



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**

**VOLUME 29**

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Commission Counsel / Avocat(e)s de la commission	Gordon Cameron Erin Dann Matthew Ferguson Hubert Forget Leila Ghahhary Benjamin Herrera Howard Krongold Hannah Lazare Jean-Philippe Mackay Kate McGrann Emily McBain-Ashfield Hamza Mohamadhossen Lynda Morgan Siobhan Morris Annie-Claude Poirier Gabriel Poliquin Natalia Rodriguez Guillaume Rondeau Nicolas Saint-Amour Daniel Sheppard Maia Tsurumi
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### III

## Appearances / Comparutions

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Human Rights Coalition	David Matas Sarah Teich
Russian Canadian Democratic Alliance	Mark Power Guillaume Sirois
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Han Dong	Mark Polley Emily Young Jeffrey Wang
Michael Chong	Gib van Ert Fraser Harland

## IV Appearances / Comparutions

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Mani Kakkar

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Malliha Wilson

The Pillar Society

Daniel Stanton

Democracy Watch

Wade Poziomka

Nick Papageorge

Canada's NDP

Lucy Watson

Conservative Party of Canada

Nando De Luca

Chinese Canadian Concern Group on  
The Chinese Communist Party's  
Human Rights Violations

Neil Chantler

David Wheaton

Erin O'Toole

Thomas W. Jarmyn

Preston Lim

Senator Yuen Pau Woo

Yuen Pau Woo

Sikh Coalition

Balpreet Singh

Prabjot Singh

Bloc Québécois

Mathieu Desquilbet

Iranian Canadian Congress

Dimitri Lascaris

# V

## Table of Content / Table des matières

	PAGE
<b>Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	1
<b>MS. BRIDGET WALSH, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	2
<b>MR. NABIH ELDEBS, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	2
<b>MS. LISA JANE DUCHARME, Sworn/Assermentée</b>	2
<b>Mr. MARTIN GREEN, Sworn/Assermenté</b>	3
<b>MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	3
Examination in-Chief by/Interrogatoire en-chef par Ms. Leila Ghahhary	3
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Preston Lim	48
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Sujit Choudhry	57
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Fraser Harland	69
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Michael Wilson	71
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. David Matas	73
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Guillaume Sirois	77
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Ms. Ryann Atkins	80
 <b>MS. AMY AWAD, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	 93
<b>MR. OWEN RIPLEY, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	94
<b>MS. ISABELLE MONDOU, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle</b>	94
Examination in-chief by/Interrogatoire en-chef par Mr. Jean-Philippe MacKay	94
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Neil Chantler	158
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Guillaume Sirois	168
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. David Matas	179
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Ms. Mani Kakkar	189

## **VI**

### **Table of Content / Table des matières**

	<b>PAGE</b>
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Mr. Preston Lim	198
Cross-Examination by/Contre-interrogatoire par Ms. Maria Barret-Morris	202

## VII

### Exhibit List / Liste des pièces

No.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
WIT0000110.EN	Interview Summary: Privy Council Office – Security and Intelligence Secretariat, Intelligence Assessment Secretariat (Nabih Eldebs, Adelle Ferguson, Marie-Hélène Chayer, Bridget Walshe, Michael MacDonald, Martin Green, Lisa Ducharme)	4
WIT0000110.FR	Résumé d'entrevue : Bureau du Conseil privé – Secrétariat de la sécurité et du renseignement et Secrétariat de l'évaluation du renseignement (Nabih Eldebs, Adelle Ferguson, Marie-Hélène Chayer, Bridget Walshe, Michael MacDonald, Martin Green et Lisa Ducharme)	4
WIT0000143	In Camera Examination Summary: Nabih Eldebs, Adelle Ferguson, Marie-Hélène Chayer, Bridget Walshe, Michael MacDonald	5
WIT0000141	In Camera Examination Summary: Martin Green, Lisa Ducharme	6
WIT0000141.FR	Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos : Martin Green, Lisa Ducharme	6
CAN021740	Canadian Intelligence Prioritization Processes, Background and Analytic Aids	15
CAN011698_R01_0001	Intelligence Priorities - Ministerial Direction	17
CAN028145_0001	Intelligence Dissemination and Tracking for Senior Leaders and Political Staff	20
CAN003787_R01	China's Foreign Interference Activities	24
CAN011049_0001	IAS Report on China's Foreign Interference Activities	28
CAN021931	Ministerial Direction on Threats to the Security of Canada Directed at Parliament and Parliamentarians	37
CAN033623_0001	Defensive Briefing for Staff of a Member of Parliament	40
CAN037056_0001	Renewing Canada's National Security and Intelligence Governance Structure	43

## VIII

### Exhibit List / Liste des pièces

No.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
CAN037897_0001	Responses to Issues Raised by British Columbia Premier Eby During Meeting with NSIA	59
COM.SUM0000001.EN	Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet – Protecting Canada’s Democracy: Securing the 2019 General Election and Beyond	91
COM.SUM0000001.FR	Résumé d’un mémoire au Cabinet – Protéger la démocratie du Canada : assurer l’intégrité de l’élection générale de 2019 et des élections ultérieures	91
COM.SUM0000002.EN	Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet – Protecting Canada's Democracy: Rising to an Evolving Challenge	91
COM.SUM0000002.FR	Résumé d’un mémoire au Cabinet – Protéger la démocratie au Canada : relever un défi en constante évolution	92
COM.SUM0000003.EN	Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet – Cabinet Directive on the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol	92
COM.SUM0000003.FR	Résumé d’un mémoire au Cabinet – Directive du Cabinet sur le Protocole public en cas d’incident électoral majeur	92
COM.SUM0000004.EN	Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet – Modernizing Canada's Approach to Addressing Threats from Hostile Activities by State Actors	92
COM.SUM0000004.FR	Résumé d’un mémoire au Cabinet – Moderniser l’approche du Canada adoptée par le Canada pour faire face aux menaces posées par les activités hostiles parrainées par des états	93
WIT0000098.EN	Interview Summary: Isabelle Mondou, Amy Awad	95
WIT0000098.FR	Résumé d’entrevue : Isabelle Mondou et Amy Awad	95
WIT0000140	Résumé d’interrogatoire à huis clos : Isabelle Mondou, sous-ministre du Patrimoine Canadien	95
WIT0000131	Interview Summary: Owen Ripley	96



**VIX**  
**Exhibit List / Liste des pièces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
WIT0000131.FR	Résumé d'entrevue : Owen Ripley	96
CAN.DOC.000034	Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference - Institutional Report - Canadian Heritage	97
CAN.DOC.000035	Enquête Publique sur l'ingérence Étrangère - Rapport Institutionnel - Patrimoine Canadien	97
CAN042656_0001	Addressing Harmful Content and Disinformation	112
CAN044734_0001	Digital Citizen Contribution Program Call #5 Priorities	119
CCC0000034	A Threat to Canadian Sovereignty: National Security Dimensions of the Canada-People's Republic of China	125
COM0000614	Une menace pour la souveraineté canadienne : les dimensions de la sécurité nationale de la relation entre le Canada et la République populaire de Chine	125
COM0000601.EN	Cyber threats to Canada's democratic processes	148
COM0000601.FR	Cyberemenanaces contre le processus démocratique du Canada	148
RCD0000052	Canadian Vulnerability to Russian Narratives About Ukraine	168

Ottawa, Ontario

--- Upon commencing on Monday, October 7, 2024 at 9:34 a.m.

--- L'audience débute le mardi 7 octobre 2024 à 9 h 34

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

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 9:34 a.m. Il est 9 h 34.

**COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Bonjour tout le monde.  
Good morning.

Maître Ghahhary, you are the one who will be conducting the examination this morning?

**MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Yes, good morning, Commissioner. You will now hear from a panel of six witnesses who appear on behalf of the Privy Council Office. Mr. Registrar, please may the witnesses be sworn or affirmed?

**LE GREFFIER:** OK. Donc, je commence avec Madame Chayer.

Donc, Madame Chayer, pourriez-vous, s'il vous plaît, indiquer votre nom complet et épeler votre nom de famille pour la transcription sténographique?

**Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Marie-Hélène Chayer  
— C-H-A-Y-E-R.

**--- Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER, Affirmed/Assermentée:**

**LE GREFFIER:** Merci.

**THE REGISTRAR:** Okay.

1 Now with Ms. Walshe. So Ms. Walshe, could  
2 you please state your full name and spell your last name for  
3 the record?

4 MS. BRIDGET WALSHE: Bridget Walshe, W-A-L-S-  
5 H-E.

6 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

7 --- MS. BRIDGET WALSHE, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:

8 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

9 And now for Mr. Eldebs. So Mr. Eldebs, could  
10 you please state your full name and spell your last name for  
11 the record?

12 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Nabih Eldebs, E-L-D-E-B-S.

13 THE REGISTRAR: Perfect.

14 --- MR. NABIH ELDEBS, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:

15 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

16 All right. And now for Ms. Ducharme. Could  
17 you please state your full name and spell your last name for  
18 the record?

19 MS. LISA DUCHARME: Lisa Jane Ducharme, D-U-  
20 C-H-A-R-M-E.

21 THE REGISTRAR: Perfect. Thank you.

22 --- MS. LISA JANE DUCHARME, Sworn/Assermentée:

23 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

24 All right. And now for Mr. Green. Mr.  
25 Green, could you please state your full name and spell your  
26 last name for the record?

27 MR. MARTIN GREEN: Martin Green, G-R-E-E-N.

28 THE REGISTRAR: Great, thank you.

1 --- MR. MARTIN GREEN, Sworn/Assermenté:

2 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

3 And finally, Mr. MacDonald. Could you please  
4 state your full name and spell your last name for the record?

5 MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD: Michael MacDonald, M-  
6 A-C-D-O-N-A-L-D.

7 THE REGISTRAR: Perfect. Thank you.

8 --- MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD, Affirmed/Sous affirmation  
9 solennelle:

10 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you very much.

11 Counsel, you may proceed.

12 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN-CHEF PAR

13 MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:

14 MS. LEILA GHAAHARY: Thank you. Good  
15 morning, witnesses. I'll begin with a few housekeeping  
16 matters. Firstly, there are four witness summaries that I  
17 need to adopt and -- well, you need to adopt, and I need to  
18 file. In the interest of time, I'm going to deal with the  
19 process in as efficient way as possible.

20 Court Operator, could you put up WIT110.EN,  
21 please? Thank you.

22 MS. LEILA GHAAHARY: This is a summary of a  
23 classified interview that took place in panel format on the  
24 19<sup>th</sup> of June this year. All of you formed part of that  
25 panel. So I'm going to ask each of you, in turn, to confirm  
26 that you have reviewed the summary, that you do not have any  
27 changes to make, that the summary is accurate to the best of  
28 your knowledge and belief and that you adopt it as part of

1 your evidence before the Commission today. So I'll take it  
2 turn.

3 Mr. MacDonald, could you confirm, please?

4 **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** I confirm. I'm  
5 comfortable with this and I adopt it and I have no changes to  
6 make.

7 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

8 Mr. Green?

9 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Confirmed.

10 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

11 Ms. Ducharme?

12 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** Confirmed.

13 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Mr. Eldebs?

14 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Confirmed.

15 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Walshe?

16 **MS. BRIDGET WALSH:** Confirmed.

17 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Chayer?

18 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Oui, je confirme.

19 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000110.EN:**

20 Interview Summary: Privy Council  
21 Office - Security and Intelligence  
22 Secretariat, Intelligence Assessment  
23 Secretariat (Nabih Eldebs, Adelle  
24 Ferguson, Marie-Hélène Chayer,  
25 Bridget Walshe, Michael MacDonald,  
26 Martin Green, Lisa Ducharme)

27 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000110.FR:**

28 Résumé d'entrevue : Bureau du Conseil

1                   privé - Secrétariat de la sécurité et  
2                   du renseignement et Secrétariat de  
3                   l'évaluation du renseignement (Nabih  
4                   Eldebs, Adelle Ferguson, Marie-Hélène  
5                   Chayer, Bridget Walshe, Michael  
6                   MacDonald, Martin Green et Lisa  
7                   Ducharme)

8                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

9                   Court Operator, could you please put up  
10                  WIT143.EN? Thank you.

11                  Mr. Eldebs, Ms. Chayer, Ms. Walshe, and Mr.  
12                  MacDonald, this is a summary of your in camera examination  
13                  that took place during classified hearings in June and July  
14                  this year. Again, I'm going to ask each of you to confirm  
15                  that you've reviewed it, that you don't have any changes to  
16                  make, that it's accurate, and that you adopt it as your  
17                  evidence before the Commission today.

18                  So again, please, starting with Mr. Eldebs,  
19                  can you confirm?

20                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I confirm.

21                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Chayer?

22                  **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Oui, je confirme.

23                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Walshe?

24                  **MS. BRIDGET WALSH:** I confirm.

25                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And Mr. MacDonald?

26                  **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** Yes, I confirm.

27                  **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000143.EN:**

28                  In Camera Examination Summary: Nabih

Eldebs, Adelle Ferguson, Marie-Hélène

Chayer, Bridget Walshe, Michael

MacDonald

**MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

Could the Court Operator now put up WIT141,  
please?

Thank you. Ms. Ducharme and Mr. Green, this  
is a summary of your in camera examination that took place  
during the classified hearings. And again, could you confirm  
that you've reviewed the summary, you don't have any changes  
to make, it's accurate, and you adopt it as part of your  
evidence today?

Mr. Green?

**MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Confirmed.

**MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Ducharme?

**MS. LISA DUCHARME:** Confirmed.

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000141:**

In Camera Examination Summary: Martin  
Green, Lisa Ducharme

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT0000141.FR:**

Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos :  
Martin Green, Lisa Ducharme

**MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

And finally, Court Operator, could you please  
put up WIT146?

Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Green, this is an  
addendum to the summary of an interview with the Commission  
that you participated in during Stage 1 of the Commission's

1 work. And again, for the final time, please could you  
2 confirm that you've reviewed the summary, you don't have any  
3 changes to make, it's accurate, and you adopt it as part of  
4 your evidence?

5 Mr. Green, please.

6 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Confirmed.

7 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And Mr. MacDonald,  
8 please?

9 **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** Yes, I confirm.

10 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you very much.

11 The French versions of all of those summaries  
12 will be filed in due course.

13 I'm going to start with some brief  
14 introductions if I may. You are all members of two different  
15 secretariats that are housed within the Privy Council Office,  
16 which I'll call PCO for shorthand from now on. The first of  
17 those Secretariats is the Security and Intelligence  
18 Secretariat, and the second is the Intelligence Assessment  
19 Secretariat. We're just going to run through your roles and  
20 the functions of each of those Secretariats.

21 I'll start by introducing the members of the  
22 Intelligence Assessment Secretariat. I'm going to refer to  
23 that as IAS from this point.

24 Ms. Chayer, since October 2023, you have  
25 served as the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for the  
26 National Security Council, which merged with the IAS in July  
27 last year, meaning that you now effectively lead both. Is  
28 that right?



1                   **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:**   Oui.

2                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   Thank you.   And  
3   formerly, from June to October 2023, you were the Acting  
4   Assistant Secretary for the Security and Intelligence  
5   Secretariat, and before that, from January to June 2023, you  
6   led the PCO's Task Force on Foreign Interference.   Is that  
7   correct?

8                   **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:**   Oui, c'est correct.

9                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   Thank you.

10                  Ms. Ducharme, you are the Director of  
11   Operations at IAS and you've held that role since March 2023.  
12   Is that correct?

13                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:**   That's correct.

14                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   And in this role, you  
15   handle the day-to-day operational needs at IAS, which  
16   includes amongst other things, information flow, staffing,  
17   finance, and ATIP requests.   Is that right?

18                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:**   That's correct.

19                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   But you also spearhead  
20   the Canadian Academy for Intelligence analysis, and that's a  
21   body that provides training to and standards of practice for  
22   intelligence analysts.   Is that right?

23                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:**   That's correct.

24                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   Mr. Green, you were  
25   formerly the Assistant Secretary at IAS until your retirement  
26   in July of this year.   Is that right?

27                  **MR. MARTIN GREEN:**    Yes.

28                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   And as the Assistant

1 Secretary, you reported to the National Security and  
2 Intelligence Advisor, or the NSIA?

3 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Yes.

4 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** I'm going to briefly  
5 just deal with the functions of IAS.

6 And Court Operator, please could you put up  
7 CAN.DOC36?

8 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** This is the PCO  
9 Institutional Report. It's already been filed, and so we  
10 don't need to deal with that formality.

11 Court Operator, could you please turn to page  
12 5 of the report, please? Thank you. And if you could scroll  
13 down so that the heading "Intelligence Assessment  
14 Secretariat" is at the top of the page? Thank you.

15 Ms. Ducharme, I'm going to ask you to assist  
16 me in setting out the main functions and roles of the IAS.  
17 Page 5 summarizes those main functions. I'll run through  
18 them and ask for some explanations from you.

19 Firstly, it produces analysis and assessments  
20 on foreign trends that impact Canadian interests. Could you  
21 briefly explain the types of analysis and assessment  
22 products, and to whom they are provided?

23 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** Sure. IAS produces a  
24 range of different product types to meet different needs and  
25 different clients. For example, we produce daily reports  
26 that are reporting on current trends. These are short one-  
27 pagers. We produce weekly summaries. We produce longer more  
28 in-depth papers, commonly referred to as National

1 Intelligence Assessments, that require we bring the entire  
2 intelligence community together to work on issues that  
3 require deep examination, hard targets, or issues that  
4 haven't been previously examined. We also provide very  
5 tailored, specific products to support senior leadership  
6 within the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's  
7 Office. We provide intelligence to the Prime Minister, to  
8 the Clerk, the National Security and Intelligence Advisor,  
9 and again, it all depends on the situation for various  
10 meetings, various conferences, various committees. So it's  
11 tailored to the approach for the client and the situation.

12 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. And another  
13 aspect of the role of IAS is that it helps to convene and  
14 coordinate the Intelligence Assessment Community. Again, Ms.  
15 Ducharme, could you briefly explain the nature of that role?

16 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** Sure. There are a number  
17 of governance committees that do this. We have a Director  
18 General's Intelligence Assessment Coordination Committee and  
19 we meet together with a number of S&I agencies to look at  
20 enterprise issues for improving enhancing the intelligence  
21 assessment function. We also have an Assistant Deputy  
22 Minister's Committee that looks at the intelligence products,  
23 as previously referred, National Intelligence Assessments,  
24 products that we intend to go to Cabinet or the Deputy  
25 Minister level.

26 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. And it's  
27 also responsible for chairing and supporting various  
28 intelligence assessment related committees. Again briefly,

1 could you help us with an explanation of what work it does in  
2 relation to those committees?

3 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** We provide tailored  
4 reports, either by request for information or proactively if  
5 we are looking at the forward agenda. For example, the  
6 National Security Council is a perfect example of that. When  
7 we know what products -- when we know what issues are going  
8 to be discussed at that fora, we bring the community together  
9 to work on an all-community assessment that is going to  
10 support those specific discussions.

11 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

12 I'm going to now turn to the Security and  
13 Intelligence Secretariat and again just go through some brief  
14 introductions and functions of that entity.

15 Mr. Eldebs, you are the Assistant Secretary  
16 at SI and you've held this role since December 2023. Is that  
17 right?

18 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

19 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And as the Assistant  
20 Secretary, you are responsible for overseeing the SI  
21 Secretariat's four branches, which include the Operations  
22 Branch, which is headed by Bridget Walshe, and that looks at  
23 operational issues relating to security and intelligence in  
24 Canada. Is that right?

25 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

26 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And you also oversee the  
27 Strategic Policy and Planning Branch, which is headed by  
28 Adelle Ferguson, and that looks at policy development with

1 respect to security and intelligence and the national  
2 security community. Is that correct?

3 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

4 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And you also oversee the  
5 Review Coordination Unit which liaises with the national  
6 review bodies, NSIRA and NSICOP. Is that right?

7 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

8 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And you oversee the  
9 Security Operations Directorate, also known as SECOPs, or S-  
10 E-COPs, which is responsible for the physical security  
11 operations within PSO. Is that right?

12 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

13 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And Ms. Walshe, you are  
14 the Director of Operations at SI and you were appointed to  
15 this role in June 2022. Is that right?

16 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** It's correct I was  
17 appointed to the role in June of 2022, but I left the Privy  
18 Council Office in August of this year. I'm now working at  
19 the Communications Security Establishment as of September.

20 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you for that  
21 clarification.

22 In your former role, you handled operational  
23 issues related to security and intelligence, you helped to  
24 convene the national security community, and you also led the  
25 challenge function on operational policy. Is that right?

26 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** That's correct.

27 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Mr. MacDonald, you  
28 served as Assistant Secretary for SI from May 2020 to June

1 2023. Is that correct?

2 **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** That's right.

3 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And Court Operator,  
4 please could you put up page 4 of the document that we have  
5 on the screen?

6 Thank you. And if you could take the heading  
7 "Security and Intelligence Secretariat" to the top of the  
8 page.

9 Thank you.

10 Mr. Eldebs, the Institutional Report provides  
11 an overview of the role and functions of the SI. Could you  
12 please help us with a brief summary?

13 As before, I'll take you through the main  
14 headlines and if perhaps you could elaborate.

15 The functions and role of the IAS provides  
16 policy advice and support to the NSIA on national security  
17 and intelligence matters. Is that right?

18 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct, yes.

19 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And it performs the  
20 traditional PCO challenge function on the policy proposals,  
21 legislative plans and resource requests that are developed  
22 and submitted by departments and agencies. Is that right?

23 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct, yes.

24 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And it supports the NSIA  
25 in briefing the Prime Minister and Cabinet on key national  
26 security issues. Is that right?

27 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

28 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And it plays a convening

1 function in governance across the SI community and co-chairs  
2 security and intelligence bodies, which include secretariat  
3 functions for various Assistant Deputy Minister and Deputy  
4 Minister committees. Is that right?

5 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

6 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Could you perhaps just  
7 give a short explanation of what that looks like on a day-to-  
8 day basis?

9 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** For sure.

10 So as you mentioned, the Director of  
11 Operations or the Operations Section looks at all things  
12 related to security and intelligence activities that are  
13 happening at any given day within Canada, so that means  
14 things like cyber security, elections security, violent  
15 extremism, things that, you know, impact the national  
16 security framework of Canada.

17 And we do a convening function, we do a  
18 coordination function, and we brief up to the NSIA as well as  
19 to the Prime Minister's Office.

20 The policy branch looks -- as you mentioned,  
21 does a convening function in terms of policy that's  
22 coordinated across the S&I community. In particular, for  
23 example, C-70 -- Bill C-70 was one where the policy branch  
24 would have coordinated and done a convening function of.

25 We also -- that branch also conducts the --  
26 performs the function of getting the intelligence priorities  
27 together as well as the intelligence requirements for the  
28 security and intelligence community and also they're tasked

1 with the Five Eyes relationship and ensuring that that's a  
2 robust and ongoing, well-established relationship.

3 The review unit is one that does a bit more  
4 on the coordination with National Security and Intelligence  
5 Review Agency and the National Security and Intelligence  
6 Committee of Parliamentarians, and convenes on particular  
7 issues where there are common themes across the community  
8 that need to be resolved or addressed or coordinated.

9 And finally, as you mentioned, the Security  
10 Operations branch is the security of PCO, so the physical  
11 security of PCO, but as well as conducts background checks  
12 and security screening for all OIC appointments.

13 You mentioned co-chairing of some committees  
14 as well, so I'm the co-chair of about four committees, I will  
15 say, as well as the chair of two, so about six committees all  
16 together where we -- where S&I chairs and co-chairs in terms  
17 of ensuring the functioning and convening of the committees.

18 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

19 You mentioned the intelligence priorities.  
20 Let's briefly take a look at those.

21 Court Operator, could you please put up  
22 CAN21740?

23 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN021740:**

24 Canadian Intelligence Prioritization  
25 Processes, Background and Analytic  
26 Aids

27 And this a guide to the intelligence  
28 priorities process. And if you could go to page 3, please.



1 Thank you.

2 And it states there that:

3 "Canada's intelligence priorities  
4 setting process is a vital part of  
5 ensuring accountability and managing  
6 risk within the intelligence  
7 community. Strategic intelligence  
8 prioritization is key in ensuring  
9 that our finite Canadian intelligence  
10 capabilities meets government  
11 objectives."

12 Mr. Eldebs, it's right that the Government of  
13 Canada's intelligence priorities are set by Cabinet every two  
14 years?

15 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct, yes.

16 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And the process for  
17 developing those priorities is intensive and it's coordinated  
18 by the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch at SI.

19 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

20 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And they're developed  
21 through consultation with departments across the Government  
22 of Canada.

23 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct, yes.

24 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And underneath the  
25 intelligence priorities sits something called the  
26 intelligence requirements, and they are more detailed and  
27 they set out specific aspects of what each department can do  
28 in respect of intelligence priorities. Is that right?

1                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That is correct.

2                   So think of the intelligence priorities as  
3 the strategic objectives and the requirements as the roadmap  
4 to get to those objectives.

5                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

6                   Court Operator, could you now put up  
7 CAN11698\_R01, please?

8                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN011698 R01 0001:**

9                   Intelligence Priorities - Ministerial  
10                  Direction

11                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** This is an explainer on  
12 Ministerial direction for intelligence priorities.

13                  Mr. Eldebs, could you briefly speak at a high  
14 level as to what the Ministerial direction is and how that  
15 differs, perhaps, from the requirements?

16                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Absolutely.

17                  So the requirements -- sorry, the  
18 intelligence priorities as I noted are set by Cabinet and  
19 they're a set of several priorities at the strategic level.  
20 However, then Ministers can tailor to their departments what  
21 they need to do and what -- how they can achieve those  
22 objectives.

23                  So the Minister of National Defence, Minister  
24 of Public Safety as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
25 will issue particular directions to their institutions that  
26 fall under them in terms of meeting the priorities of each --  
27 of Cabinet.

28                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

1 I'm going to move on now to intelligence  
2 assessments and briefly touch on the threat landscape.

3 The Commission has already heard and will  
4 continue to hear lots of evidence on the current threat  
5 landscape, and therefore it's not necessarily to look at that  
6 in any great detail today. I just want to focus on two  
7 threat landscape products that are produced by IAS.

8 Court Operator, could you put up WIT141,  
9 please, and go to pages -- go to page 4, rather.

10 Thank you.

11 If you could scroll down to paragraph 12,  
12 please.

13 Ms. Ducharme, I want to ask you about two  
14 products, the year ahead and the national security outlook.  
15 Taking each in turn, please would you explain what those  
16 products are and the ways in which each captures the threat  
17 landscape, including who the intended audience is for each  
18 and what use those products might be put to?

19 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** I can speak to that, but  
20 I think that it might be -- I would probably defer to Martin  
21 Green on this because he's been with IAS for a number of  
22 years, and this is an annual product. And then I'm happy to  
23 add on any additional information.

24 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Of course.

25 Mr. Green, could you assist?

26 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Sure.

27 They're both annual products that come out  
28 normally early in the new year. The National Security

1 Outlook is a strategic analysis of the trends and threats --  
2 the foreign trends and threats that we believe will impact  
3 Canada.

4 So under that rubric, you have geopolitics,  
5 cyber, foreign interference, many of the issues that we're  
6 seeing out there, so it's an attempt to create a narrative  
7 for the upcoming year.

8 Out of necessity, it also includes, you know,  
9 issues that will be with us for three to five years. It's  
10 not just sort of exclusive to that time zone.

11 And then the National Security Outlook 24 is  
12 a placemat in which we try to summarize what are the key  
13 national security trends and threats that we need to be  
14 looking out for. So it is more specific with respect to what  
15 we see as the trends and threats that will impact Canada from  
16 around the world.

17 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

18 Court Operator, could you turn up page 5 of  
19 the document on the screen? Thank you. And scroll down a  
20 little further so that we can see all of paragraph 15. Thank  
21 you.

22 Mr. Green, at paragraph 15 that you can see  
23 on the screen, you share your view that it would be a good  
24 idea to share unclassified versions of these types of  
25 products. Can you explain your thoughts on this, and in  
26 particular, why you think it would be beneficial to do that?

27 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I think we're at a  
28 juncture with national security in Canada where we need to

1 engage very much. And that's been one of the themes, I think  
2 a lot of the testimony with the provinces, other levels of  
3 government, the private sector, and indeed the Canadian  
4 public. Because the threat landscape, I think, over the last  
5 decade has become probably more profound and piquant in terms  
6 of everyday Canadians.

7 And many other countries have annual  
8 documents, which are quite extensive when you look at them.  
9 The U.S., Australia, U.K., and many others, where they  
10 outlined the strategic landscape, and I believe that that's  
11 their effort to develop a conversation with the public. We  
12 do that. We have a number of products that are public, you  
13 know, there's speeches, there are different documents that  
14 the Cyber Centre and CSIS produce. But I don't think we have  
15 one national assessment like other countries do it comes out  
16 on a regular basis. And I think that would be a great idea  
17 in order to engage Canadians in a very serious issue.

18 MS. LEILA GHAAHARY: Thank you. I'm going to  
19 move on now to the subject of intelligence sharing and  
20 starting with senior officials. Court Operator, please could  
21 you put up CAN.28145? Thank you.

22 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN028145 0001:**

23 Intelligence Dissemination and  
24 Tracking for Senior Leaders and  
25 Political Staff

26 MS. LEILA GHAAHARY: Mr. Eldebs, I understand  
27 that in 2023 the PCO developed a new dissemination and  
28 tracking protocol for senior leaders. It appears to be the

1 document that we see on the screen. First of all, can you  
2 explain why this new protocol was developed, and what gaps or  
3 problems it was meant to address?

4 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I believe the idea of  
5 tracking has always existed in PCO, however, it was a bit of  
6 a manual process that where S&I or other secretariats would  
7 track all products that would go up and be briefed at a  
8 different level. This is an attempt to offer a more robust  
9 electronic version of tracking where all documents -- where  
10 whenever someone views a document the tool would track them  
11 as if they've read it.

12 So that was the idea behind this, is to  
13 modernize the tracking system that still exists. We still do  
14 both. So we still do the tracking as well as there's some --  
15 the electronic version of it. But Marie-Hélène maybe can  
16 add.

17 **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Si je peux ajouter  
18 quelques points là-dessus, c'est un document qui avait été  
19 développé par mon équipe à l'époque et puis ça se voulait  
20 vraiment juste une espèce d'effort de donner des... un guide  
21 pour la communauté qui produit de l'évaluation de  
22 renseignement, mais comme monsieur Eldebs l'a mentionné,  
23 c'était pas nécessairement nouveau. La communauté avait déjà  
24 des efforts, des mesures mises en place pour savoir où et à  
25 qui et quand les analyses de renseignement sont distribuées.  
26 Donc, c'est pas quelque chose qui est nouveau, mais de plus  
27 en plus, avec les nouveaux outils qui sont disponibles, on  
28 peut faire ça électroniquement, donc ça devient plus facile

1 de savoir qui a accès à quoi à quel moment.

2           Donc, ça, c'était un document interne, ça ne  
3 se voulait pas être un nouveau protocole, comme vous avez  
4 mentionné, c'est vraiment juste un document interne dont on  
5 s'est servi pour discuter avec les différentes agences qui  
6 sont mentionnées là. Sur leurs processus internes, il y a  
7 certaines différences de systèmes, par exemple, d'une  
8 organisation à l'autre, puis donc, tout ça, ç'a été mis en  
9 place. Voilà.

10           **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Madame Chayer, vous dites  
11 que ça existait déjà.

12           **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Oui.

13           **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Est-ce que la possibilité  
14 de savoir qui avait effectivement lu un document qui avait  
15 été transmis auparavant existait aussi?

16           **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** À cert...

17           **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Ou ça, c'est arrivé avec  
18 le nouveau...

19           **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** À certains...

20           **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** ...ministre?

21           **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** ...endroits, comme je  
22 mentionnais, il y a des organisations qui utilisaient déjà un  
23 système électronique de *tracking*; d'autres qui étaient en  
24 train de le mettre en place. Donc, la période de temps à  
25 partir du moment où tout le monde fonctionnait avec le même  
26 processus, ça s'échelonne sur quelques mois, voire quelques  
27 années, mais c'est vers ça qu'on s'en va, donc, pour voir qui  
28 a accès aux documents, puis on fait aussi un effort pour

1       renforcer notre *tracking* des briefings oraux, donc qui se  
2       fait breffer sur quoi.

3                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Ms. Chayer, one year on  
4       -- sorry, Mr. Green?

5                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Sorry, just I think  
6       there's an important addition to that, which is you know, it  
7       is tracked and, you know, who has access to it, and in a lot  
8       of cases who's being briefed on it. There is a nuance I  
9       think with respect, you know, there's a tremendous amount of  
10      material. So I don't think it tracks that, you know, an  
11      individual briefing was, you know, fully absorbed.

12                   There's a nuance in there that I think is  
13      important. You know, you can know who saw it, and who read  
14      it, or who was briefed on it. I think there is a bit of a  
15      difference with respect to has that actually been, sort of,  
16      absorbed at a certain level? Because there's an awful lot of  
17      material.

18                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. Ms. Chayer,  
19      a year on, is this system working or is there room for  
20      further improvements or development?

21                   **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Je pense qu'il n'y a  
22      pas de contradiction dans la question que vous posez. Le  
23      système fonctionne, mais on peut toujours améliorer,  
24      évidemment. Mais je pense que le système fonctionne de mieux  
25      en mieux.

26                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

27                   I'd now like to move on to the IAS special  
28      report. This concerns matters of intelligence sharing with



1 senior officials. Mr. Green, you were involved in the  
2 creation of this special report and I'm going to ask you to  
3 assist with some of the details relating to its preparation  
4 and circulation. Can the Court Operator please put up  
5 CAN.3787R01? Please could you scroll down and zoom out just  
6 a touch? Thank you.

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN003787 R01:**

8 China's Foreign Interference  
9 Activities

10 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Mr. Green, this is a  
11 draft of a special report on China's foreign interference  
12 activities that was prepared in the autumn of 2021. Is that  
13 right?

14 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Yes.

15 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And Court Operator,  
16 could you now put up WIT141 and go to page 6, please? And if  
17 you could scroll down so that we can see paragraphs 19 and  
18 20? Thank you.

19 Mr. Green, you discussed the special report  
20 in your *in camera* examination, that these paragraphs reflect  
21 your evidence. For today's purposes, would you please again  
22 explain the circumstances that led to the preparation of this  
23 report?

24 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Sure. There has been  
25 significant debate around foreign interference for years, and  
26 one of the issues that comes out quite frequently is foreign  
27 interference versus foreign influence, which I think the  
28 paper on the second page speaks to that. Because many of the

1 activities fall into what we would call a grey zone, and you  
2 know, is it influence or is it interference, and what are the  
3 thresholds therein?

4 So the paper, because this conversation was  
5 ongoing at the senior levels, with much of the intelligence  
6 that was being received was, I thought, kind of an innovative  
7 idea to marry, a, the international foreign influence and  
8 interference that we were seeing, because many, many  
9 countries are grappling with this issue, including a lot of  
10 our allies. They know that there's a lot of foreign  
11 interference going on, but how do you actually define it?  
12 What are the legal thresholds that one would put around it?  
13 And then of course, if you're seeing that internationally,  
14 you also -- you know, it quickly begs the question what are  
15 we seeing domestically?

16 So this paper was an innovative attempt to  
17 marry the international and the domestic because there was a  
18 big debate about whether or not, particularly China, which is  
19 the subject of the paper, was it really doing a lot of  
20 foreign interference in Canada?

21 So it's a joint paper as well. We  
22 occasionally do what we call multi-badged products. So this  
23 was a paper that we did very closely with CSIS. And I think  
24 what's really germane about it, there's a lot of, you know,  
25 good material in it, are the key judgements, in which we say  
26 that the Canadian intelligence community is of a consensus  
27 view that China is the most significant foreign interference  
28 threat to Canada. I believe that remains true three years

1 later, and I believe that the community agrees with that.  
2 It's -- and there are -- you know, we point that there are a  
3 number of other countries that are involved as well.

4 I think it has to be taken in context too.  
5 You know, we're talking about foreign interference here.  
6 There are a lot of other national security issues out there.  
7 I'm not sure that I would say foreign interference is the  
8 biggest national security trend or threat that we have. I  
9 think that's open to debate. But it's certainly a really  
10 important one, because it speaks to our democratic  
11 institutions.

12 The paper also highlights that Canada remains  
13 highly vulnerable to these foreign interference efforts, and  
14 I think that has to be looked at, you know, contextually,  
15 within the lens that most democracies are very vulnerable, by  
16 the nature of, you know, how our systems are set up. You  
17 know, being open and transparent. So that creates a  
18 vulnerability to the way a lot of foreign interference is  
19 activated here.

20 And then I think the third key judgement is  
21 very important, is you could look at foreign interference  
22 simply, you know, or just solely through the lens of the  
23 electoral system. I think it's much bigger than that.  
24 You're seeing really kind of hybrid tools being brought to  
25 bear. So in the case of a country like China, there is  
26 clearly a very sophisticated toolkit which involves foreign  
27 defence, national security and intelligence activities,  
28 there's, you know, economic coercion, there's military

1 pressure, there's espionage. So there's a suite of tools  
2 that are brought to bear that we're seeing much more often  
3 and there's a convergence, in terms of how a country might  
4 use these.

5 So, you know, it's one thing, and it's a very  
6 important thing, to look at the impact, the direct impact on  
7 our electoral system, but there are a lot of other tools  
8 being used which actually influence that as well.

9 So a lot of -- and the other part of it is  
10 it's very long-term. This is not, you know, something that  
11 happened last May over two weeks. There may be a specific  
12 incident there, but it is very long-term, there are long-term  
13 strategies around this so that other countries can interfere  
14 and influence other countries decisions.

15 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. A few points  
16 of clarification on the circulation of the report, if I may?

17 We heard last week that Mr. Morrison, who was  
18 acting NSIA at the time, requested that the IAS produce this  
19 report, and he explained that his intended audience, when he  
20 commissioned the report, was himself to increase his own  
21 understanding of the threat of the PRC-related foreign  
22 interference. Would you agree with that? It was initially  
23 for Mr. Morrison's consumption?

24 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Well, yeah, it does say  
25 that Mr. Morrison requested it. My recollection is it was my  
26 idea. But that's fine. David Morrison thought it was a good  
27 idea. I -- we did this under the presumption that this would  
28 be for a Deputies' discussion, a senior level discussion,

1 because of some polarized views about foreign interference  
2 and influence. So this was our attempt to move that  
3 discussion forward and bring the dissent forward as well, to  
4 have a conversation because it was never any sort of solid  
5 conclusions at that point, and so we thought it was important  
6 to further the debate. So I think there's corresponding  
7 material where I suggest that this paper should be brought to  
8 the attention of Deputies, and then hopefully it would form  
9 the basis of further discussions at a senior political level.

10 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. Once the  
11 draft report was prepared, I understand it was discussed with  
12 Mr. Morrison on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 and the report was  
13 subsequently modified to take into account his feedback,  
14 which included points relating to the tone of the report, the  
15 need for factual reporting, and he highlighted some  
16 activities in the report that he regarded as being regular  
17 diplomatic activity. Once the report had been amended, I  
18 understand that Mr. Morrison then moved on. He moved on from  
19 his role as Acting NSIA and Ms. Jody Thomas took up the  
20 mantle, and you rewrote the report, and at that time, you say  
21 your expectations were that it would be circulated wider than  
22 the NSIA.

23 Court Operator, could we please put up  
24 CAN11049, please? Perhaps scroll down a little. Thank you.

25 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN011049 0001:**

26 IAS Report on China's Foreign  
27 Interference Activities

28 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Mr. Green, I think we

1 can see in the second paragraph your recommendation that the  
2 report is provided to select Deputy Ministers and Cabinet  
3 Ministers, the members of the Security and Intelligence  
4 Threats to Election, SITE Task Force as it's known, CSE, GAC,  
5 the RCMP, the Interim Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and you say that  
6 they would benefit from receiving the report.

7 In making that recommendation, what was your  
8 intention with regard to the function of this paper? What  
9 did you hope it would achieve?

10 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Again, it was premised on  
11 the fact that there was an ongoing debate and some dissent  
12 about the seriousness of foreign interference and influence,  
13 and it was our effort to further that discussion at the most  
14 senior levels, and it's very much, you know, as it says here,  
15 -- I point out too that it was very limited distribution at  
16 that point. It was basically IAS, we did keep our colleagues  
17 in S&I informed, but it was CSIS and IAS that produced the  
18 paper, and once CSIS agreed to its contents and, you know,  
19 your history is right, there was a switch in leadership, so  
20 this cover note was presented to the new NSIA suggesting that  
21 it should go to key Deputies for a discussion. And then  
22 there were next steps that, you know, at the senior political  
23 level that we thought would be useful too, and we thought it  
24 was a good foundational paper to have that conversation.

25 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Court Operator, could  
26 you put up WIT141, please, and go to page 6? And if you  
27 could scroll down so that we could see paragraphs 19 and 20?

28 Mr. Green, you've just touched upon the

1 differences in perspectives that you hoped to reflect in this  
2 report, and as I understand it, encourage discussion on. In  
3 your examination, you told us that some of the activity fell  
4 into everyday and some fell into what's known as the grey  
5 area. And you also said that, at this time, you were seeing  
6 foreign interference activity increasing and becoming more  
7 aggressive, and that, otherwise, regular diplomatic activity  
8 in combination with other factors showed a growing trend.  
9 Could you just elaborate on that? What, if any, concerns did  
10 you have about the picture that had emerged through the  
11 Special Report?

12 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I think the Special  
13 Report, you know -- and it's not a perfect report, I think  
14 it's a darn good one, is -- it makes the point that there  
15 appears over the last decade to be an increase in the trends  
16 in threats, particularly with reference to China and their  
17 willingness to use foreign interference to influence other  
18 country's decision-making. And our analysis of it was that  
19 that indeed had been increasing through a number of areas.  
20 So some of the examples, I think, fall very solidly into the  
21 category of foreign interference, which, you know, was covert  
22 and deceptive. And then there are a number of others that  
23 fall into the, you know, the influence category, which some  
24 people might suggest is normal, everyday diplomacy, but I  
25 think you have to look at them together because one does  
26 inform the other in terms of the objectives of the influence.  
27 And as I said, the third key judgment in this, it doesn't --  
28 you know, the report doesn't represent a complete account of

1 observed activities abroad, nor does it include the hybrid  
2 toolkit that is brought to bear to influence other countries.  
3 So one of the underlying themes is we thought China was a  
4 growing threat on foreign interference.

5 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. And I  
6 understand that having passed the report to the then NSIA,  
7 Jody Thomas, in January 2022, that the report wasn't  
8 circulated as you'd recommended. The first question is, do  
9 you know why it wasn't circulated as recommended?

10 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** There were -- you know, to  
11 be fair, that period of time when Jody Thomas became NSIA was  
12 pretty extraordinary in that the Russia Ukraine conflict  
13 broke out and we had, you know, exquisite intelligence in  
14 advance that that would happen. So there was a lot of work  
15 being done on that, quite rightly. We also were hearing the  
16 truckers' horns starting to blare as they made their way  
17 across the country, and which led to the Freedom Convoy. So  
18 there were, you know, some pretty dramatic issues that we  
19 were being faced, so foreign interference at that immediate  
20 juncture was not, I think, top of mind or front burner. I  
21 raised the issue several times thinking that, you know, it  
22 would still be good to have that conversation, so I can't  
23 really speak to why, you know, it was not the subject of a  
24 deputy's meeting or not. That would be for others to decide  
25 because, you know, it's -- you know, I can make the  
26 recommendation, but I can't say, you know, you got to go do  
27 this.

28 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Do you recall with whom



1       you raised the issue?

2                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I raised it, you know, by  
3       virtue of the cover note with the NSIA, and I raised it  
4       subsequently at several bilats where I would have regular  
5       meetings with the NSIA, basically, asking about the status of  
6       it, and, you know, hoping that it would move forward.

7                   **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** If I may, just to provide  
8       some helpful context that within the assessment community, it  
9       is not uncommon for products to be started, and for whatever  
10      reason, overtaken by events or competing priorities. It  
11      doesn't make it all the way through to the finished product,  
12      but that doesn't mean that the information and the assessment  
13      hasn't been helpful in informing the people who were part of  
14      that generation process, and also those who were exposed to  
15      it. And, indeed, this effort has contributed to our  
16      collective understanding of the threats in this area and has  
17      shaped and informed how we work going forward.

18                   So as mentioned in the past, IAS was  
19      primarily a foreign geo-political assessment unit. Since  
20      that Special Report, it's baked into how we do business now.  
21      We consistently work with our domestic partners at the RCMP,  
22      CSIS, CBSA and others to bring those aspects together in all  
23      the work that we do. So as mentioned, in this particular  
24      incident, this didn't make it through all the way to the  
25      finished product, but it does shape future work. It does  
26      inform our collective knowledge, and it gets reused and  
27      repurposed in other products, in other ways, if that's  
28      helpful.

1                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. And in that  
2 regard, although it may not be a finished product, and  
3 although even if it is a finished product, others may decide  
4 not to pass it on, it's still open to you and others, for  
5 example, Mr. Green when he was in his position to circulate  
6 it amongst other officials if he wishes; is that fair to say?

7                   **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** Normally, we wouldn't  
8 circulate a product that was not finished outside of our  
9 assessment chain.

10                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** But if it's finished and  
11 it's not circulated by others, you're at liberty, presumably,  
12 to share it with people if you see fit?

13                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** If they have the  
14 requisite security clearance and they have a need-to-know  
15 based on the functions of their job, yes.

16                  **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

17                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** But are you at liberty  
18 to circulate the document or the report to whoever you want?

19                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** It would all depend on  
20 the sensitivity of the information, so in this case, it  
21 relied on a lot of operational information, and the  
22 dissemination of that would have been done in consultation  
23 with CSIS as the owners of much of the bulk of that work.

24                  **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** So in this specific case,  
25 I was not comfortable sharing it further than I did. So it  
26 was actually a fairly small group of people at CSIS and IAS  
27 that looked at it. I'm not sure whether or not others did  
28 share it as time went by because there would be people who

1 had drafts, I guess, who could have done it. I did not  
2 because I didn't feel comfortable doing that because of the  
3 sensitivity of the issue.

4 **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Si je peux ajouter,  
5 par contre, juste un autre point, je pense que le rapport  
6 dont il est question était basé en grande partie sur des  
7 rapports, des évaluations existantes du service de CSIS.  
8 Donc, ces rapports-là avaient été disséminés à leur audience  
9 présagée aussi, donc c'est pas... c'est important aussi de  
10 mettre en perspective que c'était pas... si on n'avait pas vu  
11 le rapport spécial, on pouvait pas avoir accès à  
12 l'information. L'information était existante, disséminée.  
13 L'avantage, le gros avantage de ce rapport-là, c'est qu'il  
14 mettait tout ça ensemble, mais c'était disponible quand même.

15 **MS. BRIDGET WALSH:** And if I might add, and  
16 as well, from an operational perspective, there's a  
17 governance structure and an engine that operates always. And  
18 as Ms. Chayer points out, that intelligence flows and is  
19 looked at, at all times. And so committees like the -- like  
20 DMOC, the DM Operational Committee can address these issues  
21 as they come up. So even if we're not seeing that this  
22 report may have been discussed specifically, there is  
23 certainly discussions that happen over time on these  
24 particular issues.

25 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you. I'm going to  
26 move on now to intelligence sharing in relation to political  
27 parties and parliamentarians. I understand that SI plays a  
28 role in coordinating briefings in this respect, and I'd just

1 like to look at a few of the types of briefings that fall  
2 under your remit. Court Operator, could you put up WIT 143  
3 and go to page 8, please? Thank you. And if you could  
4 scroll down to paragraph 28?

5 So the heading, "Briefing to Parliamentarians  
6 and Political Party Leaders" is at the top.

7 Thank you.

8 Mr. Eldebs, starting with, "General briefings  
9 to parliamentarians and new ministers and their staff," as I  
10 understand it, these briefings are meant to bring the  
11 recipients up to speed on the threat landscape, and they also  
12 are followed by regular refresher briefings. Could you just  
13 briefly explain the nature of those briefings?

14 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Absolutely. So as I  
15 mentioned, security operations or SECOPS does that on a  
16 regular basis with new ministers, with parliamentarians,  
17 particularly also with staff parliamentarians. And the idea  
18 is to bring forward awareness about the threats that are  
19 facing them; about how to -- what to look for when they're  
20 travelling, for example, or what to look for when -- or how  
21 to behave when they're exposed to classified information;  
22 what they can share, how they can share it, what they could  
23 talk about. It also brings out the idea that they are  
24 targets for foreign interference, as well as targets for  
25 foreign states from espionage or cyber security perspective.

26 So the idea is to kind of make sure that  
27 we're raising the bar in terms of awareness, and ensuring  
28 that they are aware of the threatscape around them by also

1 virtue of their positions and virtue of them being  
2 parliamentarians or ministers.

3 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

4 Another type of briefing is a briefing for  
5 security-cleared Opposition Party leaders. I understand that  
6 the role of SI in this regard is coordinating the clearance  
7 that those Party leaders receive. It's actually the NSIA or  
8 the DNSIA that provides the actual briefings.

9 I also understand that only two of the  
10 Opposition leaders have taken up the offer of receiving those  
11 briefings. Mr. Eldebs, could you briefly explain the role of  
12 SI and confirm how many Party leaders to date have taken up  
13 the offer of clearance?

14 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** As I mentioned, Security  
15 Operations is responsible for conducting security clearances  
16 as well for OIC appointments in particular, but also for PCO  
17 staff and other departments where there's a desire to sponsor  
18 a security clearance.

19 The Prime Minister in, May of last year, I  
20 believe, wrote to the Opposition Party leaders, requesting or  
21 offering that they obtain Top Secret security clearance. Two  
22 of the Opposition Party leaders responded back, the NDP as  
23 well as the Green Party, asking for the security clearance  
24 for their leaders, and we have, since then, processed those  
25 security clearances for both Opposition Party leaders.

26 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

27 Moving on to another type of briefing, and it  
28 concerns threats to parliamentarians. In May 2023, a

1 Ministerial Direction was issued by the Minister of Public  
2 Safety. Court Operator, could we put up CAN21931, please?

3 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN021931:

4 Ministerial Direction on Threats to  
5 the Security of Canada Directed at  
6 Parliament and Parliamentarians

7 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And whilst that's being  
8 put up, we heard during the CSIS evidence that the language  
9 used by this Ministerial Directive included the words, "Any  
10 threat," and that this was somewhat prescriptive, resulting  
11 in the disclosure of information which was not necessarily  
12 credible, corroborated or verified. And later Public Safety  
13 and CSIS developed a protocol for the briefings concerning  
14 threats to parliamentarians which clarified the scope of the  
15 briefings and that they should focus on credible threats.

16 We don't need to put that protocol up; it's  
17 previously been put up by way of document CAN28170, page 11,  
18 for anyone that's interested.

19 My question is to you, Ms. Chayer. In the  
20 development of that protocol that you were in discussion with  
21 others, and you made a suggestion that it was necessary to  
22 dig deeper into the concept of the threat and what actually  
23 constitutes a credible threat. And I'd like you to provide  
24 the PCO's perspective on that and talk a little about  
25 credible threats, if you can.

26 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Yes, I do remember  
27 that email exchange. And I think what I meant is I was  
28 trying to put myself into parliamentarians' shoes, so the

1 recipient of that briefing. And I wanted us to try to be as  
2 clear as possible to make sure that the briefing was as  
3 useful as possible to the people receiving it. We are part  
4 of a national security community, so we know those issues; we  
5 are familiar with them, it's clear to us what words mean.  
6 And I'm fully aware that it's not always the case for people  
7 who are not operating in that environment day-in, day-out,  
8 that it's as clear. So I really wanted us to challenge  
9 ourselves to find the right way to explain those issues to  
10 parliamentarians.

11 And since then, I mean, there's a lot of work  
12 that's been put in place to establish a very robust  
13 governance to do just that. So it goes through several  
14 committees; Mr. Eldebs and Madam Walshe would be better  
15 placed to talk to you about this, but just to say that it  
16 goes through various rounds of consultation, discussions to  
17 make sure that we get a product that is as most useful as  
18 possible.

19 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

20 Mr. Eldebs, in explaining more about the  
21 protocol, you told us that in assessing whether threats are  
22 credible for the purposes of a briefing under the protocol,  
23 the intelligence is usually reviewed by an ADM committee and  
24 then a DM committee. Given what we know about the differing  
25 perspectives on foreign interference, could you explain what  
26 would happen if there was disagreement on whether the  
27 intelligence had passed the credible threat threshold?

28 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** For sure. So as you

1 mentioned, the intelligence is generally discussed at an ADM  
2 table, so ADM intelligence -- sorry; ADM NS tactical, which  
3 is a smaller group of individuals that kind of can get into  
4 that intelligence. And then that intelligence is referred to  
5 the DM ADM committee, the DM committee on Intelligence  
6 Response.

7 The debate has been quite robust so far but  
8 also with a view that the debate ensures that the  
9 intelligence is clear, that the threat environment is clear,  
10 and that all avenues of also action in terms of what could be  
11 done about that threat is also clear.

12 I haven't, so far, seen a lot of dissent in  
13 terms of the threat landscape or the level of threat or what  
14 to do about it as it comes to these committees, I think, but  
15 I would have to say as well that debate is helpful. It helps  
16 shed a light on things that other departments bring to the  
17 table from their own perspective. Mr. Green talked about  
18 foreign influence versus foreign interference. So when  
19 you're bringing in from a security or intelligence  
20 perspective it's always helpful to look at diplomatic  
21 activity and look at the two in the same light and see what -  
22 - where that difference is.

23 All that to say, though, as much as that  
24 debate has been helpful in sharpening the tools and  
25 sharpening how we talk about intelligence, I've seen deputies  
26 at the DM table as well as the DM table agree on the road  
27 forward and agree at the level of the threat intelligence.

28 **MS. BRIDGET WALSH:** And if I could add in,



1 while that debate about the nature of the intelligence is  
2 really important to coming to a common understanding, that  
3 debate also really helps and it speaks to, I think, to what  
4 Ms. Chayer said; making sure that we're explaining it very  
5 well when information about intelligence is briefed to  
6 someone from outside the community.

7 So that really helpful discussion and  
8 understanding the intelligence really informs not just our  
9 understanding but how we can express it to that individual  
10 and come to that very common and clear approach.

11 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

12 Finally on this topic I just want to briefly  
13 touch on defensive briefings.

14 Court Operator, could you put up CAN33623?

15 **--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE No. CAN033623 0001:**

16 Defensive Briefing for Staff of a  
17 Member of Parliament

18 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And if you could go to  
19 page 2. Perhaps it's page 3; apologies. Thank you.

20 We see here a memo from the PCO to the PMO  
21 detailing a defensive briefing to be given to the Chief of  
22 Staff for the Leader of the Opposition, Pierre Poilievre. We  
23 can see on page 5 -- Court Operator, if you could take us  
24 there -- that Mr. Poilievre had not yet agreed to undertake  
25 the security clearance.

26 Mr. Eldebs, so I have two questions.  
27 Firstly, what is the role of PCO SI in relation to defensive  
28 briefings; and, two, in light of the low numbers or

1 Opposition leaders who are taking up security clearance, do  
2 what extent do these defensive briefings bridge any gap in  
3 knowledge and understanding on their part?

4 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** In terms of the role, let  
5 me answer that first. So defensive briefings are generally  
6 led through CSIS and ITAC, the Intelligence -- sorry; the  
7 Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre. And they are  
8 intended to also, as I said, raise the bar in terms of the  
9 common knowledge of what the threat landscape is,  
10 particularly to those who are in certain positions. So it  
11 adds another layer of briefings to parliamentarians, to  
12 ministers, to officials who are in a position of power, with  
13 the idea to tell them about that things they could face, the  
14 threat landscape around them. By virtue of their position,  
15 what does it mean and what they are exposed to in that realm.

16 So we play a role in terms of just making  
17 sure that we're tracking the defensive briefing, informing  
18 the Prime Minister's Office that these are taking place, and  
19 making sure that the messaging, it's well coordinated, we  
20 understand what's being told to a specific parliamentarian.

21 So I think, you know, as I mentioned, the  
22 role -- the briefings do play a significant role in making  
23 sure that we all understand the threat. They might -- they  
24 do not go to a classified level, so they are at the unclassified  
25 level, but even then, they do bring that awareness, and they  
26 do bring that engagement with specific individuals and make  
27 them aware of the things that they could be seeing on a day-  
28 to-day basis.

1                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:**   And the final subject  
2 of intelligence sharing relates to provinces and territories.  
3 I understand that S&I has also begun work to improve  
4 information sharing between the federal government and the  
5 sub national government.

6                   Mr. Eldebs, again, I call on you. Could you  
7 give a brief explanation of what that work has been and where  
8 things are up to? What the current picture is?

9                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Absolutely. So I will say  
10 that in any threat landscape, and particularly with the  
11 complexity of what we're dealing with, we need to deal with  
12 them from a whole of society approach. And that means that  
13 we really need to have a role for the provinces and  
14 territories in tackling a lot of these issues that we face,  
15 whether it's foreign interference or anything else from a  
16 threat environment that Canada is facing.

17                   So on that -- because of that we have worked  
18 with public safety to revive a national security table that's  
19 being -- that was being held at the ADM table to bring  
20 national security topics to all of the provinces and  
21 territories. As well as I've done over the last say, several  
22 months, bilats, bilateral meetings with every province and  
23 territory to meet counterparts there who are dealing with  
24 national security issues. Ensure that we are connected,  
25 ensure that also I hear from them about some of the things  
26 that they're interested in so that we can bring to that table  
27 to discuss issues not just that the federal government is  
28 bringing forward, but also that the provinces and territories

1 care about.

2 The Clerk of the Privy Council has also had a  
3 meeting with his counterpart clerks from all of the provinces  
4 and territories to talk about national security issues.  
5 There was a talk on Bill C-70 for example, to explain what  
6 that means for Canada. But also, part of my conversations  
7 with my counterparts is to offer them security clearances as  
8 well so that we are able to have classified information, and  
9 the information is not just being shared at a non classified  
10 level. So if there's a specific threat that they need to be  
11 aware of that is at the classified level, we can talk about  
12 these things.

13 And in parallel as well, the Clerk has  
14 offered the provinces and territories a secure means of  
15 communication up to the secret level, so that we can also  
16 connect and make these meetings and make these interactions a  
17 little bit easier.

18 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

19 Madam Commissioner, I'm slightly over my time  
20 period I have one final topic. It will be very short. I  
21 asked for permission ---

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** You can go ahead.

23 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

24 Court Operator, could we put up CAN37056,  
25 please?

26 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN037056 0001:**

27 Renewing Canada's National Security  
28 and Intelligence Governance Structure

1                   **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** I'm going to ask  
2 questions briefly on the security and intelligence governance  
3 structure. This is a slide deck that outlines proposals to  
4 revise Canada's National Security and Intelligence governance  
5 structure. It states on page 2 at the top that Canada's  
6 current NSI governance structure is not optimally or  
7 efficiently organized.

8                   Ms. Walshe or Mr. Eldebs, could you perhaps  
9 explain the issues and gaps that have given rise to the need  
10 to revisit Canada's National Security and Intelligence  
11 governance structure?

12                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I think I could start and  
13 then Bridget, feel free to add. If you look at that slide as  
14 well, if you look at the righthand side of the DM levelled  
15 committees, you could see the plethora of committees that DM  
16 have to be at, which makes it a little bit difficult, which  
17 makes some of the meetings redundant, as well as it makes,  
18 you know, it makes for DMs that are always in meetings and  
19 not engaging in other things.

20                   But also, over time, you know, when new  
21 issues arise, we add new committees. But we haven't been  
22 doing a good practice of stopping certain committees that  
23 have become dormant overtime. So this was a view of ensuring  
24 that we have a much more robust and engaged governance  
25 structure, one that holds policy and operations together, one  
26 that also provides an overall picture for all DMs at ADMs in  
27 the community.

28                   So based on that, we've engaged with all of

1 the departments to look at what that could mean, reducing the  
2 number of committees, making them much more streamlined, and  
3 making them deal with issues that touch on important things  
4 that we're dealing with today.

5 **MS. LEILA GHAAHHARY:** Thank you.

6 And Court Operator, could you finally turn to  
7 page 7 of this document, please?

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** What's the date of the  
9 document?

10 **MS. LEILA GHAAHHARY:** I believe it's a 2023  
11 document, but I'll be corrected by the witness panel. I  
12 don't think it's ---

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Twenty twenty-three  
14 (2023)?

15 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** I believe the date at the  
16 front said November 2023.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

18 **MS. LEILA GHAAHHARY:** Mr. Eldebs, you  
19 explained in your examination, evidence that to date, the  
20 consultations seemed to favor the restructuring option that  
21 we see here on page 7. Is that still the case?

22 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Slightly different since  
23 the last conversation. The NSIA held a meeting with our  
24 fellow deputies to discuss this particular slide, and there  
25 was a bit of a sense that we need to do a bit more shifting  
26 in that structure. Not too much straying from where we are.

27 But with a view that there will be another  
28 fifth committee added which already meets, and that committee

1 is called Deputy Minister Protection Committee, which looks  
2 at the physical security of ministers as well as high  
3 prominent officials, members of Parliament who are under  
4 threat. And so, that would be added to that structure, and  
5 that would remain a committee. As well as looking at the  
6 Foreign Policy and Global Affairs one, and seeing where we  
7 can find efficiencies with already existing structures.

8 But in general, this is -- there's general  
9 agreement that this is the way we're heading. We're hoping  
10 that the next meeting we'll adopt a new structure as well.

11 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** And if I can add in just  
12 some additional context as well? As Mr. Eldebs pointed out,  
13 a lot of the work was on looking at the fact that there are a  
14 number of committees. But as this exercise proceeded, it's  
15 really clear that there were a number of very, very, core  
16 meetings and committees that are quite effective. And so,  
17 those same ones that we relied on for years, ADM, National  
18 Security Operations Committee, the tactical meeting that  
19 developed a few years ago, the DM committee on operations,  
20 and those sorts of meetings are very well reflected in the  
21 new structure.

22 So a lot of things were working very, very,  
23 well for that operational coordination and continue to  
24 operate, and are being wrapped into the new proposal.

25 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** And when do you think or  
26 anticipate this new structure that's being worked on will  
27 come into effect?

28 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I'm hoping in the

1 following few weeks. We were -- times are quite busy at  
2 present, but we were hoping to have landed it in the last  
3 week or so. But I think in the next few weeks for sure we're  
4 hoping at least the last conversation, or the follow up  
5 conversation, will be had to reflect the comments that the  
6 deputies provided at the last meeting and then adopting a new  
7 structure.

8 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARY:** Thank you.

9 Madam Commissioner, those are my questions.

10 Thank you.

11 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you. Will take 20  
12 minutes break, so we'll come back at 11:05.

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

15 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
16 recess until 11:05 a.m. Cette séance de la Commission est  
17 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 11 h 05.

18 --- Upon recessing at 10:46 a.m./

19 --- L'audience est suspendue à 10 h 46

20 --- Upon resuming at 11:06 a.m./

21 --- La séance est reprise à 11 h 06

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

24 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
25 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la  
26 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en  
27 session.

28 The time is 11:06 p.m. Il est 11 h 06.



1 --- Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER, Resumed/Sous la même  
2 affirmation:

3 --- MS. BRIDGET WALSHE, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation:

4 --- MR. NABIH ELDEBS, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation:

5 --- MS. LISA JANE DUCHARME, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

6 --- MR. MARTIN GREEN, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

7 --- MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD, Resumed/Sous le même serment:

8 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: So we'll begin the  
9 cross-examination. The first one this morning is -- the  
10 first to start is Mr. Jarmyn, counsel for Eri O'Toole.

11 It's not Mr. Jarmyn.

12 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

13 MR. PRESTON LIM:

14 MR. PRESTON LIM: Switch-up today. Thanks,  
15 Madam Commissioner.

16 Hi, everyone. My name is Preston Lim, and  
17 alongside Mr. Jarmyn, I represent Erin O'Toole.

18 Thank you so much for your time this morning  
19 and for your insights.

20 The questions that I have today I'll direct  
21 Mr. Eldebs, but of course if colleagues see fit to come in,  
22 you can phone a friend, so let's just get right into it.

23 So before the break, we were talking about  
24 threats to Parliamentarians briefings. And so just as a kind  
25 of a simple first question, I take it that you viewed these  
26 as important and that your belief is that they should  
27 continue on an ongoing basis.

28 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Yes.

1                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Great.

2                   And so then my question kind of relates to  
3 the internal PCO process that leads up to these briefings to  
4 parliamentarians. Do you have any concerns about the ways in  
5 which the internal process is currently set up? Are there  
6 any improvements, in your view, that might reasonably be  
7 made?

8                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I can't speak to processes  
9 previous to me joining PCO. However, since I've joined, I've  
10 felt that the processes have been working very well,  
11 particularly from the team that I'm responsible.

12                  So from a SICOPS perspective, they do these  
13 briefings on a regular basis. Most recently, they did it to  
14 all Ministerial staff, for example, in terms of their travel  
15 and ensuring that they remain protected and understanding of  
16 their surroundings while they're travelling. But also, the  
17 foreign interference coordinator as well who sits in Public  
18 Safety Canada had organized briefings for all of caucuses of  
19 the Parties represented in Parliament, and those briefings  
20 took place over the spring and summer, I believe.

21                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** That's helpful. Thank you.

22                  So I'm not going to take you to the witness  
23 summary, but I can if we need to.

24                  You discuss in your witness summary, and I'm  
25 just going to quote from it, how:

26                               "Political parties have not taken the  
27 government up on its offer of  
28 clearances or briefings."

1                   And I know you expanded on that a little bit  
2                   this morning.

3                   First off, am I correct in stating that these  
4                   observations relate only to the period stretching from  
5                   December 2023 onwards, that is, when you were appointed as  
6                   Assistant Secretary?

7                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes. I would have to say,  
8                   though, I think most recently, for example, Mr. Ian Todd, who  
9                   is the Chief of Staff for Mr. Poilievre, also received a  
10                  security clearance and is being briefed on national security  
11                  related issues during -- most recently.

12                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Right. And if I could turn  
13                  your mind to the byelections that have occurred since your  
14                  appointment as Assistant Secretary, which political Parties  
15                  were offered briefings from the SITE Task Force?

16                  So here I'm thinking of Toronto St. Paul's  
17                  following Minister Bennett's resignation in January 2024,  
18                  Lasalle-Émard-Verdun following the resignation of Minister  
19                  Lametti and then, finally, Elmwood-Transcona following the  
20                  resignation of MP Daniel Blaikie earlier this year.

21                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Generally speaking, the  
22                  SITE briefings are offered to the political Parties that are  
23                  taking part in the election and the byelection itself. So  
24                  all the political Parties who were part of that byelection,  
25                  the main political Parties who were part of that byelection  
26                  were offered SITE briefings.

27                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Right, okay. Thank you.

28                  And staying with that topic about kind of the

1 setup and the communication between political Parties and  
2 intelligence agencies, a twofold question. So first off, in  
3 your view, what measures should political Parties adopt to  
4 ensure more regularized and effective communication between  
5 their representatives and the appropriate governmental  
6 authorities?

7 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I think, in my opinion,  
8 the offer to clear at least Opposition Party leaders top  
9 secret clearance was an offer to ensure that national  
10 security information is being shared with those Opposition  
11 Party leaders as well as ensuring that we can discuss with  
12 them what could be done about that intelligence as well. So  
13 it's not just about sharing. It's about what could be done  
14 with that intelligence. And so I believe that this is a very  
15 critical process.

16 Also, the idea of having SITE representatives  
17 from all the political Parties to hear, one, to get the SITE  
18 briefings before a byelection or General Election, but also  
19 to get the classified SITE reports after a byelection or, in  
20 the case of a General Election, to understand the threat  
21 picture that had evolved in a particular byelection or  
22 riding, for example, is quite important.

23 So I think there are multiple levels there of  
24 engagement that are healthy to take place so that we are all  
25 operating from the same page and actually are able to protect  
26 Canada and Canadians.

27 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** And if I can add in ---

28 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Yes, please.

1                   **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** --- those SITE briefings  
2                   that occur before a General Election or we've had ahead of  
3                   many byelections are really important places where, you know,  
4                   a lot goes into providing briefings to the representatives  
5                   who attend to understand the threats and how to mitigate  
6                   against them, but also an opportunity to ask questions.

7                   So a very important venue for the Party  
8                   representatives to engage with the members of the  
9                   intelligence community to share their questions and concerns.

10                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** If I could add as well,  
11                  we've also undertaken to give briefings outside of a  
12                  byelection, so the SITE Task Force, for example, most  
13                  recently had a briefing on artificial intelligence and we  
14                  offered it to all of the major political Parties as well.  
15                  And some of us -- some of them took us up on that as well.

16                  And so it's helpful to kind of get a  
17                  baseline, although at the unclassified level, for those kind  
18                  of -- some of those briefings. It gets -- as I mentioned  
19                  before, it helps baseline the level of information, it helps  
20                  baseline what could be done about information and what to  
21                  watch out for.

22                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** And to whom are these  
23                  briefings outside of the byelection structure offered?

24                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** So they were offered to,  
25                  as I mentioned, all the political Parties, so the Liberals,  
26                  NDP, the Conservatives, Green and Bloc.

27                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Perfect.

28                  And the kind of the mirror question, but are

1       there any added measures that you think the government or  
2       perhaps more specifically PCO should implement to increase  
3       effective communication between the appropriate intelligence  
4       bodies and the political Parties themselves?

5                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I can't speak to kind of  
6       what's missing. I believe that there's a lot that's  
7       happening, I believe, in engagement. I believe that there's  
8       a lot of, you know -- there's a lot of channels of engagement  
9       that are happening right now. And so maintaining that  
10      healthy dialogue and maintaining that exchange of information  
11      is always helpful, but if there's other ways, we're happy to  
12      listen to them and improve as necessary.

13                  **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** And I think important to  
14      note that when you look back to when the SITE process started  
15      before the election in 2019, for example, there was a lot of  
16      work into adapting and changing as things progressed. So a  
17      continuous process at looking at how the governance and the  
18      information flow and sharing is working, and adapting over  
19      time is just a normal part of that kind of business.

20                  **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** If I may?

21                  **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Please.

22                  **MR. MICHAEL MacDONALD:** I think there is  
23      another contextual piece that one can add to this, and it's  
24      not just all PCO that works in this space. You do have your  
25      parliamentary entities, the Sergeant-At-Arms, Parliamentary  
26      Protective Service, and of course the Senate Security. And  
27      they have a role to play, as part of the community, in  
28      working with their constituents, members of Parliament, and

1 having discussions of this nature as well.

2 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** That's helpful. And I  
3 appreciate that comment, Mr. Macdonald. So I have one final  
4 question. I don't know if you're the right person for this,  
5 Mr. Eldebs, but maybe just sticking with the PCO perspective  
6 on this issue, what kinds of measures has the PCO implemented  
7 to kind of address the problem of the spread of  
8 disinformation on WeChat? This is just -- this is an issue  
9 that we've heard a lot about over the past couple of weeks,  
10 so I was looking to kind of get the PCO perspective on that.

11 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I will say -- I can start  
12 and others can add to it, but I will say that -- I will say  
13 Democratic Institutions within PCO is very well placed to  
14 answer that. I think you had Mr. Allen Sutherland, ---

15 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Yes.

16 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** --- who was here  
17 testifying in front of the Committee, who develops a plan for  
18 protecting democracy, and that plan has been key at  
19 addressing mis- and disinformation in Canada, and raising  
20 also awareness about these kinds of platforms and the mis-  
21 and disinformation that's being spread there.

22 There's a role also for the SITE Task Force,  
23 particularly of the Rapid Response Mechanism within Global  
24 Affairs Canada at looking at social media and the spread of  
25 mis- and disinformation as well, and bringing that to light  
26 for the government. And if there's a way for the government  
27 to take action, then action can be taken.

28 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** And maybe also important

1 to note that beyond just looking at PCO, there's a lot of  
2 work that has gone on looking at mis- and disinformation over  
3 time. So not a new issue. For those of us who remember the  
4 1980s, for example, certainly the government had a lot of  
5 campaigns at the time providing education. So others within  
6 the government community are certainly looking at this issue,  
7 including colleagues at Heritage, for example. So a broad  
8 issue that is being addressed from many points.

9 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** As well as private --  
10 civil society and universities are looking at this issue as  
11 well.

12 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** From the assessment  
13 perspective, IAS also participates in working with our  
14 security and intelligence partners to produce briefings and  
15 papers on the threats of mis- and disinformation and how AI  
16 is increasingly enabling these types of operations. And we  
17 use our intelligence expertise in things like red team  
18 exercises to come up with ways and means that we think that  
19 AI and mis- and disinformation could influence election  
20 security and we provide the briefings and the outcomes of  
21 those results to implicated areas.

22 We also participate in an AI informal network  
23 within PCO where different parts of the organization, the  
24 policy, and the intel folks come together to discuss how AI  
25 is contributing to mis- and disinformation efforts and come  
26 up with ideas to help policy.

27 And also we are alive to the policy  
28 discussions, so we turn those into intel requirements for



1 future assessments.

2 And we continue to provide briefings and work  
3 on products with our partners, not just in Canada, but also  
4 with our Five Eyes allies. They too are also seized with  
5 this and we share best practices and knowledge and lessons  
6 learned in this space to benefit our collective efforts.

7 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** And if I could add an  
8 observation from an operational perspective, those sorts of  
9 discussions and information sharing that the assessment  
10 community has, and others, are really, really important,  
11 because it provides sort of a baseline understanding and  
12 knowledge sharing amongst the entire community and so from an  
13 operational perspective, those analysts who are looking at  
14 kind of intelligence on the day to day basis have the tools  
15 and understanding they know and they need to grow, to learn,  
16 and to adapt, and to change the methods they use based on  
17 that changing technology.

18 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Mr. Green, since you were  
19 speaking about China earlier, I wonder if you might have any  
20 insights to add to those of your colleagues?

21 **ME. MARTIN GREEN:** No, I think Lisa really  
22 emphasized a couple of important points, is the role of  
23 emerging tech in all of this, be it AI, or some of the social  
24 media platforms. And those are things where I think there  
25 are very robust conversations going on about the influence of  
26 those, and it is something that requires a whole of  
27 government approach. You know, it wouldn't just be PCO, but  
28 I think Bridget mentioned Heritage Canada's role in this,

1 because it's becoming, you know, abundantly evident that  
2 social media and some of these platforms, like TikTok or  
3 WeChat, you know, are used as vehicles to influence voters'  
4 perceptions, and sometimes those narratives are probably  
5 narratives that we don't want to see. So they could be  
6 targeted to individuals, they could be targeted at an issue,  
7 and those are things that I think us, and most of our allies,  
8 I mean, we're discussing it frequently. I know as the Head  
9 of Assessment, with several of our allied partners, it's  
10 almost a standing item, which is, you know,  
11 mis/disinformation and the role of social media. So we look  
12 very carefully at what other countries are doing to try and  
13 build the appropriate deterrence and resilience to those  
14 influences.

15 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Great. That's all I have,  
16 Madam Commissioner. Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

18 So next one is counsel for Jenny Kwan. Is it  
19 Ms. Kakkar or Mr. Choudhry?

20 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:**

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good morning,  
23 Commissioner.

24 For the record, my name is Sujit Choudhry.  
25 I'm counsel to Jenny Kwan.

26 So I'd like to frame my questions for the  
27 panel by reference to Bill C-70, which as you know, passed  
28 Parliament in record time in the spring. And what I want to

1 -- and so could -- is it fair to assume that the panelists  
2 are familiar with Bill C-70?

3 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** We won't be able to speak  
4 to the depths of each particular aspect of it, but yes.

5 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. I'll take that as  
6 a yes for the panel, just in the interests of time. I won't  
7 do a head count or a roll call.

8 So there's a key term that I want to focus in  
9 on to help frame my questions, and it's this -- it's a new  
10 term in federal law. It's the term political or governmental  
11 process. And what's important, and what I want to draw  
12 attention to, and use to frame some questions, is the fact  
13 that the definition of that term applies to political or  
14 governmental processes, not just at the federal or national  
15 level, but also at the subnational level. So at provincial  
16 levels, at municipal levels, and also at the level of  
17 Indigenous government.

18 Are you all -- or whoever would like to  
19 answer, is the panel aware of that fact? Could you please  
20 say yes for the record?

21 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Sure. Yes.

22 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Yes.

23 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sorry, the head nodding  
24 doesn't show up in the transcript, I'm afraid.

25 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Apologies.

26 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And nor can it be  
27 translated.

28 So what I'd like to then do is call up a

1 document that was on the Commission list, which is  
2 CAN37897\_1.

3 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN037897 0001:

4 Responses to Issues Raised by British  
5 Columbia Premier Eby During Meeting  
6 with NSIA

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So this document is  
8 entitled *Responses to Issues Raised by British Columbia*  
9 *Premier Eby During Meeting with NSIA*. And it begins by  
10 saying:

11 "Premier Eby met with the NSIA and  
12 raised the topics of Foreign  
13 Interference; Election Security; [and  
14 others]."

15 So I would just like to -- I'd like to ask  
16 some questions about this document.

17 So was -- did any of you prepare this  
18 document?

19 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** If I can respond, I have  
20 to say I recognize the document. I think, you know, by  
21 looking at it, it's an early draft written by an analyst on  
22 the team, putting together some thoughts and ideas in  
23 response to, as is stated, this is a discussion between Ms.  
24 Thomas and Premier Eby.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I see. So there's  
26 probably a later version of this document that we don't have?

27 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Potentially. It's also  
28 often that we put together documents to organize thoughts and

1 ideas.

2 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Well this is what  
3 we have. This is all I've been able to find. So I'm going  
4 to ask questions about this and then you can answer as best  
5 as you can.

6 So does any of you know the date of the  
7 meeting between Premier Eby and the NSIA?

8 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** No.

9 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Do you know at whose  
10 request the meeting took place? Was it the premier's or the  
11 NSIA's?

12 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Cannot answer.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Can't answer. Did any  
14 of you attend this meeting?

15 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** No.

16 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** No. Okay. And so I  
17 take it, I think I know the answer to this question. Do you  
18 know if the issue of foreign interference was raised by the  
19 NSIA with Premier Eby, or did Premier Eby raise the issue  
20 with the NSIA?

21 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I am not aware ---

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay.

23 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** --- who raised it.

24 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And you don't  
25 know how long the meeting ran?

26 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** No.

27 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** No.

28 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. So let's just

1 scroll down, and so if you look at the first -- that's good.  
2 It states here,

3 "Premiere Eby asked if there was a  
4 mechanism for BC political parties to  
5 "check" names..."

6 That's not a legal term.

7 "...with federal national security  
8 authorities for covert ties to  
9 foreign states or significant  
10 organized crime links."

11 And so just to give you a sense of what this  
12 notetaker or this analyst thought that meant, I ask that the  
13 Court Reporter please scroll down to the bottom of page 2?

14 And it says here,

15 "Premier Eby raised three issues  
16 related to elections and foreign  
17 interference: 1) if he would be  
18 notified if any of his  
19 nominees/candidates had undue contact  
20 with foreign states; 2) how would he  
21 be notified if a foreign state were  
22 interfering in provincial elections;  
23 and 3) how he should inform  
24 opposition leaders if foreign  
25 interference took place in an  
26 election."

27 And so what I want to kind of use as a frame  
28 for my questions to you about this section is what appears in

1 the first bullet. And it says here, whoever wrote this,  
2 says,

3 "It's unclear what authority the BC  
4 Premier has to request or be in  
5 receipt of this information."

6 Okay? And so -- and then it says at the end  
7 of that first bullet,

8 "In such instances, one possible  
9 threat reduction measure might be  
10 informing the party leadership."

11 So I want to come at this issue of authority.  
12 Authority to request this information and authority to  
13 provide it to the premier of a province. And to give you a  
14 sense of where I'm going with this, this type of conversation  
15 in theory could have happened with the premier of any  
16 province, with the premier or first minister of any  
17 territory, with the mayor of a city, with the head of a band  
18 council because foreign interference does not respect  
19 jurisdictional boundaries within Canada. And so the -- so  
20 one question I have is this, would a briefing about undue  
21 contact, whatever that might mean, would that count -- would  
22 that fall, in your view, under the scope of a TRM or threat  
23 reduction measure?

24 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I want to distinguish the  
25 two, so I think the idea of threat reduction measures had  
26 occurred in the *CSIS Act* for a longer time than Bill C-70,  
27 but Bill C-70 also, what it allows CSIS to do is to share  
28 information outside of the federal government.

1                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Correct.

2                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** So it gives them an  
3 additional authority to be able to share information, not  
4 just through a threat reduction measure.

5                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good.

6                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I will -- I can't answer  
7 to the authority of Premier Eby. I can answer to the  
8 authority of a federal government in terms of sharing  
9 information, and I think ---

10                  **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure.

11                  **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** --- that both the  
12 intelligence agencies, CSIS and CSE have robust measures now,  
13 particularly after Bill C-70 had passed for CSIS and CSE had  
14 that authority from before in terms of being able to share  
15 intelligence outside of the federal government, but also with  
16 the view that you're able to sanitize that intelligence to  
17 the classification level of the audience receiving it. So if  
18 someone is -- doesn't have a security clearance, they can  
19 sanitize the level of information to share without  
20 jeopardizing sources and methods, which are key to protecting  
21 the intelligence and continuing to protect Canada and  
22 Canadians, and then, also with a view about what could be  
23 done about that.

24                  **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Ms. Ducharme, I see you  
25 nodding a bit. Is there something you wanted to add?

26                  **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** No, I am agreeing.

27                  **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay, great. Okay.  
28 Well, then on that topic, so I wanted to suggest to you that



1        what might -- and we don't know because Premier Eby's not  
2        here; right? But it's a matter of public record that in  
3        September 2019, CSIS gave a briefing to security-cleared  
4        members of the Liberal Party of Canada regarding intelligence  
5        concerning a nomination race in the GTA. And so it's  
6        possible that Premier Eby thought, well, maybe I should  
7        receive that type of briefing too if there were some concern  
8        that the intelligence agencies raised in relation to a  
9        nomination race in British Columbia. Would you agree that  
10       under -- and you've raised yourself that C-70 now grants new  
11       authorities to federal agencies to share information. Is it  
12       -- would you agree that now, in the wake of C-70, that type  
13       of a briefing could be provided to an appropriate provincial  
14       official?

15                **MR. NAHIB ELDEBS:** Yes, as I mentioned, Bill  
16       C-70 allows for that ability to share that information, but  
17       also, there's robust processes within the government to  
18       identify that, identify the intelligence, and identify  
19       whether a briefing is the right course of action, of course.  
20       And so but the authorities are now in place to allow for  
21       that, but also, allow for a sanitized level of the  
22       information with a view about what could be done about it.

23                **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And would a security  
24       clearance be required for the provincial official receiving  
25       that briefing, as was the case in 2019 in relation to Don  
26       Valley North, where the members of a Liberal Party who  
27       received the briefing had security clearances?

28                **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I can't speak to 2019, but

1 I will say the security clearance level of the information  
2 dictates the audience and who can be shared, but with a view  
3 as well that even if you're not cleared to top secret, there  
4 could be something that could be shared. It might not be as  
5 robust as the full classified information, but there could be  
6 something that could be shared.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I'm assuming the  
8 need-to-know principle also ---

9 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Absolutely.

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- applied. Okay. So  
11 let's go to the next page then to the top bullet. So it says  
12 here, and I take the point, Ms. Walshe, that this might be --  
13 or that this might be an analyst' note,

14 "Having an entity with a provincial  
15 election security  
16 architecture/monitoring mandate would  
17 enable BC to continually monitor  
18 threats to its democratic processes,  
19 establish links with federal partners  
20 and election security. One approach  
21 might be modelled after the federal  
22 approach (i.e., the Critical Election  
23 Incident Public Protocol, [and] the  
24 [...] (SITE) Task Force)."

25 So I want to just drill in on this because  
26 this bullet it seems to suggest that the way to deal with  
27 these issues is to replicate at every level of government  
28 some analogue to the Critical Election Incident Public

1 Protocol and the SITE Task Force. And if that's true, I want  
2 to ask you if that's really practical. And we have 10  
3 provinces, 3 territories, hundreds of municipalities. We  
4 have over 600 band councils. Is it really realistic, despite  
5 the virtues of subsidiarity and federalism, to replicate that  
6 type of machinery within each level of government that might  
7 be subject of foreign interference? Ms. Walshe, I see you --  
8 -

9 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Yeah, so I think I'd  
10 point you to the fact that, like I said, this is a draft  
11 document of thoughts and ideas rather than a set of  
12 proposals.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So let's take you --  
14 let's pick up on that because I know these issues are in flux  
15 and are evolving, and so I want to put some propositions to  
16 you. Would you agree that in Canada national security is a  
17 federal competence?

18 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I would agree that the  
19 federal government is -- invests more in national security  
20 than any other subnational, sub-federal government.

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Fair. Would you agree  
22 that international intelligence is a federal competence in  
23 Canada?

24 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yes. Okay. And would  
26 you agree that -- and here I'm thinking of Mr. Green's  
27 report, that the intelligence assessment of foreign  
28 interference straddles the divide between international and

1 domestic intelligence; correct?

2 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Yes.

3 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: And so as a consequence,  
4 the level of government with the greatest comparative  
5 advantage to assess threats to our political and democratic  
6 processes is, in fact, the federal government; correct?

7 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: I think the federal  
8 government has been doing a lot to actually do that as well.  
9 So you are ---

10 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: That wasn't my question.  
11 It's a question of comparative advantage.

12 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: I cannot talk to  
13 comparative advantage and not knowing what the provinces are  
14 investing or what they are doing on those fronts as well and  
15 what -- and as you know as well, political parties have their  
16 own nomination processes, so it's also difficult to know ---

17 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Right.

18 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: --- what they are doing  
19 there as well.

20 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Right.

21 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: So I could speak to only  
22 what the federal government is doing.

23 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Fair enough. And so and  
24 isn't it the case that the SITE process and the Panel of Five  
25 or DMCIR function effectively because they are connected with  
26 our federal intelligence and security machinery?

27 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Yes.

28 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Yes. And so I put to

1       you that as C-70 has broadened the lens and legal definition  
2       of what counts as foreign interference, that the federal  
3       government machinery and processes have to adapt and evolve  
4       as well to track that new legal definition.

5                       And so I have two final questions on that  
6       point. The first is this, that the RCMP's authorities to  
7       engage in threat reduction measures have also been increased  
8       by Bill C-70; is that not right?

9                       **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I think the criminal  
10       offences in relation to foreign interference have increased  
11       the RCMP's remit to look at crimes as it relates to foreign  
12       interference.

13                      **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I'll ask you to take  
14       my word for it, that the RCMP provides contract policing in 7  
15       of the 10 provinces.

16                      **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yeah.

17                      **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHURY:** And so if that's true,  
18       then it seems that the RCMP provides the national bridge  
19       between federal intelligence and security apparatus and what  
20       might be happening at the provinces; wouldn't that be right?

21                      **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Je pense que c'est  
22       important de se rappeler aussi que la Gendarmerie a son  
23       propre mandat, CSIS a le sien, et que grâce à C-70, CSIS peut  
24       maintenant partager de l'information, classifiée ou non, avec  
25       des organisations qui ne sont pas membres du portfolio  
26       fédéral quand elles ont collecté de l'information qui  
27       rencontrent leur *threshold*, selon leur acte. Donc, je pense  
28       que c'est important de noter ça.

1                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHURY:** Very fair, very fair.

2                   And so then my final question's this, that of our Five Eyes  
3                   partners, two are federal states, the United States and  
4                   Australia. Do you know, or can you comment on how they  
5                   address the issue of threats of foreign interference at the  
6                   subnational level?

7                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I cannot speak to that.

8                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you.

9                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

10                  The next one is counsel for Michael Chong,  
11                  Mr. Harland.

12                  **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

13                  **MR. FRASER HARLAND:**

14                  **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Good morning,  
15                  Commissioner. Mr. Green, you gave some helpful evidence on  
16                  the Special Report in your discussion with Commission  
17                  counsel, and I was hoping to just dig a little deeper into  
18                  that with you. Ms. Ducharme and Ms. Chayer added some  
19                  context to your concerns. Ms. Ducharme noted that unfinished  
20                  reports are normal and can still be useful, and Ms. Chayer  
21                  noted that the underlying intelligence was still available.  
22                  And, Mr. Green, I don't want to put you in an uncomfortable  
23                  position with your colleagues, but I would like to get your  
24                  response on those points. So first, I'm wondering if you'd  
25                  agree with me that given your experience of finished report  
26                  is going to be more useful and taken more seriously than a  
27                  partial report. Do you agree with that?

28                  **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Sure.

1                   **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** And although it was  
2 based on an existing intelligence, it was doing something  
3 important by putting an analysis of what was known  
4 domestically and internationally with respect to the PRC  
5 together in one product; is that fair?

6                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Yes.

7                   **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** So the Special Report,  
8 by virtue of having been done, was more useful than just a  
9 smattering of the underlying intelligence; is that -- would  
10 that accord with your view on that?

11                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** It was, you know, unique  
12 in some instances. And as I mentioned, I thought somewhat  
13 innovative in that it was an attempt to marry what we knew  
14 internationally with what we knew domestically, and that's  
15 why, you know, the document is actually double badged with  
16 PCO and CSIS logos on the front. So it was -- you know, so  
17 yes.

18                   **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** And it was, to use your  
19 words, a darn good product. That's fair?

20                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I kind of like it.

21                   **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Okay. And it wasn't  
22 moved along by NSIA Thomas despite your concerted efforts to  
23 have her do so. Is that fair as well?

24                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Well, I mean, I made  
25 representations of what I thought would be a useful process  
26 for the paper. And again, you know, given that it is a  
27 Special Report, it didn't -- you know, there's a number of  
28 documents that I sign off on where I wouldn't necessarily go

1 to the NSIA. And then there are larger documents like the  
2 National Intelligence Assessments, which actually normally go  
3 through a deputy's review, and while they don't approve them,  
4 they will input to them, and it's, sir, we're getting their  
5 and imprimatur that this is, you know, a good assessment that  
6 should be circulated on behalf of the Government of Canada.  
7 So, you know, it's not my, it's the NSIA's call, and  
8 particularly in this instance, and that's why I went to seek,  
9 you know, her direction on what we should do with it.

10 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** That's very helpful, Mr.  
11 Green. Is there anything else that you'd like the  
12 Commissioner to know about the Special Report vis-à-vis some  
13 of what we heard this morning?

14 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** No.

15 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Okay. Thank you very  
16 much. Those are my questions, Commissioner.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

18 Counsel for the Conservative Party?

19 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

20 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:**

21 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:** Good morning. My  
22 questions will be for Mr. Eldebs. Mr. Eldebs, my questions  
23 relate to the SITE Task Force briefings and reports offered  
24 to political parties around byelections. I understand that  
25 the SITE Task Force began issuing these briefings and reports  
26 with the Durham byelection earlier this year; is that  
27 correct?

28 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I don't know if reports



1 were issued before the Durham byelection, but they did --  
2 they were issued at the Durham byelection and afterwards as  
3 well.

4 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** I can add in that the  
5 enhanced monitoring during byelection periods began for the  
6 byelections held in June of 2023.

7 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:** But is it correct that  
8 the first briefings were offered in connection with the  
9 Durham byelection in and around the Durham byelection?

10 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I'm unaware if they were  
11 the first. They were offered at a Durham byelection and  
12 afterwards, but I'm not -- I'm unaware of they were offered  
13 previously.

14 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:** Okay. And are you aware  
15 that ---

16 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Sorry, I can -- if I  
17 can, I do know that a briefing was offered in the last days  
18 of May 2023 heading into the June byelection.

19 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Yes, it took place  
20 ---

21 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:** Mr. Eldebs ---

22 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Sorry, if I could  
23 just -- I apologize. I had trouble hearing you. So, yes, I  
24 can confirm that there was indeed a briefing that has  
25 happened on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

26 **MR. MICHAEL WILSON:** Back to Mr. Eldebs, are  
27 you aware that the Conservative Party's designated  
28 representative for the SITE Task Force process is Trevor

1 Bailey, its Director of Operations?

2 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: I became aware of that a  
3 few weeks back.

4 MR. MICHAEL WILSON: Okay. Would it be  
5 correct then that the first time that Mr. Bailey was invited  
6 to attend a SITE Task Force briefing or to receive a report  
7 in connection with a byelection was on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024?

8 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Yes, he emailed me and  
9 noting that he was the SITE representative and the previous  
10 byelections we had invited three other individuals from the  
11 Conservative Party, but not Mr. Bailey.

12 MR. MICHAEL WILSON: Okay. And after the  
13 invitation was extended to Mr. Bailey to receive the report  
14 on the same polls byelection, he did, in fact, attend to take  
15 that report and the earlier reports?

16 MR. NABIH ELDEBS: Yes.

17 MR. MICHAEL WILSON: Thank you. Those are my  
18 questions.

19 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you.

20 The Human Rights Coalition?

21 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

22 MR. DAVID MATAS:

23 MR. DAVID MATAS: My name is David Matas, and  
24 my questions are directed to anybody on the panel who feels  
25 they have an answer. I'm referring to the document CAN.DOC  
26 36, which at page 27 talks about meetings of the Deputy  
27 Ministers China Committee. And at page 31 talks about  
28 meetings of the ADM China Committee. And the report says

1       that these committees would from time to time discuss issues  
2       relating to foreign interference. So my question is, did  
3       these committees and these discussions discuss the impacts of  
4       foreign interference on Uyghurs, Hongkongers, Tibetans and  
5       Falon Gong practitioners?

6                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** The meetings I've attended  
7       were not on this subject, but again, I've been a member of  
8       the ADM Committee over just the past 10 months. Maybe Global  
9       Affairs Canada can be better placed to answer that question  
10      since they lead both the ADM and the DM level committee.

11                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I could add to that ---

12                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Yeah.

13                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** --- you know, over time,  
14      certainly, those issues have been part and parcel of  
15      briefings on China, you know, their human rights. So and I -  
16      - you know, some of the documents that have come to this  
17      Committee also speak to those from CSIS. So, you know, I'm  
18      not sure that it wasn't, you know, the subject at hand, but  
19      they were certainly discussed as part and parcel of a whole.

20                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Understood.

21                   When you say from time to time, could you say  
22      something about the frequency?

23                   **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Not offhand. You know, to  
24      understand that there is a DM China committee, and these  
25      other committees, those issues would certainly be part of the  
26      background briefings that were provided.

27                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** These discussions about the  
28      impact on diaspora communities, was there any contact to your

1 knowledge, between those committees and the diaspora  
2 communities?

3 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I don't now.

4 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I am not sure. I cannot  
5 answer that.

6 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Okay. Now I can see that  
7 there's a Deputy Ministers Committee on China, an ADM  
8 Committee on China, there's also an ADM committee that has to  
9 do with India. And is there a committee that has something  
10 to do with any other country, a DM or ADM committee that has  
11 something to do with any other country besides those two  
12 countries?

13 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I'm not aware of the ADM  
14 committee that you mentioned on India. Maybe I'm ---

15 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Yeah, I think that  
16 Global Affairs would be the best place to answer those  
17 questions.

18 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Yeah. It says ADM biweekly  
19 meeting on India. It's mentioned at page 31 of CAN.DOC 36

20 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Okay, sorry. Biweekly  
21 meeting, it's not necessarily a committee, it's just a  
22 meeting that happens every two weeks to talk about specific  
23 issues, but it's not specific committee that has a structure.  
24 Sorry, I just misunderstood what you meant.

25 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Understood. But I guess my  
26 question is not about that committee, but whether there are  
27 other, either meetings or committees, that relate to other  
28 countries and foreign interference, besides China or India?

1                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I will say that at the ADM  
2 level -- the ADMNS Operations Committee, talks about all  
3 types of foreign interference, so not just -- not just from  
4 one specific country. So all types of foreign interference,  
5 regardless of its origin, will be talked about there. So I  
6 want to distinguish that from the committee that GAC -- that  
7 Global Affairs Canada leads on China.

8                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** I understand there's also a  
9 Protecting Democracy Unit, or there was within the democratic  
10 institutions of -- and the question is, whether that  
11 Protecting Democracy Unit has led to increased engagement, or  
12 engagement at all with diaspora communities?

13                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** That's probably also a  
14 question to put to them. It's a specific Secretariat and a  
15 unit within the Privy Council office that's not connected to  
16 our -- like, they don't work for us or part of our sections,  
17 but it's probably a good secretariat to talk to. Mr. Allen  
18 Sutherland was here testifying to the committee, and he's the  
19 one that leads that effort.

20                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** I see. So it's a different  
21 part of the Privy Council Office? Somebody who was here  
22 before.

23                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes.

24                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** But it's not something that  
25 you're personally aware of? Right.

26                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I can't talk about more.

27                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Okay. Those are all my  
28 questions. Thanks.

1 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you.

2 Counsel for the RCDA, the Russia Canadian  
3 Democratic Alliance?

4 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

5 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:

6 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Good morning. Can I  
7 ask the Court Reporter to pull CAN.DOC.36, please? This is  
8 PCO's Institutional Report, Part C of the Institutional  
9 Report. Go to page 20, please? We will see one of the  
10 meetings PCO had with representatives of foreign governments  
11 about foreign interference.

12 I'm most interested with the September 28th  
13 meeting. There was a discussion about the evolution of  
14 China's foreign interference activities, the coordination  
15 between Russia and China, and engagement with India, and the  
16 face of increased FI activity. I'm wondering if -- like the  
17 part that interests me the most is the coordination between  
18 Russia and China. I'm wondering if there was any comment you  
19 can add to this coordination or about this meeting?

20 MR. MARTIN GREEN: So this is in reference to  
21 the Heads of Assessment which Canada hosted in September  
22 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023. And there's an agenda for those meetings, and  
23 foreign interference, as I mentioned, is quite often on the  
24 agenda. So in terms of that, you know, we talked about what  
25 each country is saying because it's, you know, quite  
26 different, sometimes there are similarities.

27 With respect to coordination between Russia  
28 in China, that agenda item was to discuss how real, or the

1 breadth and depth of partnerships between Russia and China.  
2 And I'm not sure I should say more on that, but it is, you  
3 know, in the context of the Russia Ukraine war and certain  
4 activities in the Indo-Pacific. There's an interest in how  
5 those two countries are relating and how deep the partnership  
6 might be.

7 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So there is or there  
8 seems to be a growing partnership or greater coordination  
9 between those two countries?

10 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Yeah, I wouldn't feel  
11 comfortable commenting on, you know, the extent of that  
12 partnership, because I think most of it is pretty -- that I  
13 know, is based on pretty highly classified information.

14 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I understand. Thank  
15 you. I don't mean to make lead you on commenting on it.

16 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** Yeah, sorry. I'm sorry  
17 too.

18 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** No problem. Let's  
19 assume that there was a greater coordination. Would that  
20 pose a higher -- would that mean that the risk of foreign  
21 interference our democratic processes is increased? Is it  
22 worse for us if -- in terms of coordination?

23 **MR. MARTIN GREEN:** I guess. You know, that  
24 gets into the hypothetical, but I think, you know, the  
25 obvious answer would be yes. That if there was, you know,  
26 strategic cooperation on narratives across the board that  
27 would create a bigger problem.

28 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you.

1 And I'm wondering if we could go to  
2 CAN.SUM.30 at page 6, briefly? This is the summary for all  
3 countries for Stage 2. I want to briefly direct you to, at  
4 page 6, there's the summary about Russia. You can scroll  
5 down. You can scroll down at the next page.

6 So we see the sentence here:

7 "Canada does not have the same  
8 profile for Russia as some of our  
9 allies as a target for disinformation  
10 and other Russian F[oreign]  
11 I[n]terference related activities;  
12 given an ever-changing geo-political  
13 landscape, it is important that  
14 Canada remain[s] vigilant regarding  
15 the potential for future escalation  
16 against Canada's democratic  
17 processes."

18 So I'm wondering -- you're probably aware of  
19 the Tenet Media Operation and where Russian operatives set up  
20 a news outlet that produced 50 or so videos about Canadian  
21 issues that were viewed 500 -- 500,000 times. I'm wondering  
22 if this is an example of why Canada needs to remain vigilant  
23 regarding the potential for future escalation against  
24 Canada's democratic processes by Russia?

25 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** If I can maybe add to  
26 that? I think the statement alludes to Canada's involvement,  
27 or Canada's view or position in regards to Russia Ukraine  
28 war, certainly has happened after the last election, and so



1 it's important for us to take that into account as we're  
2 looking at the next election. And so, foreign interference  
3 as it was mentioned, is something that doesn't take place in  
4 a specific moment, but is something that's planned, something  
5 that takes time to do, and for us to always remain vigilant.

6 I think there are -- you mentioned some media  
7 articles there, but it's always important for the federal  
8 government to be on the watch for anything in relation to  
9 foreign interference, particularly as the conflict continues  
10 between Russia and Ukraine.

11 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** All right. Thank you.

12 I used all my time, but I thank you for your  
13 answers.

14 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

15 Attorney General, do you have any questions?

16 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

17 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:**

18 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Ms. Chayer, I'm going to  
19 start with you. You were asked some questions about  
20 briefings to political parties in advance of byelections, and  
21 I believe you indicated that there was a briefing to  
22 political parties in advance of the byelections in June 2023  
23 that was held May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Did I hear that correctly?

24 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** Yes.

25 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Can you tell me which  
26 political parties were invited to that briefing?

27 **MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER:** The Green Party,  
28 the NDP, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the

1 People's Party and the Bloc Quebecois.

2 MS. RYANN ATKINS: And how were these parties  
3 invited?

4 MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER: The Deputy National  
5 Security Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister sent them  
6 an email on May 17 mentioning that we would reach out. I  
7 followed up with an email on the 25th and a calendar invite  
8 on the 26th.

9 MS. RYANN ATKINS: How many and which  
10 political Parties accepted that invite?

11 MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER: They all attended.  
12 They all accepted the invite and attended.

13 MS. RYANN ATKINS: There was some suggestion  
14 that the Conservative Party was not invited. Can you confirm  
15 to whom at the Conservative Party of Canada the invitation  
16 was sent?

17 MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER: Yes, it was sent to  
18 Executivedirector@conservative.ca. And the morning of the  
19 29th, the Executive Director's EA confirmed participation.

20 MS. RYANN ATKINS: And did anyone log in to  
21 the meeting from that account?

22 MS. MARIE-HÉLÈNE CHAYER: Yes.

23 MS. RYANN ATKINS: Okay. Mr. Eldebs, I want  
24 to speak to you on the same subject, but this time with  
25 respect to the byelections that took place in 2024, starting  
26 with the byelections in March 2024.

27 Was there a SITE briefing to political  
28 Parties in respect of that byelection?

1                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes.

2                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** When did that take place?

3                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Shortly before the  
4 byelection. I don't have the exact dates. I apologize.

5                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Fair enough.

6                   Were the same Parties invited as what Ms.  
7 Chayer indicated?

8                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes. For certain  
9 byelections, for example Durham, we didn't the Bloc because  
10 they were not taking part in that byelection.

11                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Can you confirm to whom at  
12 the Conservative Party the invitations were sent for this  
13 byelection?

14                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** It was sent, as I  
15 mentioned, to -- previously, it was sent to three  
16 individuals, particularly someone called Stephen Barber,  
17 someone called Matthew Conway and someone called Christina  
18 Mitas.

19                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** And if the Party wanted to  
20 indicate a different representative, was there a way for them  
21 to signal that to you?

22                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** As any other meeting, yes,  
23 it would have -- they would be able to, yes.

24                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** How many and which  
25 political Parties accepted the invitation to that briefing?

26                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Only one Party accepted,  
27 the NDP.

28                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** And as far as you could

1 tell from the users who logged in, which Parties attended  
2 that briefing?

3 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Only the NDP.

4 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Finally, with respect to  
5 the byelections most recently held in June 2024, was there a  
6 SITE briefing to Parties?

7 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes.

8 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** And were the same Parties  
9 invited?

10 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Yes, they were.

11 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** How many accepted?

12 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** And only the NDP accepted  
13 as well.

14 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** And as far as you can  
15 tell, how many attended?

16 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** Only the NDP.

17 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Okay. We've heard a lot  
18 about these special structures that have been stood up during  
19 byelections and during General Elections, specifically SITE  
20 and, in the General Elections, the Panel of Five. Can I ask  
21 the panel to speak to what measures, if any, are set up to  
22 monitor and respond to foreign interference in between  
23 election periods?

24 Maybe I'll start with Ms. Walshe.

25 **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:** Absolutely.

26 So -- and it came up a few times in the  
27 discussion already that we have a governance structure that'  
28 supports the discussion and action on intelligence no matter

1       what the issue.

2                       And so in particular when I think to foreign  
3       interference, a lot of those bodies that both -- both look at  
4       the intelligence to sort of understand and have clear  
5       indications on how to act are the National Security -- the  
6       ADM NSOPS tactical meeting, the DM Committee on Intelligence  
7       Response -- sorry -- and, really, that's a space where the  
8       information is brought together where assessments are  
9       discussed and where how to take action, whether there is the  
10      SITE structure in place and whether we're in a writ period to  
11      recommend options and to discuss not just how we move forward  
12      to address that intelligence, but also to circle back and  
13      understand how it was addressed and any follow-up steps that  
14      may need to be taken.

15                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:**   And how are these  
16      processes working right now?

17                   **MS. BRIDGET WALSHE:**   I can't speak to right  
18      now given that I've recently left the Privy Council Office  
19      but, at the same time, I can say up until this summer working  
20      quite smoothly.

21                   And I can speak to the fact that since the  
22      DMCIR, the DM Committee on Intelligence Response, was stood  
23      up, there was a lot of maturity and adaption that happened as  
24      we went through the processes we were using and really sat  
25      down and said what's an efficient, effective way to make sure  
26      that everybody had the information they needed, were well  
27      informed, and that were really good discussions happening at  
28      the Deputy Minister level on foreign interference.

1                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** If I could just add to  
2                   that -- it's still working well even after Bridget left. But  
3                   I wanted to add as well that there's an ADM Committee on  
4                   Election Security that I co-chair with Elections Canada as  
5                   well, and that committee is always standing, too. It's not  
6                   just -- you know, it gets more frequent as we approach a  
7                   byelection or the General Election, but it's continuously  
8                   held.

9                   And also, SITE Task Force appears there as  
10                  well and talks about some of their findings, some of that  
11                  work as well so that Elections Canada is also aware of what's  
12                  happening.

13                 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** I want to turn to a  
14                  different subject now and briefly talk about classified  
15                  briefings to external parties, whether it's a parliamentarian  
16                  or a Party leader. And we've heard a concern that receiving  
17                  classified briefings might not be helpful if the information  
18                  cannot be shared or used.

19                 Mr. Eldebs, what can or does S&I do to assist  
20                  recipients of this information act on the intelligence that  
21                  they receive?

22                 **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I think there -- the idea  
23                  that intelligence, you know, at this most classified level  
24                  can't be used or shared is something that we're certainly  
25                  working on with a view that it can be shared to those who are  
26                  cleared and have a need to know as well as working with them  
27                  and identifying, for example, a form of words or actions that  
28                  they can take that will not jeopardize the source or methods

1       that the intelligence collected.

2                   I was asked about, you know, security  
3       clearances before and I mentioned that Mr. Ian Todd, for  
4       example, has obtained a security -- top secret security  
5       clearance from the Conservative Party. The same for Mr.  
6       Jasmeet Singh and the same with Ms. Elizabeth May, who have  
7       obtained top secret security clearances. And if there's a  
8       need for them to do something or say something that  
9       intelligence, we're able to work with them to identify  
10      specific form of words that they can mention publicly or talk  
11      about in a more public setting.

12                   **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** You also spoke briefly  
13      about a table that's been stood up to share information with  
14      provinces and territories.

15                   Can you just speak to the purpose of that  
16      table and why there's an interest in sharing information with  
17      provinces and territories instead of the federal government  
18      doing it all on its own?

19                   **MR. NABIH ELDEBS:** I don't think anybody can  
20      do it all on its own. I think a lot of the issues -- not  
21      just foreign interference. Foreign interference is something  
22      that we mentioned happens at the municipal level, happens at  
23      the provincial level and happens at the federal level, but  
24      also happens with society. It happens with -- in the  
25      business sector. It happens with Indigenous communities.  
26      And so the idea of bringing all of these -- of that table  
27      together to talk about national security issues is to raise  
28      awareness, build resiliency within the system and ensure that

1 we're all operating on the same page to protecting Canada and  
2 Canadians.

3 But I want to say it's not just foreign  
4 interference. It's all the threats from a national security  
5 perspective. We need to take a whole of society approach,  
6 whether it's violent extremism, foreign interference, cyber  
7 security. Everybody has a role to play and we want to make  
8 sure that we're building that resilience in the system to  
9 ensure that Canada continues to be protected.

10 **MS. LISA DUCHARME:** I'd like to briefly add  
11 on to that that there's been a lot of internal reflection on  
12 the intelligence assessment community since the work of the  
13 Commission has started and since the NSICOP Report that we  
14 need to do a better job of writing at lower levels and  
15 unclassified levels to increase the level of intelligence  
16 literacy and culture and also to support our communications  
17 offices with having more discussions on national security  
18 issues with the government. So we've continued this, and we  
19 continue to work forward on that.

20 **MS. RYANN ATKINS:** Thank you. Those are my  
21 questions.

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

23 Any questions in re-examination?

24 **MS. LEILA GHAAHARRY:** No, thank you, Madam  
25 Commissioner.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So thank you very much  
27 for your time and for sharing with us your experience.

28 We'll break for lunch. We'll come back at



1 1:20.

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

4 The sitting of the Commission is now in  
5 recess until 1:20 p.m. Cette séance de la commission est  
6 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 13 h 20.

7 --- Upon recessing at 12:02 p.m./

8 --- La séance est suspendue à 12 h 02

9 --- Upon resuming at 1:20 p.m.

10 --- L'audience reprend à 13 h 20

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

13 The sitting of the Foreign Interference  
14 Commission is now in session. Cette séance de la Commission  
15 sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en session.

16 The time is 1:20 p.m. Il est 13 h 20.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So good afternoon. Bon  
18 après-midi. Alors, before we begin this afternoon, I would  
19 like to provide an update on the status of the Commission's  
20 discussion with the Government of Canada regarding the  
21 Commission's access to information subject to Cabinet  
22 confidence.

23 In setting its terms of reference, the  
24 Government agreed to provide the Commission with access to  
25 four Memoranda to Cabinet that had previously been provided  
26 to the Independent Special Rapporteur on Foreign  
27 Interference.

28 Following extensive discussion with

1 Commission counsel, the Government has consented to the  
2 public disclosure of summaries of these MCs. The Government  
3 has also twice expanded the Commission's access to  
4 information, subject to Cabinet confidence: first in respect  
5 of certain operational documents that were prepared and used  
6 by national security officials to brief Cabinet or its  
7 committees; and second, to provide access to further MCs that  
8 I have identified as being critical to the Commission's work.

9 The extraordinary degree of access by the  
10 Commission to both classified information and information  
11 subject to Cabinet confidence is unprecedented and reflects  
12 the importance of the Inquiry's work. This information will  
13 assist me in developing recommendations that will help to  
14 preserve the integrity of Canada's electoral processes and  
15 democratic institutions and enhance Canadians' trust and  
16 confidence in their democracy.

17 And I understand that Ms. Chaudhury will  
18 enter the four summaries of the Memoranda to Cabinet right  
19 before we begin with the next witnesses and right after I  
20 would have repeated the same thing in French.

21 Alors, avant qu'on commence, j'aimerais faire  
22 le point sur l'état des discussions entre la Commission et le  
23 gouvernement du cabi... du Canada, pardon, concernant l'accès  
24 de la Commission à des documents confidentiels du Cabinet.

25 Lors de l'élaboration de son mandat, le  
26 gouvernement a accepté de donner à la Commission accès à  
27 quatre mémoires au Cabinet qui avaient été précédemment  
28 fournis au Rapporteur spécial indépendant sur l'ingérence

1       étrangère. Alors, après des discussions approfondies avec  
2       les avocats de la Commission, le gouvernement a consenti à ce  
3       que des résumés de ces mémoires au Cabinet soient divulgués.

4               Le gouvernement a également élargi à deux  
5       reprises l'accès de la Commission aux documents confidentiels  
6       du Cabinet, d'abord en ce qui concerne certains documents  
7       opérationnels qui ont été préparés et utilisés par des  
8       responsables de la sécurité nationale pour informer le  
9       Cabinet ou ses comités, et d'autre part, afin de permettre  
10      l'accès à d'autres mémoires au Cabinet que j'ai identifiés  
11      comme étant essentiels aux travaux de la Commission.

12             L'étendue de l'accès accordé à la Commission  
13      à des informations classifiées et à des documents  
14      confidentiels du Cabinet est sans précédent et reflète  
15      l'importance des travaux de la Commission. Ces informations  
16      m'aideront à formuler des recommandations qui contribueront à  
17      préserver l'intégrité des processus électoraux et des  
18      institutions démocratiques du Canada et à renforcer la  
19      confiance des Canadiennes et des Canadiens dans leur  
20      démocratie.

21             Je comprends que Maître Chaudhury va produire  
22      en preuve les quatre résumés des mémoires au Cabinet dès  
23      maintenant, en fait. Merci.

24             **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Parfait. Merci,  
25      Madame la Commissaire.

26             I'll just read the doc IDs and the titles  
27      into the record so as to make the summaries available  
28      evidence.

1                   So beginning COM.SUM1.EN: *Summary of a*  
 2                   *Memorandum to Cabinet: Protecting Canada's Democracy,*  
 3                   *Securing the 2019 General Election, and Beyond.*

4                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000001.EN:**

5                               Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet -  
 6                               Protecting Canada's Democracy:  
 7                               Securing the 2019 General Election  
 8                               and Beyond

9                   **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** En français, c'est  
 10                   COM.SUM1.FR, *Résumé de mémoire au Cabinet : Protéger la*  
 11                   *démocratie du Canada, assurer l'intégrité de l'élection*  
 12                   *générale de 2019 et des élections ultérieures.*

13                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000001.FR:**

14                               Résumé d'un mémoire au Cabinet -  
 15                               Protéger la démocratie du Canada :  
 16                               assurer l'intégrité de l'élection  
 17                               générale de 2019 et des élections  
 18                               ultérieures

19                   **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Next, COM.SUM2.EN:  
 20                   *Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet: Protecting Canada's*  
 21                   *Democracy, Rising to an Evolving Challenge.*

22                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000002.EN:**

23                               Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet -  
 24                               Protecting Canada's Democracy: Rising  
 25                               to an Evolving Challenge

26                   **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** COM.SUM2.FR, *Résumé*  
 27                   *de mémoire au Cabinet : Protéger la démocratie au Canada,*  
 28                   *relever un défi en constante évolution.*

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000002.FR:**

Résumé d'un mémoire au Cabinet -  
Protéger la démocratie au Canada :  
relever un défi en constante  
évolution

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Next, COM.SUM3.EN:  
*Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet: Cabinet Directive on the  
Critical Election Incident Public Protocol.*

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000003.EN:**

Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet -  
Cabinet Directive on the Critical  
Election Incident Public Protocol

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** COM.SUM3.FR, *Résumé  
de mémoire au Cabinet : Directive du Cabinet sur le protocole  
public en cas d'incident électoral majeur.*

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000003.FR:**

Résumé d'un mémoire au Cabinet -  
Directive du Cabinet sur le Protocole  
public en cas d'incident électoral  
majeur

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fourth, COM.SUM4.EN:  
*Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet: Modernizing Canada's  
Approach to Addressing Threats from Hostile Activities by  
State Actors.*

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000004.EN:**

Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet -  
Modernizing Canada's Approach to  
Addressing Threats from Hostile

Activities by State Actors

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** COM.SUM4.FR, *Résumé de mémoire au Cabinet : Moderniser l'approche adoptée par le Canada pour faire face aux menaces posées par les activités hostiles parrainées par des états.*

**--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM.SUM0000004.FR:**

Résumé d'un mémoire au Cabinet -  
Moderniser l'approche du Canada  
adoptée par le Canada pour faire face  
aux menaces posées par les activités  
hostiles parrainées par des états

**Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

**COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci.

Bonjour. Alors, c'est vous cet après-midi.  
Vous pouvez débiter.

**Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Donc, Jean-Philippe MacKay, pour la Commission. On peut commencer par l'assermentation des témoins.

**THE REGISTRAR:** All right. So I'll start with Ms. Awad.

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

**MS. AMY AWAD:** Amy Awad, A-W-A-D.

**THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you. Now for the affirmation.

**--- MS. AMY AWAD, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:**

**THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

Now I'll go on to Mr. Ripley.

1                   Mr. Ripley, could you please state your full  
2 name and then spell your last name for the record?

3                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Thomas Owen Ripley.  
4 R-I-P-L-E-Y.

5                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you. Now for the  
6 affirmation.

7 --- MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY, Affirmed/Sous affirmation  
8 solennelle:

9                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you.  
10 And, finally, avec Madame Mondou. Donc,  
11 pourriez-vous s'il vous plaît indiquer votre nom complet et  
12 épeler votre nom de famille pour la transcription  
13 sténographique?

14                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Isabelle Mondou, M-O-N-  
15 D-O-U.

16                   **LE GREFFIER:** Parfait, merci.  
17 --- Mme ISABELLE MONDOU, Affirmed/Sous affirmation  
18 solennelle:

19                   **LE GREFFIER:** Merci. Maître, vous pouvez  
20 procéder.

21 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN-CHEF PAR  
22 Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:

23                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So I'll begin with  
24 the usual housekeeping. We have a series of documents to  
25 file. I'll begin with the interview summary for Madam Mondou  
26 and Ms. Awad.

27                   The document is WIT98. We can pull up the  
28 English version, please.

Résumé d'interrogatoire à huis clos :  
Isabelle Mondou, sous-ministre du



Patrimoine Canadien

**Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** La version originale en français qui apparaît à l'écran, Madame Mondou, je vous pose la même question, est-ce que vous avez eu l'occasion de réviser le document avant votre témoignage aujourd'hui?

**Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui, j'ai eu l'occasion de réviser le document.

**Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Acceptez-vous que le document tel quel fasse partie de votre preuve?

**Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument.

**Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Parfait. Et la version anglaise suivra, Madame la Commissaire, incessamment.

The next witness summary is the WIT131. We have the English version, the original version. This is the interview summary for you, Mr. Ripley. Interview that we conducted with you on September 12<sup>th</sup> of this year. Did you have the occasion to review the document before your appearance today, Mr. Ripley?

**MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I did.

**MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Do you accept that this summary be part of your evidence before the Commission?

**MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I do.

**MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Thank you.

**--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO WIT0000131:**

Interview Summary: Owen Ripley

**--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO WIT0000131.FR:**

Résumé d'entrevue : Owen Ripley

1                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et dernièrement, on  
2 peut mettre à l'écran CAN.DOC34.

3                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.000034:**

4                   Public Inquiry into Foreign  
5                   Interference - Institutional Report -  
6                   Canadian Heritage

7                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Madame Mondou, je  
8 vais vous poser la question puisque vous êtes la... en  
9 hiérarchie, vous êtes la plus élevée du ministère du  
10 Patrimoine canadien ici. Rapport institutionnel en version  
11 anglaise - la version française se termine par 35, on va la  
12 déposer également - vous avez eu l'occasion, Madame Mondou,  
13 de prendre connaissance de ce document avant votre témoignage  
14 aujourd'hui?

15                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui, effectivement.

16                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et vous acceptez  
17 que, au nom du ministère du Patrimoine canadien, que ces  
18 documents... en fait, la version française et la version  
19 anglaise du résu... du rapport institutionnel fasse partie de  
20 la preuve du gouvernement devant la Commission?

21                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Certainement.

22                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Parfait. Donc, la  
23 version anglaise, CAN.DOC35... there's no need... la version  
24 française, CAN.DOC35, est également déposée; il n'est pas  
25 nécessaire de le mettre à l'écran.

26                   **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC.000035:**

27                   Enquête Publique sur l'ingérence  
28                   Étrangère - Rapport Institutionnel -

1 Patrimoine Canadien

2 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** My first question  
3 for you is can you, by way of background, present your roles  
4 and functions within the Department of Heritage?

5 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Thank you for the  
6 question. So I'm the Deputy Minister of the Department, and  
7 as such, I'm responsible to manage the Department, and also  
8 for supporting six Ministers. At the time, we had five, but  
9 now it's six Ministers.

10 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And I'm Associate  
11 Assistant Deputy Minister in our Cultural Affairs Sector,  
12 which is one of the sectors of the Department with  
13 responsibilities for art, culture, media, export, and  
14 legislative policy, and my role deals primarily with  
15 advancing the Department's legislative priority issues in the  
16 space of media information, broadcasting, news, and online  
17 harms.

18 **Mme AMY AWAD:** Je suis la directrice générale  
19 des Cadres de politiques numériques et créatifs et je  
20 travaille avec monsieur Ripley sur les projets de loi et  
21 réglementaires liés à la culture.

22 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et avant de  
23 poursuivre, je vais vous inviter... j'ai moi-même commis la  
24 faute de parler très rapidement. Donc, il y a de  
25 l'interprétation en simultané et je vous demanderais, lorsque  
26 vous répondez à mes questions, d'essayer de répondre assez  
27 lentement pour que l'interprétation puisse se faire de  
28 manière complète.

1                   Question pour vous, Madame Mondou. Le  
2   ministère du Patrimoine canadien, pouvez-vous nous expliquer  
3   en fait quelle est sa mission et quel est le mandat de la  
4   ministre du Patrimoine canadien?

5                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Avec plaisir. Donc, le  
6   ministère du Patrimoine canadien tient son mandat de la Loi  
7   correspondante et touche plusieurs éléments, mais l'élément  
8   commun entre tous les mandats, c'est vraiment de supporter  
9   l'identité canadienne. Donc, que ce soit dans le support de  
10  la culture, du patrimoine, du multiculturalisme, des langues  
11  officielles ou du sport, l'élément commun, c'est que ce sont  
12  tous des éléments qui touchent directement l'identité  
13  canadienne. Et donc, le ministère a la responsabilité de  
14  supporter ces secteurs et de s'assurer que tous les Canadiens  
15  ont accès aux programmes que le ministère offre.

16                  **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et plus précisément  
17  en matière de support ou de politiques en lien avec les  
18  médias, pouvez-vous simple... brièvement nous expliquer quel  
19  est le rôle du ministère? Et nous y viendrons un peu plus en  
20  détail, mais simplement de manière générale pour l'instant.

21                  **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument. Donc,  
22  depuis plusieurs années, le ministère supporte un écosystème  
23  de nouvelles et aussi d'informations diversifiées à travers  
24  différents programmes, comme le programme de support aux  
25  périodiques. Et plus récemment, avec la crise des médias, le  
26  ministère a vu son intervention augmenter pour supporter un  
27  écosystème qui est vraiment en transformation. Alors, avec  
28  une série de programmes dont on discutera plus tard. Et

1 évidemment, si on parle de la ministre de Patrimoine  
2 canadien, à l'intérieur de son portefeuille, il y a aussi  
3 notre diffuseur public, Radio-Canada/CBC, qui est  
4 effectivement un joueur important au niveau des nouvelles à  
5 travers tout le pays.

6 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Et j'ajouterais aussi  
7 qu'il y a certains cadres politiques ou cadres législatifs  
8 qui sont à l'appui des médias aussi, notamment la *Loi sur la*  
9 *radiodiffusion* et la *Loi sur les nouvelles en ligne*.

10 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Parfait.

11 Nous y viendrons un peu plus tard dans les  
12 questions de manière détaillée.

13 Toujours à titre introductif, pouvez-vous  
14 nous expliquer si le ministère du Patrimoine canadien a un  
15 rôle en lien avec l'ingérence étrangère? Donc, c'est une  
16 question très générale...

17 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

18 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** ... mais je vous  
19 inviterais simplement... de quelle manière le... votre ministère  
20 a un rôle à jouer en lien avec ce dossier, si je peux dire?

21 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** La façon dont je le  
22 vois et, vraiment, c'est que l'interférence étrangère peut  
23 toucher tous les Canadiens, et notre rôle ici, c'est d'offrir  
24 un écosystème en santé. Donc, avec le support aux médias,  
25 comme je l'ai mentionné, avec des secteurs culturels, qui  
26 permettent l'émergence de différentes voix et avec un support  
27 au multiculturalisme qui, là aussi, permet l'émergence de  
28 différentes voix.

1                   On est un peu dans un triangle. Donc, ici,  
2           en haut du triangle, on voit un écosystème au Canada qui  
3           supporte la démocratie avec ses efforts et ses initiatives.  
4           Et où l'identité canadienne se situe aussi, c'est qu'une  
5           identité canadienne qui est bien vécue par les gens au  
6           Canada, je pense que c'est une défense aussi contre  
7           l'interférence étrangère. Donc, on voit ici le rôle du  
8           ministère.

9                   Et plus on se rapproche, et on va parler, je  
10          pense, aussi beaucoup aujourd'hui d'autres programmes qu'on a  
11          mis sur pied pour combattre la désinformation, la  
12          mésinformation, on se rapproche du bout de la pyramide où,  
13          probablement, il y a des instruments qui vont nous aider  
14          aussi à rendre les citoyens plus résilients par rapport à  
15          l'interférence étrangère.

16                  Et finalement, au bout de la pyramide, ici,  
17          il y a des dossiers où on va faire des interventions plus  
18          spéciales qui sont peut-être plus directement liées à  
19          l'interférence.

20                  Mais je crois fondamentalement que tous ces  
21          éléments-là sont nécessaires dans la lutte pour  
22          l'interférence, même si le but de ces programmes-là est  
23          beaucoup plus large que l'interférence étrangère.

24                  **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Simplement pour  
25          bien situer le travail concrètement que votre ministère fait  
26          au quotidien, je crois que c'est important de... peut-être  
27          d'expliquer pour le bénéfice de Madame la Commissaire et pour  
28          le public de quelle manière votre ministère agit

1 concrètement? De quelle manière l'action du ministère se  
2 déploie?

3 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument. Je dirais  
4 qu'il y a deux façons principales d'intervention. Donc, j'ai  
5 mentionné, évidemment, que nous avons des programmes. Alors,  
6 par programme, ce que je veux dire, c'est qu'on a des  
7 différentes initiatives où on investit dans la culture, les  
8 arts, le patrimoine, mais aussi dans un écosystème de médias  
9 pour essayer de supporter un écosystème qui est vibrant et  
10 qui supporte notre démocratie.

11 Mon collègue a mentionné aussi qu'on a des  
12 instruments législatifs et règlementaires qui sont une autre  
13 forme d'outil pour intervenir dans cet espace-là. Le Canada  
14 a une longue tradition de défendre l'identité canadienne avec  
15 des instruments comme la *Loi sur la radiodiffusion*, la *Loi*  
16 *sur les droits d'auteur* et, plus récemment, avec des  
17 nouvelles initiatives comme la *Loi sur les nouvelles en ligne*  
18 et, finalement, la loi sur la haine, en fait, les préjudices  
19 en ligne.

20 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et avant d'aborder  
21 la question ou le programme plus spécifique de l'Initiative  
22 de citoyenneté numérique...

23 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

24 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** *Digital Citizen*  
25 *Initiative.*

26 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

27 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** J'aimerais vous  
28 entendre sur cette idée qu'on voit dans les résumés

1 d'entrevue et dans votre rapport institutionnel, cette idée  
2 de résilience citoyenne – citizen resilience. J'aimerais vous  
3 entendre, en fait, quelle est la conception que vous avez,  
4 que vous mettez en œuvre de cette idée de résilience  
5 citoyenne?

6 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** En fait, on a vu dans  
7 les dernières années – depuis 2018, je pense que ç'a pris de  
8 l'ampleur, c'est certainement le temps depuis lequel le  
9 ministère est impliqué – que les gens sont inondés  
10 d'informations, que l'information arrive de sources qui  
11 étaient peut-être des nouvelles sources par rapport aux  
12 sources traditionnelles de journaux, et cetera, et donc, on  
13 essaie de voir comment on peut assister les citoyens, sans  
14 intervenir directement parce que le gouvernement ne veut pas  
15 dire aux gens évidemment qu'est-ce qu'ils devraient lire,  
16 écouter, et cetera, mais de trouver des instruments pour  
17 aider les citoyens à naviguer à travers cet écosystème-là qui  
18 est de plus en plus complexe.

19 Donc, un des programmes qu'on va discuter  
20 aujourd'hui, c'est d'essayer d'établir par le mot  
21 « résilience » des outils, des façons de faire, de  
22 l'éducation pour équiper les citoyens à faire des bons choix,  
23 les choix qu'ils désirent avec toute l'information qu'ils  
24 peuvent avoir, et avec peut-être des pistes et des outils qui  
25 peuvent les aider justement dans cette détermination-là.

26 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et sujet, bon,  
27 évidemment on parle... on va parler plus spécifiquement de la  
28 question de la désinforma...



1                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

2                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** ...de la  
3                   désinformation et de la mésinformation, et tout simplement...  
4                   on pourra revenir plus tard sur les partenariats ou les  
5                   discussions au niveau international, mais tout simplement à  
6                   titre introductif, est-ce qu'il y a des sociétés ou des pays  
7                   à travers le monde vers lesquels le Canada peut se tourner  
8                   pour trouver de l'inspiration, donc des sociétés où cette  
9                   idée de résilience est mise en œuvre et fonctionne?

10                  **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Je vais donner quelques  
11                  éléments avant de me tourner vers mon collègue. C'est  
12                  vraiment important parce qu'on a vraiment continué dans les  
13                  dernières années à rechercher les meilleures solutions avec  
14                  tous les partenaires, Europe, États-Unis, Australie,  
15                  Nouvelle-Zélande, et cetera, et ce qui est ressorti de nos  
16                  partenariats, c'est qu'il y a des solutions communes, même si  
17                  ça prend des formes différentes.

18                  Alors, un élément, c'est évidemment, comme je  
19                  l'ai mentionné, d'essayer de donner des outils aux gens, de  
20                  donner de l'éducation, mais il y a aussi la diversité des  
21                  voix. Une façon d'assurer la résilience des gens aussi, c'est  
22                  qu'ils aient différentes sources d'information et qu'ils  
23                  peuvent donc faire leurs propres analyses à travers d'une  
24                  diversité de voix.

25                  Donc, c'est une autre chose sur laquelle on a  
26                  travaillé avec les collègues. Je dirais que les pays qu'on a  
27                  mentionnés se posent tous ces questions-là et ont tous des  
28                  initiatives, soit règlementaires, soit programmatiques dans

1       cet espace-là.

2                       Mais je vais peut-être me tourner vers mon  
3       collègue Owen pour vous parler de quelques exemples qui nous  
4       ont inspirés plus particulièrement.

5                       **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:**   So the example that  
6       is frequently cited is Finland as a country that has and is  
7       recognized for a very high degree of media and digital  
8       literacy in its population. Finland is a country that  
9       borders Russia, and, as a result of that, is frequently  
10      subject to Russian disinformation circulating in the media  
11      and information ecosystem in Finland. And so what we have  
12      seen over many years is that Finland has invested in really  
13      equipping its population from very early on in the education  
14      system as they grow up through the education system and then  
15      into adulthood with skills for being able to assess the  
16      quality of information. And we've seen in recent years, in  
17      the context of the pandemic, they've made additional  
18      investments about really trying to train their citizens to be  
19      able to detect when information has been altered, that there  
20      is something suspicious about information and having that  
21      kind of attitude of curiosity to be able to kind of dig down  
22      and assess for themselves whether the information that they  
23      are being presented with is accurate. And so I think Finland  
24      in many contexts is recognized as having one of the highest  
25      degrees of digital media literacy in that respect  
26      internationally.

27                      Another example that sometimes comes up is  
28      Taiwan, and again, Taiwan is a -- is right on the border, as

1 we know, with China and faces that same kind of information  
2 space. And so, you know, these are examples that have come  
3 up. I think that it speaks to what we are trying to do  
4 through the Digital Citizenship Initiative in terms of  
5 understanding that, moving forward, the information space is  
6 going to remain complex. There is going to be varying  
7 degrees of information in it, including disinformation. And  
8 so in the long run, for Canadians to be able to make good  
9 decisions and be able to assess the decisions that they want  
10 to make with respect to their own lives, but also, in the  
11 democratic process it will be important that we collectively  
12 think about how best to teach those skills throughout their  
13 life from, again, I think, childhood through to adulthood.

14 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So I understood --

15 -

16 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I have a question, and  
17 I'm not sure you'll be able to answer it, so just let me  
18 know, but do you know if these countries have noticed since  
19 they have built resilience within the population, whether  
20 they have noticed a decrease in the disinformation? What I  
21 have in mind is if you are not succeeding when you are doing  
22 some disinformation, it may be an inducement to do less  
23 disinformation, but do you know if there's any measures of --

24 -

25 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** The example that  
26 does come to mind that I think ---

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** M'hm.

28 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- in the case of

1 Finland, there was a state-sponsored media outlet, for  
2 example, I believe it was a Russian state-sponsored media  
3 outlet that in Finland chose to shut down because there was  
4 not kind of engagement from the Finnish population, for  
5 example, with that broadcaster. So it's an example, again.  
6 I think the answer to the question is that, you know, again,  
7 disinformation is going to be part of the space moving  
8 forward, so I'm not sure at a quantitative level whether the  
9 role kind of -- it will result in a decrease but, again, I  
10 think when you equip citizens in that way, it does certainly  
11 make the task for those seeking to spread disinformation more  
12 and more difficult, and I think, again, that's a good example  
13 of kind of them saying, okay, this isn't working because,  
14 again, the Finnish population is kind of seen through the  
15 type of propaganda that we're spreading.

16 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

17 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So we hear in your  
18 evidence that the state has a role to play to help citizens  
19 and to equip them with the necessary tools, but what are the  
20 limits or the constraints that exist on state intervention in  
21 the disinformation space?

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Thank you. That's a  
23 very important question because in Canada, obviously we live  
24 in the environment of the *Charter of Rights*, which protect  
25 freedom of expression, and it's very important that that is  
26 at the centre of everything we do. I will take the different  
27 type of intervention one at a time. When we talk about some  
28 of the legislation and regulation that we talk, we -- what we

1 did in those contexts is we set the frame and we stay very  
2 far from interfering with content, but we are really acting  
3 more into making a framework that is more susceptible to  
4 support this diversity advice that is so important. And in  
5 the case of one particular bill, to make sure that there is  
6 still a news ecosystem out there to be able to provide those  
7 different space. So in term of regulation, I think it's more  
8 creating the context in term of making those other voice  
9 successful and valid.

10 In the case of the funding program that we  
11 have, it's all a bit different, but I will say the principle  
12 have always been in the case of media to absolutely put the  
13 independence of media at the centre. So we never give  
14 directly in the media and picking media or anything like  
15 that.

16 In the context of the problem that we have  
17 with regard to digital literacy, we're working a lot through  
18 third-party. Why? Because first, it's not always the  
19 government who is better placed to have trusted tool because  
20 we are not seen always as trusted by some people in society.  
21 But more importantly, and as importantly, I should say, these  
22 organization, they work in the groundwork. They are civil  
23 society organization that have an ability to work with  
24 scientific but also with the community enough in and in a  
25 more trusted way. So what we do, frankly, is we try to  
26 foster an environment where there is researcher, where there  
27 is people who are interested in the subject and working on  
28 the subject, but we're really letting them do that direct

1 work because the last thing we want is to -- the government  
2 to be the truth teller in that space. And that's true for  
3 all our initiative, I would say.

4 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And before we move  
5 to the DCI, Digital Citizen Initiative, it is clear from the  
6 interview summaries and the institutional report that your  
7 department does not monitor the ecosystem, so that's not  
8 something that you do. So your intervention is at the level  
9 of policy, legislation, and the funding.

10 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** That's correct. What I  
11 will say, just to illustrate just what I say before is that  
12 we have found program, and I think you have a partner that  
13 have come to testify here, a partnership between McGill and  
14 University of Toronto where they are doing some observation.  
15 But we are funding this program; we have nothing to do with  
16 the management of the program.

17 So we feel that it's very important for civil  
18 society to develop this capacity. They have done it in Iraq  
19 and it's important that they have this objective scientific  
20 voice out there that is not the government. But we are a  
21 partner in the sense that we are funding those.

22 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So the Digital  
23 Citizen Initiative, could you please explain the -- what this  
24 program is? So a general overview, and then we will -- I'll  
25 ask some more detailed question about the program.

26 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will turn to my  
27 colleague.

28 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So thanks for the

1 question.

2                   So as my colleague said, the Digital Citizen  
3 Initiative is a funding program, an initiative in the  
4 department. It was created in 2019-2020 in advance of the  
5 2019 federal election. And the objective of the program is  
6 really to support and mobilize civil society and researchers  
7 around this phenomenon of dis- and misinformation, with a  
8 view to kind of equipping them to develop strategies, to  
9 develop tools to better equip citizens.

10                  And so the kind of philosophical underpinning  
11 of it, as Isabella alluded to, is that in the long run we  
12 will have a more resilient society, we will have more  
13 resilient citizens if we have a strong civil society response  
14 to this because it's not going to be -- it's not going to be  
15 feasible or practical for government to kind of have the  
16 complete solution to it. And so it's really being geared  
17 towards mobilizing, creating that community of practice here  
18 in Canada and supporting those civil society efforts.

19                  **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And by "Community  
20 of practice," what do you mean exactly?

21                  **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So I would -- a key  
22 turning point was the 2016 election in the United States; I  
23 think it was a key turning point in this space for many  
24 folks. It's really when this idea of fake news kind of hit  
25 the public consciousness. And what we observed at that time  
26 is following the 2016 US election, you really saw a strong  
27 mobilization of civil society in the United States; so  
28 philanthropic foundations, the tech sector really to kind of

1 start digging into this problem and thinking about what are  
2 strategies or solutions to better equip Americans to deal  
3 with this information space?

4 And so that was an observation we made and we  
5 observed that we have a number of really good civil society  
6 organizations who historically have been in the digital media  
7 literacy space, have been in the kind of education about  
8 democratic processes and value space. But there wasn't  
9 necessarily kind of the same cross-pollination happening here  
10 in Canada at the time, and so part of, again, the reason for  
11 bringing the program into place was to get those  
12 organizations to start mobilizing around this common issue  
13 that kind of touched on their areas of expertise and their  
14 mandates, with a view to really better understanding the  
15 phenomenon here in Canada.

16 So while fake news had kind of burst onto the  
17 public consciousness internationally, we didn't have a very  
18 good sense of how it was impacting Canada specifically, the  
19 differential impacts on certain segments of the population,  
20 whether that's English-speaking population, the French-  
21 speaking population, diasporan communities. And so the  
22 program was really designed to encourage researchers to  
23 better understand specifically what was happening here in  
24 Canada, and then to encourage civil society organizations to  
25 really start investing in tools and education in light of  
26 some of that research, and to get them to talk to each other  
27 and share those findings and those insights.

28 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** I'll invite Court



1 Operator to pull up CAN42656.

2 --- EXHIBIT NO./PIECE No. CAN042656 0001:

3 Addressing Harmful Content and  
4 Disinformation

5 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And we can go to  
6 page 3 of 11.

7 So we saw on the first page -- this is a  
8 document from 2022.

9 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

10 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And Mr. Ripley,  
11 you explained the *raison d'être*; you covered that already.  
12 And we see here an evolution of the program. Could you  
13 please explain briefly the evolution and where -- how the  
14 program evolved throughout the years since 2019, since its  
15 creation?

16 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Happy to.

17 So as I mentioned, the program was created in  
18 advance of the 2019 federal elections as part of the broader  
19 plan to protect democracy, headed by democratic institutions  
20 at the Privy Council Office. The creation of the program was  
21 one of the initiatives launched under the Citizens Resilience  
22 pillar, and those early projects, so approximately \$7 million  
23 was invested in advance of the 2019 federal election with a  
24 view to quicken citizens to potentially -- you know, who  
25 could potentially encounter disinformation in that electoral  
26 context.

27 The program was then established and set up  
28 and it involves doing a regular kind of call for proposals,

1       which is, again, really seeking to better understand kind of  
2       the phenomenon in Canada and how it evolved over the years.

3               And so some of that very early work was  
4       general diagnostic work to really understand and develop a  
5       bit of a Canadian base of research. But the program has  
6       proven remarkably flexible over the years and has actually  
7       been deployed at certain moments in response to basically  
8       disinformation events playing out in real time. And so  
9       relatively soon after the program was created, we found  
10      ourselves in the pandemic and so the program was actually  
11      deployed very early on in the pandemic, in light of the fact  
12      that the team was observing the rise of health mis- and  
13      disinformation; was observing the rise of disinformation  
14      targeting Canadians of Asian descent, and so very quickly got  
15      into the field supporting projects by civil society  
16      organizations in that context. There was a second batch of  
17      projects done in the context of the COVID pandemic.

18             Similarly in 2022, in light of the Russian  
19      invasion of Ukraine, the program also in response to a rise -  
20      - observed rise in Russian disinformation put out another  
21      special call for proposals, for example.

22             So the program what it's been able to do is  
23      kind of sustain this regular set of projects that seek to  
24      grow that evidence base. But at the same time has shown that  
25      it can, you know, respond quite quickly to something that's  
26      happening in real time and put projects out in the field and  
27      support of civil society organizations and researchers in  
28      that respect.

1 I would also highlight -- so, you know, I've  
2 spoken primarily about kind of projects that are funded by  
3 the department, but the program is broader in that it has  
4 supported a number of kind of key partnerships over the  
5 years. So, for example, it supported a longer-term project  
6 by the Public Policy Forum that actually gave rise to some of  
7 the work that you would have heard from the Media Ecosystem  
8 Observatory. It also has a current partnership, a three-year  
9 partnership with the Digital Media Research Network, for  
10 example.

11 And so, again, there have been some more kind  
12 of signature investments made along the way to support  
13 larger-scale projects, and so that partnership component is  
14 also an important part of the Digital Citizen Initiative.

15 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And we see on this  
16 document that -- well, it's a document from 2022. So could  
17 you please complete the picture? At the bottom of the page  
18 we see, "DCI currently set to sunset in 2022-2023." So what  
19 happened in 2022 and since then up until today?

20 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So we got an extension  
21 of the program in the fiscal update, IM 2022. And it's until  
22 2025, March 2025; the program is sunseting in March 2025,  
23 which include all the partnership that my colleague mention.

24 So obviously this is something that as a  
25 department we don't want to see happen because we really  
26 think that the program have been effective and efficient, and  
27 we have done evaluation of the program that support that. So  
28 we are going to recommend that the program be extended,

1 hopefully for a long period.

2 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** I'll get back to  
3 the budgetary aspect of the program, but before I do that,  
4 I'd like to pull up COMM.SUM1. We can put the English  
5 version.

6 This is a document that was just entered in  
7 evidence. It's a summary of the Memorandum to Cabinet for  
8 the initial plan to protect Canada's democracy.

9 And the question I have for you -- we can  
10 scroll down a little bit.

11 So it was mentioned earlier in your testimony  
12 that citizen resilience was a pillar of the program, so we  
13 see that in the middle of the page at four pillars:  
14 combatting foreign interference; promoting institutional  
15 resilience; building citizen resilience, and establish rules  
16 of the road for digital platforms.

17 We understand that your department is  
18 involved in the building citizen resilience aspect. And were  
19 you involved in the rules of the road for digital platforms  
20 or is this something that you are -- you're involved with the  
21 platforms, but from a different angle?

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will turn to my  
23 colleague who was there in 2019.

24 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I was.

25 So in this context, in the context of this  
26 MC, and I believe in the summary a little bit later on, it  
27 talks about negotiating kind of the protocol with social  
28 media platforms, the voluntary protocol around the elections.

1 So the reference to establishing rules of the road for  
2 digital platforms was in that context about seeking to  
3 negotiate that kind of voluntary agreement or protocol with  
4 them, and that work was led out of PCO Democratic  
5 Institutions Unit. for a long period.

6 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Thank you.

7 And now we can scroll down a little bit to  
8 the second page. And we see the third bullet:

9 "Canadian Heritage lead  
10 implementation of election-centric  
11 digital news and civil literacy  
12 programming in partnership with  
13 academic and civil society  
14 organizations as well as undertake  
15 research and engagement."

16 So I would like to start from there to -- for  
17 you to explain the evolution of the projects and the calls  
18 for proposal because we see in the MC that the initial  
19 intention was to have an election-centric program, but we can  
20 see and you can explain how broader the digital citizen  
21 initiative was implemented, so the -- it's not necessarily  
22 focused on election, but it's broader than that on the  
23 information ecosystem.

24 So I'd like you to explain the scope of the  
25 projects that the program funded.

26 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will turn to my  
27 colleague, and once again I just want to say to your point  
28 what was very interesting, I think, in 2019 is was this whole

1 government approach and why Canadian was add to some security  
2 agency and so on and so forth. And I think it's for two  
3 reasons.

4 Obviously, because we are some responsibility  
5 and some action in the space I described before, whether it's  
6 the media, diversity of culture and all of that, and also  
7 because of our work with civil society.

8 So that's kind of the impetus of why suddenly  
9 Canadian Heritage is showing in this list of partners.

10 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So as I mentioned,  
11 the program was created as part of this process. There was a  
12 decision made that the first wave of programming that was  
13 approximately \$7 million should be entirely dedicated to  
14 projects in an election context in advance of the 2019  
15 federal election.

16 So the department moved quite quickly in 2019  
17 -- end of 2018, 2019. We actually used existing programs at  
18 the Department of Canadian Heritage at the time to flow that  
19 money and fund those projects because we hadn't yet kind of  
20 built this new program and put the infrastructure in place.  
21 But the decision that was made was ultimately to create a  
22 program that was not solely focused on kind of the writ  
23 period in the elections context but, rather, to sustain that  
24 community of practice that I was describing to you on an  
25 ongoing basis in between elections as well.

26 And Amy, maybe you can just briefly describe  
27 some of the kind of more recent projects and work that we've  
28 been doing.

1                   **MS. AMY AWAD:** Absolutely.

2                   So over the years, there was five regular  
3 calls for proposal and the -- kind of the focus or the  
4 priorities through those proposals varied. At first it was  
5 very focused on understanding the kind of landscape in  
6 Canada, identifying gaps, trying to determine how to measure  
7 success in the area of digital media literacy. Later on, it  
8 became more focused with kind of responses specifically to  
9 events in Russia with a focus on AI, bots, behaviour  
10 responses, cognitive vulnerabilities and also kind of tools  
11 that would be focused on specific diaspora communities.

12                  In the fifth call, for example, there was a  
13 specific priority tied to disinformation spread by foreign  
14 states and examples of Russia and the PRC were cited in the  
15 call. And there was a couple of different projects that came  
16 from that that focused there specifically on, for example,  
17 Chinese sourced disinformation Canadian ecosystem.

18                  For example, one of them was about  
19 strengthening community resilience to foreign interference,  
20 and it was a research project by the Digital Public Square.  
21 And the focus there was to look at how specific transnational  
22 oppression campaigns or foreign influence disinformation from  
23 the PRC was impacting social inclusion in Canada and to  
24 conduct research activities and build tools and awareness,  
25 and those tools were eventually deployed in different  
26 languages within both kind of the general Canadian population  
27 and within certain diaspora communities.

28                  Another project that was funded in the fifth

1 call was called "Disinformation in Canadian Chinese language  
2 media". And this call -- this involved developing an open  
3 access AI tool that tracked disinformation narratives in both  
4 online and offline Chinese media available in Canada and make  
5 that data available to researchers and monitors across the  
6 country.

7 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And if I could just  
8 loop back to the spirit, maybe, of your question just to  
9 stress that, obviously, you know, the election context is a  
10 moment in time when disinformation can have a big impact on  
11 the democratic process but, again, the underpinning of the  
12 program, the philosophical underpinning is understanding that  
13 we've got to equip citizens at all times to be able to  
14 navigate this. And so it's not just kind of a one and done  
15 type intervention but, rather, we've got to sustain it.

16 And as Amy mentioned, we know that the  
17 tactics used by individuals or actors looking to spread  
18 disinformation continuously evolve, you know, to use of bots,  
19 now the use of AI. We know synthetic images, right. And so  
20 it's going to be necessary to continuously also equip  
21 citizens to deal with those new tactics.

22 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So I'd like to  
23 pull up CAN44734. CAN44734.

24 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN044734 0001:**

25 Digital Citizen Contribution Program

26 Call #5 Priorities

27 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** This is the  
28 memorandum to Minister St-Onge for the fifth call proposals



1 and with the list of priorities for her approval. And we can  
2 -- first, could you explain briefly how the process works for  
3 the identification of priorities?

4 **MS. AMY AWAD:** Absolutely.

5 So the program is structured internally where  
6 there's, I guess, a team of analysts that work on the  
7 program, but there's also a consultative body of different  
8 government departments and agencies that work on  
9 disinformation, and there's an external steering committee  
10 made up of researchers and civil society members.

11 So in order to determine the priorities of a  
12 particular call, the analysts will do their internal analysis  
13 first based on the information available, previous projects,  
14 public source information. They'll then consult those  
15 priorities with the government consultative body so that they  
16 get the input from all the different other parts in  
17 government that work on issues related to this information,  
18 also bring that for validation to the steering committee.  
19 And then once they've settled all those priorities, there's a  
20 process to seek approval for the Minister before launching  
21 the call.

22 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And when you  
23 mention that there's a consultation with other parts of  
24 government, who is consulted through that process?

25 **MS. AMY AWAD:** So it's a fairly large  
26 consultative body with it's like multiple -- multiple kind of  
27 groups within different government departments. Primarily  
28 there's different groups within Canadian Heritage that are

1       impacted, within Global Affairs Canada, within the Privy  
2       Council's Office, Democratic Institutions, within the  
3       different security agencies, so Public Safety, CSIS, CSE and  
4       so forth.

5                       We have in the past had other groups that  
6       continue to be part of that like Health Canada depending,  
7       again, on the topic of the calls.

8                       **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** And if I may, just  
9       behind the logic of that is also what my colleague was  
10      saying. The importance of this intervention is to really  
11      have a horizontal approach, and so we benefit not just from  
12      the priority and the project, but we benefit from the  
13      expertise of all these agencies who are somehow acting in  
14      that spaces, and same thing, obviously, with the expert in  
15      the field.

16                      So it was really essential for us to not do  
17      that just in our kind of own space, for to really pull  
18      together the expertise both internally and externally.

19                      **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And in practice,  
20      how does that work? The exchange of information, for  
21      example, we know -- this Commission knows well that agencies  
22      -- security and intelligence agencies collect -- assess  
23      intelligence. And we know from the interview that we  
24      conducted with you that you are not part of the security and  
25      intelligence community, but you are exposed, Madam Mondou,  
26      you're exposed to some intelligence through various  
27      committees, the Deputy Ministers Committees on which you sit,  
28      but that exchange concerning the development of priorities

1 for the program, how do you -- what kind of information do  
2 you receive from those agencies or departments that are --  
3 that have access to classified information? How does that  
4 translate in their exchange with you to inform the priorities  
5 of your program?

6 **MS. AMY AWAD:** So they are -- so the partner  
7 departments will all receive kind of full information from  
8 us, "These are the priorities, these are the reasons that  
9 we've identified them," and they'll have an opportunity to  
10 provide input. And they can do that at a level that's  
11 appropriate from a security perspective. So it could be to  
12 say, "We think that an additional priority could be  
13 considered on this issue," and if they have public  
14 information or information that we can access to explain why  
15 they'll provide it, and even if they don't, they can still  
16 suggest that priority and say, "We have information to think  
17 that this would be an important priority to consider," and  
18 then we'll have other members of the consultative body that  
19 can kind of validate that or kind of say, "Well, maybe  
20 there's a different priority."

21 So there is an opportunity, even without  
22 sharing, for example, top secret or highly classified  
23 information, to feed into our development of priorities.

24 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So we can go to  
25 the second page of this document, and we'll use the seventh  
26 priority as an example.

27 So this is -- Ms. Awad, this is the priority  
28 that you mentioned earlier. And there's a reference at the

1 bottom of the page that there was a consultation, or there's  
2 a support by Global Affairs Canada.

3 So the mention of Global Affairs Canada here,  
4 is that part of the work that you are doing in the  
5 consultative body?

6 **MS. AMY AWAD:** I don't think it is. So we  
7 also -- we would have also consulted with GAC as part of the  
8 consultative body, but once we decided to move forward with  
9 the recommendation that would specifically name the People's  
10 Republic of China, given the diplomatic considerations, we  
11 would have reconsulted with them to be able to properly brief  
12 the Minister on the implications of using that wording in the  
13 call.

14 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And we see right  
15 after the mention of Global Affairs that there's the seventh  
16 priority, and I quote from the document:

17 "The seventh priority also addresses  
18 a recommendation by the Special  
19 Committee on the Canada-People's  
20 Republic of China Relationship, which  
21 recommended that the Department 'take  
22 measures to counter the prevalence of  
23 People's Republic of China-influenced  
24 media in Canadian diaspora  
25 communities.'"

26 Could you please explain the incidence of  
27 that recommendation and how did you take on that  
28 recommendation to develop the priority?

1                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So maybe I will start  
2 in a general way. The report was tabled and normally the  
3 government presents a response to the report. In our  
4 response, we have relayed the fact that these recommendations  
5 were things that we were going to look into. The  
6 recommendations were for many departments, but there were a  
7 couple for Canadian Heritage.

8                   So what happens when Committee look at that,  
9 we see what we can do, and in that particular case, there was  
10 one recommendation that was essentially, without naming the  
11 program, saying you should use the digital literacy effort to  
12 really inform people better about the situation which related  
13 to the People's Republic of China. So in a sense, we were  
14 very much inspired by that report and by other information to  
15 move ahead with that specific recommendation.

16                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And the Government  
17 response noted that the Digital Citizen Initiative is a tool  
18 that the Department and the Government has specifically  
19 related to this recommendation. And so, you know, this would  
20 have been, as Amy mentioned, part of kind of the monitoring  
21 that the team would have done, and then it would have been  
22 validated again kind of in that interdepartmental group, but  
23 as well with kind of the steering committee, who is that kind  
24 of civil society cloche de son. So -- and I think if you go  
25 back and, you know, obviously if you put yourself at kind of  
26 that time, you know, this also is an issue that is  
27 increasingly, in terms of public consciousness, top of mind;  
28 right? And so it's an effort on the part of the program to

1 be topical and relevant to again the type of disinformation  
2 that has played out in real time in Canadian society.

3 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And just to fully  
4 understand the context of that, the mention of the report in  
5 this document, I'll ask Court Operator to pull up CCC34.  
6 This is the report of the Special Committee.

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CCC0000034:**

8 A Threat to Canadian Sovereignty:  
9 National Security Dimensions of the  
10 Canada-People's Republic of China  
11 Relationship

12 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And Madam  
13 Commissioner, the French version is also part of the record.  
14 It's COM614.

15 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM0000614:**

16 Une menace pour la souveraineté  
17 canadienne : les dimensions de la  
18 sécurité nationale de la relation  
19 entre le Canada et la République  
20 populaire de Chine

21 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** We can go to page  
22 44 of the document. It's page 58 of the PDF.

23 So this is just a section where there's a  
24 discussion of the control the PRC has on some media in  
25 Canada. There is growing problem that described in this  
26 report.

27 And then we can go to page 48 of the  
28 document. It's PDF 62. Yeah, just one page above. Page 62.

1 We can scroll up a little bit.

2 So we have the recommendation number 12,  
3 which continues on the second page.

4 So this is the recommendation that is  
5 referred to -- well, there's a small portion of the  
6 recommendation that's referred to in the memo to the  
7 Minister.

8 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** That's correct.

9 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So is this an  
10 example of an issue that is being raised in a report and then  
11 there's the government response, as far as Heritage is  
12 concerned, that is taking shape into the form of a call for  
13 proposal, you're looking for a special project in relation to  
14 that issue?

15 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will say we always  
16 take, obviously, the Committee to put a lot of effort into  
17 studying this issue. So we will always put a lot of weight  
18 into Parliamentary Committees, and that also happened to be  
19 something that we had observed through other means. So it  
20 kind of comes from different sources, but for sure that was  
21 an important piece of the call to action.

22 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And Ms. Awad, you  
23 already mentioned that there's one project that addresses  
24 specifically -- one project that was retained by your program  
25 that addresses specifically this -- the -- not necessarily  
26 this recommendation, but the seventh priority in the  
27 memorandum to the Minister?

28 **MS. AMY AWAD:** That's right. There's two

1 actually. One of them that looks specifically at Chinese  
2 language media in Canada in all its forms, and another one  
3 which is building and deploying tools.

4 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Okay. So we can  
5 remove this document from the screen.

6 So just to wrap up on the projects that you  
7 funded, do you have a number of -- the number of projects  
8 that were funded -- supported by the DCI since its creation?

9 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Yes. So there is more  
10 than 142 programs that have been funded to the amount of  
11 about 31 million.

12 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And as one of  
13 these projects, the Canadian Digital Research Network, CDMRN,  
14 I will use the acronym because otherwise I'll get -- I'll  
15 confuse the different components. So the CDMRN is one of the  
16 projects that received funding from the Digital Citizen  
17 Initiative. And we heard evidence last week -- two weeks  
18 ago, actually, from the Media Ecosystem Observatory about the  
19 CDMRN and we heard that, like, some issues were raised as  
20 part of the testimonies of the representative of the MEO.  
21 One issue is the -- what was described as a lack of  
22 structural and stable funding to support work of constant  
23 monitoring of the media ecosystem, the kind of monitoring and  
24 data analysis that was described during this testimony.

25 And I'd like you to explain the structure and  
26 how it works, not necessarily the administrative detail, but  
27 for when a project is funded, so project, for, like, a  
28 shorter period of time or a longer period of time, for the



1 renewal and what was described as an issue of stable funding.  
2 Could you please address this issue that was raised as part  
3 of the ---

4 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Maybe we'll take it as  
5 general and I'm sure Owen or Amy will want to add. Obviously  
6 as we have talked, our old program got renewed at some point,  
7 so obviously our authority and money can extend for a project  
8 beyond our own authority and our own money, so that goes kind  
9 of together.

10 But obviously in the description, there is  
11 some partnerships that have been more longstanding than  
12 others, depending on some projects and all of that. So it  
13 varies very much by the nature of the partnership, the  
14 project. We are also still, I will say, in the beginning of  
15 that program. So at the beginning there was a lot of  
16 experimentation, still is and will continue to be, so some  
17 projects will be more long life because they have proved  
18 their value. Others may finish just because they have not  
19 proved to be as efficient as we were hoping for.

20 The one you described, I think we have a  
21 similar system in Europe where they have a found observatory,  
22 and we really in the department that is a pretty key element  
23 to be able people actually are monitoring on a permanent  
24 basis. So I will say that like any of the other things, I  
25 really, really, hope that we would be able to prolong the  
26 program so that we can provide this organization with more  
27 long-term spending and more stability.

28 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And specifically on

1 the Canadian Digital Media Research Network -- it is indeed  
2 quite a mouthful -- I would highlight it's not, you know, the  
3 kind of projects Amy are describing are project based, that's  
4 currently how the program is generally structured. But as I  
5 highlighted, there have been a couple of key partnerships  
6 that the government have chosen to invest in a more  
7 significant way over the years, and the network is one of  
8 those, kind of more signature type investments.

9 So in 2022 the government announced that it  
10 was investing, I think, upwards of \$5 million over three  
11 years in the network. And so, it is -- it has received a  
12 higher level and a more sustained investment over a multi  
13 year time frame then some of the other projects that would  
14 kind of come through the door and be more constrained to kind  
15 of, one fiscal year.

16 And as Isabelle noted, we have seen the  
17 importance particularly in Europe that has really built out a  
18 network of observatories in European jurisdictions and a  
19 community practice of these observatories, the importance  
20 that they can play in an electoral context. For example, on  
21 doing some of the pre-bunking work and anticipating what some  
22 of the disinformation narratives would be. We've seen that  
23 deployed.

24 So that was deployed in Europe at both -- at  
25 the national level in advance of national elections, and then  
26 this year in advance of the European elections you saw those  
27 efforts deployed again. And the national elections have  
28 given some good sense of some of the disinformation

1 narrative's that were likely to emerge at the EU level, and  
2 then they were able to take steps as the observatories and  
3 working with fact checkers and others in civil society, to  
4 try and socialize Europeans with some of those disinformation  
5 narratives were going to be and to be ready for them. Again,  
6 to be more curious, to be more critical when you encounter  
7 those kinds of narratives.

8 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So we discussed  
9 earlier the budgetary aspect of the program, and the funding  
10 at the moment and in March 2025. Obviously, you don't have  
11 an answer as to whether it will be continued. But when you  
12 look at what is being done right now and what's been done  
13 over the past almost five years in terms of the relevance of  
14 the program, what is your assessment when you look at the  
15 program and what it's achieved?

16 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So we did an evaluation  
17 of the program, and the evaluation have based on all the  
18 interviews they conducted, has confirmed that it's not only  
19 run efficiently but it has made a difference. I will say  
20 that when we looked internationally there is almost no  
21 countries now that are not looking into the kind of  
22 intervention that this program is. Because at the end of the  
23 day with issues like artificial intelligence coming and all  
24 of that, people will need to be even better equipped than  
25 they are now.

26 We're not moving from a world where these  
27 issues are coming, they're going to take another level of  
28 complexity. And so, I will say that I think it's one of the

1 tools in the toolbox that is absolutely essential. I want to  
2 mention also that we're not the only ones in that space.  
3 Provinces and territories also have an important role to  
4 play.

5 Because my colleague was referring to Finland  
6 and education and so on, that's part of the continuum, and we  
7 have started more and more to have -- using our table to have  
8 this discussion with provinces who, some of them, already  
9 have good work. Ontario, I think, is renewing its curriculum  
10 on that space.

11 So it's just part of the really almost basic  
12 skill that we have two, I think provide citizens and they  
13 have to be equipped with, because this is a world where it's  
14 getting more difficult, even with people who are, you know,  
15 looking at different sources of information to know which  
16 source is a good source or not. So I really feel this  
17 program is part of the toolbox.

18 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** We'll go back to  
19 provinces and territories. But if we go back to what Mr.  
20 Ripley mentioned earlier, what the landscape was before 2019  
21 in Canada, that you know, there had to be community of  
22 practice being -- to develop in the country. When you look  
23 at what the program has achieved through the lens of this  
24 community of practice, and what civil society is doing now  
25 compared to five, six years ago, what is your assessment?

26 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will turn to you  
27 because you have that.

28 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** There's been a lot

1 of good work done. One of the -- you know, to foster that  
2 community practice and to foster the collaboration amongst  
3 stakeholders, one of the things that we often do is give  
4 higher weighting to projects where civil society  
5 organizations work together; right? So again, it's been a  
6 way of encouraging them to submit projects where they're each  
7 bringing something to the table. Because again, a lot of  
8 these civil society organizations have different areas of  
9 expertise and different skill sets. And the department's  
10 view is the projects are stronger if different partners get  
11 together and combine their efforts.

12 So it's been a way that we have structured  
13 those calls, again, to encourage the stakeholders to do that  
14 kind of joint work. And so, we have seen a number of those  
15 projects where these organizations may not have worked  
16 together in the same way, now starting to work together.

17 I believe my colleague, Amy, may have  
18 mentioned as well that you know, we have had different  
19 efforts to encourage them to share their knowledge and the  
20 insights they're getting. So we've done conferences over the  
21 years, there's information sharing events where a particular  
22 civil society organization or researcher will be given the  
23 opportunity to present their projects and their findings.

24 You know, one of the challenges, and Isabelle  
25 kind of alluded to it in this space, is you know, this is  
26 project-based funding. The scale of the problem continues to  
27 grow, and so you know, one of the challenges is how you take  
28 a program like this and the kind of, again, objectives that

1 it has. And really scale it up in a way that it has that  
2 kind of sustained impact for Canadians, you know, no matter  
3 their age and kind of on an ongoing basis.

4 And it is why, you know, some of the  
5 reflection that we are currently doing is, you know, perhaps  
6 needs to kind of work in a deeper more sustained way with the  
7 provinces and territories who in the Canadian context have  
8 that education lever. Because again, a country like Finland,  
9 you know, it doesn't have that necessarily same  
10 constitutional make up as Canada.

11 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Concerning the --  
12 we heard evidence before the Commission about other  
13 departments and agencies who are active in the disinformation  
14 space. Do you feel that there is a -- and you are involved  
15 in that space with the program that you've just described.  
16 Do you feel that there is a sufficient coordination between  
17 different departments and agencies from the government's  
18 perspective, on this issue of misinformation and  
19 disinformation?

20 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will say that the  
21 coordination has really increased over the years. I think it  
22 started very much with after the election, the need to work  
23 together horizontally. But there is more and more of those  
24 forums. I do Co-chair with my colleague from Public Safety,  
25 a committee of DMs, where we talked about safe community, and  
26 obviously this is one subject that comes in that context.

27 But Canadian Heritage is also a invited to  
28 some of the national security tables where they discuss the

1 pointed end of it, but also talking about what we can do in  
2 the kind of more ecosystem way. So I have to say that I  
3 really see an increase of that coordination, and you've seen  
4 by some of the documents that you've shared, that this  
5 integration is being more and more important.

6 I was the DM on communication during COVID,  
7 so I knew about that program, a coincidence maybe not. But I  
8 will say that this is the other thing Heritage now may be a  
9 department that is involved because the disinformation and  
10 sometime foreign interference can come that. So it's very  
11 important too that it doesn't stay to the core department,  
12 but also, bridge more broadly, and I think that's why the  
13 committee, which is 21 department or so, is important because  
14 it takes different form over year and it takes different --  
15 it involve different department. And ideally, you don't wait  
16 for them to be on the pointed toe of that before they get  
17 engaged.

18 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And, Ms. Mondou,  
19 you mentioned during the interview that you are a part of the  
20 reflection to update the plan to protect Canada's democracy.  
21 Could you please briefly explain what the -- what your  
22 involvement in that initiative is -- what it is?

23 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will turn to my  
24 colleague who are on the ADM Committee working on that

25 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So as we noted  
26 earlier, Canadian Heritage has been involved on the plan to  
27 protect democracy from the beginning, from the inception and  
28 in advance of the 2019 election, and it is actually 1 of the

1 main vehicles now, I would say, for mobilizing, you know, the  
2 relevant departments and agencies around town in relation to  
3 mis and disinformation, obviously, more in an election  
4 context. And so as you noted, you know, that plan, it gets  
5 updated on a periodical basis based on kind of the timing of  
6 elections, and so our colleagues at democratic institutions  
7 are very seized ---

8 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

9 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- with that, and  
10 we are part of that work. And, again, I think the Digital  
11 Citizenship Initiative is one of the tools that colleagues  
12 around town really look to as a way to engage with civil  
13 society, with researchers and mobilize them on these topics.  
14 And so we'll continue to work with them in that respect.

15 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And I forgot to  
16 mention, to ask a question about the funding of the program  
17 and the budgetary concerns. We -- it was mentioned during  
18 the interview, I think by you, Ms. Mondou, that permanent  
19 funding would be -- would help working in the longer term  
20 with partners and different -- to fund different projects.  
21 Could you please expand on that a little bit the difference  
22 between what you have now and what permanent funding would  
23 bring?

24 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think when it start  
25 it was not permanent funding and I think that was the right  
26 thing to do because, frankly, we were trying to see if that  
27 was a space that could be helpful. I think we know now that  
28 it's helpful. I think we know it's flexible and can be



1 involved, which is another reason I think the program can be  
2 useful. And I believe that we are not going to see that  
3 problem goes away, and I think in that context, having a bit  
4 more stability for us, but mainly for the partnership that we  
5 have too, so that they can really make those structural  
6 change that we need. Because if you really want to go at to  
7 the scaling of some of the thing we do, you need a bit more  
8 predictability and you need long-term intervention. It's  
9 really hard in a year to make a huge difference, even if your  
10 project is wonderful and has a lot of potential, because  
11 often these things take more than a year, whether it's a  
12 specific intervention with a community that's more affect by  
13 disinformation, or whether it's establishing a new tool that  
14 has a lot of potential. So for all these reason, I think a  
15 permanent funding will be helpful, not only for the  
16 department, but, obviously, more importantly, for making the  
17 change that -- and the structural difference that we hope  
18 that it has.

19 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I would note when  
20 the program was renewed for two more years, so Isabelle  
21 previously mentioned that we ---

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

23 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- it was extended  
24 for two years in ---

25 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

26 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- the fall  
27 economic statement of 2022, there was an increase in funding,  
28 so prior to that, the program had kind of in the \$2 million

1 range per year to invest in projects, and that was increased  
2 for the last 2 years to approximately \$10 million. And so  
3 that has enabled us to invest in some larger projects that we  
4 would not have been ---

5 MS. ISABELLE MONDOU: M'hm.

6 MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY: --- able to do, and  
7 again, have some of those bigger partnerships. And you see  
8 that reflected in the note that you previously put up on the  
9 screen of, you know, still investing in some of the smaller  
10 projects, but also, identifying some of the bigger projects -  
11 --

12 MS. ISABELLE MONDOU: M'hm.

13 MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY: --- that have come  
14 forward that are, you know, proposing to have a bigger impact  
15 for Canadians.

16 MS. ISABELLE MONDOU: M'hm.

17 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: And did you formally ask  
18 for having a permanent funding?

19 MS. ISABELLE MONDOU: We are -- I will say  
20 that the recommendation of the department would be to ask for  
21 permanent, and also, to ask for not less money for sure,  
22 because if we want to see the scale, I think the nuance that  
23 Owen say is, obviously, it's important to do small project  
24 because sometime it touch small community, but we also need  
25 to build a bit some of those bigger tool that have, like, the  
26 observatory and other, a huge impact all across the board.  
27 So I will say, you know, if I have a magic wand, I will make  
28 it permanent and maybe with a bit more money.

1                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And given the various  
2 steps that have to be taken before getting such a permanent  
3 funding, when do you expect you will know about the ---

4                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So we normally know --  
5 I mean, we knew the last time in the fiscal update, it could  
6 be in a budget two. Either of those instrument are typically  
7 the one where we either see a program confirmed or expand and  
8 all of that, so these are the more common vehicle, I will  
9 say, that we can maybe hear about it. Because it's finishing  
10 in March, we really hope that we know before the budget,  
11 which tend to be a bit more around March/April. So,  
12 hopefully, we'll have a decision before.

13                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Does it create any  
14 problem in terms of hiring or retaining ---

15                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** It does.

16                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- employees because  
17 you do not know whether it will pursue ---

18                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** It does. And that's  
19 why we really hope to have early decision on that because,  
20 otherwise, you basically close the program, and then you have  
21 to restart it, which then presents some of those challenge,  
22 for sure.

23                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Donc, on comprend,  
24 en fait, que la question de l'ingérence étrangère, l'action  
25 de votre ministère sur cet enjeu-là se fait dans une  
26 perspective un peu plus large sur l'écosystème d'information.  
27 Et c'est sous cet angle-là - c'est ma compréhension, vous  
28 pouvez me corriger si je me trompe -, c'est sous cet angle-là

1 que le travail avec les provinces et les territoires se  
2 déploie.

3                   Donc, pouvez-vous expliquer en quoi le...  
4 comment le travail que vous faites avec les provinces se  
5 déploie et aussi quelle est l'importance du partenariat avec  
6 les provinces et les territoires pour s'attaquer à un  
7 problème de cette nature?

8                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Ben, en fait, il y a  
9 quelques chantiers, je dirais. Le premier chantier, c'est que  
10 la ministre, la ministre de Patrimoine canadien, lors de sa  
11 rencontre avec ses collègues ont lancé un chantier sur  
12 l'impact de l'intelligence artificielle, parce que c'est  
13 quand même un sujet important. Donc, les provinces et nous,  
14 nous avons travaillé ensemble pour regarder l'impact de  
15 l'intelligence artificielle sur notre secteur, qui est le  
16 secteur là que j'ai décrit plus tôt.

17                   De plus, il y a beaucoup d'échanges, je  
18 dirais à notre niveau, mais aussi avec mes partenaires dans  
19 les autres ministères pour essayer de créer ces liens-là à  
20 tous les niveaux. Parce que il y a différents... comme nous,  
21 au fédéral, il y a différents joueurs aussi au niveau  
22 provincial. On parle d'éducation, mais on parle aussi de  
23 d'autres ministères qui peuvent avoir un rôle à jouer. Je  
24 viens de mentionner celui de la culture, celui de la sécurité  
25 publique. Donc, c'est presque un miroir, un peu, de notre  
26 organisation, et c'est important d'intervenir à plusieurs  
27 niveaux.

28                   Donc, je dirais que les discussions se sont

1 vraiment intensifiées. Ce que je vois, moi, ce que je  
2 constate, c'est que les provinces sont un véritable intérêt,  
3 véritable préoccupation, parce qu'on voit que le phénomène de  
4 la désinformation et parfois une interférence étrangère  
5 devient un phénomène où les gens ont plus de connaissances  
6 maintenant. Les gens leur posent des questions sur ce qui se  
7 passe et je pense que le niveau d'anxiété de la population a  
8 augmenté au fil des années. Je suis pas sûre qu'on aurait eu  
9 la même discussion en 2016, honnêtement, mais ils sentent  
10 vraiment la pression aussi de citoyens qui sont anxieux, de  
11 citoyens qui veulent être mieux équipés, et cetera.

12 Donc, ce sont des discussions, je dirais,  
13 extrêmement positives. Mais elles sont encore au stade où on  
14 n'a pas... par exemple, une des choses qu'on regarde, c'est  
15 est-ce qu'on pourrait avoir une stratégie nationale sur la  
16 désinformation. T'sais, vraiment un plan d'action intégré  
17 entre les provinces, le fédéral, les territoires et tout ça.  
18 On n'est pas encore à ce stade-là.

19 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Parce que étant une  
20 fédération...

21 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

22 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** ... une constitution qui  
23 prévoit un partage des compétences, j'imagine que vous ne  
24 pouvez pas... vous pouvez pas, à certains égards, travailler  
25 seuls.

26 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Exact.

27 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Vous devez nécessairement  
28 travailler avec les provinces. On pense entre autres à

1 l'éducation là...

2 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument.

3 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** ... qui est de compétence  
4 provinciale.

5 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument.

6 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Alors, ça, vous... ce que  
7 vous faites, c'est tenter le plus possible d'obtenir la  
8 collaboration des provinces?

9 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Puis vous dites ça va  
11 bien, jusqu'à maintenant?

12 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

13 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Vous voyez qu'il y a un  
14 certain désir, mais est-ce que vous sentez que vous êtes  
15 limités à cet égard-là ou il y a pas de... il y a pas d'enjeu à  
16 ce stade-ci?

17 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Ben, je pense que les  
18 deux choses qui sont importantes dans ce contexte-là, c'est  
19 qu'il faut aussi avoir les conversations de partage  
20 d'information, parce que toutes les provinces et tous les  
21 territoires ne sont pas au même niveau. Certains sont plus  
22 avancés. Je pensais... je parlais de certains curriculums, par  
23 exemple, qui sont très avancés, d'autres moins.

24 Donc, ces tables-là permettent aussi de  
25 partager de l'information. Notamment nos agences de sécurité  
26 ont parfois de l'information qui est extrêmement pertinente  
27 qui est plus difficile pour nos agences provinciales à  
28 obtenir. Donc, je pense que les tables sont vraiment

1       essentielles au niveau du partage d'information, parce qu'on  
2       apprend de chacun. Comme nous, on est allés voir la Finlande  
3       et tout ça, les provinces apprennent l'une de l'autre et on  
4       apprend aussi ensemble.

5               Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire de plus, je crois,  
6       c'est qu'il faut continuer à engager de façon très  
7       systématique, parce que le phénomène avance à très grand pas.  
8       Les nouveaux défis de l'intelligence artificielle, c'est pour  
9       ça qu'on a focussé là-dessus sur notre table, sont énormes et  
10      sont déjà avec nous. Donc, il faut juste s'assurer que, non  
11      seulement on partage l'information, mais idéalement aussi, on  
12      travaille ensemble à des plans communs. Ça pas besoin d'être  
13      tout un plan fédéral ou tout un plan provincial, mais qu'il y  
14      ait un alignement. Puis ça, on fait ça dans nos tables  
15      Fed/PROC souvent.

16             On a des capacités de travailler ensemble sur  
17      des agendas communs. Chacun fait ses choses, mais on les  
18      fait avec des priorités puis des objectifs communs. Je pense  
19      que c'est vraiment ça l'objectif. Ce sera pas nécessairement  
20      pour le fédéral de décider quel va être le curriculum dans  
21      telle province. Et en ayant ces discussions-là, de  
22      s'entendre sur c'est quoi un curriculum robuste pis comment  
23      on peut tous contribuer à cette dynamique-là. Donc, je  
24      dirais que c'est plus à ce niveau-là.

25             **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et jusqu'à maintenant,  
26      dans les échanges que vous avez avec les provinces, est-ce  
27      que l'existence, c'est peut-être moins pertinent lors de la  
28      désinformation? Je ne le sais pas, vous me le direz.

1                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

2                   **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Mais est-ce que le fait  
3 que certaines informations puissent être classifiées et,  
4 donc, ne puissent pas être communiquées aux provinces dans  
5 l'état actuel des choses, là, a été un problème pour vous ou  
6 ça, c'est pas véritablement un enjeu quand on parle de  
7 désinformation?

8                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** C'est pas un enjeu pour  
9 moi. Je sais pas pour mes collègues. Ce serait plus une  
10 question peut-être pour mes collègues des agences de  
11 sécurité. Je pense que de plus en plus, ils trouvent des  
12 façons, un peu comme ils l'ont fait avec la Commission,  
13 d'aller partager l'essentiel des conversations.

14                   Puis une des choses que je mentionnerais,  
15 c'est que nos organismes comme CSE et tout ça travaillent  
16 beaucoup plus maintenant avec les provinces et tout ça sur  
17 des enjeux de cyber-affaires et tout ça. Donc, je pense  
18 qu'on est ailleurs qu'il y a quelques années où on était  
19 vraiment dans un environnement beaucoup plus cloisonné.

20                   Mais ce qui est intéressant aussi, pis je  
21 sais pas si Amy... je pense pas qu'Amy l'a mentionné, mais on a  
22 eu un des projets récents, c'est qu'on va avoir un organisme  
23 que ce qu'ils vont faire, c'est qu'ils vont aller parler aux  
24 élus municipaux, provinciaux, pour les éduquer - peut-être  
25 pas le même bon mot - mais sensibiliser à la réalité. Parce  
26 qu'au niveau municipal aussi, les capacités varient  
27 énormément d'une municipalité à l'autre, évidemment.

28                   Et donc, d'avoir des projets de la société



1 civile aussi qui va à tous les niveaux-là, indépendamment,  
2 parce que eux ont pas de limites de juridiction. À partir du  
3 moment où on finance un projet, eux peuvent inviter des hauts  
4 fonctionnaires, des fonctionnaires, des responsables  
5 politiques de tous les niveaux. Donc, il y a aussi ça qu'on  
6 peut faire à travers nos programmes. C'est de partager, si  
7 on peut dire, notre capacité avec le programme et de l'offrir  
8 à plusieurs niveaux de juridiction. Et ça, on est très  
9 contents de faire ça.

10 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Et tout à fait, il  
11 faut garder en tête que les organismes, les sociétés civiles,  
12 les intervenants sont souvent des intervenants partagés entre  
13 nous et les provinces. Par exemple, je pense à une  
14 organisation qui s'appelle CIVIX. CIVIX travaille dans le  
15 domaine de l'éducation. Donc, c'est vraiment d'équiper les  
16 profs avec les outils pour encourager les étudiants de mieux  
17 comprendre l'espace numérique. Donc, c'est une organisation  
18 avec laquelle on a travaillé, mais, évidemment, ils ont des  
19 relations en place dans toutes les provinces avec les  
20 ministères d'éducation. Donc, il y a un partage.

21 Et Isabelle... je pense qu'il y a vraiment une  
22 véritable opportunité pour Canada. Isabelle a mentionné  
23 Ontario. Ontario était un leader très tôt d'avoir intégré  
24 des concepts de littératie numérique dans son curriculum pis  
25 c'était reconnu à l'échelle internationale à l'époque. Et  
26 Ontario, présentement, embarque dans un renouvellement de son  
27 curriculum dans ce domaine-là. Et donc, il y a beaucoup de  
28 bon travail qui a été fait au Canada. Et puis, évidemment,

1       ça continue à évoluer.

2                   **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:**   Merci.

3                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:**   J'aimerais  
4       maintenant aborder trois initiatives législatives, la *Loi sur*  
5       *le journalisme local*, la *Loi sur les nouvelles en ligne*... la  
6       *Loi sur les nouvelles en ligne* et le projet de loi sur les  
7       préjudices en ligne. Donc, brièvement, pouvez-vous nous  
8       présenter très rapidement en quoi l'initiative journalisme  
9       local s'inscrit dans ces efforts pour contrer la  
10      désinformation mais aussi pour s'assurer d'un... assurer  
11      écosystème en santé?

12                  **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:**   Absolument. Avec la  
13      crise des médias qu'on a vu au fil des années, on a vu des  
14      journaux disparaître en grand nombre, et notamment dans des  
15      petites localités. Et ça, c'est très problématique. Ça veut  
16      dire que les gens n'ont pas accès à notre diversité de  
17      sources fiables et tout ça. Et donc, ils ne peuvent pas  
18      corroborer, jusqu'à un certain point, ce qu'ils entendent  
19      dans d'autres sources qui sont peut-être moins fiables.

20                  Donc, le programme de journalisme local,  
21      c'est vraiment ça. C'est de donner un coup de pouce de façon  
22      indépendante. Donc, c'est géré par sept associations de  
23      journaux. Nous, on transfère l'argent, mais c'est eux qui  
24      administrent, qui décident qui et comment l'argent est  
25      distribué.

26                  Et sur le terrain, ce que ça l'a fait  
27      concrètement, c'est que 400 postes de journalistes locaux ont  
28      été créés avec ce programme-là. Donc ça, ça veut dire dans

1 des... ce qu'on appelle des déserts de nouvelles, des régions  
2 où il y avait parfois plus du tout de journaux ou qui avaient  
3 pratiquement plus de présence de nouvelles. Alors, on  
4 privilégie, évidemment, les endroits où c'est plus difficile.  
5 Et c'est un programme qui a... qui est vraiment, le but, c'est  
6 de financer le salaire des journalistes. Donc, c'est pas  
7 pour payer des salaires de dirigeants ou quoi que ce soit,  
8 c'est vraiment pour des postes de journalistes et ça l'a eu  
9 un impact réel, je dirais, dans les communautés.

10 La crise continue, donc, je ne dirais pas que  
11 c'est la seule solution à tous les problèmes, mais sans avoir  
12 de journalisme à travers le pays, à travers les... pas juste  
13 dans les grandes villes, mais dans les communautés locales,  
14 c'est sûr qu'on ouvre la porte à la désinformation et  
15 ultimement, évidemment, peut-être à l'interférence étrangère.

16 **Me PHILIPPE MacKAY:** La ministre St-Onge va  
17 être avec nous plus tard cette semaine.

18 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui.

19 **Me PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et c'est un sujet qui  
20 sera assurément abordé avec elle. Maintenant, pour ce qui  
21 est de la *Loi sur les nouvelles en ligne*, vous me corrigez si  
22 je me trompe, que c'est un système un peu de redevances qui  
23 est voulu lorsque des articles de journaux, de médias sont  
24 partagés par les plateformes numériques. Et on comprend  
25 qu'il y a eu une décision d'affaires par une plateforme,  
26 Meta, de retirer le contenu de nouvelles plutôt que de  
27 participer à cette... à cette formule de redevances.

28 Donc, est-ce que vous pouvez simplement

1 expliquer la dynamique qui est en place avec les plateformes  
2 numériques, mais aussi la conséquence de voir le contenu  
3 fiable disparaître des plateformes en ligne, si tant est  
4 qu'il y en a eu?

5 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So the *Online News*  
6 *Act* is fundamentally about putting obligation on dominant  
7 platforms to bargain with news businesses when the content of  
8 those news businesses is shared and distributed on those  
9 platforms.

10 And the reason was because both platforms and  
11 news businesses compete in the advertising market. The  
12 advertising market is an important component of both of their  
13 business models, but if you're a news business, you are now  
14 very reliant on these platforms to reach your audience. It  
15 is the primary way that Canadians now search out their news  
16 and information, is via search engines, is via social media.  
17 So the challenge for news businesses is, on the one hand,  
18 you're reliant on your competitor to now reach your audience.  
19 And so the reason behind the *Online News Act*, which was  
20 modeled on a similar law in Australia, was to create a fairer  
21 business relationship and say, "There's actually an  
22 obligation on you, platforms, to come to the table and  
23 bargain with these news businesses in light of the value that  
24 their content brings to your platform."

25 As you note, Meta has made the decision to  
26 prevent Canadians from posting news links to Facebook and  
27 Instagram. That reflects a broader decision that we have  
28 seen Meta take internationally, where Meta has backed out of

1 licensing agreements with news businesses in the United  
2 States, they've backed out of them in the E.U., and we are  
3 seeing Meta indicate to countries like Australia or New  
4 Zealand that if they continue to kind of move in the same  
5 direction as Canada, they will take similar action, and so  
6 that stance of Meta reflects, from our perspective, a broader  
7 international position that they are taking that they do not  
8 feel that there is a responsibility on their part to bargain  
9 with news businesses. Obviously that goes against the spirit  
10 of the *Online News Act*.

11 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et je demanderais  
12 qu'on mette le document COM601, 601, COM601.

13 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM0000601.EN:**

14 Cyber threats to Canada's democratic  
15 processes

16 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM0000601.FR:**

17 Cybere menaces contre le processus  
18 démocratique du Canada

19 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Et vous... en fait,  
20 c'est le rapport... c'est une mise à jour de 2023 du centre de  
21 la sécurité des télécommunications et je vous demanderai  
22 d'aller à la page 15 du rapport, qui est la page 17 du PDF,  
23 si ma mémoire est... oui.

24 Donc, dans le bas de la page, s'il vous  
25 plaît. Donc, on voit ici, en fait, la mention que la Loi sur  
26 les nouvelles en ligne, bon, il y a une conséquence qu'à  
27 l'effet que Meta a retiré les nouvelles. Et le dernier  
28 paragraphe, on voit que la... il y a... on identifie une

1       vulnérabilité qui découle de l'absence de nouvelles qu'on  
2       pourrait dire fiables sur la plateforme. Est-ce que vous  
3       voyez un... est-ce que... êtes-vous d'accord avec ce constant et  
4       est-ce qu'il y a une vulnérabilité qui a été provoquée ou  
5       causée par cette décision d'affaires de la plateforme Meta?

6                   **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Donc, évidemment, on  
7       a pris connaissance du... des... du travail qui se fait  
8       présentement pour mieux comprendre l'impact du fait que Meta  
9       empêche les gens de partager les nouvelles sur Facebook et  
10      Instagram. Ça démontre plusieurs choses. Oui, ça démontre  
11      qu'il y a moins de trafic qui va vers les entreprises de  
12      nouvelles, tout à fait. Mais les chiffres démontrent aussi  
13      que certains gens essaient de trouver les nouvelles de  
14      d'autres façons. Et ça démontre aussi qu'il y a toujours du  
15      monde qui est en train de partager les nouvelles sur Facebook  
16      et Instagram avec les screenshots, et cetera.

17                   Donc, le portrait n'est pas tout à fait  
18      blanc-noir. C'est... pour le ministère, c'est important que,  
19      comme Isabelle l'a mentionné plus tôt, c'est la raison pour  
20      laquelle c'est important qu'on continue d'investir, d'assurer  
21      qu'il y a des médias fiables ici au Canada. Et c'est la  
22      raison pour laquelle, avec le programme numérique aussi,  
23      qu'on donne des outils, la formation aux Canadiens pour  
24      encore être mieux équipés pour déterminer la qualité de  
25      l'information qu'ils sont en train de rencontrer en ligne.  
26      Et donc, je pense que ce constat-là fait ce point plus  
27      largement.

28                   **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Je suis juste... je suis

1       juste curieuse, je suis pas certaine que ça ait un impact au  
2       niveau de l'ingérence étrangère, mais quand on lit que «  
3       almost 50% of Canadians aged between 18 and 24 rely on social  
4       media as their main source of news », est-ce qu'on doit  
5       comprendre qu'il y a quand même 50 pour cent qui se fient sur  
6       d'autres sources ou c'est simplement qu'ils ont aucune source  
7       d'information?

8                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I think if you look  
9       in the numbers, to your point, it's probably more of a mixed  
10      picture. So I'd have to -- we'd have to look more closely at  
11      kind of exactly the source of that statistic. The statistic  
12      is accurate in the sense that more and more, and it's not  
13      just young Canadians, but more and more, we all use these  
14      platforms to access news and information. They are, you  
15      know, the term that often gets used is kind of they play that  
16      gatekeeper function, and we're very reliant on them.

17                   That comes back to, you know, the whole  
18      reason for the *Online News Act* was to reflect that gatekeeper  
19      function and say, "In a country like Canada, in a democracy  
20      like Canada, where we value journalism and believe that there  
21      is a collective responsibility to make sure that the model is  
22      viable moving forward, you dominant platforms have a  
23      responsibility to bargain with news businesses." And  
24      obviously Meta has chosen a certain stance with that.

25                   I would highlight that there is another  
26      platform, Google, that has, you know, in good faith come to  
27      the table and found a way forward that will see them  
28      contribute, you know, \$100 million through that bargaining

1 framework on a go-forward basis, and so, you know, the model  
2 can work. We've seen that the model can work in Australia.  
3 But obviously it comes with a certain responsibility on these  
4 platforms to put forward a financial investment in supporting  
5 that function that is critical to a democratic society like  
6 Canada.

7 **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Donc, dans  
8 l'intérêt du temps, Madame la Commissaire, on va réserver la  
9 Loi sur les préjudices en ligne pour Madame la Ministre St-  
10 Onge.

11 Je vais vous demander maintenant de discuter  
12 du CRTC et de la *Loi sur la radiodiffusion*.

13 So we note in the Institutional Report that  
14 the Minister of Heritage is responsible for the *Broadcasting*  
15 *Act*. So my first question to you is what does it mean for  
16 the Minister to be responsible for the Act?

17 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** En fait, la ministre  
18 est responsable. C'est-à-dire que c'est elle qui fait les  
19 politiques par rapport à la radiodiffusion au Canada.  
20 Maintenant, on a aussi un organisme, qui est le CRTC, qui lui  
21 met en œuvre les politiques. Donc, on a un rôle vraiment  
22 complémentaire. Le CRTC, il y a plusieurs décisions devant  
23 lui sur la revue de la *Loi sur la radiodiffusion*, met en  
24 œuvre, et le rôle de la ministre, c'est d'avancer les  
25 politiques. C'est ce qu'elle a fait avec la réforme de *Loi*  
26 *sur la radiodiffusion*.

27 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And Mr. Ripley,  
28 you discussed in your interview that -- and this was also



1 mentioned by Ms. Mondou, the -- that the government has  
2 limited powers with respect to the *Broadcasting Act*. So if  
3 you can explain, or Ms. Mondou, explain what it -- expand  
4 this idea of, like, the limited powers of the government  
5 under the Act?

6 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So the *Broadcasting*  
7 *Act* is structured in a way that it recognizes that, again, in  
8 a democratic society like Canada, it is important that we  
9 really protect and privilege the independence of media, both  
10 in respect of their journalistic function, but also in  
11 respect of their cultural expression function. And you see  
12 that at the start of the *Broadcasting Act*, you actually see  
13 that this Act is to be interpreted in a way that is  
14 consistent with the creative expression accorded to these  
15 entities.

16 And so as a result of that, the Act is  
17 designed to make sure that there is a very healthy distance  
18 between any government of the day and media companies who we  
19 all rely on for, again, cultural content, entertainment  
20 content, but also news and information.

21 And so the way that the Act is structured, is  
22 that Parliament sets out the objectives that the Act is  
23 supposed to accomplish, and then those objectives are given  
24 over to the CRTC as an independent regulator that is free  
25 from government interference to put those into practice  
26 through its decisions, its policies, and its regulations.

27 There are very limited powers given to the  
28 government in that framework to direct the CRTC or ask the

1 CRTC to do something. There's kind of two main ones. The  
2 first one is the government and it would be done on the  
3 recommendation of a Minister of Canadian Heritage, but the  
4 government ask the CRTC to examine an issue or look into  
5 something and make a report. And then there is a policy  
6 power that can be used where the government, again on the  
7 recommendation of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, can  
8 issue policy direction of general application to the CRTC.

9 But what's important to understand is that's  
10 not about directing them to come to a certain conclusion on a  
11 particular decision in front of them or to take certain  
12 action vis a vie a particular company. It is really policy  
13 of general application. So it's about kind of that general  
14 policy orientation. And so those are the limited powers  
15 available to the government under the *Broadcasting Act*.

16 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** So we heard  
17 evidence last week from a representative of the CRTC about  
18 the Order in Council concerning RT. So this is what you just  
19 mentioned, Mr. Ripley, one of the powers is to support -- we  
20 under the Minister of Heritage is presenting the request to  
21 Cabinet, then an Order in Council is adopted and a request is  
22 made.

23 Is this something, if we look at the RT Order  
24 in Council, is this something that happened more than once?  
25 Or this was a first, of the government asking the CRTC to  
26 look into a foreign-controlled media?

27 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** It was the first of  
28 that nature, and the context obviously was we had the Russian

1 invasion of Ukraine, there were decisions being taken in  
2 other jurisdictions as well with respect to RT, and some of  
3 its affiliates, in terms of it -- there being concern that it  
4 was spreading propaganda, that there was concern that it was  
5 spreading abusive comments directed towards Ukrainians. And  
6 so as you note, you know, the Minister of Canadian Heritage  
7 at the time, and ultimately the government, wanted to make  
8 sure that the CRTC was seized with the issue, and so they  
9 used one of those powers to ask the CRTC not to determine the  
10 outcome of that, but to ask the CRTC to look at the question  
11 about whether it was appropriate in light of what was being  
12 broadcast on RT and RT France for those channels to remain  
13 available on Canadian cable and satellite company packages.

14 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And Mr. Ripley,  
15 I'd like to take you to your witness summary, WIT131, the  
16 original version in English, at paragraph 19. This is the  
17 last paragraph of the summary where the *Broadcasting Act* is  
18 discussed, and the last two sentences:

19 "The intention is not for the CRTC to  
20 play the role of content moderator."

21 I'd like you to explain this notion of that  
22 it's not the CRTC's role under the current legislation to act  
23 as a content moderator.

24 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So just to  
25 reiterate, and it's noted there in paragraph 19 as well as,  
26 you know, the fundamental objective of the *Broadcasting Act*  
27 in Canada is to promote cultural -- Canadian cultural  
28 expression. It's designed to create a regulatory framework

1       that ensures there's investment in the creation and  
2       production of Canadian music and film and television. And  
3       that's its fundamental purpose.

4                You know, there is a long tradition in  
5       broadcasting in terms of understanding that broadcasting  
6       services in a context where historically, you know, there was  
7       limited spectrum and things like that, there was a  
8       responsibility that came with being a broadcaster and often  
9       exercising editorial control over the programming, and that  
10      was to adhere to certain broadcasting standards. And in  
11      Canada, there are broadcasting standards that broadcasters  
12      are expected to adhere to.

13               They have been developed in partnership with  
14      the industry, so there's a group called the Canadian  
15      Broadcasting Standards Council, and so when there is concern  
16      about a particular quality of programming, usually it's the  
17      Broadcast Standards Council that has a look and kind of makes  
18      a determination on that, but ultimately, the CRTC can get  
19      involved if need be.

20               But the CRTC, generally speaking, is not, you  
21      know, reviewing the content that gets broadcast, you know,  
22      day in, day out. There needs to be a complaint and somebody  
23      coming forward and saying that they believe there's been a  
24      violation of some of those broadcast standards.

25               I would also note that the way the system is  
26      created is that, you know, it is -- you know, broadcasters in  
27      the over-the-air sense or cable or satellite are all Canadian  
28      owned and controlled, right. And so generally speaking, in

1 the case of RT, RT France is a good example. What we were  
2 talking about there was an authorization for Canadian cable  
3 or satellite companies to carry those channels, right. But  
4 the role of the CRTC is limited to regulating that split  
5 space. They don't play a role in terms of, you know, again  
6 supervising or watching what is shared in the open internet  
7 more broadly.

8 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** And my last  
9 question to you concerns the last sentence of your summary  
10 where it is noted that the *Broadcasting Act* has only limited  
11 utility in responding to FI.

12 Is this a statement that concerns the system  
13 as it currently exists and is currently structured?

14 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** It's a statement  
15 that, yes, is based on the system as it currently exists.  
16 Again, if you look at the kind of policy objectives set out  
17 in the *Broadcasting Act*, again, they're primarily about  
18 cultural expression and supporting cultural expression in  
19 English and French and Indigenous languages.

20 You will not see that there's policy  
21 objectives in the *Broadcasting Act* related to foreign  
22 interference, for example. And so it's based on the system  
23 as it exists and, again, acknowledging that the system is  
24 geared towards specific types of services, right. It's  
25 geared towards broadcasters and streaming services primarily  
26 that exercise that editorial control or curate content.

27 It's not -- the *Broadcasting Act* and the  
28 government was -- you know, this was a big point of debate

1 during the *Online Streaming Act*. The government, you know,  
2 did not scope in and give the CRTC, you know, powers to, for  
3 example, deal with user uploaded content that is not kind of  
4 commercial content like music or film or television.

5 **MR. JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** These were my  
6 questions, Madam Commissioner.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

8 We'll take the break, 20 minutes. We'll come  
9 back at 4:20.

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

12 The sitting of the Commission is now in  
13 recess until 3:20 p.m. Cette séance de la commission est  
14 maintenant suspendue jusqu'à 15 h 20.

15 --- Upon recessing at 3:02 p.m./

16 --- La séance est suspendue à 15 h 02...

17 --- Upon resuming at 3:24 p.m./

18 --- L'audience est reprise à 15 h 24

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

21 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
22 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la  
23 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est de retour en  
24 session.

25 The time is 3:24 p.m. Il est 15 h 24.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** You knew you were the  
27 first?

28 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** I did.

1 --- MS. AMY AWAS, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation:

2 --- MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation:

3 --- MS. ISABELLE MONDOU, Resumed/Sous la même affirmation:

4 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

5 MR. NEIL CHANTLER:

6 MR. NEIL CHANTLER: Good afternoon. My name  
7 is Neil Chantler, and I'm counsel for the Chinese Canadian  
8 Concern Group. I would like the Court Operator to please  
9 pull up CCC.34.

10 To the panel, this is a document you've  
11 already seen today. This is the May 2023 Special Committee  
12 on the Canada People's Republic of China Interim Report. And  
13 if we could turn, please, to page 58 on the PDF? I see that  
14 it might be a different document. Court Operator, is there a  
15 ---

16 COURT REPORTER: Just give us a moment,  
17 please.

18 MR. NEIL CHANTLER: Sure. It's the section  
19 on media. You could perhaps do a keyword search or look in  
20 the index.

21 I was going to read a passage to you, but  
22 essentially what the passage says is that there is a  
23 deepening concern that Chinese language media in Canada is  
24 increasingly becoming controlled by the PRC. And of course,  
25 the Committee concludes that while it may not have complete  
26 control over the Chinese language media that future is within  
27 sight, and that's a terrifying prospect. Certainly, to my  
28 clients, who are heavy consumers of Chinese language media,

1 but it should be to all Canadians. Here it is:

2 "The ability of journalists to report  
3 freely on matters of public interest  
4 and citizens to seek and receive  
5 information are essential components  
6 of healthy democracies. Witnesses  
7 voiced concern that the state of  
8 Canadian Mandarin and Cantonese-  
9 language media is being compromised  
10 by the PRC. Their concerns were  
11 primarily based on PRC acquisitions  
12 of Chinese Canadian traditional media  
13 and the use of PRC-controlled social  
14 media applications to spread  
15 disinformation.

16 The views presented to the Special  
17 Committee on this matter were  
18 unequivocal: if the PRC does not yet  
19 control all Chinese-language media in  
20 Canada, it will soon do so."

21 So turning to my questions to the panel about  
22 this problem, does the department -- is the department aware  
23 of this particular problem? I presume you are, but perhaps  
24 you can confirm?

25 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Yes, we were very  
26 familiar with this report. In fact, it was a government  
27 response by the whole department involved there that  
28 acknowledged this report. So thank you.



1                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And does the department  
2 share my clients' concern that such a future would be very  
3 detrimental to the ability of Chinese Canadians to access  
4 fair balance media?

5                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think so, because  
6 that's one of the reasons why one of the recent call that my  
7 colleague mentioned is exactly one of the recommendations of  
8 this report, to see how we can try to get more information on  
9 that. And I don't know if you want to repeat specifically  
10 the project, or if it's ---

11                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** No, I have your evidence  
12 from earlier today. Can I ask if the department agrees that  
13 the threat of mis- and disinformation is much higher in  
14 foreign language media when such entities are owned or  
15 controlled rather, by a foreign state?

16                  **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think one of the  
17 reasons why we had special call on some specific communities  
18 is because we know that they are more target, and that's why  
19 we did a national call on Russia propaganda and this call is  
20 here. So yes.

21                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** It was clear from your  
22 evidence earlier today that the department has done a lot  
23 towards countering mis- and disinformation, especially by the  
24 People's Republic of China, digital citizenship initiative,  
25 imposing duties on social media companies. We've talked  
26 about enhancing the public's resilience through education and  
27 promoting journalism.

28                               You didn't touch today on the CRTC's role,

1 appreciating that they are distinct from you, in what I might  
2 refer to distinctly as deterrence, preventing foreign  
3 interference from happening in the first place. Partly  
4 perhaps, through its complaints mechanism. And you would  
5 agree with me that that's a very important component of this  
6 system, that the public is able to identify something like  
7 perhaps, foreign interference happening in the media, and to  
8 report that to the government agency responsible for policing  
9 such information. Correct?

10 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So maybe I will turn to  
11 my colleague, but I will just say that I think the evidence  
12 from my colleague from CRTC was that they're working on a  
13 framework to deal with these complaints. Because I think  
14 they feel that they need to be better equipped to deal with  
15 these complaints in an efficient and good way, while  
16 obviously recognizing the constraints and the limit of the  
17 power.

18 But I don't know if you want to add anything,  
19 Owen?

20 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I would note that  
21 when it comes to holding a broadcasting license in Canada,  
22 whether that's your radio station, or television station, or  
23 cable or satellite operator, obviously it's a privilege and  
24 with that privilege comes certain responsibilities. And the  
25 CRTC's role is to oversee that system and ensure that it does  
26 reflect, as we talked about before the break, the broadcast  
27 standards that are generally expected of those.

28 And as you note, there are mechanisms for

1 individuals or organizations to file a complaint with the  
2 CRTC if it believes that, for example, there is a foreign  
3 channel being distributed by Canadian cable or satellite  
4 companies that is not respecting those. And you know, the  
5 RT, RT France is an example of CRTC removing certain channels  
6 from that list to prevent their distribution. And as you  
7 note, there have been other complaints with respect to other  
8 services that the CRTC is currently seized with.

9 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** If there's a violation of  
10 the regulations a member of the public can file a complaint  
11 and it can be looked at, and one of those regulations is that  
12 a licensee shall not broadcast false and misleading news.  
13 And I put this to the representative from the CRTC, and a  
14 tension arose in which he educated us that there is the  
15 tension between the CRTC's mandate to enhance freedom of  
16 expression, to encourage a polarity of views within Canadian  
17 society, and of course, this obligation to police false and  
18 misleading news.

19 And there was a real reluctance, I sensed,  
20 with the CRTC to wade into content. And I put to the witness  
21 that in fact, the regulations obliged them to do so. What is  
22 this panel's view on that role of the CRTC in wading into  
23 content, as I say, it appears to be obliged to do under the  
24 regulations?

25 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So I think it's  
26 important to make the distinction between Canadian  
27 broadcasters, so again, these are Canadian broadcasters that  
28 are licenced by the CRTC, and to be a Canadian broadcast

1                   er you have to be a Canadian owned and  
2           controlled company. And as I highlighted before the break,  
3           there is a -- there's a mechanism that if there -- that  
4           actually is used, that if a Canadian broadcaster puts out,  
5           you know, something that folks are concerned is false or  
6           misleading and in contravention of the broadcasting standards  
7           that you cite, the first place that you generally go is the  
8           Broadcast Standards Council and they will look at the issue,  
9           and sometimes corrections are issued, et cetera. Right?

10                   It's important to distinguish that from  
11           foreign channels that are distributed by Canadian  
12           broadcasters, right? So these are the examples of, you know,  
13           we have American channels like CNN, and NBC, and those, and  
14           then we also have other channels like RT, RT France, that  
15           were on this list that are authorized for distribution in  
16           Canada.

17                   But what's important to understand is the  
18           CRTC does not have the same degree of control over those  
19           services in the sense of the service is either on the list or  
20           it's off the list, right? They're not -- they're not a  
21           Canadian company operating here in Canada, that is going to  
22           be responsive to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council in  
23           the same way.

24                   And so, it's a more black or white instrument  
25           that the CRTC has to make a decision. To you point about, is  
26           there value in having this service on the list, and generally  
27           as the CRTC noted, you know, they do want to promote a wide  
28           diversity of programming, and diversity of views in Canada.

1 Or is there sufficient concern that because the service on  
2 the whole is not respecting the broadcasting standards that  
3 you noted, and that was the case with RT, RT France, what  
4 they ultimately concluded is that there was sufficient abuse  
5 of comment on those services geared towards Ukrainians that  
6 it merited taking them off of the list, and therefore  
7 limiting Canadians' access to those services.

8 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** So in theory, public  
9 complaints could result in a Chinese language media entity  
10 losing its licence to broadcast well.

11 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I would just  
12 clarify, it's not a -- it's not losing the licence because  
13 there is no licence. What happens is it means that a  
14 Canadian cable or satellite company like Bell, or Rogers, or  
15 Quebecor could no longer include that channel as part of  
16 their package, but the short answer is, yes, and I believe  
17 the CRTC indicated in its testimony here that they are  
18 working on a more robust complaints' framework so that it's  
19 clearer how you bring those complaints forward and seek  
20 action in that respect.

21 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Now I appreciate that  
22 detecting false and misleading information is a very  
23 difficult task, and an undesirable task to be put upon any  
24 agency, but can I pose to you a converse threat? And that is  
25 that should a foreign state be -- like China be permitted to  
26 drown out the legitimate conversation on an issue through  
27 thousands of bots or fake accounts that it is in so doing  
28 harming freedom of expression? That identifying this false,

1 misleading information, mis and disinformation, and doing  
2 something about it is essential to protect freedom of  
3 expression because otherwise we risk drowning out the real  
4 conversation that Canadians are trying to have?

5 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think what you --  
6 yes. I think what you are alluding is very important, and I  
7 will just come back to the example of the CRTC in the spirit  
8 of the tech, it's an administrative tribunal, also, by  
9 definition. They are not there to act in a very rapid way.  
10 They are there when there is a complaint and then they hear  
11 evidence and so on and so forth. So I think it takes a  
12 couple of intervention. We -- I like here a couple of  
13 intervention that we hope help people up front by, you know,  
14 education, more media, and all of that. But to your point,  
15 obviously, all these efforts are to make sure that,  
16 ultimately, people have access to information that they can  
17 trust and that they can rely on, and so we agree with you on  
18 that.

19 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Changing gears to the  
20 *Online Harms Act*. I recognize this Act may go some distance  
21 in protecting users from harmful content.

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

23 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And this is the kind of  
24 content that I doubt there's much debate over, intimate  
25 communications, harm to children, hate speech ---

26 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

27 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** --- inciting violence.  
28 There's not much debate about those things having any

1 positive value in Canadian society. I suspect that there  
2 isn't much debate about foreign interference also being  
3 something that ought to be captured, but it's just very hard  
4 to capture. Would you agree that foreign interference really  
5 ought to be regulated but we're struggling with it because of  
6 difficulties with attribution, because of limitations in  
7 technology and so on?

8 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will say that even  
9 the one that you say on dispute, it's not as -- people agree  
10 in general that something need to be done, but how it's being  
11 done and how it's apply, I will say, is a great matter of  
12 debate and we'll see that around Bill C-63. So it's -- in  
13 these things, as you say, the problem is not often the  
14 objective. It's how do you achieve this objective, and some  
15 people will found that the balance have to be more on that  
16 way, and other people on the other way, and that's where it  
17 gets difficult. If we take the example of the Bill, we table  
18 -- we didn't table, but we send to consultation a first  
19 version and people told us -- even if they agree with what we  
20 were trying to achieve that the balance was not right. So I  
21 think that's really the challenge is that what kind of  
22 intervention, and how far, and by who is always the tricky  
23 part.

24 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** These -- go ahead.

25 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** May I add?

26 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Sorry.

27 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I would just add  
28 that it's important to remember that foreign interference is

1 a motivation, right, that takes different forms, and so, you  
2 know, even in the context of the *Online Harms Act*, while it's  
3 not an explicit kind of definition or category, the *Online*  
4 *Harms Act* does target seven categories of harm, including  
5 things like hate speech or incitement to violence. And so to  
6 the extent that a state actor is using those categories to  
7 seek to influence, then it is caught by that piece of  
8 legislation. And, you know, one of the things that I would  
9 highlight, there is a labelling requirement proposed that if  
10 there -- if some of those categories of content has been  
11 artificially amplified, for example, by a bot farm ---

12 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

13 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- that it would be  
14 incumbent on social media services to label that, and that  
15 goes to, again, better equipping citizens to understand, you  
16 know, it says that this thing has had 10,000 likes, but it's  
17 labelled here that, you know, this has been artificially  
18 amplified, so maybe I should ---

19 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

20 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** --- take it with a  
21 grain of salt these 10,000 likes; right? So I think  
22 sometimes it's more about the systemic obligations you put in  
23 place so that, again, Canadians can assess the quality of  
24 information that they are being presented with.

25 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you. Those are my  
26 questions.

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

28 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Thank you.



1 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Me Sirois for the RCDA?

2 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

3 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:

4 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Guillaume Sirois for  
5 the Russian Canadian Democratic Alliance.

6 Vous avez parlé de l'importance de combattre  
7 la désinformation en ligne, et on a entendu certains  
8 commentaires au cours des audiences à l'effet que la  
9 désinformation avait peut-être pas ou peu d'effet sur les  
10 Canadiens. Je me demandais si vous aviez... *Heritage Canada*  
11 avait un certain point de vue sur l'effet que la  
12 désinformation a sur les Canadiens?

13 Mme ISABELLE MONDOU: C'est une bonne  
14 question. Je pense qu'on a plusieurs projets qui font,  
15 justement, évaluer c'est quoi l'impact, justement, de la  
16 désinformation sur les gens. Non seulement sur est-ce qu'ils  
17 sont... est-ce qu'ils lisent la désinformation, mais est-ce  
18 qu'ils changent leur opinion et qu'est-ce qui vont faire que  
19 certains gens vont être mieux équipés que d'autres à la  
20 désinformation.

21 Donc, je sais pas si on peut citer peut-être  
22 certains exemples de recherche qu'on a pour, justement, aller  
23 à cette question-là, qui est vraiment une question clé.

24 Me GUILLAUME SIROIS: Je pense que j'en ai  
25 une, justement, du Media Ecosystem Observatory.

26 Mme ISABELLE MONDOU: Oui.

27 Me GUILLAUME SIROIS: C'est RCD52.

28 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. RCD0000052:

Canadian Vulnerability to Russian  
Narratives About Ukraine

**Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui. Mm-hm.

**Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** On peut le montrer à  
l'écran peut-être. C'est...

**Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Mm-hm.

**Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Oui, on peut descendre,  
*Disinfo Watch*, qui est un partenaire là de Media Ecosystem  
Observatory. On peut remonter juste pour montrer le titre de  
l'article, s'il vous plaît.

Ça s'appelle « Canadian Vulnerability to  
Russian Narratives About Ukraine », 8 juillet 2024. On peut  
descendre, s'il vous plaît.

Donc là, il y a trois conclusions ici. Par  
exemple, que plusieurs... la plupart des Canadiens ont été  
exposés à des narratives de la Russie avec 71 pour cent des  
Canadiens *having*... ayant entendu au moins une des ces  
narratives.

Donc ça, c'est un exemple de littérature  
grandissante sur comment mieux comprendre l'effet de la  
désinformation en ligne sur les Canadiens. C'est bien ça?

**Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Oui. Pis je crois  
qu'on a subventionné en partie cette étude-là à travers notre  
partenariat, mais je vais me tourner vers mes collègues.  
Mais oui, effectivement, c'est une des études.

**M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Oui, tout à fait. Le  
Canadian Digital Media Research Network, et on a mentionné,  
c'est un des projets ou des initiatives qu'on a financés

1 pendant trois ans.

2 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Et ce genre de  
3 statistique-là, ce genre de recherche-là peut aider ensuite  
4 le Gouvernement du Canada à formuler des politiques?

5 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument.

6 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ou à prendre des  
7 décisions pour adresser...

8 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument. En fait,  
9 quand on voit des études comme ça, ça nous incite aussi à  
10 mettre l'accent sur certains projets. On vous a mentionné  
11 deux appels à l'action qui touchaient plus spécifiquement la  
12 Russie. Mais c'est sûr qu'avec des informations, de la  
13 preuve, des données, ça nous aide vraiment à orienter nos  
14 actions.

15 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Et comment ces  
16 informations-là, très utiles, sont transmises aux autres  
17 départements ou ministères à travers le gouvernement?

18 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Il y a différentes  
19 façons. Je vais laisser ma collègue Amy, parce qu'il y a  
20 différentes façons de le faire, à travers des réunions  
21 mensuelles, à travers des conférences, notre site Web, mais  
22 je vais laisser Amy.

23 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Je suis peut-être  
24 curieux aussi de savoir pour cet exemple-là particulier, qui  
25 a été publié en juillet, est-ce qu'il y a eu des discussions  
26 particulières, si vous êtes au courant?

27 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** OK.

28 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Peut-être spécifique,

1       mais je serais curieux d'en entendre parler.

2                   **Mme AMY AWAD:** Certainement. Donc, chaque  
3       projet qui reçoit du financement, en partie dans leur  
4       proposition de financement, ils expliquent comment ils vont  
5       disséminer la recherche ou les activités qu'ils vont  
6       entreprendre. Donc, ça, ça fait partie de chaque projet, le  
7       plan de dissémination.

8                   Et on essaie aussi, au niveau du département,  
9       d'aider avec la dissémination en tenant des conférences, en  
10      invitant les récipiendaires d'argent de venir nous présenter  
11      ou présenter à d'autres départements dans le gouvernement.  
12      Et on a organisé dans le passé des conférences ou d'autres  
13      activités pour tous les récipiendaires pour apprendre des  
14      recherches des autres.

15                  Par rapport à ce rapport en particulier, je  
16      peux pas... j'ai pas l'information pour vous dire exactement  
17      comment ça a été disséminé, mais on sait que nos collègues,  
18      la PCO DI et nous, on suit de très proche le travail du CDMRN  
19      et les... et on avait, par exemple, une réunion il y a deux  
20      semaines avec des chercheurs du *Network*. Ils ont mentionné  
21      plusieurs produits sur lesquels ils ont travaillé dans... et  
22      parmi ces produits, ce rapport.

23                  **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Et Amy a noté avant  
24      la pause aussi que la décision sur quels projets vont être  
25      financés s'est prise en consultation avec nos collègues  
26      d'autres ministères. Donc, c'est aussi une opportunité pour  
27      nos collègues dans d'autres ministères de signaler un intérêt  
28      dans un projet en particulier et ensuite poursuivre ou suivre

1 ce projet pis les résultats de ce projet de plus près.

2 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Est-ce que Affaires  
3 mondiales Canada serait un des partenaires dans ce contexte-  
4 là?

5 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolument.

6 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Oui.

7 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Parfait, merci. On  
8 peut descendre le document, j'ai terminé sur ce thème un peu  
9 sur l'effet de la propagande sur les Canadiens.

10 J'aimerais passer à un autre sujet un peu  
11 différent maintenant. C'est la question de la modération de  
12 contenu, si on peut le dire. Le règlement de 1987 sur la  
13 télédiffusion prévoit qu'il est interdit au titulaire de  
14 diffuser toute nouvelle fausse ou trompeuse. Donc, on en a  
15 parlé beaucoup avec votre collègue du CRTC. J'aimerais quand  
16 même revenir sur cette question-là.

17 Pis j'ai remarqué que c'était une disposition  
18 qui existe depuis assez longtemps, pis qu'il y a eu même un  
19 débat en 2011 à savoir si on limitait cette mesure-là, qui  
20 est prévue dans la réglementation, pour inclure seulement les  
21 nouvelles fausses ou trompeuses qui pouvaient porter un  
22 préjudice corporel ou psychologique à certaines personnes.  
23 On a décidé que non. On a décidé qu'on gardait ça très  
24 large, toute nouvelle fausse ou trompeuse. Pis je me  
25 demandais pourquoi c'est pas quelque chose qui est plus  
26 appliqué de la part du CRTC? Pourquoi on voit pas plus de  
27 décisions? Par exemple, pour *Russia Today*, on a décidé que  
28 c'était... parce que c'était discriminatoire envers les

1       Ukrainiens, mais pas de la fausse nouvelle. Pourquoi cette  
2       disposition-là est peut-être pas appliquée autant qu'elle  
3       pourrait l'être?

4                   **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Donc, c'est pas que  
5       c'est pas appliqué, comme j'ai mentionné à notre collègue...  
6       collègue auparavant, c'est qu'il y a un système en place où  
7       le premier endroit pour soulever ces questions-là, c'est le  
8       Broadcast Standards Council, et c'est tout à fait possible de  
9       déposer des plaintes. Et en fait, les gens déposent une  
10      plainte. Donc, s'ils voient qu'il y a une émission de  
11      nouvelles qui a contenu une erreur ou quelque chose de  
12      trompeuse, c'est possible d'aller déposer la plainte.

13                   Le CRTC, c'est toujours là comme *backstop*,  
14      mais en vertu d'engagement avec la liberté d'expression et  
15      les indépendances du média, on a développé un système où la  
16      première chose à faire est de déposer ce type de plainte  
17      devant le Broadcast Standards Council.

18                   Le défi, comme j'ai mentionné, quand c'est  
19      une question des chaînes de télévision étrangères qui ne sont  
20      pas licenciées ici au Canada, on n'a pas exactement les mêmes  
21      outils. Parce que c'est une question de permettre leur  
22      distribution par les câblodistributeurs canadiens ou pas.  
23      Donc, c'est une question plus blanc et noir. Et donc, c'est  
24      pas... c'est pas exactement la même façon de traiter ce type de  
25      plainte-là.

26                   Puis la réponse est beaucoup plus importante  
27      au niveau de réponse. C'est pas juste une question de  
28      demander à une chaîne canadienne d'émettre une correction ou

1 quelque chose comme ça.

2 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** OK. Ben, l'intention  
3 d'empêcher les nouvelles fausses ou, c'est quoi le terme,  
4 trompeuses demeure une intention très, très présente là, pour  
5 la réglementation?

6 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Oui. Et comme j'ai  
7 mentionné, quand vous êtes radiodiffuseur, vous acceptez une  
8 certaine responsabilité pour la programmation qui est  
9 distribuée, qui est émise sur vos chaînes. Et donc, oui, ça  
10 demeure une responsabilité des radiodiffuseurs d'assurer une  
11 certaine qualité au niveau d'information et des nouvelles.

12 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci. Pendant votre  
13 interrogatoire en-chef plus tôt aujourd'hui, vous avez parlé  
14 que de plus en plus, les Canadiens se dirigent vers des  
15 plateformes en ligne ou des réseaux sociaux.

16 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Mm-hm.

17 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Si cette mesure-là  
18 d'empêcher la propagation de nouvelles fausses ou trompeuses  
19 existe pour la télévision ou pour la radio, pourquoi ne pas  
20 l'appliquer aussi pour les plateformes en ligne?

21 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Ben, il y a une  
22 distinction à faire entre certaines plateformes en ligne qui  
23 sont plus ou moins des substituts pour les radiodiffuseurs.  
24 Donc, je pense notamment aux services de *streaming* comme  
25 Netflix, Disney+, Crave, et cetera. Et tout à fait, l'effet  
26 de la *Loi sur la diffusion en continu* est maintenant que ces  
27 gens-là sont assujettis aux codes de la radiodiffusion.

28 Il faut faire une distinction entre ce type

1 de plateforme et les autres où il est possible de télécharger  
2 pis partager du contenu qui est généré par les utilisateurs.  
3 Et le gouvernement n'a pas adopté la même approche.

4 Et donc, comme on vient de noter, vis-à-vis  
5 des préjudices en ligne, présentement, le projet de loi C-63  
6 propose une obligation de responsabilité sur les médias  
7 sociaux de mitiger l'effet préjudiciable de sept catégories  
8 de préjudices. Mais ça reflète le fait que les médias  
9 sociaux, c'est pas exactement... ben, c'est pas la même chose  
10 d'un radiodiffuseur traditionnel ou un service de *streaming*  
11 qui a plus de contrôle sur la programmation qui est diffusée  
12 sur leur service.

13 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci pour les  
14 clarifications. Est-ce que le projet de loi C-63 permettrait  
15 d'em... empêcherait, dans le fond, les nouvelles fausses ou  
16 trompeuses sur les réseaux sociaux?

17 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Le... c'est pas  
18 identifié comme un préjudice comme tel. Ceci dit, comme j'ai  
19 noté, on vise sept catégories de préjudices, et il y a une  
20 obligation qui est proposée d'avoir une étiquette sur  
21 certaines des choses. Donc, si on parle d'un discours  
22 haineux ou un *incitement of violence*, si on voit que la  
23 distribution est amplifiée de façon synthétique, de mettre  
24 une étiquette dessus.

25 Donc, il y a certaines connexions avec ça.  
26 Mais ce que nous avons entendu très clairement en  
27 consultation avec les Canadiens, et il faut être conscient de  
28 l'équilibre entre les questions de modération de contenu et



1 l'expression... la liberté d'expression, qui fait partie des  
2 valeurs canadiennes.

3 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Donc, ma seule  
4 question, pourquoi on adopte une approche un peu plus  
5 restreinte ou spécifique pour les plateformes de réseaux  
6 sociaux et non pas pour la radiodiffusion, la télédiffusion?

7 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Oui, ben, ça reflète  
8 la nature de ces services-là. Donc, comme j'ai mentionné,  
9 on... les services médias sociaux, c'est une façon que les  
10 Canadiens et d'autres partagent de l'information et le  
11 contenu. Et en général, ces services exercent moins de  
12 contrôle sur qu'est-ce qui est téléchargé sur leur service.

13 Donc, ils ont pas le même rôle qu'un  
14 radiodiffuseur qui fait le choix de programmation qui est  
15 émis sur leur service. C'est plutôt une plateforme pour les  
16 gens d'échanger. Et donc, ça prend une approche différente  
17 pour refléter la différence de nature-là.

18 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Si je peux juste  
19 ajouter, peut-être, je pense que la licence sociale est  
20 différente aussi. On l'a vu dans la réforme de la *Loi sur la*  
21 *radiodiffusion*, il y avait un aspect qui était controversé de  
22 la réforme, et c'est quand le débat était est-ce que le CRTC  
23 va pouvoir toucher les contenus sociaux ou pas? Et les  
24 réactions variaient énormément. Donc, je pense aussi qu'au  
25 niveau de l'acceptation sociale, il y a encore un débat là-  
26 dessus.

27 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** OK. Je voudrais peut-  
28 être essayer d'amener un exemple plus spécifique pour essayer

1 de mieux illustrer ce que... où j'essaie d'en venir. Le CRTC a  
2 banni *Russia Today* en 2022, mais ça a pris deux ans et demi  
3 pour que Meta, Facebook ou TikTok, à leur tour, bannissent  
4 *Russia Today* sur leurs plateformes. Je me demande si c'est  
5 un délai qui est acceptable ou si c'est quelque chose qui  
6 pourrait être adressé dans le futur de la part du  
7 gouvernement?

8 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Bien, ici au Canada,  
9 évidemment, on a pris la décision d'enlever *Russia Today* puis  
10 *Russia... RT France* des câblodistributeurs. Tout à fait, la  
11 décision de prendre la même décision pour les médias sociaux,  
12 ça leur appartient. Ceci dit, qu'est-ce que je dis sur ce  
13 sujet-là et l'esprit, en partie, de la *Loi sur les préjudices*  
14 *en ligne* est tout à fait d'assurer qu'il y a un cadre en  
15 place où ces gens-là sont plus responsables pour mettre en  
16 œuvre leurs conditions de service. Et donc, tout à fait.  
17 Mais à la fin, c'est une décision d'affaires d'enforcer ces  
18 conditions de service. Et s'il y a une question de violation  
19 de leurs conditions de service, ça tombe à eux de prendre  
20 cette décision-là.

21 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Donc, peut-être juste  
22 concrètement, dans l'exemple qui nous intéresse, si la loi 63  
23 était en vigueur et qu'il y avait du contenu qui promouvait  
24 de la haine en ligne qui pouvait affecter justement cette...  
25 par cette situation-là, mais techniquement, les plateformes  
26 devraient minimiser les risques et ils devraient rendre  
27 compte de ces... des mesures qu'ils prennent.

28 À l'heure actuelle, comme vous avez dit, les

1 mesures sont prises à la distraction des plateformes sans  
2 vraiment de transparence ou sans vraiment de capacité pour la  
3 société civile de voir est-ce que ces mesures-là sont  
4 efficaces. C'est ce que C-64 changerait, c'est qu'il y  
5 aurait une plus grande transparence pis aussi une plus grande  
6 responsabilisation.

7 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Et les obligations de  
8 transparence en C-63, en fait, c'est plus large que juste les  
9 sept catégories de préjudices identifiés. Donc, si un média  
10 sociaux voit qu'il y a des préjudices ou quelque chose qui se  
11 passe sur leur service, les obligations de transparence va  
12 être qu'ils vont être... ben, ils vont être obligés de  
13 divulguer ça pis ça pourra donner l'opportunité de regarder  
14 si au niveau législatif il y a quelque chose à faire ou pas.

15 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Parfait. Donc, mon  
16 temps est expiré, mais je veux juste terminer peut-être pour  
17 essayer tout mettre ensemble. En résumé, donc, en... le C...  
18 projet de loi C-63 serait un bon pas dans la bonne direction?

19 **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Mm-hm.

20 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Mais il y a peut-être  
21 d'autres choses après qui pourraient être faites pour  
22 s'assurer que la désinformation en ligne ne perdure pas sur  
23 les plateformes comme les réseaux sociaux?

24 **M. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Ben, je pense qu'on a  
25 essayé aujourd'hui de présenter que il y a plusieurs leviers  
26 qui sont applicables dans ce contexte-là. Donc, on a parlé  
27 de l'importance d'appuyer les médias canadiens, assurer qu'il  
28 y a tout à fait des informations et des nouvelles de bonne

1       qualité, et on a parlé du... de nos efforts d'appuyer la  
2       société civile pour mieux équiper les Canadiens. Et, oui,  
3       les cadres législatifs sont aussi... ça fait partie aussi du  
4       écosystème, mais c'est tout ça ensemble que, selon nous,  
5       répondent à ces préoccupations-là.

6                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Pis, évidemment, on  
7       continue toujours à suivre. C'est pour ça qu'on fait de la  
8       recherche et tout ça pour voir si, dans le futur, il y a  
9       d'autres choses qui devraient être mises en place.

10                  **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Excellent. Merci pour  
11       vos réponses. Merci.

12                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Merci.  
13                   Human Rights Commission -- Coalition, I'm  
14       sorry.

15       **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

16       **MR. DAVID MATAS:**

17                  **MR. DAVID MATAS:** My name is David Matas. I  
18       had a question based on the programs which are detailed in  
19       the information that's already provided in CAN.DOC34.  
20       There's a number of them devoted to foreign interference.

21                   So the question I had, were any of the  
22       programs that have been developed by Heritage Canada, or any  
23       of the requests that were made for proposals, directed or  
24       tailored to diaspora communities?

25                  **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Could we just get --  
26       CAN.DOC34 is the Institutional Report, or?

27                  **MR. DAVID MATAS:** As I understand it, yes.

28                  **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Okay.

1           **MS. AMY AWAD:** Yes, in fact, so there was a  
2 couple of different calls of proposals that had either direct  
3 or kind of indirect focus on diaspora communities. So the  
4 call specifically on Russia/Ukraine ended up bringing out  
5 projects that focused specifically on kind of, not say  
6 Russian, but Ukrainian communities in Canada.

7           In the second call for proposals, there was a  
8 focus again on diaspora communities and we ended up getting  
9 proposals that looked at translating materials or focusing on  
10 specific diaspora communities.

11           And then also in the fifth call, we had  
12 another focus on foreign interference and the impacts that it  
13 has on diaspora communities.

14           **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And part of the  
15 spirit of the program again reflects that the impacts of  
16 disinformation in certain Canadian communities is different;  
17 right? And so part of the spirit of the program is, again,  
18 equipping civil society organizations who have a particular  
19 relationship or a particular role in that community to play a  
20 role in that space. And so again, it's about tapping in  
21 often to those trusted partners who know that community best  
22 and know what the best way is of reaching that community and  
23 equipping them.

24           **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Now, I understand there was  
25 one specifically about Ukraine. Has there been any others  
26 that have been directed specifically to named diaspora  
27 communities?

28           **MS. AMY AWAD:** So the COVID calls did look at

1     trying to reach diaspora communities, so a lot of the  
2     projects that were funded through the COVID calls ended up  
3     producing materials in various languages either for Asian --  
4     various Asian-language communities, Latin-American  
5     communities, Middle Eastern communities, so forth, so there  
6     was a fair bit of that.

7             And there is at least one other call where I  
8     think the term diaspora community actually appeared in the  
9     call. I'm just looking at it now. It may have been in the  
10    second call. Yeah, so it talks about:

11                   "...understand[...] the impact of  
12                    disinformation on diverse and  
13                    marginalized Canadian communities..."

14             So that was part of that.

15             **MR. DAVID MATAS:** These calls that are made  
16     to -- calls for proposals, they're made and they include the  
17     term "diaspora communities". Are there actually outreaches  
18     to diaspora communities to communicate those calls to them in  
19     their own languages?

20             **MS. AMY AWAD:** So to -- I'm not aware of  
21     outreach at the outset, for example, to go and reach the  
22     communities before the call is proposed, but we have a  
23     steering committee of civil society organizations and  
24     researchers, and they have a role in trying to ensure that  
25     the right researchers and the right organizations are aware  
26     of our programs and have the opportunity to apply.

27             **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** And over the years  
28     as well, the community of practice around the Digital Citizen

1 Initiative has grown and that, you know, I think by word of  
2 mouth and other things, and so there is now also quite a  
3 large distribution list of stakeholders who are notified when  
4 there is a call for proposal going up, for example, and we  
5 add -- if somebody wishes to be added to that, we add them to  
6 that.

7 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** What was your reaction to  
8 the response to these calls? Did you find it satisfactory?  
9 Or could be improved?

10 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So there was an  
11 evaluation that was done, and what they do in this case is  
12 they don't just talk to us. They talk actually to people who  
13 were either project proponents or people who were served by  
14 the projects. So they do a bit of a canvas of 360 to make  
15 sure they get comments from everybody. And the general --  
16 and I don't remember which page it is, but the general  
17 feeling was that the program was efficient and that the  
18 program was relevant. So the level of satisfaction was very  
19 much in favour of the program.

20 The thing that evaluation mentioned, that we  
21 have to improve more and more some better measurement of the  
22 result, how can we, you know, have better indicators and  
23 other things more about how we organize ourselves internally  
24 with our colleagues and how do we coordinate within the  
25 Canadian Heritage and outside?

26 But generally speaking, I would say the  
27 problem was federally, by people who were interviewed.

28 **MS. AMY AWAD:** And I might add that the

1 program has been oversubscribed, meaning that on every call  
2 for proposals, we get significantly more applications than  
3 we're actually able to fund, and that allows us to try to  
4 meet different objectives, so choose ones, for example, that  
5 reach diaspora communities that might not have been reached,  
6 that addressed different vectors of diversity that could show  
7 more impact, that have more partnerships, that have better  
8 reach, better -- and that's, I think, a feature that you have  
9 in a program when there's a lot of organizations and  
10 researchers that wants to participate and benefit from it.

11 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** I understand. Are you  
12 happy with your level of funding or do you feel that with  
13 more funding you could do more productive work?

14 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So I think what we  
15 would like is we would like to be able to scale up more some  
16 of those activities, because we think that in order to really  
17 provide more support and structural change, we would like to  
18 be able to scale some of those very good projects that seem  
19 very promising but are fairly content at the moment. So  
20 obviously with more money, we would be able to do that a  
21 little bit more.

22 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** And also, the feedback you  
23 got from the evaluations, are you actually making the  
24 recommendations that were generated by that feedback?

25 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Yes, absolutely. So  
26 there were mainly three recommendations. The first one was  
27 about getting better measurements, which is always something  
28 we are striving to, because sometimes it's difficult to



1       measure the impact, although every project was also measured  
2       in the project, so every time we approach something, they  
3       have to measure the result.

4               The second one was that we need to be a bit  
5       more coordinated within the Department, because there were  
6       different groups that were involved. That has been resolved.

7               And the third one was something we have  
8       touched before, which was about how do we make sure that  
9       through the time we have a process that works better. So  
10      we're changing a little bit before every partner in other  
11      departments, we're reviewing all applications, but sometimes  
12      somebody from health has no value on an application about  
13      something else, so now we're really refining a bit this  
14      approval process.

15              And we're also reviewing our external expert  
16      committee, because the project, as my colleague had  
17      described, has evolved, and now we are more into foreign  
18      interference, for example, or other subjects, so we also are  
19      going to renew the expert committee to make sure that we  
20      still have the expertise we need as the program evolves,  
21      basically.

22              **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Do you have any feedback to  
23      give in the opposite direction, to proponents who produce  
24      proposals, about ways in which they could improve the  
25      proposals in order to ---

26              **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** It's a very good  
27      question.

28              Maybe I will turn to you.

1                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** I think it would be  
2 very -- it would be dependent on kind of the specific call  
3 for proposals. But what I would say to you is, as I  
4 highlighted earlier, we are really encouraging project  
5 proponents to work together and develop joint proposals that  
6 tap into various different areas of expertise. And I think  
7 that speaks to your concern about, you know, making sure that  
8 there are projects that include a lens of reaching diasporan  
9 communities, so that's certainly one piece.

10                   And, you know, the program staff is always  
11 available and willing to work with folks who would like to  
12 put forward a project proposal, to walk them through what  
13 that process looks like and the kinds of things that will be  
14 brought to bear, in terms of evaluating the strength of  
15 projects.

16                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Now, in terms of programs  
17 within the department, do you have something separate from  
18 this call for proposals and answers for proposals that deals  
19 with the problems of foreign interference and the diaspora?

20                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So in the department we  
21 don't have a program on foreign interference, per se. What  
22 we do is we try to create an environment where hopefully we  
23 create an LT, media information system, and all the thing  
24 that I mention, which I think are defence against foreign  
25 interference, because if you have access to other news, if  
26 you are able to have different voice and all for that. But  
27 we do that in that kind of eye of the pyramid, not in the  
28 specific tailor that it's only about foreign interference.

1                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** I understand that's the  
2 situation right now with the department. Would you like to  
3 see something in the department that deals specifically with  
4 foreign interference?

5                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think what we have  
6 done with the program that we have talked about, the digital  
7 literacy, is we have moved a little bit more in that sphere,  
8 in light of the research, in light of the information we're  
9 getting.

10                   So the beauty of this program is it's fairly  
11 flexible, so we have been able to adapt to the reality and  
12 what we see in the research that we are basically sponsoring.

13                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** I understand from the  
14 Digital Literacy Program you are moving somewhat. Do you see  
15 yourself moving further in that direction?

16                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think we have  
17 continued to follow the research and the expertise that, you  
18 know, we see there, and that's why it's so important that we  
19 have project but also research so that we can continue to  
20 adapt based on evidence.

21                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Now, you mentioned that  
22 there was a government-ordered hearing about RT. Has that  
23 government power to order hearings been exercised on a  
24 regular basis?

25                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** It's been exercised  
26 on different occasions over the years. It's used in  
27 different ways. So that was, as I mentioned, the first time  
28 it had been used at the CRTC to look into a particular issue

1 -- a particular issue like that. But it has been used at the  
2 CRTC, you know, to have a hearing or generate a report; it  
3 was used in advance of the *Online Streaming Act*, for example,  
4 to get them to look at the impact of streaming services. And  
5 so it is a power that is used from time to time.

6 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** In relation to RT, did you  
7 find that government-ordered hearing useful, from your  
8 perspective?

9 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** The government was  
10 keen to make sure that the CRTC was seized of the issue, in  
11 light of the broader geopolitical context and the Russian  
12 invasion of Ukraine. And as I previously mentioned we knew  
13 it was an issue that was being looked at in other  
14 jurisdictions and so it was important that the CRTC move  
15 quickly to look at that. And there was -- as the Order  
16 notes, there was a fairly tight timeline for the CRTC to do  
17 that work, and so the CRTC did that work and came to the  
18 conclusion -- the decision that it came to.

19 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Well, as you can see there  
20 is, when it comes to foreign interference and the Department  
21 of Canadian Heritage and the CRTC, more than one issue, more  
22 than just RT. And would you find it useful to have such a  
23 government-ordered hearing in other areas dealing with  
24 foreign interference?

25 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Each situation needs  
26 to be looked at on the facts because these questions do  
27 engage really fundamental, important issues like freedom of  
28 expression and independence of media, and ensuring that there

1 is a wide diversity of information and news and cultural  
2 content in Canada, so it's not something that is taken  
3 lightly.

4 As the CRTC noted in their testimony here  
5 they are working on putting in place a more complete  
6 framework in terms of, you know, ways that Canadians can  
7 bring forward complaints if there are concerns; I think they  
8 recognize it being a bit ad hoc. And so as these issues  
9 become more prominent and more important, it is important  
10 that the CRTC provide clarity to Canadians about how they can  
11 exercise their ability to file a complaint and flag if there  
12 is concerns that there is content being distributed on the  
13 Canadian broadcasting system that doesn't respect the  
14 broadcasting standards.

15 **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Do you see this prospect of  
16 a more complete framework for dealing with complaints as a  
17 way of kind of replacing the need for these government-  
18 ordered hearings?

19 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** The -- you know, the  
20 power for the government to ask the CRTC to look into  
21 something or do a hearing, you know, again, is used on a  
22 case-by-case basis, and it's being used in a variety of  
23 different contexts. So I won't speak to kind of how the  
24 government may or may not use that power in the future, but I  
25 would agree that it is -- it will be important that there be  
26 a framework and, again, that there is clarity on how  
27 Canadians or concerned organizations can raise these issues  
28 directly with the CRTC.

1                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** And maybe just to be  
2 clear; this power is a general power to ask the government to  
3 ask the CRTC to look at something. It's not specifically  
4 direct to the kind of situation we're discussing, but it has  
5 been used in that context as well, but it is used in other  
6 contexts.

7                   **MR. DAVID MATAS:** Understood. Those are my  
8 questions.

9                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

10                   Counsel for Jenny Kwan, Ms. Kakkar?

11                   **(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

12                   **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Good afternoon,  
13 Commissioner.

14                   **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

15                   **MS. MANI KAKKAR:**

16                   **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Good afternoon, panellists.  
17 I'm hoping not to give you whiplash, but I  
18 have a few very different areas to cover. One I wanted to  
19 start with was in your interview summary, you state:

20                   "As a part of the diversity of  
21 content online component of the DCI,  
22 PCH also began to liaise with social  
23 media platforms among others to  
24 create a set of principles that all  
25 parties could operationalize to  
26 promote a diversity of content  
27 online." (As read)

28                   Could you talk a little bit about your

1 engagement with social media platforms? Which ones and what  
2 outcomes have resulted?

3 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** M'hm.

4 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So I may turn to my  
5 colleague, Amy, for some of the finer details, but the  
6 diversity of content online was an initiative that the  
7 department led for several years that was really a multi-  
8 stakeholder type approach. So what it sought to do was say,  
9 "Here are some of the problems that we're seeing on the  
10 online platforms," and seek to codevelop possible responses  
11 and solutions to those in collaboration with governments,  
12 civil society, and industry, or in this case the platforms.

13 And so specifically I don't have the list in  
14 front of me, but my recollection is the platforms that were  
15 involved in that initiative were Google, and Deezer.

16 And then, Amy, I don't know if you remember  
17 any of the others off the top of your head.

18 **MS. AMY AWAD:** I'm sorry, I don't.

19 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** And I appreciate that you  
20 just said you may not remember, but do you know if ByteDance  
21 or TikTok were a part of those discussions at all?

22 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** They were not.

23 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** And how about, they're not  
24 quite social media platforms but apps like WhatsApp or WeChat  
25 where they have sort of a public/private component, given the  
26 size of the group that's discussing or sharing content?

27 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** My recollection is  
28 that they were not, no. And the information about which

1 platforms participated in that initiative, I believe, is  
2 found -- can be found on our website.

3 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Was there any particular  
4 reason for not reaching out to them, or was it just a matter  
5 of there was a subset?

6 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** The origins of that  
7 particular initiative came out of a particular event, and so  
8 the way that it developed is that there was a desire to make  
9 sure that we had platform representation. So on the country  
10 -- if I just back up, on the country side it included  
11 Australia, France, Germany, and Finland, and Mexico later  
12 joined. And so there was a desire to make sure there was  
13 platform representation from different areas of the world;  
14 that's for example, Deezer, based out of Europe, I believe.

15 And so it came out of a particular event  
16 where solicitation of platforms interested in kind of  
17 participating in that multi-stakeholder type approach, and  
18 again, that's -- it's unique in that it was a desire for  
19 companies that wanted to work with civil society and  
20 government on developing those joint type solutions.

21 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Were any of those joint  
22 type solutions developed during these meetings applicable to  
23 FI, in your view?

24 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So one of the themes  
25 -- not directly. One of the themes -- and again, you can  
26 find more information about the initiative on our website.  
27 One of the themes was about recognizing that like social  
28 media and online platforms can be a vector for



1       disinformation, and so that was one of the themes identified  
2       that the group worked through.

3               The ultimate kind of product of that was  
4       there was a series of kind of guiding principles that was  
5       developed, and you can find those guiding principles on our  
6       website and what each kind of segment did is identify things  
7       that they could do to kind of contribute towards advancing  
8       those guiding principles.

9               **MS. MANI KAKKAR:**   Okay.   And without having  
10       you necessarily talk through each of the guiding principles,  
11       they're exactly that.   They're not binding.   There's no  
12       consequence for not following them.

13              **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:**   That's correct.  
14       Again, this was a multi-stakeholder type approach where the  
15       very essence of the exercise is to agree to voluntary action  
16       in these spaces.

17              **MS. MANI KAKKAR:**   Okay.   One thing I wanted  
18       to ask more generally was -- actually, let's ask the specific  
19       question first.

20              So you said that in response to Bill C-18  
21       it's been known that Facebook, and so Meta, has essentially  
22       banned news content from being shared that would make them --  
23       that would essentially get them to be carved out, in a way,  
24       of Bill C-18 or not have the full impact of Bill C-18.

25              Have you received any similar response from  
26       TikTok or other social media platforms?

27              **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:**   So the way that the  
28       legislation is structured is that there are now regulations

1 in place that identify certain thresholds for when a social  
2 media service is subject to the legislation and where they  
3 are -- where they pass those thresholds, it's incumbent on  
4 them to notify the CRTC that they believe that they're  
5 subject to the legislation.

6 So based on the modeling that we did at the  
7 time of developing those regulations, the expectation was  
8 that Google search and Facebook and potentially Instagram  
9 would be around around that threshold.

10 There are other services below that  
11 threshold, and in the future if they were to pass those --  
12 that threshold, they would become subject to the Act and  
13 required to notify the CRTC that they are subject to the  
14 legislation.

15 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** How did you determine the  
16 threshold?

17 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** It was done on -- so  
18 there's different thresholds. There's kind of a global  
19 revenue threshold. There's a -- kind of the market in which  
20 you operate threshold, so in this case, search and social  
21 media were identified. And then there's a number of active  
22 user threshold, and the threshold that was used in that case  
23 was approximately half of the Canadian population. And  
24 again, part of developing the regulations, there was an  
25 impact assessment that is done and available online that kind  
26 of walks through the particular impacts and why those  
27 thresholds were chosen.

28 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Would you agree that a

1 threshold that sort of requires half of the Canadian  
2 population before it's triggered might inadvertently or  
3 disproportionately let diaspora communities down who may use  
4 particular platforms but may not meet that threshold  
5 requirement?

6 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** It's about which  
7 platforms are subject to that obligation to bargain with news  
8 businesses, right. And again, the rationale behind why the  
9 Act was put in place is recognizing that there are certain  
10 platforms that are particularly dominant and are particularly  
11 important kind of gateways to news and information. And so  
12 the threshold is kind of about identifying at what point does  
13 this obligation to bargain kick in.

14 The Act is structured in a way that once the  
15 obligation to bargain kicks in, the news businesses for which  
16 a platform has to bargain with is a wide diversity of news  
17 businesses, including those that represent different  
18 communities in Canada. And so the Act is structured in a way  
19 that the benefits flow to a wide diversity of news  
20 businesses, including those coming from official language  
21 minority communities, Indigenous languages and other  
22 multicultural communities in Canada.

23 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** And I will say this is  
24 one of the difference and maybe improvement of the Act over  
25 time is that the Australian model did not have requirement as  
26 to local journalists, community newspapers in different  
27 language, Indigenous newspaper, minority language newspaper.  
28 Now, in order for an organization to not have to a binding

1 arbitration, they have to fulfil a requirement to meet all  
2 these criteria and it's actually what the CRTC's looking now  
3 with Google is that are they meeting that criteria that they  
4 have reached a very, very spread of newspapers so it's not  
5 just the five big newspapers here.

6 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. No, I appreciate the  
7 clarification on that point.

8 So then more generally, in the work that you  
9 do around mis and disinformation, do social media platforms  
10 like TikTok pose any unique threats or barriers to you?

11 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** What I would say is  
12 I think we -- each platform has particular characteristics  
13 that, you know, can be used or -- by threat actors in a  
14 different way, right. And I think you see that in kind of  
15 the variety of different kinds of projects that we have  
16 funded under the Digital Citizen Initiative that each  
17 platform is not -- is not the same and it does have unique  
18 characteristics and it is important to develop an evidence  
19 base on kind of those characteristics and also important to  
20 equip citizens with specific skill sets depending on the  
21 platform.

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** And I would add that  
23 platforms change over time, too. If I take the example of X,  
24 it's a very different platform now than it was before and the  
25 content moderator has been really diminished.

26 So we also have to look at platforms where  
27 they are because sometimes to change of ownership or other,  
28 they are changing quite a lot their modele d'affaire and,

1       therefore, they also change how they moderate the content.  
2       And that has a huge impact, too, on disinformation.

3                   **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** I think that one of the  
4       panels that came before you testified that content moderation  
5       as a trend has gone down amongst platforms. Facebook, for  
6       example, used to content moderate quite a bit. It no longer  
7       does.

8                   Have you done anything to respond to this  
9       trend leaving essentially a vacuum in this space?

10                  **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So I think C-63 is in  
11       response to that because I think we have stopped trusting  
12       that content moderation is the solution and, therefore, now  
13       in C-63 is that you have an accountability just like any  
14       other product that you buy tomorrow. You want the company  
15       who put that product, whether it's for message call or  
16       anything, to be accountable for the product they have, which  
17       means that they have to assess where are the risks and they  
18       have to take measures to minimize the risk and particularly  
19       in the category of things that are the more egregious.

20                  **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. But you recognize  
21       that Bill C-63 has limitations when it comes to  
22       disinformation. Disinformation would have to fit those very  
23       discrete categories, and I don't know if there was any study  
24       done to see how much disinformation falls into those and how  
25       much will fall outside of that.

26                  **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** One of the big  
27       challenges in thinking about disinformation as a harm is that  
28       it does put some one or some entity in the position of having

1 to make a determination about whether it is true or not. And  
2 obviously, there's also a spectrum of true to not true as  
3 well, right.

4 And so it is one of the big challenges that  
5 if you specifically identify it as a harm, it engages much  
6 more substantially freedom of expression and, again, you're  
7 putting an entity in a place that has to make that  
8 determination, right.

9 So C-63 also includes certain systemic  
10 obligations on platforms. I'd previously mentioned the  
11 transparency reporting that is broader than just the seven  
12 harms, and so again, if a particular platform was -- had data  
13 or internal research or saw that something was taking place  
14 on that platform in relation to foreign interference or in  
15 relation to disinformation, they would be required to  
16 disclose it publicly.

17 There's also the obligation in C-63 to give  
18 researchers access to data sets that are currently not  
19 shared, generally speaking, with researchers to provide civil  
20 society and researchers with that access to kind of, you  
21 know, play a challenge function to what is, you know, going  
22 on in these platforms and what the platforms are saying.

23 There's obligations on platforms to put in  
24 place flagging tools. And then I previously mentioned the  
25 labeling requirement.

26 So part of the solution on thinking about  
27 disinformation as a harm is also putting in place some of  
28 these systemic things that can be flagged or indications to

1 Canadians that the information they're engaging with may not  
2 be accurate, may not be reliable, they may want to be more  
3 curious about where it's coming from. And again, that avoids  
4 putting some entity in that position of having to assess  
5 whether it's true or not and make that determination.

6 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** And the example of that  
7 is, I think some of the networks, the media networks came  
8 here, and they say used to be able to do some analysis, but  
9 now some of the companies have closed access to some data  
10 which they have to pay very, very much money to be able to  
11 access. So Bill C-63 will help on that because then it will  
12 make the information available, and when you have the  
13 information available, then civil society, academic, media,  
14 can get that information and do something about it, which is  
15 not the case now.

16 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** No, I appreciate that. And  
17 thankfully your answers have reduced the need for any -- or  
18 have reduced the risk of any whiplash, because somehow you've  
19 managed to cover off my various topics.

20 But those are my questions. Thank you so  
21 much.

22 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Thank you.

23 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

24 Counsel for Erin O'Toole.

25 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

26 **MR. PRESTON LIM:**

27 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Hi, my name is Preston Lim,  
28 and I represent Mr. O'Toole. I just have a short set of

1 questions for you, Mr. Awad, related to some of the testimony  
2 that you gave earlier, stemming from the department funded  
3 project, disinformation in Canadian Chinese language media.

4 Okay. So you mentioned earlier that in  
5 response to this project, the development -- developed some  
6 tools to combat disinformation. Do I have that correct?

7 **MS. AMY AWAD:** That's right, and there are  
8 tools in part to track disinformation and narratives and to  
9 give access to kind of researchers and so forth to them. But  
10 yes.

11 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Could you just expand a  
12 little bit more about the specific tool that was implemented?

13 **MS. AMY AWAD:** Sure. So this is a project  
14 that was funded in '23, '24, so we don't have the tool yet,  
15 as we've given the funding, we've selected the project for  
16 funding and we're waiting for them to kind of complete the  
17 project and then report to us on the outcomes.

18 But what the proposal suggested was a focus  
19 on foreign interference in Canadian Chinese language media  
20 coverage and its impact on diaspora communities. They're  
21 going to develop an Open Access AI tool for both texts and  
22 images that can identify narratives, sentient emotions in  
23 Chinese language media, and make it accessible to key  
24 stakeholders to help identify foreign interference.

25 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** And when do you expect that  
26 to be operational?

27 **MS. AMY AWAD:** The project needs to be  
28 completed by March 2025.



1                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Okay. Thank you. And was  
2 there anything else recommended by that department funded  
3 project that the department has not moved forward on?

4                   **MS. AMY AWAD:** I'm sorry, could you repeat  
5 the question?

6                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Were there any other  
7 recommendations coming out of that funded project that the  
8 department could have acted on but didn't?

9                   **MS. AMY AWAD:** So the project isn't completed  
10 yet so I don't have any recommendations.

11                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Right.

12                   **MS. AMY AWAD:** And we do have other projects  
13 that will provide recommendations, and when we receive those  
14 recommendations, we will have to work on it.

15                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** Yeah, I think the  
16 question is whether there were other components of that  
17 application that weren't funded.

18                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Yes.

19                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** We'd have to ---

20                   **MS. AMY AWAD:** I'm not aware of it.

21                   **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** We don't have that  
22 information on hand.

23                   **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Thanks. That's about all  
24 I have.

25                   One last question, and I don't know that  
26 you're the best place to answer this, Ms. Awad, but I know at  
27 least you and then also Mr. Ripley had mentioned in some  
28 manner, coordination with other government departments or

1 agencies. And so, my question is, from the perspective of  
2 the Department of Canadian Heritage, is communication with  
3 other departmentally agencies or departments rather, upon  
4 China related matters as regular and efficient as it could  
5 be?

6 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** So maybe a couple of  
7 things, and then I'm not sure if Isabel might have something  
8 from where she sits.

9 So you know, the mechanisms that Amy  
10 described earlier are really grounded in the way that we  
11 administer the program day today. And so again, to the  
12 extent, you know that we've heard and highlighted today, that  
13 the recent call for proposals specifically asked for projects  
14 related to the PRC or Russian disinformation. And so, you  
15 know, the consultative body that Amy mentioned would have  
16 been mobilized on that, or a steering committee with the  
17 external experts would have been mobilized on that; right?

18 But that consultative body is used in  
19 relation to whatever the kind of priority is of the day. I'm  
20 not sure, Deputy, if there's anything you have to add?

21 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think the other one  
22 that you are very much involved the, you know, democratic  
23 package that our colleague always had the Privy Council  
24 office work on. But also, at my level there is sometimes  
25 discussion either with secret agency or other that I'm part  
26 of because we are -- we are seen as contributing to the  
27 cultural momentum mentioned in that space.

28 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** Ms. Mondou, that's helpful.

1 Would you say that that process is -- it's working well or  
2 there are improvements that you would like to see?

3 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I will say it's way  
4 better than it was, and I think we always aim to make it even  
5 more tight. So we will continue obviously, to make sure that  
6 we are working in a very horizontal way. But I will say we  
7 are working now in a way that I'm not sure we would have  
8 worked many years ago. It's very -- certainly Canadian  
9 Heritage, I don't think would have been part of that  
10 discussion.

11 **MR. PRESTON LIM:** That's great. That's all I  
12 have, Madam Commissioner.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.  
14 Maître Lafrance for the OCC, do you have any  
15 questions?

16 **Me SÉBASTIEN LAFRANCE:** Non, pas de  
17 questions. Merci, Madame la Commissaire.

18 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Pas de questions.  
19 Pardon.

20 AG?

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

22 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:**

23 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Maria Barrett-  
24 Morris for the Attorney General of Canada.

25 We heard you indicate earlier that the  
26 mandate of the Digital Citizen Initiative is broader than  
27 foreign interference in elections. Is that fair?

28 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Correct.

1                   **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Yeah. Some funded  
2 projects through the DCI do relate specifically  
3 misinformation and disinformation stemming from foreign  
4 governments?

5                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** That's correct.

6                   **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** And some funded  
7 projects relate more generally to the detection of  
8 misinformation and disinformation?

9                   **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Also correct

10                  **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Can you explain  
11 whether those more generalized projects that relate to  
12 misinformation and disinformation also assist in  
13 understanding and detecting foreign misinformation and  
14 disinformation?

15                  **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Absolutely. I think  
16 all the ways we have to equip citizen, or all the ways that  
17 we have to make sure that citizens have the information they  
18 need to be informed, is helpful generally. Because frankly  
19 misinformation sometimes turns into foreign interference and  
20 it's not apparent to the person or council that.

21                  So I think all the effort we make in order  
22 to, you know, diversify the source of news that we have  
23 tools, and citizens to be able to hopefully be curious about  
24 the information they have, is helpful for any form of  
25 misinformation. And sometimes it turns into foreign  
26 interference and it's not always clear when it does, but the  
27 same tool and the same skill are very much applicable, and  
28 the same thing for the research that we're doing, I think.

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Would you make the same statement regarding misinformation and disinformation stemming from foreign governments in relation to elections, Canadian elections?

MS. ISABELLE MONDOU: I think that's true. I think my colleague made a good point that you want people when the election comes, to have already developed some of those skills. If you start at the beginning of the 36-day period, you're probably a little bit late.

So if we can have those more substantive conversations with Canadians and do that in a way that it's a constant dialogue, I think when the election is called whenever it is, people will be more prepared. That doesn't mean we should not do something in addition during the time of election, but I think that foundation is very useful.

**MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Thank you.

I'll ask the court reporter to pull up document CAN44734. Excuse me. Thank you.

And if we can turn -- continue going down the document, I think it's on page 2 and number seven specifically.

Commission counsel and actually numerous questioners today, have raised this particular memorandum and this call, call number five with you. Specifically with respect to priority seven, I'll ask you to just read aloud priority seven as it appears on the screen.

**MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** So it's:

"Develop and publish tools to build

1 resilience to mis-/disinformation  
2 stemming from foreign governments,  
3 such as the People's Republic of  
4 China, targeting diaspora communities  
5 in Canada."

6 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Thank you. Is  
7 this the final published language for priority number seven?

8 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I don't think it is,  
9 and I will turn to my colleagues if they have the text. I  
10 don't have the text in front of me.

11 **MR. THOMAS OWEN RIPLEY:** No, when this was  
12 ultimately finalized it included both the reference to the  
13 PRC as well as Russia.

14 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Thank you. And  
15 I'll turn now to the *Broadcasting Act*.

16 You spoke earlier about the independence of  
17 the CRTC, and you indicated that the government can't order  
18 the CRTC to reach a particular result. Am I remembering that  
19 correctly?

20 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** That's correct.

21 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Is the  
22 independence of the CRTC important in your view; and if so,  
23 why?

24 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** It's important because  
25 it's an administrative tribunal, and by definition  
26 administrative tribunal what they do is different than  
27 government. So they are basically there to enter and solicit  
28 the evidence of people who are concerned, whoever it is at

1 the time, take the record, and then make a decision based on  
2 the record before them.

3 In order for that process to work, it has to  
4 be free from government interference because it's about a  
5 process that is quasi-judicial in nature.

6 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** And is there a  
7 risk you can imagine, were the CRTC not independent from the  
8 government?

9 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** I think there will be  
10 definitely be risk to its credibility. If, for example,  
11 instead of asking the CRTC to consider RT, and then based on  
12 their review and evidence, the government has ordered them to  
13 do that -- which by the way, doesn't have the power -- I  
14 think it would be risky because then it's not a decision  
15 based on independent evidence, it's really a government  
16 decision.

17 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Thank you.

18 Absolutely.

19 **MS. AMY AWAD:** The CRTC in particular has a  
20 role with respect to the regulation of media, and that makes  
21 their independence, their administrative function even more  
22 important, so that the government is not interfering with  
23 kind of the expression of citizens, and that any decisions  
24 that are made are based kind of on a public record and rules  
25 as opposed to kind of the desire of the government to push a  
26 specific narrative within the public.

27 **MS. MARIA BARRETT-MORRIS:** Thank you.

28 **MS. ISABELLE MONDOU:** Thank you.

1                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you. Maître  
2 MacKay, any questions?

3                   **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Non, Madame la  
4 Commissaire.

5                   **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Des questions? Pardon.  
6 Je m'excuse, je passe de l'anglais au français.

7                   **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** On fait tous ça.

8                   **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** J'aime bien m'adresser  
9 aux francophones en français.

10                  **Me JEAN-PHILIPPE MacKAY:** Non, pas de  
11 questions, Madame la Commissaire.

12                  **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Pas de questions. Merci  
13 beaucoup.

14                  **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Merci, Madame la  
15 Commissaire.

16                  **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Ce fut très utile.

17                  **Mme ISABELLE MONDOU:** Merci.

18                  **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Je vous souhaite une  
19 bonne soirée. Alors, on se voit demain, 9 h 30. Merci.

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

22                         This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
23 Commission is adjourned until tomorrow, the 8<sup>th</sup> of October  
24 2024 at 9:30 a.m. Cette séance de la Commission sur  
25 l'ingérence étrangère est suspendue jusqu'à demain le  
26 8 octobre 2024 à 9 h 30.

27 --- Upon adjourning at 4:37 p.m./

28 --- L'audience est ajournée 16 h 37



## C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, a certified court reporter,  
hereby certify the foregoing pages to be an accurate  
transcription of my notes/records to the best of my skill and  
ability, and I so swear.

Je, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, une sténographe officielle,  
certifie que les pages ci-hauts sont une transcription  
conforme de mes notes/enregistrements au meilleur de mes  
capacités, et je le jure.



---

Sandrine Marineau-Lupien