, this is about putting out the facts as to what NATO  
7 is, that isn't about true or trying to put a different set of  
8 information out there. It's just to be very clear to  
9 Canadians exactly what NATO is.

10 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, I'm confused.  
11 Because you say it's not about truth or false claims. But  
12 here we see clearly "Russia's false claims". Russia claims  
13 that NATO is a threat to Russia:

14 "The facts:  
15 NATO is a defensive Alliance that  
16 does not seek confrontation."

17 In the heading, well the small description  
18 above this -- the entries themselves, we see:

19 "Below, you will find a sample of the  
20 many lies by the Russian regime about  
21 its invasion of Ukraine, along with  
22 the truth."

23 So it is about truth or false. The  
24 government is acting as arbiter of truth. And I'm not saying  
25 it's a bad thing to the country, I'm just saying that's what  
26 is happening here.

27 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So again, I'm not  
28 responsible for penning that, but at the end of the day, you

1 know this is about the facts, right? It is putting out the  
2 facts into the public sphere.

3 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. And you agree  
4 it's important that the facts are out there for the public to  
5 learn the truth about the war in Ukraine for instance?

6 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I agree it's definitely one  
7 of the approaches that can be used. It doesn't always have  
8 to be the government that's putting out the facts, there's a  
9 lot of fact checkers, there's a lot of NGOs, there's a lot of  
10 different communities, of course, that actually take on this  
11 role.

12 So it doesn't always have to be governments,  
13 nor in some circumstances should it be. But of course, you  
14 know, in a world where populations are faced with a lot of  
15 inaccurate information, when there's a contribution that can  
16 be made to providing the facts of the situation it is one  
17 tool that could be used.

18 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So government has a  
19 responsibility, although not the only one, but is certainly  
20 one of the actors that has a responsibility of debunking  
21 certain false narratives?

22 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I wouldn't describe it as a  
23 responsibility. I would say that it is one of the tools that  
24 could be used, and it depends on the circumstance. So again,  
25 while it was decided to use it in the instance of Russia's  
26 invasion of Ukraine, it does not mean that the government  
27 should be aiming to fact check every piece of information  
28 that circulates within the Canadian environment.

1 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Thank you, I  
2 appreciate that.

3 Would you agree that these narratives can  
4 influence how Canadians think and vote about important issues  
5 of national security, such as Canada's support for NATO  
6 defence spending or support for Ukraine?

7 MS. TARA DENHAM: I think how Canadians  
8 consume information and the information that is consumed can  
9 inform some of their views.

10 But there is actually a lot of research that  
11 says it's very, very difficult to actually say the impact.  
12 There could be a lot of factors that actually influence or  
13 impact how Canadians vote on different issues. And so,  
14 again, there's a lot of information or reasons that I vote in  
15 different ways. It doesn't mean that it is -- it does not  
16 mean that information in and of itself will change somebody's  
17 opinion. It may be one factor amongst many.

18 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Mr. Morrison, you  
19 talked about earlier during examination, about an incident  
20 approach rather than -- and you seemed to indicate that you  
21 preferred a more broader view of foreign interference for  
22 instance.

23 And if we take each of these false claims on  
24 their own as incidents, do you agree that we are kind of  
25 missing the bigger pictures of them? For instance, 116  
26 entries over two years -- two years period, and having the  
27 Russian propaganda that happened during the freedom convoy  
28 for instance, or other instances of propaganda from other

1 countries as well, do you think that there's a need to have a  
2 broader picture of propaganda as well, and disinformation, to  
3 really understand what's the impact of foreign interference  
4 in Canada?

5 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** So there's a lot there.  
6 What I testified to this morning was that in the process that  
7 the senior most levels of our security and intelligence  
8 community underwent recently, to decide which examples  
9 amongst a large number of candidates we should actually  
10 stipulate for the Commission were major instances of  
11 potential foreign interference, that I think all involved  
12 learned things.

13 I think that some elements of the community  
14 learned a little bit more about diplomacy, and distinctions  
15 that can usefully be made between foreign influence and  
16 foreign interference. And what I had tried to say, was that  
17 I learned that in addition to evaluating whether any one  
18 incident constitutes in and of itself foreign interference,  
19 one needs to take into account repeated -- if that's how it  
20 plays out -- repeated instances and the corrosive effect that  
21 that can have overtime.

22 So tying what I actually said to your  
23 question, I completely agree with my colleague, Ms. Denham,  
24 that it is useful to have inaccurate content on important  
25 issues fact checked. And whether that is an NGO, or in this  
26 case the Canadian government, I hope that it does -- that  
27 having a place where the real facts can be checked or  
28 evaluated helps people form their views. But it's just been

1 testified how that isn't exactly a science.

2 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Okay. Thank you.

3 I'd like to move on now to a slightly  
4 different issue. Still this information, but if we can pull  
5 up RCD20 now?

6 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. RCD00000020:

7 Tenet Youtube videos

8 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Just still Russian  
9 propaganda, but very different way and different messages as  
10 well. I'll be talking about the Tenet Media operation. I'm  
11 sure you've all heard that through media reports.

12 This is the -- as you know, just a brief  
13 summary for the record. It's a social media company that was  
14 set up by Russian operatives and Canadians aimed at  
15 influencing Americans and Canadians thoughts.

16 So here we have the 50 or so videos targeting  
17 Canadians specifically. I would like to scroll down a little  
18 bit more because I'm always showing the first video at the  
19 top, but I'd like to just show different examples this time.  
20 Can we scroll down a little bit, please? Yeah, right after  
21 that one. That's good.

22 So you see, that's a good example, I think.  
23 You see "Canada is becoming A COMMUNIST HELLHOLE", some  
24 interview with influencer. "BREAD LINES ARE RETURNING?",  
25 supposedly in Canada. There's a communist flag there.  
26 "TRUDEAU'S GROCERY WAR".

27 So obviously, Canada is not becoming a  
28 communist hellhole. This is false. I think we can all agree

1 on that. And I hope we can all agree on that. But I'm  
2 wondering, why is it more difficult for RRM Canada, or GAC,  
3 or anyone else in government to identify this sort of  
4 narrative as being Russian propaganda, or Russian false  
5 narrative aimed at influencing how Canadians think and vote,  
6 rather than the false narratives about Ukraine? Why is one  
7 treated differently than the other? Is there good reason for  
8 that?

9 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** There's a lot of inaccurate  
10 information on the Internet. We see it every day. I would  
11 remind that the mandate of the RRM is about threats to  
12 democracy and focusing on disinformation, RRM Canada, on  
13 focusing on disinformation. And our mandate is actually to  
14 watch these tactics as they play out internationally.

15 So again, RRM had an understanding, RRM  
16 Canada an understanding of how Russia was pumping  
17 disinformation into the ecosystem as it pertained to Ukraine,  
18 because we are watching internationally to watch how those  
19 campaigns are playing out. We do not have a mandate to look  
20 internal to Canada, except when we are initiated to support  
21 SITE in the context of federal elections and in by-elections.  
22 And so, this would not be for RRM to investigate instances  
23 of, you know, inaccurate information in the Canadian  
24 ecosystem.

25 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, what if I told  
26 you that there was four by-elections, four, during that time  
27 that this operation took place?

28 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** I don't have the time -- I

1 wouldn't be able to validate that. I mean that would be -- I  
2 wouldn't be able to validate that. I can't speak to that.

3 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** No, no. But I'm  
4 telling you it's a fact. Like this operation set up in  
5 November 2023 and there has been four by-elections, so RRM  
6 Canada was looking internally. I'm just wondering whether  
7 the messages are more difficult to detect, because it targets  
8 Canada's political issues rather than international issues.  
9 Is it something that's a consideration for RRM Canada? I'm  
10 just wondering why it can go undetected for so long?

11 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** So I spoke to this earlier.  
12 Again, RRM Canada is a small team, and we have a limited  
13 capability. So in the context of elections, I gave an  
14 example of what we would be looking for. And again, we're  
15 doing searches against the candidates in an election  
16 themselves, the issues that may be playing out in that  
17 election itself. And we watch for whether there is any  
18 patterns that those issues that are pertinent to that  
19 particular byelection or those candidates are -- if there's  
20 any indication of narratives related to that election, are  
21 those political issues that are suspicious in nature and may  
22 trigger further review.

23 So again, we're not looking at all  
24 information within Canada that could have anything to do with  
25 Canada, while it takes place during an election or a by-  
26 election, right? It has to be very specific, and that is  
27 really where we focus on the mandate of RRM and how we can  
28 support the by elections.



1 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you. We can  
2 pull the document down. I'll be asking questions now on the  
3 government's response following these events.

4 So as we know there have been pretty  
5 significant, I think we can agree on that as well, foreign  
6 interference operations targeting Canadians. There are 50  
7 videos or so specifically targeting Canadian issues. I'm  
8 wondering, what has been the Government of Canada's  
9 diplomatic response towards pressure? Because Russian  
10 operatives set up that network initially, and it helped  
11 operate that network and produce the videos and so on,  
12 according to the US Department of Justice indictment.

13 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Vous faites référence...  
14 je vais me permettre, Madame la Commissaire...

15 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Allez-y.

16 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Absolument. Oui.

17 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** ... d'essayer d'injecter  
18 un petit peu de français dans la discussion après la  
19 tentative de mon collègue, Monsieur Lafortune.

20 Est-ce que vous faites référence  
21 particulièrement à cette campagne?

22 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Je fais référence à  
23 l'opération de *Tenet Media*, oui, c'est ça.

24 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** D'accord. Et vous  
25 voulez savoir qu'est-ce qu'on a fait exactement... quelle a été  
26 la nature de l'interaction avec le gouvernement russe, c'est  
27 ça?

28 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ben, je veux savoir,

1 oui, effectivement, est-ce qu'il y a eu des *persona non*  
2 *grata*, est-ce qu'il y a... j'ai vu un que c'était une  
3 affirmation, une déclaration de Mélanie Joly, par exemple, la  
4 ministre des Affaires étrangères. Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres  
5 choses qui ont été faites pour essayer de faire en sorte que  
6 ça ne se reproduise plus au Canada dans le futur?

7 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Alors, je dirais que  
8 ça s'inscrit dans une... dans la longévité, dans la grande  
9 série d'interactions qu'on a eues, de communication envers le  
10 gouvernement russe qu'on a eu au fil des derniers mois, des  
11 dernières années.

12 D'abord, souvenez-vous qu'on a... on était un  
13 des premiers pays à imposer des sanctions contre des entités  
14 qui promouvaient de la désinformation. On a à ce jour  
15 environ 125 personnes et une quarantaine d'entités qui ont  
16 été listées sous la loi sur les... la *Loi des mesures*  
17 *économiques spéciales*, particulièrement pour leur implication  
18 dans des campagnes de désinformation par rapport à l'Ukraine.

19 *RT* et *Sputnik* ont été sanctionnés en mars  
20 2022, donc, dans la première vague de sanctions qui ont été  
21 annoncées contre la Russie. Et leur capacité de diffuser sur  
22 les ondes canadiennes a été enlevée par le CRTC. Donc, déjà,  
23 toutes ces mesures avaient été prises en amont.

24 Alors, comme je l'ai... comme j'ai témoigné un  
25 peu plus tôt aujourd'hui, nos communications avec le  
26 gouvernement russe sont très parcimonieuses, sont très rares.  
27 On garde... surtout à mon niveau, avec l'ambassadeur russe, par  
28 exemple, on engage seulement dans des cas exceptionnels et

1 dans des questions qui impliquent nos intérêts les plus  
2 prononcés.

3                   Donc, par rapport à cette campagne  
4 spécifique, je n'ai eu aucune interaction avec le  
5 gouvernement russe, représenté par l'ambassade ici à Ottawa.  
6 Mais je dirais, encore une fois, ça s'inscrit dans une longue  
7 lignée de reproches, de réprimandes qu'on fait à leur égard.

8                   Et l'autre chose que je dirais, et c'est  
9 peut-être une nuance qui est importante à signaler pour le  
10 bénéfice de la Commission, c'est que le terrain canadien est  
11 beaucoup moins fertile que ce qu'on trouve par exemple dans  
12 certains pays est-européens ou ailleurs pour que l'efficacité  
13 de ces campagnes de désinformation ait un effet prononcé.

14                   Regardez l'évolution des sondages d'opinion  
15 publique à l'égard de la Russie versus l'Ukraine, une grande  
16 stabilité, il y a pas grand monde au Canada qui est persuadé  
17 par ces campagnes-là. Il y a pas grand monde au Canada qui  
18 se fait absorber par ce narratif qui est un narratif  
19 mensonger. On a une certaine chance, par rapport à ça, mais  
20 ça signifie aussi que nos systèmes de défense, notre  
21 communication à l'égard du gouvernement russe et la  
22 résilience des Canadiens fait en sorte qu'il y a beaucoup  
23 moins d'emprise sur ces messages mensongers au Canada.

24                   **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** J'aimerais ça montrer,  
25 s'il vous plaît, RCD52 sur ce dernier point que je trouve  
26 très important, parce que je crois que peut-être... peut-être  
27 que c'était le cas il y a quelques années, peut-être avant la  
28 guerre en Ukraine, mais en fait, il y a de plus en plus

1 d'études, dont celle-là, qui se basent notamment sur une  
2 étude de Angus Reid Institute.

3 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. RCD0000052:

4 Canadian Vulnerability to Russian  
5 Narratives About Ukraine

6 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ça, c'est une étude  
7 publiée par *Disinfo Watch* le 8 juillet 2024, qui s'intitule  
8 « Canadian Vulnerability to Russian Narratives about  
9 Ukraine ». Désolé, c'est pas une étude francophone. Mais  
10 c'est... *Disinfo Watch*, un institut reconnu, Marcus Kolga.

11 Donc, ici, on voit les trois points là. Je  
12 vais vous les lire rapidement juste pour comme avoir la  
13 discussion sur cette question d'influence... les conséquences,  
14 que le Canada est un terreau fertile. Moi, je suis tout à  
15 fait en désaccord avec ça... en désaccord... mon client est en  
16 désaccord avec ça.

17 Donc, je vais expliquer pourquoi.

18 « Most Canadians have been exposed to  
19 Russian FIMI narratives, with 71% of  
20 Canadians having heard at least one  
21 of the narratives, with an average  
22 exposure of 2.1 narratives.

23 A substantial portion of Canadians  
24 exposed to Kremlin narratives believe  
25 them to be true or are unsure of  
26 their falsehood.”

27 And:

28 “We found a marked difference in

1 susceptibility to Russian  
2 disinformation along political  
3 lines.”

4 Donc, ma question, ce serait, est-ce que vous  
5 croyez que cette idée-là, que le Canada n'est pas un terreau  
6 fertile, était peut-être vraie avant l'invasion en Ukraine,  
7 mais maintenant que la Russie a augmenté sa propagande,  
8 l'évaluation pourrait être un peu différente?

9 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Non, je serais en  
10 désaccord. Je continue à croire, selon mes expériences  
11 personnelles, mais aussi des sondages... écoutez, je peux pas  
12 commenter sur la méthodologie qui a été utilisée par cette  
13 enquête-là, mais je revois encore des sondages récemment  
14 publiés par le Pew Research Center dans une grande majorité  
15 des pays de l'OTAN qui montrait que le Canada était parmi les  
16 pays dans lesquels le pourcentage de la population qui  
17 comprenait quel était le rôle de l'OTAN, qui comprenait quel  
18 était l'objectif, et donc qui ne croyait pas en le narratif  
19 russe sur le fait que c'était l'OTAN qui avait initié le  
20 conflit, et cetera, le Canada était parmi les pays qui  
21 étaient le plus convaincu de ce qu'on sait, étant les faits  
22 et la vérité. C'était dans les hauts 60 pour cent.

23 Donc, je ne connais pas cette recherche ni la  
24 méthodologie qui a été utilisée, mais ça ne correspond pas  
25 avec l'information autant anecdotique que scientifique à  
26 laquelle moi j'ai accès.

27 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Madame la Commissaire,  
28 vous avez été très patiente avec d'autres... mes collègues. Je

1 vous demande si je peux avoir un autre trois minutes, comme  
2 accordé à mes confrères.

3 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Tout à fait.

4 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci.

5 Donc, pour continuer un peu sur cette idée-  
6 là... ben, premièrement, je vous recommande de lire cette  
7 étude-là. Elle est très pertinente, je crois, et  
8 intéressante. On peut la descendre, par contre. On n'a pas  
9 le temps de l'analyser plus en profondeur.

10 Mais je vais continuer quand même avec vous,  
11 Monsieur Lévêque, si vous le permettez. Je me demande, dans  
12 votre résumé d'entretien que vous avez fait avec la  
13 Commission, il y a une question que la Russie n'a pas  
14 l'intérêt... en anglais, c'est écrit - pis c'est juste  
15 disponible en anglais, le résumé - c'est :

16 « Russia lacks the interest to spread  
17 disinformation in Canada. » (As  
18 read)

19 Et je me demande, après les événements de  
20 *Tenet Media*, que 50 vidéos ont été produites sur des enjeux  
21 canadiens, qui ont été vues par 500 000 personnes,  
22 supposément les Canadiens, est-ce que c'est la même  
23 évaluation que vous avez encore, que le Canada... que la Russie  
24 n'a pas d'intérêt à influencer les Canadiens spécifiquement?

25 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** D'abord, j'aimerais  
26 faire une distinction entre les intérêts de la Russie à  
27 s'immiscer dans les processus domestiques et électoraux et  
28 démocratiques canadiens, où là, il est très clair, selon

1 toutes les analyses que nous avons reçues, y compris dans nos  
2 services de renseignement, que l'intérêt, l'intention est  
3 beaucoup moins élevée que dans bien d'autres pays. Ça, c'est  
4 une chose.

5 Maintenant, en ce qui concerne les exercices,  
6 les tentatives de désinformation sur l'Ukraine, ce n'est pas  
7 non-existant. Ça existe, on en est tout à fait conscients.  
8 Vous en donnez des bons exemples aussi. Ce que je dirais  
9 encore, c'est que 500 000 visionnements, comparé aux millions  
10 de visionnements et d'impact que ça a dans plusieurs pays de  
11 l'Europe de l'Est, par exemple, où il existe des politiciens  
12 qui sont déjà sympathiques aux positions de la Russie - je  
13 pense entre autres à la Slovaquie, je pense à la Pologne, je  
14 pense à la Serbie - je trouve, et je continue à dire que le  
15 Canada n'est certainement pas immunisé, mais est moins sujet  
16 à cette influence, à cause, je reviens à ça, du fait qu'on a  
17 une terre un peu moins fertile, que ce soit à cause d'un  
18 meilleur niveau de conscientisation ou un mélange de *fact-*  
19 *checking* qui aurait été fait par plusieurs organisations.  
20 Mais je continue à observer que le territoire est beaucoup  
21 moins fertile à cette ingérence.

22 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci. Je vais  
23 terminer sur cette question-là. Si... je me demande,  
24 l'ingérence russe a été un enjeu depuis longtemps,  
25 particulièrement les campagnes de désinformation, notamment  
26 avec l'élection présidentielle de 2016. Vous m'avez parlé  
27 d'un long processus là, qui est l'engagement avec l'ambassade  
28 russe sur ces questions-là notamment, et des discussions qui

1 ont eu lieu, des réprimandes, et cetera. Les sanctions,  
2 même, visant *Russia Today* et les dirigeants de *Russia Today*.

3 Je me demande, considérant que ça se produit  
4 encore aujourd'hui, considérant que l'opération *Tenet Media* a  
5 eu lieu en 2023-2024, est-ce que c'est pas une preuve que ces  
6 sanctions-là et que ces mesures-là ne fonctionnent pas et que  
7 ça prendrait peut-être une nouvelle stratégie, une nouvelle  
8 approche envers la Russie?

9 **M. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** D'abord, un mot sur  
10 les sanctions. Il y a beaucoup de débats sur comment définir  
11 le sujet d'un régime de sanctions. Mais je crois que  
12 personne ne présente l'argumentaire que des sanctions... qu'il  
13 est attendu que des sanctions aient un impact immédiat ou de  
14 façon immédiate altèrent le comportement qu'on essaie de  
15 modifier. Encore là, les sanctions ne sont efficaces que si  
16 elles s'expriment dans la longévité et que si elles sont  
17 adoptées en compagnie d'un plus grand nombre de pays  
18 possible. Ça, c'est une chose.

19 Deuxièmement, dans notre régime de sanctions  
20 - et je reviens à SEMA, la *Loi sur les mesures économiques*  
21 *spéciales* - il n'existe pas de déclencheur qui nous permet  
22 d'utiliser l'ingérence étrangère comme l'élément déclencheur  
23 pour pouvoir annoncer des sanctions. Les deux éléments  
24 déclencheurs principaux sont des violations aux droits de la  
25 personne et une déstabilisation ou la mise en danger du... de  
26 la paix et de la sécurité internationale.

27 Donc, dans ce cas-ci, le régime de sanctions  
28 n'est pas nécessairement le meilleur outil pour ce qui est de



1 l'ingérence ou des tentatives d'ingérence domestique. Mais  
2 comme je l'ai dit, on a réussi à trouver assez d'information  
3 dans le domaine public pour pouvoir lister 125 individus et  
4 40 entités qui faisaient de la promotion de mensonges, de  
5 désinformation, à un point où on pouvait juger que ça  
6 déstabilisait et que ça mettait en danger la sécurité, la  
7 paix internationale, le cas échéant, ici, en ce qui concerne  
8 l'Ukraine.

9 **M. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Si je pouvais,  
10 Monsieur Sirois, j'aimerais quand même faire quelques  
11 commentaires, parce que je pense que l'exemple que vous  
12 prenez est un excellent pour cette Commission-là, surtout  
13 qu'on a parlé beaucoup au début de la Commission des outils  
14 que les Affaires étrangères ont pour contrer le phénomène  
15 d'interférence étrangère.

16 Et puis l'exemple que vous donnez, je vais  
17 pas le commenter au niveau de *Tenet*, je sais... je suis  
18 conscient qu'il y a eu un *indictment* de le ministère de la  
19 Justice américain, puis pour ce qui est du Canada, ben, je  
20 vais laisser naturellement aux autorités compétentes de ça.  
21 Je note que le ministre de la Sécurité publique, le ministre  
22 LeBlanc, a déjà commenté à ce niveau-là.

23 Mais je veux parler de la source avec vous et  
24 comment les différents outils du gouverneur fédéral sont  
25 rentrés pour continuer notre action vis-à-vis la  
26 désinformation que alias *Russia Today*, RT, fait en ce moment,  
27 et vous avez référé aux commentaires, à l'énoncé, au  
28 *statement* que la ministre Joly a fait dernièrement, et c'est

1 un très bon exemple de comment les différents outils de  
2 ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la communauté de  
3 renseignement de sécurité nationale fonctionnent en ce  
4 moment.

5           Pourquoi? Parce que, premièrement, ce que  
6 vous avez vu comme énoncé de la ministre Joly est en fait des  
7 renseignements hautement classifiés qui ont passé à travers  
8 un processus de déclassification pour partager avec les  
9 Canadiens et avec le reste du monde ce qu'on perçoit en ce  
10 moment de RT et de leurs activités.

11           Vous avez absolument raison que RT fait une  
12 campagne de désinformation et de propagande, je dirais, non  
13 seulement sur la situation en Ukraine, mais sur des processus  
14 électoraux, principalement au niveau de l'Europe de l'Est. La  
15 Moldova – la Moldavie, en français – en est un exemple  
16 probant, un exemple que nous avons également commenté, que la  
17 ministre a également commenté dans le passé.

18           Malheureusement, le problème avec RT est  
19 encore plus grand que ça. Ce n'est pas uniquement limité à la  
20 désinformation et à la propagande également, ils sont rendus  
21 à un autre niveau.

22           La première chose, j'ai déjà pensé à leur  
23 interférence au niveau de certaines élections au niveau  
24 Europe de l'Est, mais ils ont aussi commencé à utiliser des  
25 initiatives pour financer l'effort de guerre russe en  
26 Ukraine. Ils ont également employé des... ce qu'on appelle – je  
27 vais utiliser les termes en anglais ici – des cyberproxys,  
28 ils ont employé des cyberproxys que nous savons que par le

1 passé ils ont participé à des incidents cybernétiques,  
2 incluant des incidents cybernétiques contre les  
3 infrastructures canadiennes.

4 Et puis ensuite de d'ça, on sait très bien  
5 qu'ils ont également, suite aux sanctions que monsieur  
6 Lévêque a énoncées, sanctions qui ont été aussi reprises dans  
7 certains autres endroits dans le monde, ont commencé à créer  
8 des plateformes qui officiellement se dissocient de RT pour  
9 continuer à propager cette propagande-là.

10 Et vous avez raison quand vous dites que  
11 mondialement ces plateformes ont un impact, parce qu'on a  
12 analysé et remarqué qu'ils ont généré plus de clics sur leurs  
13 plateformes que certains grands médias internationaux comme  
14 tels.

15 Donc, qu'est-ce qu'on fait à ce niveau-là?  
16 Donc, la première chose qu'on a faite à ce moment-là, c'est  
17 utiliser les capacités de la communauté de renseignement pour  
18 avoir l'information et la déclassifier pour la rendre  
19 publique.

20 La deuxième chose aussi qu'on a faite, c'est  
21 qu'on a coordonné notre action avec le gouvernement américain  
22 et avec le gouvernement britannique afin d'envoyer un message  
23 fort.

24 Puis finalement, qu'est-ce qu'on fait  
25 également, c'est cette fois-ci, malgré que c'est un problème  
26 de sécurité nationale, on utilise les canaux diplomatiques en  
27 coordination avec les États-Unis et les Britanniques afin de  
28 mettre en lumière le phénomène que RT... le défi que RT

1 représente dans un cadre non seulement de désinformation et  
2 de propagande, mais les autres activités qui pourraient être  
3 contre les intérêts de d'autres pays à travers le monde, et  
4 ça inclut aussi les pays en développement, par exemple, donc  
5 de mettre vraiment en lumière comme ça, et c'est très  
6 important que le Canada continue dans cette initiative-là  
7 parce qu'il y a beaucoup de ces pays-là dont une organisation  
8 comme RT représente la grande majorité de l'information qui  
9 est disponible pour ces pays-là.

10 Donc, pour nous, non seulement l'idée c'est  
11 de prendre les mesures appropriées pour le Canada comme tel,  
12 mais pour les Affaires étrangères. En ce moment, on travaille  
13 avec nos alliés pour non seulement commenter avec nos alliés  
14 les plus proches, les pays de l'Europe de l'Est, les pays de  
15 l'OTAN, mais également bon nombre de pays en développement.

16 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci.

17 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** J'ai mes réponses. Merci  
18 beaucoup.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Chantler for the  
20 Concern Group.

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

22 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:**

23 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Good afternoon, Madam  
24 Commissioner. Good afternoon, panelists. Neil Chantler for  
25 the Chinese Canadian Concern Group.

26 I'm going to start on a subject that you  
27 haven't been asked about today, and that is China's interest  
28 in our Arctic. I think these questions are probably most

1 appropriate for Assistant Deputy Lévêque.

2 Various public reports have indicated that  
3 China has a significant growing interest in the Canadian  
4 Arctic and that it is crossing the line between influence and  
5 interference with respect to this issue. Can you please  
6 briefly -- I have many other issues to cover, but briefly  
7 comment on China's apparent interest in the Canadian Arctic,  
8 whether GAC sees the PRC as posing a threat to Canadian  
9 Arctic sovereignty and what diplomatic engagements GAC has  
10 had with Chinese officials in respect of Canada's Arctic?

11 **MR. ALEXANDRE LÉVÊQUE:** Global Affairs Canada  
12 is absolutely seized of this, and seized very clearly through  
13 what the PRC has been doing, its interest in the Arctic.

14 What I would say, first of all, Minister Joly  
15 has mentioned this publicly recently, it has pushed us to  
16 review, do an in-depth and update of our Arctic strategy, and  
17 particularly the foreign policy part of the Arctic. And  
18 that's something that will be released very soon. And I  
19 would say it takes a much more conscious view of how the  
20 Arctic is now the stage for geopolitical competition.

21 And so a number of -- without wanting to pre-  
22 empt the issuance of that document, a number of lines of  
23 activity will be revealed in that sense.

24 Another really important aspect of our  
25 actions, and GAC is leading the way along with Department of  
26 National Defence and intelligence and security agencies, is  
27 working with Indigenous and northern communities to raise  
28 their awareness. Often we're talking about very small

1 communities that don't have necessarily access to what we  
2 see, that don't have a way of interpreting and understanding  
3 what some mild overtures might look like coming from from  
4 China and other countries, so it's a real partnership.

5 It's we need to learn from them in seeing  
6 what they see on the ground and then, in return, help them  
7 interpret how some investments or offers to develop  
8 infrastructure, et cetera might be tools used and might have  
9 ulterior motives.

10 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** That's very helpful.  
11 Thank you.

12 I'm going to turn subjects to the overseas  
13 police stations, and these questions may be best directed to  
14 Mr. Epp.

15 One of the most concerning aspects of this  
16 particular case of foreign interference seems to be that it  
17 didn't come to light as a result of our own security and  
18 intelligence agencies' detection. We learned about these  
19 overseas police stations through an NGO's report out of  
20 Spain. And so in the context of this public inquiry, which  
21 is tasked with determining Canada's capacity to detect and  
22 deter foreign interference, I think it would be helpful to  
23 understand GAC's perspective on how these overseas police  
24 stations avoided detection here in Canada.

25 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I think it's an excellent  
26 question because I think there can be different  
27 interpretations of whether -- I take your point that that  
28 would be troubling on one level, but I would want to clarify

1 that no government globally identified this as an issue and  
2 Safeguard Defenders' report was not a report about these  
3 occurrences in Canada. It was about these occurrences  
4 globally.

5 I take a slightly different view, which is,  
6 particularly when dealing with highly sophisticated and  
7 globally impactful states like the PRC, I think we have to  
8 anticipate in the future, as we saw with Safeguard Defenders'  
9 report, that any evolving and learning approach to robustly  
10 and firmly pushing back against foreign interference cannot  
11 sufficiently be managed by the government. It has to be  
12 managed through active cooperation with sophisticated non-  
13 governmental private sector, et cetera groups.

14 I think the Safeguard Defenders' report was  
15 an excellent example where that NGO, within its own mandate,  
16 did a deep dive and surfaced a phenomenon that hadn't been  
17 tracked by any government, to our knowledge, including the  
18 Canadian government, but that we responded to very quickly  
19 and continue to track, the RCMP is still investigating and  
20 tracking these phenomena in Canada.

21 And the last thing I would say is that it's  
22 particularly important to have that whole of society  
23 approach, awareness raising, capacity building to addressing  
24 these kind of grey zone vectors for foreign interference  
25 because that's what they are. And as I explained in my  
26 testimony earlier, something can look kind of legitimate.  
27 For diplomats we would have picked out right away if we'd  
28 walked into a strip mall with one of these offering

1 subnational government services from Fujian province and  
2 said, "Well, that's -- you know, that's off kilter," and we  
3 would have reported in. But for a lot of Canadians, quite  
4 reasonably, they don't know the niceties of the Vienna  
5 Conventions. So the combination of non-governmental  
6 organizations, who may pick up on this information, doing  
7 sophisticated analysis, and bringing it to light I actually  
8 think is an important part of how we evolve as threat --  
9 state threat actors evolve their own forums and tools because  
10 the next iteration may not be a police station, it may be  
11 something else, and if we're just playing whack-a-mole with  
12 the last iteration we're going to miss the next. So we have  
13 to work with a whole-society approach.

14 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** You expect fully that if  
15 the RCMP had received reports about these overseas police  
16 stations prior to September 2022 when the report came out you  
17 would have been informed about it?

18 **MR. WELDON EPP:** I am confident that if any  
19 of our domestic partners had identified these activities or  
20 these sort of manifestations of grey zone activity, that it  
21 would have been brought through the interdepartmental  
22 community. I probably would have heard of it first from my  
23 colleague, Phil Lafortune, and we would have discussed it  
24 interdepartmentally, yes.

25 **MR. PHILIPPE LAFORTUNE:** Just to provide  
26 additional comment of what Mr. Epp just mentioned, in  
27 situation where, let's say, the RCMP notice the activity of a  
28 foreign state for which it has question, it will reach out



1 quickly to us to ask if such activity has been formally  
2 accredited to our Office of Protocol. So that would be their  
3 first question. They're also going to be wondering if indeed  
4 it has been accredited [sic], do those individual enjoy the  
5 immunities, and so on and so forth.

6 So while we would not get information should  
7 an criminal investigation is launched, the first step of the  
8 RCMP would be quickly to reach out to us to verify that  
9 information about accreditation, and if there is such  
10 accreditation, which was not the case here -- if there is  
11 such accreditation, then what are the exact immunities that  
12 those officials been ---

13 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you.

14 Moving to GAC's response to the overseas  
15 police stations. We've heard evidence today that -- at least  
16 perhaps from Mr. Morisson or Ms. Termorshuizen, GAC's  
17 response was diplomatic in nature, of course, and in  
18 parallel, the RCMP pursued the matter through the normal  
19 course of investigation.

20 My question for you is, those are two very  
21 different paths to follow, and is there a concern that one  
22 might affect the other? Was there any conversation between  
23 GAC and the RCMP about what each of you were doing, and was  
24 there a concern held by GAC that a brute-force approach on  
25 the policing side might interfere with the delicate  
26 diplomatic negotiations that you are undertaking, meeting  
27 with the Ambassador and so on?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'll start; Cindy can

1 jump in.

2 I wouldn't consider them delicate diplomatic  
3 negotiations. This is offside and so we demanded  
4 explanations, and our goal was to have any illegitimate  
5 activity shut down. That's the diplomatic outcome we were  
6 pursuing.

7 I can't speak -- I did read what the RCMP  
8 said it was trying to accomplish, including by doing things  
9 overly rather than as part of an investigation.

10 My overall sense is our Government of Canada  
11 objective was to stop this from happening and so we were  
12 pursuing the same objective as the RCMP.

13 **MS. CINDY TERMORSHUIZEN:** Yeah, the only  
14 thing I would add to that is that, you know, we've talked  
15 about this a number of times over the course of the day. The  
16 Government of Canada has a toolkit that different departments  
17 have pieces of that you could deploy in these types of  
18 situations. And in this particular situation, it was  
19 absolutely appropriate that both Global Affairs and the RCMP  
20 use the tools at their disposal to address this issue, and  
21 there was a significant coordination and communication  
22 between us in doing so.

23 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Mr. Morrison, you  
24 anticipated some of why I'd asked the question, and that was  
25 that from one perspective, the RCMP's response to the  
26 overseas police stations was very diplomatic; it was very  
27 soft. They didn't move in and covertly investigate and  
28 gather evidence and pursue criminal charges, at least as far

1 as we know publicly. Their approach was to, as we heard in  
2 their evidence the other day, try and be present; park in  
3 front of the station, and try and engage and show the  
4 community that the police were aware of the situation. And  
5 that's a much softer response than they might have employed  
6 had this been some other kind of organized crime going on, I  
7 suggest.

8 And I wonder if that was as a result of some  
9 dialogue with GAC, but I take it it wasn't; is that correct?

10 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I'm not aware of GAC at  
11 all shaping how the RCMP went -- decided to go about its  
12 disruption activities. I will say at a kind of threshold  
13 level, as Weldon has said, these appeared to be dual-use  
14 physical locations, providing government services at the kind  
15 of provincial level; Weldon mentioned a couple, marriage  
16 certificates and so on, but also houses or vectors for  
17 transnational repression.

18 So I think it's probably fair to say that we,  
19 being unaware of them, also needed to establish their  
20 presence; we needed to look into exactly what was going on.  
21 And as the Foreign Ministry, we needed to call out China on  
22 an egregious violation of its -- of the Vienna Convention and  
23 Canadian sovereignty. And in so doing, we asked the Chinese  
24 government about their likely reaction if a Canadian province  
25 decided to open an outlet somewhere in China without the  
26 permission of the national government.

27 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** I'd like to address a  
28 couple more issues in the limited time I have.

1           Could the Court Operator please called up  
2 CAN044228? There's an "\_R01" as well.

3           This document was shown to you earlier today.  
4 These are the DM CIR, I think you pronounced it, meeting  
5 minutes from October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. If we go down to the middle  
6 of -- sorry, the bottom of page 2 where it says, "GAC advised  
7 that..." -- there is it, the last paragraph:

8                     "...per the original Spanish NGO  
9                     report on PRC OPS, many OPS have been  
10                    successful in convincing people to  
11                    return to China, and that the PCR  
12                    [sic] likes these tools."

13           You can scroll down a little further. "In  
14 GAC's view..." -- and, again, Mr. Morrison, I take it this is  
15 your view; you're the GAC attendee at this meeting:

16                    "...we should not interpret OPS as  
17                    about us, but as about PRC views of  
18                    Chinese people abroad, and expected  
19                    loyalties."

20           What did you mean by "Us" there? Who are you  
21 drawing a distinction between?

22           **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Again, I don't actually  
23 recall the meeting very well, but it was obviously the --  
24 this obviously is an account of what I had said. The -- I  
25 had read the Safeguard Defenders' report, and I had -- was  
26 very curious as to the very significant number of people  
27 that, according to the report, had returned to China or had  
28 been encouraged, enticed, coerced -- I don't know -- to

1 return to China as a result of the presence of these police  
2 stations. So in the -- again, I do not recall the nuances of  
3 the discussion, but I think I was encouraging colleagues to  
4 try to fully understand that for China -- unlike other  
5 countries, China, I have learned from my China expert  
6 colleagues, takes a different view of diaspora than many  
7 others do. We believe if you're a Canadian and you move  
8 abroad, you -- that's your free choice.

9 China, for reasons that I at first found very  
10 puzzling, seems to believe that if you move abroad and even  
11 become, say, a Canadian citizen or a Spanish citizen or a  
12 Dutch citizen or dual, for example, they still have some kind  
13 of claim on you. And that's just a very different view of  
14 diaspora, it's a very different view of citizenship  
15 obligations than we have.

16 So I believe what I was trying to do is to  
17 encourage greater understanding of why these existed because  
18 I was struggling with that notion myself.

19 Again, as the foreign Ministry, our number  
20 one priority was to have them cease operations because they  
21 are illegitimate. It sounds like I was just musing after  
22 having read the report as to why they existed in the first  
23 place.

24 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Is there anything you or  
25 the other panelists can say to us in this forum about the  
26 ongoing threat of these stations and anything that the  
27 diaspora should be concerned about?

28 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** We will and are as a

1 community remaining very vigilant. I've said elsewhere in my  
2 testimony that I think, at the end of the day, Canadians can  
3 be confident in elections, they can be confident in their  
4 parliamentarians, they can be confident in our democratic  
5 processes. But the two areas where I think much more work is  
6 required are artificial intelligence and its impact on mis  
7 and disinformation and transnational repression. And to the  
8 extent that these stations are part of the PRC's  
9 transnational repression toolkit, we will remain very active  
10 and very vigilant.

11 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you.

12 Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

14 Last, but not least, the Attorney General.

15 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

16 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:**

17 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Madam  
18 Commissioner. Whether I'm least depends on the day, but I'm  
19 sure everyone is happy to see me standing up here because it  
20 means we're almost at the end of the day, and that happiness  
21 is certainly not least among the witnesses.

22 I'm Helene Robertson, counsel for the  
23 Attorney General.

24 So I just had a few questions for you, and  
25 I'll start with you, Ms. Denham.

26 You discussed with Commission counsel the  
27 cyber framework and the fact that there is no equivalent  
28 framework for disinformation. In that respect, I was

1 wondering if you could explain a little bit, and briefly, how  
2 you would refer to a public announcement about disinformation  
3 and if there's any distinction -- any importance about the  
4 terminology in those announcements.

5 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Sure. So again, we did  
6 talk at length about the attribution framework and going  
7 through the assessments and there's an ability to do a  
8 technical assessment to actually look for the evidence of any  
9 breach and tie it to the international norms and legal  
10 framework, but disinformation, there's a few key messages  
11 that I hope everyone has taken away. And actually, the  
12 Deputy just referred to it again.

13 Disinformation, the environment is very, very  
14 complex and it's getting harder, and AI and the different  
15 tools are going to make that even more difficult.

16 And so what we've learned over time is,  
17 again, to focus on understanding what the tactics are, how  
18 are they evolving, focusing on those tactics and we frame it  
19 now more around disclosures, so move away from this concept  
20 that you can directly attribute.

21 You know, cyber, you have the evidence,  
22 you're able to cite the international norms and laws.  
23 Disinformation, a disclosure is more about making sure  
24 there's information available about the tactics that are  
25 being used because we may not, in all instances, be able to  
26 be able to identify exactly which country or if there was a  
27 foreign entity because of the complexity and the intersection  
28 and intermingling with regular Canadians communicating and

1 global populations.

2 So I encourage the team and the community  
3 when we're talking about this to look at it more as  
4 disclosures and how can we use disclosures to increase  
5 education around what people should be aware of.

6 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you.

7 Moving on, again, Ms. Denham, you spoke with  
8 Commission counsel about the role of RRM in monitoring the  
9 domestic information environment during elections and by-  
10 elections, and you'd spoken with some of the other counsel  
11 about that as well. When you were talking in the email that  
12 you were shown at the beginning -- and I can have it pulled  
13 again, but I think I don't need to. I think you know the one  
14 that we're talking about. What were you suggesting would  
15 happen vis a vis monitoring the domestic information  
16 environment?

17 Were you suggesting, for example, that it  
18 should stop entirely if Global Affairs were to move out of  
19 that space?

20 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** No, not at all. What I was  
21 indicating in the email is that I think we've actually proven  
22 the importance of monitoring that space, that the RRM Canada  
23 team has done that very well, and we've been contributing to  
24 that since that capability began, but that given, again, the  
25 complexity and the understanding of the severity or the  
26 importance of this threat within a domestic landscape, that  
27 there needs to be a conversation and decisions within the  
28 Government of Canada as to where that capability should



1 exist.

2 And that was the point. I think we  
3 absolutely need to build on what we've proven on the  
4 importance of understanding this landscape, but it shouldn't  
5 be the responsibility of a Foreign Affairs department to be  
6 watching within the domestic landscape on a permanent basis.

7 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** And do you see a role  
8 for Canada -- the RRM Canada team in moving that towards a  
9 different entity doing that monitoring? Do you see a role  
10 for yourselves in that transition?

11 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Yes. There was two things  
12 that I suggested in that email. One was that I actually did  
13 say RRM Canada should remain on SITE, on the SITE construct,  
14 and that was again to be able to harvest the learnings that  
15 we were gaining internationally about those tactics and the  
16 threats that we were seeing and be able to share that with  
17 our domestic entities as an early warning so that they could  
18 be watching for it domestically.

19 I then -- I also suggested that, given we  
20 have this capability and we have built this capability over a  
21 number of years, that we would want to -- we would be more  
22 than willing to support any department when the decision is  
23 made as to where that domestic capability should exist, that  
24 we would be more than happy to work with that department to  
25 learn from us.

26 Again, we sort of leapfrog and build on what  
27 we've learned on how to build that capability and the tools  
28 and the analysis and some of our ways to actually do

1 disclosures that we'd be happy to support any department in  
2 building that capability.

3 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you.

4 Deputy Minister Morrison, you had a  
5 discussion with the Commission about the assessment of  
6 intelligence provided to Global Affairs by CSIS and you  
7 stated that sometimes it was healthy to have a sceptical  
8 mindset when approaching intelligence.

9 If you are sceptical of intelligence because  
10 of, for example, indicators of reliability, that sort of  
11 thing, what would you do? Would you ignore it, for example?  
12 What would be your steps if you had some questions about that  
13 intelligence?

14 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** Most of the raw  
15 intelligence products that I see do have caveats on them, on  
16 the sourcing, on the reliability of the sourcing. And people  
17 are people. When something comes around and even in some of  
18 the things we discussed today, things that are now taken as  
19 fact in the discourse that we're currently having are, in  
20 some cases, based on a single piece of uncorroborated  
21 intelligence so we actually don't know whether Thing X or  
22 Thing Y happened or didn't happen. But as conversations and  
23 discourse takes over, it quickly becomes accepted fact.

24 So in a case like that or where there was  
25 just general reason for scepticism, there are a couple of  
26 different interdepartmental bodies, of which I am a member,  
27 where concerns could be raised.

28 In some cases, I would talk to my colleague,

1 Philippe Lafortune, and ask for what's behind this. Is there  
2 more? Is there something that I'm not seeing? And you know,  
3 odds are I -- my initial impression was mistaken.

4 But I do think that as David Vigneault  
5 testified, it's not appropriate for the intelligence agencies  
6 to have the final word on any or on most issues. Most issues  
7 benefit from a cross-disciplinary stress test, and I think a  
8 little bit of scepticism helps produce better outcomes. And  
9 I must say at the senior levels I've never seen anyone that  
10 has expressed scepticism. I've never seen -- the views can  
11 be litigated, but I've seen them not taken seriously.

12 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you very much.

13 Ms. Denham, I'm going to come back to you,  
14 and it's just about the WeChat campaign involving MP Michael  
15 Chong you were speaking with, originally, the Commission  
16 counsel with.

17 You mentioned during that conversation that  
18 Kenny Chiu incident that took place during the general  
19 election of 2021, and that there were four accounts involved  
20 there. And a question that I had for you is, do you know  
21 whose accounts those were and how active they were, in terms  
22 of commenting on Canadian politics before the 2021 election?

23 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** The accounts that I was  
24 referring to were Chinese Canadian news outlets that were  
25 within the WeChat environment. And so on the reporting from  
26 RRM Canada, they weren't able to make direct link between  
27 those Chinese Canadian news agencies and the PRC.

28 In terms of level of volume, again, a Chinese

1 Canadian news outlet during an election period would be --  
2 it's not unexpected that they would be commenting on Canadian  
3 politics. I can't speak to before the election period as,  
4 again, RRM Canada wouldn't have been monitoring that, but the  
5 main thing here is we couldn't make the links to the PRC. It  
6 was a low level of -- there was a low level of interaction  
7 with that information. And so at that point we had a low  
8 level of confidence that it was actually clandestine, covert,  
9 coordinated in any way.

10 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Thank you. And for  
11 the 2024 campaign that you were talking about, what was the  
12 timing of that campaign?

13 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** That campaign, and I wrote  
14 it down again, that was between May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 13<sup>th</sup> when it  
15 actually took place. Again, we weren't able to identify it  
16 till later, but that targeted timeline was actually coincided  
17 with when Zhao Wei was PNG. So, again, that's the piece  
18 where you have an event, you then see a very coordinated  
19 campaign with 72 accounts for which you're actually able to  
20 make a link to the PRC; that is a completely different  
21 circumstance, and what coordinated activity looks like in a  
22 disinformation event.

23 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** And did that ---

24 **MR. WELDON EPP:** And it was 2023, not 2024.

25 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Oh sorry.

26 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Twenty twenty-three  
27 (2023), thank you very much.

28 And was that timing important, in terms of

1 your assessment of the campaign?

2 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Well, there was a few  
3 parts. One was the PNG of Zhao Wei, because we were trying  
4 to contextualize this as to why would that type of campaign  
5 have been launched around that timeframe.

6 But are you talking about the timing in terms  
7 of the volume of activity that's happening, or I'm not ---

8 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Just did you do assess  
9 that there was a link between the PNG of Zhao Wei and that  
10 campaign involving ---

11 **MS. TARA DENHAM:** Oh, that was part of the  
12 analysis as a consideration. Again, in terms of when you're  
13 trying to understand or try to put that analysis around it,  
14 as to we're seeing this information campaign, what else could  
15 be happening around that time? The team did include the  
16 analysis that that was around the time period of the PNG.

17 **MS. HELENE ROBERTSON:** Okay, thank you.

18 And I just have one last final area to ask a  
19 question of, really all of you, anyone who wants to engage is  
20 welcome to do so, and it's a general question.

21 From your perspective as a foreign affairs  
22 department, how would you character the amount of foreign  
23 interference targeting Canada's domestic processes as  
24 compared to those that you're seeing in other countries?

25 **MR. DAVID MORRISON:** I can take a swing at  
26 that.

27 So my testimony in multiple *fora* has been  
28 that Canada has a baseline of foreign interference that we

1 need to take account of, but that in the two federal  
2 elections that are covered by this Commission of Inquiry, we  
3 did not see a spike in foreign interference activities,  
4 either in 2019 or in 2021.

5 I think it's probably fair to say that that  
6 baseline is rising. But we have, frankly, not been targeted,  
7 our elections have not been targeted, in the way that the  
8 BREXIT Referendum was targeted; in the way that the French  
9 presidential election of 2017, I believe, was targeted; in a  
10 way that the US 2016 election is being targeted; in a way  
11 that the current US election is evidently being targeted,  
12 mainly with mis- and disinformation; in a way that Moldova  
13 has been targeted; in a way that Taiwan has been targeted,  
14 and you can go on.

15 So we have been, as Canada, I think, very  
16 lucky. We've also been a leader in putting in place some  
17 defensive mechanisms that have, I think, proven quite  
18 effective.

19 But the threat is evolving. I am -- if I'm  
20 in my current position at the time of the next election, I'll  
21 be a member of the Panel of Five, and I will say we are  
22 actively preparing for the next election, whenever it comes.

23 The threats are developing and so we -- our  
24 defences -- our defensive mechanisms will also have to  
25 develop. That's -- so compared internationally we've been, I  
26 think, thoughtful but also probably a little bit lucky. And  
27 we'll -- but we'll be prepared in case we're not as lucky  
28 next time around.

1 MS. HELENE ROBERTSON: Those are my  
2 questions. Thank you very much.

3 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you very much.  
4 Ms. Chaudhury, re-examination?

5 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: No re-examination  
6 but I understand that Ms. McBain-Ashfield has one very small  
7 housekeeping item to take care of.

8 MS. EMILY McBAIN-ASHFIELD: Thank you,  
9 Commissioner.

10 So this morning a few of the witnesses  
11 adopted an addendum to their Stage 1 interview summary, and  
12 it was WIT114. And at the time, we didn't have the French  
13 version; we now do. So just for the record, that is  
14 WIT114.FR.

15 --- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE No. WIT0000114.FR:

16 Addendum au résumé d'entrevue -  
17 Affaires mondiales Canada

18 MS. EMILY McBAIN-ASHFIELD: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you very much.

20 So let me thank you. Honestly it was very,  
21 very interesting, and you have been very generous in sharing  
22 your experience, your knowledge, and your views.

23 I think the last thing I have to do is just  
24 to wish you all a good weekend, and try to think about other  
25 things than foreign interference but could be difficult.  
26 Thank you.

27 THE REGISTRAR: Order, please. À l'ordre,  
28 s'il vous plaît.

1 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
2 Commission is adjourned until Monday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2024  
3 at 9:30 a.m. Cette séance de la Commission sur l'ingérence  
4 étrangère est suspendue jusqu'à lundi le 7 octobre 2024 à  
5 9 h 30.

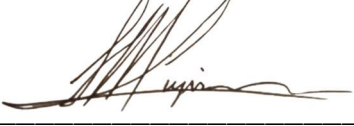
6 --- Upon adjourning at 5:37 p.m./

7 --- L'audience est ajournée 17 h 37

8  
9 **C E R T I F I C A T I O N**

10  
11 I, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, a certified court reporter,  
12 hereby certify the foregoing pages to be an accurate  
13 transcription of my notes/records to the best of my skill and  
14 ability, and I so swear.

15  
16 Je, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, une sténographe officielle,  
17 certifie que les pages ci-hautes sont une transcription  
18 conforme de mes notes/enregistrements au meilleur de mes  
19 capacités, et je le jure.

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22 Sandrine Marineau-Lupien  
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