



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security**

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SECU • NUMBER 162 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Monday, May 13, 2019**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable John McKay**



## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Monday, May 13, 2019

• (1525)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)):** I'll bring this meeting to order.

Welcome to the 162nd meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

We have the Honourable David McGuinty and Rennie Marcoux. Thank you to both of you for coming and presenting the annual report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which has the unfortunate name of NSICOP. I'm sure Mr. McGuinty will explain in his own inimitable style what NSICOP actually does.

Welcome, Mr. McGuinty, to the committee. We look forward to your comments.

**Hon. David McGuinty (Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, colleagues. Thank you for your invitation to appear before your committee. I am joined by Rennie Marcoux, executive director of the Secretariat of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP.

It's a privilege to be here with you today to discuss the 2018 annual report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

The committee's first annual report is the result of the work, the dedication and the commitment from my colleagues on the committee. It is intended to contribute to an informed debate among Canadians on the difficult challenges of providing security and intelligence organizations with the exceptional powers necessary to identify and counter threats to the nation while at the same time ensuring that their activities continue to respect and preserve our democratic rights.

[Translation]

NSICOP has the mandate to review the overall framework for national security and intelligence in Canada, including legislation, regulations, policy, administration and finances.

It may also examine any activity that is carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence.

Finally, it may review any matter relating to national security or intelligence that a minister refers to the committee.

[English]

Members of the committee are all cleared to a top secret level, swear an oath and are permanently bound to secrecy. Members also agree that the nature of the committee, multi-party, drawn from the House of Commons and the Senate, with a broad range of experience, bring a unique perspective to these important issues.

In order to conduct our work, we are entitled to have access to any information that is related to our mandate, but there are some exceptions, namely, cabinet confidences, the identity of confidential sources or protected witnesses, and ongoing law enforcement investigations that may lead to prosecutions.

The year 2018 was a year of learning for the committee. We spent many hours and meetings building our understanding of our mandate and of the organizations responsible for protecting Canada and Canadians. The committee was briefed by officials from across the security and intelligence community and visited all seven of the main departments and agencies. Numerous meetings were also held with the national security and intelligence adviser to the Prime Minister. NSICOP also decided to conduct a review of certain security allegations surrounding the Prime Minister's trip to India in February 2018.

Over the course of the calendar year, the committee met 54 times, with an average of four hours per meeting. Annex E of the report outlines the committee's extensive outreach and engagement activities with government officials, academics and civil liberties groups.

The annual report is a result of extensive oral and written briefings, more than 8,000 pages of printed materials, dozens of meetings between NSICOP analysts and government officials, in-depth research and analysis, and thoughtful and detailed deliberations among committee members.

The report is also unanimous. In total, the report makes 11 findings and seven recommendations to the government. The committee has been scrupulously careful to take a non-partisan approach to these issues. We hope that our findings and recommendations will strengthen the accountability and effectiveness of Canada's security and intelligence community.

• (1530)

[Translation]

The report before you contains five chapters, including the two substantive reviews conducted by the committee.

The first chapter explains the origins of NSICOP, its mandate and how it approaches its work, including what factors the committee takes into consideration when deciding what to review.

The second chapter provides an overview of the security and intelligence organizations in Canada, of the threats to Canada's security and how these organizations work together to keep Canada and Canadian safe and to promote Canadian interests.

Those two chapters are followed by the committee's two substantive reviews for 2018.

[English]

In chapter 3, the committee reviewed the way the government determines its intelligence priorities. Why is this important? There are three reasons.

First, this process is the fundamental means of providing direction to Canada's intelligence collectors and assessors, ensuring they focus on the government's, and the country's, highest priorities.

Second, this process is essential to ensure accountability in the intelligence community. What the intelligence community does is highly classified. This process gives the government regular insight into intelligence operations from a government-wide lens.

Third, this process helps the government to manage risk. When the government approves the intelligence priorities, it is accepting the risks of focusing on some targets and also the risk of not focusing on others.

[Translation]

The committee found that the process, from identifying priorities to translating them into practical guidance, to informing ministers and seeking their approval, does have a solid foundation. That said, any process can be improved.

In particular, the committee recommends that the Prime Minister's national security and intelligence advisor should take a stronger leadership role in the process in order to make sure that cabinet has the best information to make important decisions on where Canada should focus its intelligence activities and its resources.

[English]

Moving on, chapter 4 reviews the intelligence activities of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. The government's defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", states that DND/CAF is "the only entity within the Government of Canada that employs the full spectrum of intelligence collection capabilities while providing multi-source analysis."

We recognize that defence intelligence activities are critical to the safety of troops and the success of Canadian military activities, including those abroad, and they are expected to grow. When the government decides to deploy the Canadian Armed Forces, DND/CAF also has implicit authority to conduct defence intelligence

activities. In both cases, the source of authority is what is known as the Crown prerogative. This is very different from how other intelligence organizations, notably CSE and CSIS, operate. Each of those organizations has clear statutory authority to conduct intelligence activities, and they are subject to regular, independent and external review.

This was a significant and complex review for the committee, with four findings and three recommendations.

Our first recommendation focuses on areas where DND/CAF could make changes to strengthen its existing internal governance structure over its intelligence activities and to strengthen the accountability of the minister.

The other two recommendations would require the government to amend or to consider enacting legislation. The committee has set out the reasons why it formed the view that regular independent review of DND/CAF intelligence activities will strengthen accountability over its operations.

We believe there is an opportunity for the government, with Bill C-59 still before the Senate, to put in place requirements for annual reporting on DND/CAF's national security or intelligence activities, as would be required for CSIS and CSE.

Second, the committee also believes that its review substantiates the need for the government to give very serious consideration to providing explicit legislative authority for the conduct of defence intelligence activities. Defence intelligence is critical to the operations of the Canadian Armed Forces and, like all intelligence activities, involves inherent risks.

DND/CAF officials expressed concerns to the committee about maintaining operational flexibility for the conduct of defence intelligence activities in support of military operations. The committee, therefore, thought it was important to present both the risks and the benefits of placing defence intelligence on a clear statutory footing.

Our recommendations are a reflection of the committee's analysis of these important issues.

• (1535)

[Translation]

We would be pleased to take your questions.

[English]

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. Picard, you have seven minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.):** Thank you.

Welcome to our witnesses.

This my first experience with this committee, and I am very enthusiastic about it.

My first question is very basic, Mr. McGuinty, just to get the discussion rolling.

The NSICOP is a new organization and there is currently a learning curve associated with it. It is an addition to our current structures.

To help us better understand what our intelligence organizations do, can you explain how this organization, the NSICOP, adds value to what was done in the past, before it was established?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Thank you for the question.

I would start by saying that the added value comes first from the fact that members of NSICOP have access to all classified information, to all documents, to presentations and to witnesses. Having access to the most in-depth information helps a great deal.

Then I believe that, this year, NSICOP has shown that it is very possible for parliamentarians of all parties, from both Houses of the Parliament of Canada, to work together in a non-partisan way. That is being done against a currently very partisan backdrop, I feel.

My colleagues and I decided from the outset that we would check the partisan approach at the door because of the importance of the work. Matters of national security are simply too important for us to be part of the normal daily tensions on the political stage.

The year was not easy because, in a sense, we had to learn how to get the plane off the ground. We formed a secretariat, we hired about a dozen full-time people and we have a budget of \$3.5 million per year.

We are proud of what we have done to get NSICOP started in its first year.

**Mr. Michel Picard:** Thank you.

So I am now going to ask you a more technical question. I would like to go back to your comment about military intelligence.

You made a comparison between the intelligence services, the agencies working in intelligence, such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, and the Security Communications Establishment, or CSE, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the other agencies engaged in intelligence activities.

When you talk about military intelligence, you say that the Department of National Defence encompasses the entire range of intelligence services. Are the services similar to the extent that we can consider them equal?

How are military intelligence activities broader in scope than those in the other agencies?

What comparisons can the government use to evaluate the issue of military intelligence? For example, can it rely on best practices in other countries in order to properly evaluate the needs in terms of military intelligence?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** First of all, we cannot forget that the legislative basis for the Department of National Defence always remains the prerogative of the Crown.

• (1540)

[English]

What we know about the Crown prerogative is that it's several centuries old. It's a very old vestigial power vested in the Crown that

allows countries to, for example, deploy troops, prosecute wars and conduct foreign policy.

The powers vested today in CSIS and CSE, for example, also sprang forth from the original concept of the Crown prerogative, but as a result of evolving, both of those organizations now have four corners of a statute within which to operate. They have their own law. They have their own enabling legislation, and by its own admission, in the government's defence paper, the Department of National Defence indicates that it's the only full spectrum organization in the country. In other words, it does what CSIS, CSE and the RCMP do combined.

It also plans on expanding the number of intelligence personnel by 300 over the next several years. It is a major actor in the intelligence sphere.

We took a long hard look at the statutory footing on which it's operating and began to ask some difficult probative questions. The report tries to walk a fine line between the merits of the government considering a statutory footing, new legislation, and some of the inherent risks that the department has brought to our attention. We've been very careful in the report to put it in very plain black and white for people to understand. In so doing, we wanted to simply raise the profile of this issue and ignite a debate, not only amongst parliamentarians but in Canadian society.

**Mr. Michel Picard:** For the remaining time, my last question will be on one of your findings. On page 54 it states:

F7. Performance measurements for the security and intelligence community is not robust enough to give Cabinet the context it needs to understand the efficiency and effectiveness of the security and Intelligence community.

Do we have any example of prejudice caused by the lack of effectiveness? Would you expand on this finding please?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux (Executive Director, Secretariat of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians):** I'll answer the question.

What we've indicated in the report is that we did not have access to the actual cabinet documents, since it's a limit in our legislation. What we saw were all the discussions, the briefing materials and the minutes of meetings leading up to that. I think it's in the overall process, from start to finish, where we identify the result, that cabinet did not get enough in terms of answering these questions: What are the risks? What are the benefits? Where are the gaps in collection? Where are the gaps in assessment? Could we contribute more to the alliance?

It was the whole gamut of information, in terms of measuring the committee's performance, that we felt could be better.

**Mr. Michel Picard:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Picard.

We'll hear from Mr. Paul-Hus for seven minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. McGuinty and Ms. Marcoux.

On page 26 of your report, paragraph 66, you talk about espionage and foreign influence.

Do you consider election campaigns, such as for the election coming up, to be a national security issue?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** NSICOP has not yet looked deeply into the whole matter of the integrity of elections, specifically the one coming up.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Do you feel that foreign interference in elections is a matter of national security? In paragraphs 66 and 67, you say that Russia and China are two countries known to be major players in political interference. You also talk about activities designed to influence political parties as well.

It is mentioned in your report. It is a known fact.

Is NSICOP currently in a position to take measures to help stop the Chinese Communist Party trying to interfere in the coming election campaign?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Let me be clear on two things.

We included Russia and China in the report because we relied on open sources. So that is what was repeated there.

Then, we announced that one of the reviews that we will be doing in 2019 is about foreign interference. Eventually, we will have much more to say about it.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** So clearly, we will not have the information before the next campaign. Is that right?

• (1545)

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Probably not.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** When you undertook the study on the trip the Prime Minister took to India, it was likely because a matter of national security would normally be involved. Is that correct?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Minister Goodale appeared before this committee during the hearings on Bill C-59, I believe. At that time, he told us that he could not answer certain questions because it was a matter of national security. After that, in the House of Commons, Minister Goodale said the opposite. Daniel Jean also testified before our committee that it was not a matter of national security.

In your opinion, is it a matter of national security?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** In the report, we included a letter to the Prime Minister in which we clearly deal with it.

We told him that, as per our terms of reference, we had examined the allegations of foreign interference, of risks to the Prime Minister's security, and of inappropriate use of intelligence.

The report deals with those three matters specifically. The Department of Justice clearly redacted the report and revised it.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Your report on the trip to India mentions that the Prime Minister's Office did not screen the visitors well and that an error in judgment was probably made.

Has the Prime Minister or a member of his staff responded to your recommendations?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** No, not yet. We are still waiting for a response from the government to both reports.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** So you submit your reports but there has been no follow-up or reply on the recommendations. Is that right?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** NSICOP hopes that there will be some follow-up. We are still waiting for a response. We have raised the matter with the appropriate authorities.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** We certainly see that, basically, colleagues from all parties who work with you on the NSICOP have done so seriously since it was created. That is also clear as we read your report. There is a desire to take the work very seriously.

However, we still have doubts about what will come of your reports. Right from when you submit a report in which you identified serious matters, the Prime Minister basically always has the last word.

The concern we have had since the beginning, when Bill C-22 was introduced, is about the way information is transmitted. Of course, we understand that highly secret information cannot be made public.

However, when the Prime Minister himself is the subject of a study, we don't expect a response.

As chair of the committee, do you expect at the very least a reply to your studies from the government and the Prime Minister?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes, Mr. Paul-Hus.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Your notes mention Bill C-59. You make recommendations involving the Department of National Defence, DND. I know that the bill is being studied in the Senate at the moment, but I no longer recall which stage it has reached. Do you think that amendments will be proposed by the Senate or the government? Have you heard anything about that?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Our role is to submit reports to the government, and we have done that. All we can do is hope that the government will take them seriously

[*English*]

The national security and intelligence review agency, NSIRA, once it's created under Bill C-59, will have the power to review the Department of National Defence but will not be obligated to do so on an annual basis like it will for CSIS and CSE. The committee was unanimous in calling for NSIRA to have that annual responsibility built into Bill C-59 so that the extensive activities of the Department of National Defence in intelligence were reviewed on an ongoing basis.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** You explained that NSICOP has had a number of working sessions and that they are several hours long. What is the main subject that concerns you?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** What do you mean?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** For example, when you have an investigation to conduct and you need information, do you have easy access to it?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes, Mr. Paul-Hus.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** The doors of all departments are open?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Sometimes, we ask for so much documentation that the members of NSICOP find it quite difficult to manage the amount. But we have an exceptional secretariat and very experienced analysts. However, from time to time, we have to put a little pressure on some departments or some agencies. But you have to remember that our committee has only been in existence for 17 or 18 months.

Do you want to add anything, Ms. Marcoux?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** Yes.

What we notice most is the difference between agencies that are already subject to examination and that are used to providing classified information—such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, the Communications Security Establishment, CSE, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP—and other departments that are not used to it.

Those other organizations, such as the Department of National Defence or other departments, first of all have to establish a triage process for the documents and make sure that their directorates or divisions accept that a committee like ours has an almost absolute right of access to classified information, including information protected by solicitor-client privilege. It really is a learning process.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Marcoux.

Mr. Paul-Hus and Mr. Dubé, you have the floor for seven minutes.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for joining us today.

First of all, I want to thank you and all the members of the NSICOP for the work that you have done up to now. Given that this is the first experience for us all, please know that, if we are asking more technical questions on the procedure, it is in order to reach certain conclusions, it is not that we are criticizing your work, quite the contrary.

I would like to know more about the follow-up to your recommendations. As an example, when the Auditor General submits a report, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts generally makes it a point to hear from representatives of the various departments.

In your case, it is a little more complicated for two reasons. First of all, the information needed for the follow-up may well be classified. Then, you are not completely able to engage in the

political jousting that is sometimes necessary to achieve good accountability.

Would it be appropriate for a committee, like ours, for example, to be given the responsibility of conducting the follow-up with some of the organizations mentioned in your recommendations?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** That is a question that the members of the committee have discussed at length: how can we push a little harder and require the recommendations to be implemented?

We are considering several possibilities. We have learned, for example, that the CSE carries over recommendations that have not yet been implemented from one report to the next. That is a possibility we are looking at, but we are in contact with the people involved every day.

To go back to Mr. Paul-Hus' question, the Department of National Defence has never yet been examined by an external committee of parliamentarians like the NSICOP, which has the authority to require all that information.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Yes.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Since we have had DND in our sights, they, for the first time in their history, have established a group of employees with the sole responsibility of processing all the information requested. That alone is progress.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Thank you.

Please forgive me if I move things along. I have a limited amount of time.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I understand.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I would like to focus on one other point. I am going back to the question that was asked about foreign interference.

Your study was supposed to be submitted, or at least completed, before May 3, if I am not mistaken. Did I understand correctly that it is possible that the report will not be tabled in the House before Parliament adjourns for the summer?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We are working as fast as we can and spending a lot of time on that task in order to try to finish the report. However, it deals with four topics.

The problem is that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act stipulates that the government must table its reports, once the process of redaction, or revision, is complete, within 30 days.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I do not want to add to your workload and I understand that you are making every possible effort.

Is the committee satisfied with the length of time between your report arriving at the Prime Minister's Office and it being laid before the House?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** That is an excellent question. In fact, we are thinking of studying those timeframes as part of the review of the act, which has to be done five years after its coming into force. You have put your finger on a good question.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I am not doubting your good faith, but it is important for us to ask these kinds of questions in order to do our work, especially as the elections draw nearer.

In paragraph 49 of your report, you talk about the national intelligence expenditure report. You quote statistics from Australia, but the figures for Canada are redacted. Why did the Australians decide that it was appropriate to make those figures public to the extent that even we in our country are aware of them, but Canada did not? Are you able to answer that?

• (1555)

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** We asked the government the same question when we learned that this information was going to be redacted.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Have you received a response that you're able to send us?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** The government told us that this was classified data and that it did not want to disclose these details.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** This is interesting, especially considering that Australia is a member of the Five Eyes.

I have another question on redacting, particularly with regard to the summary, which must remain consistent with the rest of the document. Does the NSICOP determine how the summary is written?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** The summary is written by the staff of our secretariat. In this case, after reviewing the sentences or sentence sections and the paragraphs that had been redacted, we decided to reformulate sentences to make them complete and therefore produce a complete summary.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Was your decision to use asterisks drawn from the British model?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes, exactly.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Right, thank you.

I have another question on National Defence and the recommendation to amend Bill C-59 as well as on the definition of the mandate that would be given to the new committee.

Is your committee concerned about the resources that this new sister committee would have to do this monitoring? The resources are already rather limited. If the mandate is expanded, are you concerned about whether the new committee will be able to carry it out each year? I would like it to be and I agree with the recommendation, but the question is whether it will be able to do so adequately given current or planned resources.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** We aren't aware of the resources and budget available to the new committee. I know that this budget will be much larger than the one allocated to my secretariat because the mandate of the new committee is much broader, but we are not aware of the precise figures. That being said, we agree that resources will have to be allocated according to the mandate.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I have one last question, which may be obvious, but which I would like to ask in the 15 seconds I have left.

When you list the criteria—sufficient, but not necessary, or still necessary, but insufficient—according to which you have decided to

initiate an investigation or study, can it be said that it is in fact only a guide to inform the public, since you do not necessarily limit yourself to these criteria as appropriate?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

Mr. Spengemann and then Mr. Graham.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

Mr. McGuinty and Madam Marcoux, thank you very much for being with us. Congratulations on tabling the report.

Mr. McGuinty, in addition to chairing the NSICOP, which is a committee of parliamentarians and not a parliamentary committee, you also chair the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU, which is the umbrella organization for the world's parliaments founded in 1889.

This puts you in a very unique position to comment on the role of parliamentarians on two fundamental policy objectives that are very live around the globe today. One is the fight against terrorism and also violent extremism in all of its forms. The other is the fight for diversity and inclusion, the fight for gender equality, the fight against racism and the fight for LGBTI rights.

I'm wondering if I could invite you to comment on your perspectives, your reflections on the role of parliamentarians on these two issues, drawing on the two roles that you currently hold.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Thank you for the question.

One of the things we've been hearing as a new committee as we interface with our colleagues in Australia, the United States, Britain, New Zealand, the Five Eyes and beyond, is that parliaments worldwide are struggling with this tension between the granting of exceptional powers for security purposes and the ways in which those powers are exercised with the protection of fundamental rights to privacy, freedom, and charter rights in the Canadian context, for example.

We're not alone on this journey. Many countries have reached out to NSICOP already. Ms. Marcoux was in Europe speaking to a number of countries that are fascinated by our approach. We've been invited to countries, like Colombia, and elsewhere to help them build capacity in this regard.

I think it's not necessarily only a Canadian challenge; it's obviously a global one, with the rise of violent extremism and terrorist activity.

However, we have to make sure that we get this balance right. That's what the government's intention was when NSICOP was created, and it is certainly the informing ethic among all the members of all parties who sit on the committee now.



•(1600)

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** If you were to put your finger on the one most important aspect of parliamentary dialogue in an unencumbered setting like the IPU where there is no ministerial direction—the reconciliation between these two policy objectives—what would that role be for parliamentarians such as ourselves here on the committee?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I think the secret sauce in the work that we're doing is non-partisanship. If we learned how to work together in a more non-partisan fashion in many critical areas that we're facing as a country and as a planet—security being one, climate change being another—we might do better by our respective populations, the people we represent. I think that is integral to being able to treat issues like national security in that balance between security and rights.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you very much.

I'll hand it over to my colleague.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Thank you.

Mr. McGuinty, I'd like to put it on the record that without your mentorship when I was a staffer many years ago, I probably wouldn't be at this table today. Thank you for that.

I am happy to see your considerable skills and experience being put to use in this important work, which is very far from the public eye.

Chapter 2 makes frequent reference to Canadians not appreciating the extent of our intelligence services or understanding the various roles.

What is the most important thing you want Canadians to understand that they don't understand today?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Thanks for pointing that out, Mr. Graham.

We were struck early on in our steep learning curve about how little Canadians knew about the security and intelligence community in the country: who were the actors, what were their powers, how did they co-operate, how did they not co-operate, how could things be improved, and what are the threats facing the country.

We saw some astonishing polling results about the lack of information in Canadian society. Despite the fact that we have good agencies and departments putting out good information, Canadians are not ferreting out that information, not understanding it and not collating it.

We decided, on a foundational go-forward basis, to provide some 30 to 32 pages at the front end in this chapter to give Canadians a bit of a survey, a security and intelligence 101 course in plain English.

One of my favourite tests that I apply all the time in the committee is, if you can't stop anybody coming off of a Canadian bus or train or commuter vehicle and put this report in front of them and have them understand it, you've failed. We've tried to write and deliver information here for Canadians to understand what's going on in the country in a way that they can get it.

Canadians do get this; they get it perfectly well. It's just that I think we haven't necessarily taken the time to put it in a format and a way that they can understand and digest it. That's the purpose of those 32 or 34-odd pages, to paint a picture and a mosaic of what is going on, and at the same time to show Canadians that historically, security and intelligence has been an almost organic process.

I mentioned earlier that CSIS was spun off from the RCMP—after the RCMP was involved in some shenanigans going way back—from the Macdonald commission. It was given its own statutory footing, and CSE was given its statutory footing. Things evolved, and we think that this is an organic process in the security and intelligence field. We've tried to capture that as well.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Thank you.

I have quite a lot of questions, but I probably won't have time to get through most of them.

Do we have an appropriate number of intelligence agencies? Are there too many, too few?

Before you answer that, table 1 on page 20 lists 17 organizations, and I think there might be one missing. From our work at procedure and House affairs, we've learned that the Parliamentary Protective Service has its own intelligence unit.

Would that fall under your mandate? As a parliamentarian or as a government committee, how would you see that?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Any federal actor involved in national security and intelligence falls under the mandate of NSICOP. We did not turn our minds to the sufficiency or insufficiency or perhaps over-sufficiency of the number of actors in the field so I can't comment on that.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Thank you very much. I still have a few seconds.

**The Chair:** Yes, you do.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** You mentioned plain English as an important point.

There's a whole page, page 94, describing the arguments by DND against legislative supervision. Could you boil that down into plain English for us on how that debate went?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Manoeuvrability, operational manoeuvrability. We wanted to capture in the report verbatim the submission made by DND for that very reason. We wanted Canadians to juxtapose what we think are the merits of proceeding or considering to proceed this way with a legislative basis and some of the challenges coming forth from our front-line practitioners in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, so we reflected that very accurately. In a sense we wanted to give Canadians a shot at the state of the debate in this area.

•(1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Mr. Motz, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. McGuinty and Ms. Marcoux, for being here today.

Before I begin with my questions, I just want to commend you and thank you for your dedication of this report to our colleague Gord Brown who passed away just about a year ago. I know his family is really appreciative of that gesture, so thank you very much.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I also appreciate the comments you made about the necessity to have national security issues remain non-partisan. These issues need to be non-partisan. I couldn't agree with you more and there are a lot of lessons to be learned.

Unfortunately, the 2018 terrorism report produced by the Minister of Public Safety appears to have now become mired in some partisan politics.

Would that report have come to NSICOP before it was published?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Do you want to take a shot at that?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** Are you referring to the 2017 or the 2018 report?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** The 2018 terrorist threat.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** We were given a copy of the final report, I think, a day or two in advance of its publication, as a courtesy.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** You were not involved in reviewing it.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** No.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Mr. McGuinty, does your committee intend then to evaluate the development or publication or revision of this report to determine if there was any political interference in its various iterations, in what best practices should be moving forward, or does that not fall within your mandate?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** It might, but it's not something I'm in a position to comment on now. We have a full spectrum of four reviews for 2019 and we generally only pronounce on what we're working on once we announce what we're working on.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay, fair enough.

In the original terrorism threat report, the Minister of Public Safety named Khalistan extremism as a threat. The minister has since reworded that, but the evidence remains very dated in the report.

The only explanation that I can think of is either that the new information can't be published or that it was a political issue, not a security one. If it's the latter, if it was political and not security, then it's a significant breach of trust, in my opinion, to use terrorism threats for a political purpose.

Where should these questions be investigated? Is this committee the right one? Is your committee the right one? How do we get to the bottom of that issue, sir?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We haven't turned our minds to this question at all. We're not in a position at all to comment on the government's decision one way or the other. I think that's a question better put to the government itself and the minister.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay. Are your members of the committee prevented from speaking out on any errors in reports like this?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** As a general rule, the membership has agreed from the very beginning that we are extremely circumspect in any public comments, and generally we only comment on the merits of the work that we've done in the form of reports.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** The work you've done....

**Hon. David McGuinty:** The work our committee has done. That's correct.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay. So—

**Hon. David McGuinty:** And those reports, of course, are unanimous.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay, very good.

I just want to ask a more general question about the committee and how you operate now.

During study of Bill C-22, which is the legislation that created your committee, former CSIS director and national security adviser Richard Fadden said that the committee should go slow and see how the committee does.

Now that you have 16 to 18 months of operations under your belt, do you think there are aspects that the committee should consider changing in its operations, in its role or its access? I know you and Mr. Dubé just talked about the timeliness of its release once you give it to the PMO. Is there anything else you can think of? Would those changes be legislative or internal? There must be touchpoints now, some things you need to work on.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes, one of the areas we're learning a lot about is this question of redaction and the redaction process. We have turned our minds to this, and we reserve the right, so to speak, to say more about it in due course. We're comparing and contrasting with other redaction processes—Australia was raised, and there's the United States and other countries—to see what their practices are. We also think the redaction process may be capable of evolving. However, we always tend, as best as we can, towards providing more information, rather than less, to the Canadian public.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** If I'm hearing you correctly, this committee should maybe have its own redaction rules, and because it's non-partisan and it represents the government, well, the whole House, then maybe no outside redaction should occur. Have I heard you correctly?

•(1610)

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Not exactly. What we're trying to get our heads around collectively as a committee of parliamentarians is how the redaction process works, how the departments fit into this, what role the national security adviser plays, the role of the Department of Justice under the Canada Evidence Act, and on. We think its capable of evolving and becoming more transparent over time.

**The Chair:** Thank you Mr. Motz.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Over the past few exchanges, we've heard a little bit about Bill C-59 and the other forms of oversight or review that might be put in place. In respect of the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, NSIRA, how would you see the complementarity between the review agency and yourself?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I think it's fair to say that NSIRA's mandate will be chiefly based on examining the activities of different security and intelligence actors on the basis of their lawfulness and whether they're operating within the powers they have vested in them. They also have some mandatory yearly reviews to perform. They'll be becoming, as they say, a bit of a super-SIRC, so they'll have to review SIRC as well as the Communications Security Establishment on an annual basis.

Public complaints will be a big factor in terms of receiving Canadians' complaints. That will be a very large component, but we'll wait and see. We've already met with the folks at SIRC and other agencies that are in place, and we fully intend to meet up with NSIRA, when it's created. I'm sure we will be co-operating and sharing information, research, and analysis. One of the benefits of having a secretariat, which will be led by Ms. Marcoux, is that the institutional memory will remain constant, transcending any one government or any one membership of the committee.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Do you think having that kind of a super-SIRC agency will result in the creation of another base of information that will help you do your work?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We think so. It's going to be in a position to have access to key information and classified materials, and I fully expect that we'll be sharing and co-operating as best we can.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** In paragraph 69 of your report, you talk about the threat of espionage and foreign influence that's growing in Canada, and then at the end, the last sentence refers to Australian legislation. It says, "The committee agrees and notes that Australia passed legislation in June 2018 to better prevent, investigate, and disrupt foreign interference."

I'm wondering if you'd be able to tell me a little bit about that legislation, and what you think we could learn from it.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Well, we can't learn very much as this stage, because we're actually in the throes of reviewing the government's response to foreign interference, and that's one of our major reviews for 2019. Following this 2018 report, we want to shed light on the scope of the threat of foreign interference.

We also want to assess the government's response to that threat. We want to do this particularly with respect to Canadian institutions and different ethnocultural communities in a Canadian context. We

are not looking so much at electoral integrity or the acquisition of Canadian companies under the Investment Canada Act. Those are not areas or cybersecurity, not the areas that we're honing in on. We're going to be looking at who these foreign actors are, what they're up to, and how well we're responding.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Is there anything you would be able to comment on about the Australian legislation? It's referenced in this paragraph, so is there something you can tell us about the Australian example?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** I don't have the details of the legislation in front of me, but I remember something of the discussion at committee. I was struck by the fact that Australia had enacted explicit legislation on foreign interference, whereas here in Canada, foreign interference is listed as a threat to national security under the CSIS Act. Australia felt that the threat was severe enough to draft and enact explicit legislation on it—probably a whole-of-government approach as opposed to that of a single agency.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** You're working on that right now, so it's something that hopefully we'll get to—

**Hon. David McGuinty:** You will have more to say.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** —talk to you about a little bit more.

This is the last one, as I only have a minute.

You've talked a bit about the lack of awareness among Canadians about our security agencies. When you looked into it, what did you find was the biggest misunderstanding, if there was a biggest misunderstanding? There's one part you note in the report about lack of knowledge about what our agencies are, but was there anything where you actually spotted a misunderstanding as to how our agencies work?

•(1615)

**Hon. David McGuinty:** It was more basic than that. Very few Canadians could name our core intelligence agencies. Very few knew what CSE was. Very few really understood what CSIS was, what it was doing, how it was operating. It's an even more rudimentary lack of understanding not so much in precision about the way they act, but simply the very existence of the organizations or the number of organizations that are acting. This is very new for Canadians.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** A chart of all the organizations is in here, so that might help get that information out.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We hope so, thank you.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

Mr. Eglinski, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you.

I'd like to thank both presenters today. Thank you for the work that you're doing for our country. It's a lot of long hours, and I appreciate what you're doing.

I noticed in your report, especially paragraphs 67 and 68 and even partially going into 69 where.... I think in 68 you mention CSIS has raised concerns about Chinese influence in Canadian elections and stuff like that. Is your agency involved in any of the preparations for the 2019 election to ensure there's no political interference from foreign agents, or could it potentially retroactively look at this issue? Are you going to look at it before...? Have there been any studies done?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Not at this time, not by NSICOP. In our foreign interference focus, as I mentioned, our first objective is to simply shed light on the breadth and the scope of the threat by foreign actors in terms of who these primary threat actors are, what threat they are posing, and what they are doing, and also, how well our country is responding to the threat. We're not focusing so much on electoral integrity in this forthcoming election as we are the general role of outside actors.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Your organization itself is not. Do you know if the other groups, like CSIS, are doing some active research, study or intelligence work in that area?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** One of the reasons we didn't look at the upcoming election in terms of foreign interference is that the government—they informed us—was doing so much work in terms of assessing the threat and then taking action to prevent the threat of foreign interference.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you.

Being a new organization and working with our basically eight major intelligence gathering organizations in Canada, how have you found over the last year the co-operation with these outside agencies? Quite often these agencies are reluctant to give information, reluctant to trust a new organization or outside.... Has the transition been fairly good? Are they buying into the need for our national organization—you, your group?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** That's a great question.

Generally yes, I think most folks we work with are very supportive, but it's new. We're building trust and building a relationship of co-operation and getting access to information, pushing and poking and prodding from time to time to get what we need.

I mentioned earlier the Department of National Defence has never had a spotlight shone on it this way in terms of its intelligence activities. That was a great learning experience, and there was a lot of trust.

This year, we're doing a major review on the Canada Border Services Agency, which has never been reviewed by an outside body of parliamentarians. We've already received roughly 15,000 to 16,000 pages of documentation from CBSA, so the co-operation is very good so far.

I think most folks think that this kind of external review is helpful in terms of how they conduct their affairs, and look forward to the findings of NSICOP because they are non-partisan, and because they are very much recommendations for improvement.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you.

Just expanding on that, how are you finding your group being recognized by international communities?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We're very proud of the report; the annual report has been well received around the world. We've had commentary from the U.K., the United States, Australia and New Zealand. For example, we heard from New Zealand's intelligence commissioner, I think she's called—

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** She's the inspector general.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** She has said that chapter 4 on national defence—

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** It's the intelligence priorities.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I'm sorry. The intelligence priorities will be part of the foundational examination in the commission of inquiry on the Christchurch shooting. We're reaching out as best we can, but the feedback so far is very positive.

• (1620)

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** I have a quick last question.

We gave you a mandate when the group was started, and there was lots of controversy over it initially. Have we given you enough tools? I believe there was supposed to be a five-year review. Do you find, even in your first year, that we may need to look at that more quickly? Are you going to need better tools to assist your organization?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** We might, but right now we're only two years or so into the five-year mandate, and I think it's going to be interrupted a bit with an election campaign in the fall—

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Yes, it will be.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I think the committee would say that five years is an appropriate moment, but we're certainly carrying forward some of these areas, and as we practise and get more experience, I think we'll have more to say and perhaps more suggestions for improvement.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Eglinski.

Mr. Graham, you have five minutes, please.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Thank you.

On page 66 of the report, paragraph 170 describes defence intelligence. There is a description of the different types of intelligence. Signals intelligence is, of course, the one that gets the most interest. It's the one that all the Edward Snowden stories were about at the core. By the very nature of SIGINT, it captures everything; it's really hard not to.

In your view, and this comes down to the core reason the committee was created for political reasons, does Canada's intelligence apparatus, and our Five Eyes partners especially, take adequate safeguards to prevent unjustified or illegal collection of data by, about or between Canadians?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** That's an excellent and really difficult question. I'm going to deflect it to a certain extent by letting you know that again this year, 2019, one of the major reviews we're undertaking is a special review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. We're going to be examining the collection, use, retention and dissemination of information on Canadian citizens by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. We're going to try to make sure there's clarity on the legal and policy constraints around this collection of information on Canadian citizens when conducting defence intelligence activities. So it's something we're immediately seized with.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Does DND have domestic intelligence or is it mostly international?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** They're able to collect intelligence if they have a legally mandated authority to deploy forces on a mission, whether it's in Canada in support of the RCMP or CSE for example, or on a mission abroad. They can collect in support of a mission wherever it is.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Do we know if the existence of NSICOP has changed the behaviour of any of the intelligence community?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I think it has. I mentioned earlier that one of the immediate effects of examining intelligence activities at the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces is that for the first time ever, the department set up a unit within to respond to outside review, to pull together information, to collate and to respond to the requests that we made. We've made many requests to the department and have received thousands of pages. When we think it's not satisfactory, we go back and ask for more. If something is missing, we ask why things might be missing.

We think the probity that NSICOP can bring to organizations that are involved in national security intelligence is really positive for Canadians.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** At the very end of your report, paragraph 265, I read a hint of frustration that the intelligence community is less than forthcoming and sometimes has to be coaxed along to provide information you're asking for. Is this changing, and will the recommendations you propose also help solve that?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Did you say paragraph 265?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Paragraph 265 on page 110. It's towards the end of the report. There was a bit of frustration by the committee that you'd ask a question and you'd get a very narrow response instead of getting the answers you're looking for.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I think Ms. Marcoux is best placed to answer that question, because she is dealing with her colleagues inside these departments and agencies on a regular basis.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** As I think I mentioned earlier, it's a question of the departments, particularly those that are not subject to regular review, getting used to providing information, the relevant information, to the committee.

In some cases, it's perhaps about the secretariat needing to be more precise in terms of time frames or the type of information we want. It's a back and forth process that's going on. In some cases, it's just a question of the need to read the document carefully. If there's a

reference, for example, to a document in a footnote, it is incumbent on them to give us that document as well. So it can be the small things as well as the big ones.

• (1625)

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** I understand.

Paragraph 107, on page 41—you don't need to go to each page; I'm just telling you where they are—discusses a case of CSIS drafting a ministerial direction minus two priorities, and it creating a bunch of confusion about whether or not intelligence can be collected.

Are they allowed to collect things outside of the priority list? Why would it create confusion? They can still do data collection, even if it's not among 10 items that are redrafted on the—

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** It's easier for me to—

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Sure. It's paragraph 107, on pages 41 and 42. This is excellent weekend reading, by the way.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** I don't think we're in a position to give you much more insight, given the classified information that backs up that paragraph.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** I understand.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** Yes. I think it's because CSIS operates within very precise references and direction, so the more precision they get, the better it is for the officers in a region to collect. I think that's what we were trying to refer to.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Mr. Dubé, you have three minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I just have two last questions. One may seem a little ridiculous, but I think it's important.

Will the format of the report be different next time so that it is easier to view on a computer—for example, to allow searching using the Ctrl-F keys? In other words, will it still be a scanned copy?

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** This problem is related to the redaction process. You can't just cross out the information in a document and then transfer it to a computer or on the web. In fact, copies and photocopies must be made before they are posted on the website.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** You will forgive me for saying that in 2019, we should be able to find a solution to consult the document more quickly.

**Ms. Rennie Marcoux:** Yes.

We share your frustration, Mr. Dubé.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Excellent. Thank you. I couldn't help but mention it.

I have one last quick thing to ask you.

To go back to the first question I asked, is there a plan to formally monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the NSICOP? I asked the same question at the beginning of my intervention, but I just want to make sure that there is a formal follow-up on these recommendations.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Yes.

The NSICOP has a plan to do exactly this kind of follow-up. We are really pleased to be here today, and perhaps be invited to the Senate later, to address your counterparts there. We think this is a good start to raise awareness among parliamentarians at the very least.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Excellent. Thank you.

**Hon. David McGuinty:** Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

I have one last question.

In your recommendations, you talk about the process for setting intelligence priorities, the F1 recommendation, and you're complimentary about that. Then you say in F7 that the performance measurement for the security and intelligence community is not robust enough.

Intelligence priorities change all the time. The one that comes to mind is the change in priorities between terrorism and cybersecurity. A lot of intelligence analysts think that cybersecurity is a far greater threat than terrorism.

Can you describe that process, in terms of whether you're satisfied that, ultimately, we have our priorities correct?

**Hon. David McGuinty:** When we undertook the intelligence priority setting review, we did it because we wanted to be, so to speak, at the top of the crow's nest for the country, examining the overall architecture of security and intelligence, while at the same time getting into the engine room, to see how these priorities were, in fact, arrived at.

One of the stumbling blocks we think we happened upon here, which is made very plain in the recommendation, is this question of standing intelligence requirements. There are over 400. It's very difficult to triage and feed 400-plus standing intelligence requirements into a cabinet process. We don't have access to cabinet confidences in this regard, but we see most of the material that has led up to those kinds of discussions and debate.

We think there's real improvement to be made, which is why we're calling on the national security and intelligence adviser to take a much more proactive role. The NSIA is pivotal in the overall architecture of security and intelligence in Canada, and she is best placed, we believe, to streamline and simplify. A lot of good front-

line actors in security and intelligence in the country are looking for more clarity, and perhaps a smoother process.

The entire chapter breaks down for Canadians how this works, step by step, and we've honed in on a couple of internal fine-tuning mechanisms that we think would go a certain distance in improving the entire process.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank both of you for your presentation. It's an insight that all of us appreciate. I commend the work of your committee. I commend your report. Thank you for the very hard work that I know you have put in over the last 18 months.

With that, colleagues, I propose to suspend until we see Minister Goodale in the room, but I'm going to turn to Mr. Paul-Hus while we have a little bit of time. He wishes to deal with M-167, which is not on the agenda. I only want to deal with that if there is unanimity on the part of colleagues to deal with it now. If not, I'm just going to shut it down and deal with it—

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** We have to be in camera for that, right?

**The Chair:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** We can't wait for Ralph then.

**The Chair:** First of all, is there an attitude that we wish to do this at the end of Minister Goodale's presentation?

**An hon. member:** That's fine.

**The Chair:** You'll be fine if I then go in camera. Is that right? I want to just make sure we are all okay.

With that, we will suspend.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1630)

**The Chair:** We will resume. The minister and his colleagues are with us.

This is a special meeting. We agreed to invite the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to appear on, respond to and take questions on the “2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada”.

I'll turn to Minister Goodale for his opening statement and ask him to introduce his colleagues.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. It's good to be back.

I have with me today the associate deputy minister, Vincent Rigby, the commissioner of the RCMP, Brenda Lucki, and the director of CSIS, David Vigneault.

We're happy to try to respond to your questions about the “2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada”.

I'd like to begin by saying that the women and men who work for our intelligence and security agencies do an incredible and very difficult job of identifying, monitoring, mitigating, and stopping threats in the interests of keeping Canadians safe. It is a 24-7, unrelenting job and the people who protect us deserve our admiration and our thanks.

The purpose of the "Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada" is to provide Canadians with unclassified information about the threats we are facing. That includes threats emanating from Canada but targeted elsewhere around the world. No country wants to be an exporter of terrorism or violent extremism. Providing Canadians with a public assessment of terrorists threats is a core element of the government's commitment to transparency and accountability. While never exposing classified information, the goal is to be informative and accurate.

Before I get into the specifics of this year's report, I would like to remind committee members about the "2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada". In the ministerial foreword to that report, I wrote this:

It is a serious and unfortunate reality that terrorist groups, most notably the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), use violent extremist propaganda to encourage individuals to support their cause. This group is neither Islamic nor a state, and so will be referred to as Daesh (its Arabic acronym) in this Report.

In hindsight, that principle is something that should have better guided the authors of subsequent reports when referring to the various terrorist threats facing our country. Canadians of all faiths and backgrounds have helped to build our country and continue to be integral members of our communities and neighbourhoods. They contribute to inspiring a stronger, more equal and compassionate Canada, one that we all strive for. It is neither accurate nor fair to equate any one community or an entire religion with extremist violence or terror. To do so is simply wrong and inaccurate.

Following the issuance of the 2018 report, we heard several strong objections, particularly from the Sikh and Muslim communities in Canada, that the language in the report was not sufficiently precise. Due to its use of terms such as "Sikh extremism" or "Sunni extremism", the report was perceived as impugning entire religions instead of properly zeroing in on the dangerous actions of a small number of people. I can assure you that broad brush was not the intent of the report. It used language that has actually been in use for years. It has appeared in places such as the previous government's 2012 counterterrorism strategy and the report in December 2018 of the all-party National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. Similar language also appeared on the Order Paper of the House of Commons in reference to certain proposed parliamentary business. As I have said before, language matters. Just because something has often been phrased in a certain way does not mean that it should be phrased in that way now or in the future.

As a result of the concerns presented to me, I requested a review of the language in the report, to ensure that it provides Canadians with useful, unclassified information about terrorist threats to Canada without falsely maligning any particular community. We consulted with the Sikh and Muslim communities in Canada. We consulted with the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on National Security.

We consulted with our security and intelligence agencies. We also heard from many members of Parliament.

• (1635)

Going forward, we will use terminology that focuses on intent or ideology, rather than an entire religion. As an example, the report now refers to "extremists who support violent means to establish an independent state within India". This is an approach, interestingly enough, that is sometimes used by some of our allies. For instance, the 2018 national strategy for counterterrorism of the United States of America reads in part, "Babbar Khalsa International seeks, through violent means, to establish its own independent state in India".

The objective must be to describe the threat to the public accurately and precisely, without unintentionally condemning the entire Sikh community or any other community. The vast majority of the Sikh community in Canada are peaceful and would never wish to harm anyone, not in this country or anywhere else.

Similarly, we have eliminated the use of terms such as "Shia or Sunni extremism". Going forward, these threats will be described in a more precise manner, such as by referring directly to terrorist organizations like Hezbollah or Daesh. That is more accurate and more informative. Once again, the point is that language matters, and we must always be mindful of that fact, which is why the review will be an ongoing process.

I'm sure that every member here has seen the increasing statistics on hate crime published just a couple of weeks ago. Sadly, 2017 saw a 47% increase in police-reported hate crime in Canada. Social media platforms are making it easier and easier for hateful individuals to find each other and then to amplify their toxic rhetoric. Tragically, as we saw very recently in New Zealand, this sometimes leads to devastating and deadly consequences. The idea should be anathema to all of us that governments of any stripe might inadvertently continue to use language that can then be twisted by these nefarious and violent individuals as proof points in their minds and justifications for their hatred.

In addition to the language review, I would like to share some of the innovative things that our security agencies are doing to be accurate, effective and bias-free in their day-to-day work. That's just one example. For the past several months, the people who are tasked with making those final difficult decisions about adding someone to the SATA, the Secure Air Travel Act, or the no-fly list, in other words, have had the name and the picture of that particular person removed from the file, so that the name or the picture does not influence the final decision, not even subconsciously. The focus of the decision-makers must be on the facts that are in the file, and they must make a decision on the basis of those facts. So it's a matter of fact and not prejudice.

The women and men of our intelligence and security community are hard-working professionals, but there is not a human being alive who is not prone to some preconceived idea or bias. Government should try very hard to mitigate the effects of this very human trait.

Finally, while the updated report has been received reasonably well, there have been critics who have complained that the changes reduce the ability of our agencies to do their job. I would profoundly disagree with that. The factual content of the report has not changed. It continues to outline the threats facing and emanating from Canada. It simply does it in a manner that cannot be interpreted to denigrate entire communities or religions because of the actions of a small number of individuals who are actually behaving in a manner that is contrary to what that community holds dear. The whole community should not be condemned for that.

• (1640)

Frankly, our security and intelligence agencies need the goodwill and the support of all peaceful, law-abiding members of all communities to do their jobs effectively. We cannot build those partnerships if the language we use creates division or distance or unease among those communities and our security agencies.

Mr. Chair, thank you for inviting me to be here again today. I and my officials would be pleased to try to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister Goodale.

Ms. Sahota, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, Minister, I'd like to thank you for appearing here today. Thank you for the work you do. We know with the RCMP and CSIS, your job is not easy. You keep our country safe, and it is much appreciated.

I have raised this issue with you, Minister, several times. My community and several stakeholders contacted me after this report was made public back in December. They were truly bewildered as to why Sikhs had been identified in this way, why other faiths—Sunni, Shia, Islamist—had been mentioned in this report. Previously in these public reports they've always focused on regions and extremist travellers. Why the change in the way this report was set up this time?

• (1645)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Ms. Sahota, the report is the collective work of a variety of security and intelligence agencies within the Government of Canada. As you have acknowledged, they do a very difficult and very professional job of assessing the risks before the country at any given moment. That changes from time to time. Since this is a report to the government and to the public, it's perhaps not for me to comment on the input that went into it.

Perhaps, David, from CSIS's point of view, can you provide a perspective on the factors that would come into the thinking of the authors of the report in what needs to be assembled at any given moment and...?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** If I may just add a little more to that, in your introductory remarks, Minister, you referred to the 2016 report which specifically mentioned that ISIL would no longer be used as it's neither Islamic nor a state and Daesh would be used. Why that reversal in this report? We've seen a lot of changes in the layout, the substance and the description in this report.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Mr. Rigby, the associate deputy minister, wants to comment.

**Mr. Vincent Rigby (Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Thanks very much, Minister.

This is a whole of security and intelligence community product. Public Safety has the technical lead, but we reach out to the community and in a very inclusive way take input from across the RCMP, from CSIS, from ITAC. We assemble the information both in threat and threat capabilities and also in the government response. We pull all that material together and then we all collectively agree at the end of the day, right up to head of agency, before it goes to the government and to the minister to sign off.

There had been, I think, a little criticism in the last couple of years that the reports had not been as detailed as people would like. They'd like it to be a little more expansive and go into a little more of the intricacies of the threat, etc. I think in our attempt perhaps to provide a little more of that detail, unfortunately some language crept into the report that, at the end of the day, we're now here to discuss. As the minister said, the language which in future we would much prefer will focus more on ideology and less on community.

That's a little of the background as to how this slipped in. Again, the language had been used in previous reports, but in some of the specific terminology the minister referred to, had not been used since 2012.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Okay. I know there has been some criticism about removing these words, saying that it will not be precise, but like the minister, I disagree. I think homing in on the actual terrorist organizations is being far more precise.

Can you explain to me, in the section on those who continue to support establishing an independent state within India by violent means, how this section is precise? The questions I get from stakeholders in the community is that this section, or reference to this section, has not previously been in past reports other than the mention of one organization, so why now? Why, when no events have occurred publicly that we know of, was it included in the 2018 report and never referenced before, when in that section it mainly references an incident and a time between 1982 and 1993?

• (1650)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** I think Mr. Vigneault can comment on this, but I'd just make two preliminary observations.

The material that is prepared and published in the public threat report of course has to be unclassified. Classified information has to remain classified, but there is a parliamentary avenue for some examination of that. Of course, that's the purview of your previous witness this afternoon.



**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** I was thinking that myself.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians was created for the purpose of allowing our security agencies, when appropriate, to be able to discuss classified information with the appropriate group of parliamentarians. That is the NSICOP as opposed to a standard parliamentary committee. If the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians wishes to pursue an issue of this kind, that would be the appropriate venue for that discussion to happen.

I will invite David Vigneault, the director of CSIS, to comment further.

**Mr. David Vigneault (Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** Thank you, Minister.

Thank you for your question and for giving me an opportunity to elaborate on this topic.

As you can imagine, CSIS's national security investigations are very fluid. They're influenced by events taking place here in Canada and taking place abroad. Our mandate is to make sure that individuals here in Canada who are supporting or engaged somehow in support of the use of violence for political purposes are investigated. These fluid investigations ebb and flow, and we have been providing advice to the government, and we have been providing advice to Public Safety in the context of the report and our threat assessment.

We stand behind the assessment we've provided that there is a small group of individuals who right now are engaging in activities that are pursuing use of violent means to establish an independent state in India. It is our responsibility to make sure that we investigate these threats and that we provide advice to the RCMP and to other colleagues to make sure, based on our information and our own investigations done by CSIS, that Canada is not being used to plot terrorist activity and that we Canadians are also safe at the same time.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to leave it there, Ms. Sahota.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Goodale, I was fortunate to have the first copy of the December 11, 2018 report, which gave us some information. I understand your arguments and the whole explanation you are giving us to try to fix what, technically, we should not have had to do. I'm glad I got it, because it gives us information about national security.

For you, you're playing politics with it. What worries me a little bit is that at one point, as Canadians, we had access to information, which was then changed. We have learned that CSIS, the RCMP and other agencies have done some work and have reported important information in a Public Safety Canada report about our security. Subsequently, groups lobbied. You were initially pressured and on April 12, you amended the report. A second version has been put online on the site. Two weeks later, on April 26, another group lobbied, and you modified the report a second time. We now have a watered down version.

I want to understand the process. I know it can affect communities, but the fact remains that reports have been prepared by our security agencies and that information has been put on them that corresponds to the situation described. To what extent does politics play a role and do we water down reality so as not to hurt anyone? How does it work?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Mr. Paul-Hus, the representations that we received, as I mentioned in my remarks, came from representatives of the Muslim community and the Sikh community in particular. We also heard from a number of members of Parliament from different political parties, not just one. In fact, all sides of the House of Commons had occasion to comment on this situation and made their views known, raising similar kinds of concerns.

In assessing the input that was coming in, contrary to the assertion in your question, it was not a partisan issue; it was a matter of accuracy, fairness and being effective.

• (1655)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** I believe the information was accurate. The information presented still clearly indicated points concerning an existing threat. You changed some words to lighten it up.

In essence, that's what politics is all about: trying not to displease people. However, the fact remains that the first version of the agencies was clear.

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** No. That is not the purpose of the changes.

Clearly, what we heard from a number of stakeholders across the country, the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on National Security, and members of Parliament of several different political parties, when you read the words in the report, was the impression that an entire religion or an entire community was a threat to national security. That is factually incorrect.

There are certain individuals that are threats to national security that need to be properly investigated, but when you report on that matter publicly, using expressions that leave the impression with people that it's an entire religion, or an entire ethnocultural community that's to be feared, that is factually incorrect. That is what needed to be corrected.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** But we understand that we are talking about extremism. Obviously, not everyone is targeted. No matter which religions and cultural communities are involved, when we talk about radical Islam, for example, we clearly say "radical Islam". We refer to people who are radical or radicalized. We don't attack all Muslims, of course.

Is there a way to be clear without attacking people who do not need to be targeted?

Word choice is important. It is important to avoid removing information, especially if you do not want to displease. What I want to know is the truth.

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** No. The very objective here, Mr. Paul-Hus, is to do exactly what you have said, to convey the threats in a public way, in an accurate way, but not using a brush that is so broad that you condemn an entire religion, or you condemn an entire ethnocultural community.

While you have seen phrases in the report which to you were clear in narrowing the scope of what was being referred to, there were others who read that report and saw it exactly through the opposite end of the telescope, and saw the language used was broadening the brush beyond what really was the threat.

The objective of the review, the consultation, and the work we have done here is to be accurate and precise in telling Canadians what the threat is, but also to be fair in the sense that we are not condemning, impugning or maligning entire religions or entire ethnic communities.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** To your knowledge, is this the first time interest groups have lobbied to change a national security report?

In your government or in other governments, has there ever been a case where, following official publication, groups have information changed?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** In my experience in the areas over which I have jurisdiction and responsibility, this is the first change of this nature. The reaction was sufficiently large and pointed. It led me to the conclusion that the problem being raised was a serious one. It wasn't just a little semantic argument. It was a very serious concern that impressions were being left by the report that were not fair and accurate, and that the language needed to be modified.

When we looked at the language, we found that very similar phrases had been used in many other places at different times, including in reports that had been filed by the previous government, in reports that had been filed by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. Indeed, some of the language also appeared at one point in time on the Order Paper of the House of Commons.

The language had been in use, but just because it had been in use for a certain period of time or for certain purposes does not mean you need to continue using a phrase that is running the risk of conveying misinformation and a misimpression of entire communities or entire religions.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

It would be helpful, Minister, if from time to time you looked at the chair so that colleagues can get their questions in.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** You are indeed a very attractive specimen, sir, but—

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** —I'm admiring this entire committee.

**The Chair:** I thought you'd admire my tie.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Mr. Dubé, you have seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Minister, thank you for being here. I want to thank my colleagues on the committee for accepting my motion to have you come and speak to this issue. As you know, I wrote to you in December when this issue first arose, and Mr. Singh and I had both written to the Prime Minister before the changes were made. Unlike what was just mentioned, the words do matter, and on that we agree, Minister.

I think the Sikh community deserves praise for standing up for itself because ultimately, the consequences are very real. There is a rise in hate crimes, and there is another form of terrorism that is happening in communities not just here in Canada but around the world, namely, going after and attacking faith communities, and other communities of course.

I think these changes are welcome, and I certainly hope the work will continue with affected communities, because there's a specific issue that was raised in this report. We know, though, that the Muslim community both here in Canada and around the world, and certainly in the United States, has faced this issue with regard to terrorism for the better part of two decades. It's a concern that has been raised. One of the reasons you've had to make changes to the no-fly list is that there is a form of profiling inherent in the way that apparatus works.

Minister, you've said a lot of the things that I think are welcome certainly by folks hoping for change in how this is done. We've asked that there be a rethink of this process, given that we are seeing a rise in hate crimes and other incidents that seriously jeopardize public safety.

Will there be a push to institutionalize the thinking that you've put forward here today? These types of mechanisms, transparency-wise, are very important but can have the opposite affect, as you've pointed out.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** We intend to use language throughout our systems, Mr. Dubé, that is accurate, precise and fair in conveying information about terrorist threats. It has to be an ongoing process. It's not something that you can just sort of do once as a kind of blip and presume that you've addressed the issue or solved the problem.

People need to be alert to the issue all the time, partly for the reason that you mentioned, that if you're not alert to the issue, you can inadvertently be encouraging those who would be inclined towards hate crimes and using the language as a pretext for what they do. The other reason it's important, Mr. Dubé, is that if we're going to have a safe, respectful, inclusive society, there has to be a good rapport between our police and security agencies and every community in our society. If language is used that is seen to be divisive, then you won't have that rapport, and we'll have a less safe society.

• (1705)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** It's probably not the greatest point to interrupt you on, but my time is limited. I did want to get to the substantive piece, though.

Older reports are quite challenging to find in this digital age, to be fair. I think that's worth pointing out, but from what we see, it has been 17 years since the issue that was raised in this report was ever part of a similar report, so it's been quite a while.

I think one of the issues that was raised by many who were taking issue with this is not just the language that's used, which we've all addressed today, but it's also the why. I think there was a question raised to that effect.

Given that you can't divulge everything because it's classified information, as much as we always want transparency, is there not a concern that if you can't explain why, some thought needs to be put into whether it's better to leave some things classified instead of sort of going halfway without being able to provide any justification?

This was also a big issue that was taken up by some of the communities that were calling the government to account on this.

It is important to raise the question of why. There was reporting this morning, even about the Minister of Foreign Affairs getting talking points relating to specific communities on foreign trips.

There is some cynicism around that. Are you not concerned that it gets fed into by dropping something into a report and then not being able to back it up?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** There are two imperatives, Mr. Dubé. They sometimes present a bit of a conflict. On the one side, our security agencies would want to be as forthcoming with Canadians as they can possibly be in a public report to provide information that would be useful and helpful to Canadians in understanding the various public threats. At the same time, you raise the competing issue, which is the extent to which they can actually discuss the details.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Right.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** The experience will undoubtedly be borne in mind when future reports are written.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Minister, with the last minute I have, I just want to ask you about the fact that the consequences were, perhaps, not properly thought out. Is that a sign of a larger issue that seems to be coming more and more to the forefront, which is to say that the threat posed by another form of extremism, namely, white nationalism and white supremacy, is being understated or undervalued by our security agencies? Does more thought need to be put into what's happening there, and the consequences that it has?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** The police and security agencies have to deal with all of it, Mr. Dubé. They are alert to all of those threats and potential risks. You will note that in this report there are frequent references to far-right-wing extremism that poses a threat as well. It is very much a part of the matrix of issues that the police and security agencies are alert to and are dealing with.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Thank you, Minister.

In fact, I'll be picking up a little bit from where Mr. Dubé left off. It's the sections in this report about right-wing extremism.

I'm from Montreal. I was a CEGEP student at the time of École Polytechnique, which was an impactful event, as far as it was clearly targeting women because of the hatred of women. Only about a month ago, I was at a vigil for the van attack on Yonge Street, which was another event that was based on the hatred of women. At least that's what we've heard from reports.

At the beginning of this year, we held a vigil outside a mosque in my community because of what happened in Christchurch, New Zealand. In fact, not so long ago, we had also had a vigil because of what had happened at the mosque shooting in Sainte-Foy.

Those are three very large events, as far as people killed. All of them would be based on right-wing extremism and that kind of a philosophy. Yet, when I'm looking at this report, it says, "However, while racism, bigotry, and misogyny may undermine the fabric of Canadian society, ultimately they do not usually result in criminal behavior or threats to national security."

Is this type of extremism truly less dangerous than the other forms of extremism? That doesn't seem to be, at least in my experience when I look back on our recent history.

• (1710)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Ms. Dabrusin, I'll invite both the commissioner of the RCMP and David Vigneault to comment on those issues, because it falls to them to do the investigations and to keep people safe.

I can tell you that, over the course of the last several years when I've had the vantage point of being fairly close to our security agencies, watching their activities and the shaping of their priorities and so forth, they have worked very hard on the issue of right-wing extremism. The report that is the subject of this meeting in fact makes specific reference to a number of incidents that demonstrate why this worry needs to be treated seriously.

We've had instances from outside the country, in New Zealand, in Pittsburgh, in Charlottesville, and so forth, but within our own country, the van attack on Yonge Street, the mosque attack in Sainte-Foy, the attack on police officers at Mayerthorpe and Moncton and the misogynist attacks at Dawson College and École Polytechnique are all the product of the same perverted and evil ideology that results in people being put at risk and people losing their lives. It is taken seriously.

Let me ask Brenda and David to comment.

**Commissioner Brenda Lucki (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** To respond, it's no less a threat than other topics within this report, but when we look at the report, one focus, the goal, amongst others, was to provide an overall assessment of the terrorist threats to Canada first. We've added in right-wing extremism because it is a threat, maybe not when we talk, as you mentioned in your quote, to national security; it's more to events and individuals.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Just to clarify, the report says, "ultimately they do not usually result in criminal behaviour or threats to national security." It seemed to me that, when we look at the list of events, in fact, you have a very long list of events that seem to be due to right-wing extremism.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Yes, there's absolutely criminal activity, and that would be our focus. When we do our focus on criminal activity, it's conducted by groups or individuals in any category within this report or outside, most definitely. It's no less a threat.

**Mr. David Vigneault:** From CSIS's perspective, the way we look at this is that any individuals or groups who are looking to use violence to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives are a threat to national security as per the definition in our act. I'm on the record in the other chamber recently, too, having said that we are focusing more of our resources on looking at the threat of different extremist groups: misogynist, white nationalist and neo-nationalist. Essentially, they are now using terrorist methods to achieve some of their goals.

As for the attack on Yonge Street, the method was publicized initially by an al Qaeda-affiliated magazine. They called it the ultimate mowing machine, essentially telling people that it is what they should be doing. You had someone who had other extremist views who used a technique that had been developed or popularized by another set of groups to essentially kill people. From our perspective, we're not marking the difference. We investigate these groups when they meet these definitions.

• (1715)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** My only concern is that, when I was reading the rest of the report, I didn't see any other form of terrorism or criminal behaviour being kept within the context of saying that, whatever these groups, ultimately they do not usually result in criminal behaviour or threats to national security. Those kinds of terms weren't couched around other types of groups. I was just curious why the differentiation when we're looking at—

**Mr. David Vigneault:** I can't speak for all the groups, but essentially, if you look at a funnel, the vast majority of the commentary, the vile commentary online, will have an impact on society but would not be admitted to the criminal threshold. Then you have a small amount of that, which may be of interest to the RCMP or to other police bodies and law enforcement in Canada. Then you have a very, very small group of people, individuals or small groups, who are looking to organize themselves and use violence to achieve some political purpose, and that would be a national security case. It is, if you want, a kind of methodology we're looking at to essentially better understand and better characterize what we're seeing in society, but it is definitely evolving.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

Mr. Motz, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister and officials, for being here today.

In reference to this, I have some experience in threat assessments from a criminal organization perspective that fit into a national organized crime threat assessment for this country, so I understand the work and vigour it takes from our security agencies to create this.

With that in mind, Mr. Minister, I'd like to read a quote from Phil Gurski, a former CSIS analyst, and a well-respected one. He said the following with regard to this report:

What about 'individuals or groups who are inspired by violent ideologies and terrorist groups, such as Daesh or al-Qaida (AQ)?' Aside from the ridiculous insistence on 'Daesh' rather than Islamic State (Minister Goodale: Daesh is Arabic for 'Islamic State' by the way), this phrase is only partially accurate. I know from my days at CSIS that yes some Canadians are inspired by these terrorist groups but there is also a huge swathe that radicalise to violence in the name of greater Sunni Islamist extremist thought (Shia Islamist extremists are a different beast altogether) that has little or nothing to do with AQ [al-Qaida] or IS [Islamic State] or any other terrorist group. Oh and guess what else? They are all Muslims—nary a Buddhist or an animist among them. Again, using the term 'Sunni Islamist extremism', which is what we called it when I was at CSIS, does not mean all Canadian Muslims are terrorists.

To my mind this is just political correctness and electioneering gone mad.

I think it's important to recognize, and I know you do, sir, that national security issues are far more important for Canadians than to have politics as part of that. My question for you is this: Do you think that informing Canadians, informing the public, of the actual threats posed by terrorists, regardless of the moniker, should be beyond any electoral designs of the current government?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Absolutely, and that's the way I conduct myself.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay. How will you then dismiss Mr. Gurski's expertise so easily with regard to the changes that have been made to this report?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Well, I don't have his quote in front of me, but I go to the latter part of it that you referred to, where he seemed to be saying, despite some of the language that he referred to, that everybody would understand that not all of the Muslim community was being criticized. That's a rough paraphrase of what you said.

It's not at all clear, Mr. Motz, that that's in fact true. When you use broad-brush language, you can, by implication, be impugning innocent people who you do not mean to criticize, but the language gets extrapolated and extrapolated, and if you look at some of the material on the Internet, you see the distortions, the misinterpretations and the abuse.

It all gets back to the original point. Let's be very, very careful about the language used in the first place. We have to be accurate about conveying the nature of the risk, but let's not express it in such a way that we impugn people who are innocent and, by impugning them, put them at risk.

• (1720)

**Mr. Glen Motz:** We all agree that a threat can be an individual and it can be a small element within certain communities, but I think Canadians are astute enough to appreciate and understand that it is not the entire community at all that is subject to the very defining language that would define a terrorist threat.

I guess one of the things that I'm curious about is how many agencies contributed to this report. Who were they?

**The Chair:** Very briefly, Minister.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** I'll ask Mr. Rigby to do the calculation of adding up the numbers that were involved.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Along with that question, on the agencies that were involved in the creation of this, were they also involved in the

**The Chair:** Mr. Motz, you are stretching the chair's patience.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Were they also involved and consulted in the revision?

**The Chair:** Mr. Motz, please.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** That's all I'm getting at.

**The Chair:** Please, a brief answer.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** As I said, we consulted with a whole variety of agencies to get their input.

I'll ask Mr. Rigby to talk about the total numbers that are involved in the intelligence community within the Government of Canada.

I think when the people who wrote the material were using those expressions that you've just referred to, their intent was to narrow the focus, but when members of the public saw those expressions, they actually saw the situation through the other end of the telescope and thought the criticism was actually getting broader rather than narrower. That's the dilemma here of finding the language that is accurate and precise, but at the same time, fair so that we're not having consequences that we don't mean to have.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to leave the answer there.

We'll go to Ms. Sahota, for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** I'm going to follow on what my colleague Julie was saying earlier.

In the right-wing extremism section, it says:

It may be difficult to assess, in the short term, to what extent a specific act was ideologically driven, or comment while investigations are ongoing or cases are before the court.

To one of my previous questions, it was mentioned that there are fluid investigations ongoing and that we would not want a plot to occur on Canadian soil. I agree with you 100%. I would never want to see what had happened in 1985 ever happen on Canadian soil again. I hope you catch the people who are up to no good, because they indirectly, or directly in this case, end up impacting whole communities at times. I think all of us would be outraged if any religion, Catholicism or Protestantism, were ever brought into any organization that had committed an act, and we wouldn't do that. However, it seems as though, from this perspective, there's an insensitivity originally to other faiths that don't originate from the western world.

In short, why wasn't the "but" language, which is included in the right-wing extremism section, included in those other sections? You're saying they are fluid investigations. How do you know for sure whether they were ideologically driven? Those exceptions are definitely referred to in the right-wing extremism section.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** David, can you comment on that?

**Mr. David Vigneault:** I'm not the author of the report, so I cannot comment on exactly why the final wording is there.

However, I can say from a CSIS perspective, as I mentioned earlier, that we're not looking at a specific religion; we're looking at the activity of individuals. If the activity of individuals is plotting to use violence to achieve political, ideological or religious objectives, that's when we would be investigating.

With the example in New Zealand, that individual invoked about five, six or seven different reasons as to why he committed the activity. When you start to mix what is happening online with mental health issues, and so on, what exactly was the motivator of an individual can be extremely delicate to determine. That's why when we work in the sphere of national security, when our colleagues in law enforcement are investigating, we might not know exactly what we're dealing with initially.

I can only speak to the types of investigations. In terms of the report and why these other caveats were not added to the others, I cannot speak to that angle.

• (1725)

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Okay.

There has been a lot of skepticism since the release of the report. From my investigation and from my talks with Minister Goodale, I found out that about 17 different agencies and departments were involved in feeding into this report.

I don't think we got to that number.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** That's approximately correct.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** I also found out that, when compiling this report, no evidence is taken from any single source.

Can a single source be feeding allegations or evidence into all these various different departments, and therefore, when it comes out of more than a few departments, it elevates to the level of being in the report? What are your comments on that?

**Mr. Vincent Rigby:** I'll defer to David in terms of some of the source reporting from a CSIS perspective, but I can only repeat what you just said. When we went out to those 17 agencies and departments representing the breadth and scope of the security intelligence community, we looked at all sources.

Everything that came up to us was intelligence, open sources, consultations with academics right across the board. What you see reflected in the report is a composite picture of all the evidence, all the intelligence, and all the analysis, open-sourced right on down across the spectrum.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Could it be bad intelligence coming from another country?

**Mr. Vincent Rigby:** How would you define bad intelligence?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Is it verified intelligence by our own independent agencies?

**Mr. Vincent Rigby:** I'll defer to David on this, but we are in regular consultation, without a doubt, with our allied partners, particularly in a Five Eyes context, so we're often looking at the intelligence they provide as well.

I should stop here and let David finish it off, but we are going to make our own assessments. We will certainly look at what our allies are saying, but this is a Canadian assessment at the end of the day.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vigneault is going to have to finish it off very quickly.

**Mr. David Vigneault:** Mr. Rigby described the way it is done very well. I mentioned in my first answer to you, Ms. Sahota, that it was based on our own investigations. I want to be very clear that they were CSIS-led investigations.

**The Chair:** I want to thank the minister and his colleagues for their attendance and a thorough discussion of this issue.

We're going to suspend and then go in camera.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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