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# Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

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Chair: The Honourable Bardish Chagger





## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Thursday, October 27, 2022

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to meeting No. 36 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[*English*]

The committee is meeting today to resume its study on expanding the parliamentary precinct to include parts of Wellington Street and Sparks Street.

Our first panel consists of officials from CSIS, who will provide the committee with a security briefing on their work.

Our second panel consists of witnesses and organizations who have been recalled to committee to provide additional information.

I would like to let the committee know that all of our virtual witnesses have undergone the pre-committee connectivity and audio test.

In panel one we are welcoming today Cherie Henderson, assistant director, requirements, and Newton Shortliffe, assistant director, collection.

Before we start, I remind everyone that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair.

Ms. Henderson, please go ahead with your opening statement. Welcome to PROC.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson (Assistant Director, Requirements, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** Thank you.

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Cherie Henderson and I am the assistant director of requirements for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I am joined today by my colleague, Newton Shortliffe, the assistant director of collection. I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak to you today and to respond to your questions.

I would like to begin by speaking briefly about the mandate of the service, to help situate the activities of CSIS at home and abroad. All our activities are grounded in the CSIS Act, which clearly articulates our mandate and authorities.

First and foremost we investigate threats to the security of Canada. Our act defines the threats we are authorized to investigate: espionage and sabotage, foreign interference, terrorism and extremism, and subversion.

We provide advice to the Government of Canada on these threats, including through the production of intelligence assessments and reports. CSIS may also take measures to reduce threats to the security of Canada.

Lastly, at the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of National Defence and with the consent of the Minister of Public Safety, CSIS may collect foreign intelligence within Canada in relation to the intentions, capabilities or activities of a foreign state.

Importantly, CSIS is specifically prohibited from investigating lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, except when it is carried on in conjunction with activities that constitute a threat to the security of Canada. We are also bound by and uphold the charter rights of all Canadians.

As indicated in our 2021 public report, which I invite you to read online, the key national security threats facing Canada—foreign interference, espionage, malicious cyber-activity and violent extremism—are all accelerating and evolving.

We continue to see uncertainty regarding the global balance of influence, with shifting power structures posing new and complex challenges to the international rules-based order. These include the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban and the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in February of this year.

Here at home, foreign interference poses one of the most important strategic threats to Canada's national security, targeting Canada's sovereignty and democratic institutions. Last year CSIS released a report to the public on foreign interference threats to Canada's democratic process. In our report we advised Canadians that foreign states and their proxies target politicians, political parties and electoral processes in order to covertly influence Canadian public policy and public opinion, and to undermine our democracy.

We are also increasingly seeing states leverage media to spread disinformation or run influence campaigns designed to confuse or divide public opinion, interfering in healthy public debate and political discourse.

Additionally, here and around the world, the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the unpredictability of the current threat environment and in some cases exacerbated the threats.

One of those is most certainly the threat from ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, which is fuelled by extreme views around race, gender and authority. It is a threat that thrives on division and festers in the online space. We continue to see an increase in IMVE attacks in Canada and around the world. Lone actors remain the primary IMVE threat, as demonstrated by the tragic June 2021 attack in London, Ontario.

As our director told the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency this past May, in the case of the “freedom convoy”, CSIS was concerned with the threat of IMVE, and specifically the potential for serious acts of violence.

The combination of major disruptive events like the pandemic, the ever-increasing influence of social media and the spread of conspiracy theories has created an environment ripe for exploitation by influencers and extremists. This environment has the potential to inspire individuals to commit acts of violence.

• (1105)

In the lead-up to the “freedom convoy”, CSIS closely monitored known IMVE threat actors to assess any threat of serious acts of violence. This operational posture was informed by context. For one, CSIS had observed a rise in anti-authority violent rhetoric, particularly as it related to public health measures. CSIS was also aware of the opportunities that large gatherings and protests could offer IMVE actors to carry out acts of violence and recruit like-minded individuals.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Henderson, for those opening comments. We look forward to learning more within our round of questions and answers.

We will be starting with Mr. Calkins for six minutes, followed by Monsieur Fergus.

Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I really appreciate your being here, Ms. Henderson.

I noticed that when you talked about IMVE, you said it thrives on division. I notice that the divisive policies of the government when it came to vaccine mandates wasn't included on the list of things you just gave when it came to the convoy threats, but that's fine. I would just like to have that noted.

When the government says things about its own citizens and takes a divisive approach in its political strategies, I think it creates or exacerbates the very real problems we have with the state of the mental health of a lot of Canadians and some of the people who were inspired to do the things they're doing, but I don't want to get involved in that. I think we're going to have an opportunity to talk about these kinds of things in the next study, on foreign interference and so on.

I will move on now to dealing with the issue at hand, which is the operational security of the parliamentary precinct.

University of Cambridge historian Christopher Andrew has stated that intelligence failures are more often not in the collection of information but in the failures of sharing, analysis and execution. Given the lessons learned from the 2014 Parliament Hill shooting and more recently from the convoy, would you say that intelligence information is being shared properly within the parliamentary precinct? Furthermore, would increased co-operation between all parties in the national capital preclude the need to expand the parliamentary precinct?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** What I would say is that we absolutely work very closely with all of our police partners, specifically the RCMP, but all police partners of jurisdiction. We have a very robust process with the RCMP in regard to making sure we hold what we call one-vision meetings, where we ensure that any information we collect or the RCMP collects that could lead to threats to national security is shared, so that the appropriate body can engage under its mandate.

We have constantly continued to strive to improve information sharing and to ensure really good communication between all parties. There's always room for improvement, but it is an ongoing effort to ensure that every party that could potentially be impacted by a piece of information receives that information and can respond to it under its mandate.

• (1110)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** During the recent convoy in Ottawa, did CSIS have a relationship and a communication exchange with the Parliamentary Protective Service or the Sergeant-at-Arms?

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe (Assistant Director, Collection, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** As the assistant director of collection, I am responsible for all the regions that are responsible for the investigations on national security issues that the service does.

When there is a major incident such as the convoy incident, incident groups are created. This is led by law enforcement. Different partners will participate in that and will interface with those groups in order to share information to ensure that intelligence can be passed and to have discussions about what is going on.

The service did participate in those structures during the convoy. I know that our capital region, which is responsible for the national capital region, has an excellent relationship with parliamentary security, as well as with the RCMP.

I don't know if parliamentary security, however, participated in the particular incident group in which we were interfacing during the convoy, because the point of these groups is to create a single point of contact in and out at the working level so that we reduce the amount of fog that might otherwise be created by the information flows.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** As a former member of the Board of Internal Economy during that particular process, I would suggest to you that more work needs to be done in sharing that information.

I believe the advice we were given as parliamentarians in various debates here in the public sphere was largely done without knowing the information that we probably ought to have or should have known. I would like, if you can.... I don't want to put you on the spot right now, but I think there needs to be a way for parliamentarians to engage in the debate on issues as important as the ones we're discussing here today, so that at least parliamentarians can have actual informed debate rather than speculating. There was a lot of speculation and a lot of uncertainty about what was true and what wasn't true insofar as what the intents of some of the people involved in the convoy were.

Given that Wellington will be seeing many changes over the next few years, including the new block 2 plan and renovation to the Parliament, as well as the West Memorial Building and the heating and cooling plant, do you believe that the expansion of the precinct should be left to a panel of experts? Should you be providing advice as one of those experts?

There was an NDP MP here who I didn't agree with much and who said that as parliamentarians we shouldn't be picking out the colours of the drapes in the building, but we should be providing oversight rather than actual planning. Do you think that should be left to a panel of experts and, as such, have you been consulted as a potential member of that panel?

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** The role of the service is to conduct investigations relating to threats to the security of Canada. We look at individuals and groups who may pose different kinds of threats. We provide advice on what we're seeing in that regard, but in terms of policy decisions regarding, for example, what the nature of the security should be in the parliamentary precinct, really that's for others and is not something I would be comfortable commenting on.

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

I will note that it was really nice how, when one group of people was questioning, everybody else was quiet, even though some of the comments might not have been well received. I hope that continues now with Monsieur Fergus's six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I hope my questions will not prompt any comments from my honourable colleagues, from whichever side.

I would first like to thank Ms. Henderson and Mr. Shortliffe for their testimony.

I would also like to invite Ms. Henderson to finish her presentation before I ask my questions. I don't think that will take her long and I think it will be beneficial for the committee.

• (1115)

[*English*]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I can finish off, if that's okay for the committee.

What I will say is that CSIS was also aware of the opportunities that large gatherings and protests could offer IMVE actors to carry out acts of violence and recruit like-minded individuals.

Finally, CSIS was concerned about the threat posed by lone actors. That is why, throughout the events of January and February, CSIS remained engaged with the RCMP and other law enforcement partners to ensure timely sharing of information.

As I've mentioned, the service is mandated to investigate a variety of threats to the security of Canada, and that is what we work on every day in collaboration with domestic and international partners.

I understand that your study centres on expanding the federal jurisdiction for the operational security of the parliamentary precinct. From a CSIS perspective, we understand that our institutions and parliamentarians can be and are at risk. Tragic past events have shown as much, almost eight years ago to the day. That said, the service acts on its mandate regardless of where the threats emanate from or are directed.

To conclude, although our work at CSIS is often undertaken outside of the public eye, I want to ensure this committee that the service is steadfast in its commitment to keep all Canadians safe.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you for finishing your presentation, Ms. Henderson.

Is the Canadian Security Intelligence Service best placed for commenting on security in the parliamentary precinct? Would the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other organizations be in a better position to offer us expertise in that regard?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Thank you for your question. I am going to answer in English, so that the nuances are clearer.

[*English*]

What I would like to say is that CSIS looks at and investigates threats all across the country. Those threats could potentially be directed at any area or any individual. We collect that information, analyze it, develop our assessments and provide it to the other bodies. Those bodies, such as the RCMP or relevant police services, can then use that information to help assess the threat with regard to a particular situation.

While we may not be commenting particularly with regard to the parliamentary precinct, we can speak and provide information with regard to the threats we are seeing across the country—or in some cases, what we are seeing around the world—that are impacting the situation in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I would now like to ask a more theoretical question, but I assure you that I am taking what you just said into consideration.

In general, to increase the security of a crucial institution like Parliament, the Privy Council Office or the Prime Minister's Office, is it preferable that there be more or less distance between those important offices and the street where cars or trucks are travelling?

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** From the CSIS perspective, we wouldn't necessarily comment on the actual physical security around certain areas. What we would do is try to get a very clear appreciation of the threat environment we are currently facing, recognizing that the threat environment changes. At the moment, we know from ITAC that our national threat terrorism level is at medium.

In situations where we are collecting information indicating that there is a potential increase that could lead to an increase in the threat assessment, that needs to be taken into consideration with regard to the protection of certain areas, depending on the threat in those areas. It can change, alternate and move, depending on the threat environment we are seeing at the time. We would hope that information and assessment could be used for your determination.

• (1120)

[Translation]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Is the situation safer or less safe in today's world, given trends?

I would ask you to give a short answer.

[English]

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

[Translation]

The floor is yours for six minutes, Ms. Gaudreau.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses, because they have taught me a lot about CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I understand clearly that the role of CSIS is to inform us about potential threats.

I am going to offer some context for the matter at hand: we want to avoid a recurrence of an event like the one that occurred in 2014, an event for which the parliamentary precinct did not have all of the security resources needed for taking action.

I also understand that it is difficult for CSIS to say whether or not an expansion would help it assess threats, so I am going to ask much more specific questions in connection with the chronology of events.

What was the date when CSIS looked at a potential threat? When did it inform the Ottawa Police Service, the Parliamentary Protective Service, or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I just want to make sure I understand.

Are you speaking specifically in regard to the convoy itself, or are you speaking more generally?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Because of the events surrounding the presence of the convoy, we are trying to determine whether the expansion is necessary to help people like you maintain the security of the site.

What were the dates of your discussions? I am talking about the period when you started to look at the possibility of a threat associated with the arrival of the truckers.

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I wouldn't be able to speak to exact dates. What I can speak to is the fact that, prior even to the convoy starting, in the beginning of 2022 we were all very aware of the current what I would call rise that we were seeing, or the impact of the ideologically motivated violent extremist movement.

This was something we had been very aware of. We can even go back to what happened in Washington on January 6, when we saw Capitol Hill overrun. I think that shocked a lot of people. We have always been watching this, and we were constantly watching to determine whether any individuals we were specifically looking at within the IMVE milieu were starting to engage with the convoy. We're always concerned that anything creating—

• (1125)

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** I'm sorry to interrupt you. I would really like to know on what occasions you discussed the subject.

I know the watch you keep is extremely important, but I want to know what dates and what organizations you spoke with to determine whether there was a serious threat, an alarm signal. I would like to know on what occasions your discussions took place.

What we have to do is determine whether an expansion is possible and how things could be facilitated so that the operational services protect our security.

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I don't have any specific dates. What I can say is that as we continually monitor and investigate anything that could be a potential threat to the security of Canada, we constantly and regularly engage with the RCMP and our police partners. These are the same rules of engagement we followed with the RCMP and our police partners during the events that happened in January and February.

If there was anything that came to light, we would automatically make the—

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** I will amend my question: when did someone communicate with you to determine whether something was happening, and who communicated with you?

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** As I was saying, in any of these situations, if anything comes across our radar that we feel the RCMP or the appropriate police need to be advised of to ensure that they can do the appropriate protection and investigation, we share that. That is a constant, ongoing, back and forth process. There's no one specific date or time. It is something we are constantly working with.

We would never hold or sit on any information that we felt was necessary to ensure that we were protecting the security of Canadians. We go back and forth on a regular basis.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** From what I understand, you speak to each other daily or weekly and there was no one time when you said to yourselves that something was happening. Someone communicated with you, whether it was the Ottawa Police Service, the Parliamentary Protective Service, or even the RCMP. No one said to you that on that day, they were wondering what you knew about the upcoming events.

I am just trying to understand how it is possible to tell people how safe we are. I would really have liked to see the extent to which what you did, whether it was daily or weekly, might have reassured the people watching us. If you have dates to provide us, I would invite you to do so.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Blaney, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the folks who are here providing testimony for us.

I will first go through the chair to Ms. Henderson. You said earlier that our threat level—I think I got this right—at this point, today, is at a medium. If that's the case, I'm just wondering if you could tell us what the threat was between January 22 and 29 and then from January 29 until the convoy was removed.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** From my recollection, the threat level in Canada has remained at medium. Since it became part of the regular process of setting the threat level following the tragic events of 9/11, it has been at medium.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** That's interesting to me. Is there a measurement for internal threats and then a measurement for external threats, or are those two things combined?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** The national terrorism threat level is set by ITAC, our integrated terrorism assessment centre. They have a very solid methodology that they use. I wouldn't be able to go into specifics and explain it to you. They set the terrorism threat level for the country, but they look at areas around the world as well that may impact us. They may not necessarily, but because we have so many Canadian interests all around the world, they want to make sure Canadians are aware of potential threats outside of the country. We can also engage with Global Affairs Canada, because on their website they list the various threat—

• (1130)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you. That's helpful. You've answered my question.

We have heard, of course, that there are multiple jurisdictions, specifically around Parliament, and that sometimes figuring out who is in charge of what and when feels like a bit of a challenge.

I'm just wondering, from the perspective of your department, if it would be easier to deal with future events on this scale if they ever happen again? Having the jurisdiction expanded, would that make any significant difference in your ability to do your work?

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** When there is an incident of this nature, as I mentioned before, we usually join the intelligence groups that are created by law enforcement. Our primary counterpart for national security incidents is the RCMP. They are the designated lead for national security incidents, but of course, depending on where events occur, there can be issues with local police services of jurisdiction, who's doing what, and that sort of thing.

I know this was a very complicated issue during the crisis earlier this year, but for the service it would likely not make a very big difference, because our main interface is still through the RCMP and through their integrated security enforcement teams.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** On the other side of that, are there any concerns from your perspective with expanding the jurisdiction?

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** As I said just now, from a service point of view it probably wouldn't make a big difference one way or the other. We have excellent relationships with our partners, including local law enforcement, including the Ottawa Police Service, for example, the OPP and other organizations right across the country. I would expect those to continue, regardless of what structure is implemented.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

I've also heard testimony from this department today that threats across Canada are constantly assessed. If you're telling me that the threat level stayed at medium when we were watching people come across the country to disrupt our place of governance, I'm just wondering if there is any other way that you measure this, because it seems to me that this was not addressed as well as it could have been.

It didn't seem that the threat was taken very seriously until we were in a position where it was really hard to deal with it. I'm just wondering if you could talk about that. How is the assessment of threat made, and how does that work with the folks you work with in other departments?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Again, it's ITAC that sets that national terrorism threat level, and it pulls the information based on what it sees across the country and in relation to its members. What the service does is when.... We are always looking for a threat of serious violence to overthrow or to push forward an ideological agenda. That is one thing we are constantly on the alert for.

That's where, when we are looking at national security, we look at a narrow section of the pie, because we are looking really at espionage and terrorism. We look at terrorism if there's an effort to engage or incite serious violence in order to achieve an objective. If we see anything, that information would be fed into ITAC, and it would use that in order to help determine whether or not it would change that threat level.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

I will now give the floor to Mr. Berthold for five minutes, and then Ms. Romanado will follow.

Mr. Berthold, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses.

Ms. Henderson and Mr. Shortliffe, I would like to understand the process of discussions by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service with the police services, in particular the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, a little better.

What level of information do you share with your police partners? For example, an investigation is underway concerning a national threat. We know that some police services are very cautious about disclosing their information so as not to interfere with their own investigations.

In the case of an event like the one we are talking about, what level of information did you communicate to the RCMP about the investigations underway, whether or not they concerned the events that took place in Ottawa?

As a general rule, what will mean that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service does or does not share information?

• (1135)

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** Thank you for your question.

[*English*]

I'll reply in English to make sure I'm clear.

The trigger for sharing information is related to whether we perceive a possible threat to the security of Canada. As you mentioned earlier, we investigate the activities of certain individuals who we believe may be engaged in threat-related activity.

As Ms. Henderson has said, this is a discussion that goes on all the time with our law enforcement partners, particularly the RCMP. This is done through a number of different venues. It is done at our headquarters level, through headquarters-to-headquarters meetings, where we discuss, for example, what can be passed officially that law enforcement might be able to use in their own investigations.

There's also tactically a conflation that occurs at the regional level between the regions and the integrated national security enforcement teams on specific individuals we are both aware of. This is to ensure that we are essentially not tripping over each other in our investigations and that key threats are identified.

One of the most important roles is that if we become aware of information that, for example, is a threat to life or a threat of serious violence, we will find a way to get that over into the hands of law enforcement so they can take action as quickly as possible.

Beyond that, we have challenges—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Excuse me for interrupting you. It seems that different filters and various levels of approval are necessary before information is shared. It has to be determined whether the threat is in the short or medium term. There are several levels to go through before the information is passed on to the RCMP or, in the case at hand, the Parliamentary Protective Service. I imagine the level of trust between the two police services also has to be assessed before sharing that information.

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** Yes. We pass on information to the various levels, depending on the intended purpose of sharing the information.

[*English*]

On one level, we pass information at the strategic level, at the headquarters level, and that's where the official disclosures will occur. This is because we have to carefully manage what is provided from the service to law enforcement, mainly because of the intelligence-to-evidence rules that can make it very difficult for law enforcement to see a prosecution through if we have to withdraw information later on in order to protect our sources and methods of operation.

At the tactical level, though—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** I am going to interrupt you again. I understand. Thank you.

You did answer and you confirmed that there are several levels to go through. When information is provided, it has first gone through several levels of approval at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS. A number of people have seen the information.

As a result, when the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency received documents from the government indicating that while the convoy was in place, CSIS was not worried about explaining and sharing information with the public, we can understand that several authorities within CSIS had seen and approved that declaration.

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** If I have understood your question correctly, you want to know whether several levels of CSIS discussed threats in general, and yes, there were several discussions about this at various levels. Ultimately, there was a comprehensive threat assessment that gave us all the information.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next is Madam Romanado.



**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Through you, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us today.

For the purposes of this study and focusing on whether or not the protection of the parliamentary precinct should be expanded, in terms of physical security we were talking about focusing on whether or not Wellington Street and perhaps Sparks Street should be closed to vehicular traffic, and whether the jurisdiction over the security of those streets should move to the Parliamentary Protective Service.

One of the witnesses who came forward, former Senator White, brought up a situation—we also heard it from the PPS—which was that during the illegal occupation, there were trucks parked on Wellington and there was no intelligence to understand what was in those trucks. One of the concerns was obviously that we all know what happened in Oklahoma City.

In terms of CSIS expertise and intelligence gathering, whether it be using cyber and so on and so forth, would CSIS be in a position to provide intel of that nature, given the fact that it's physically here on Wellington Street? I'm just trying to understand. Would CSIS have been able to ascertain what was in those trucks, given that you're not physically on the ground? It is the police who are on the ground physically. Unless someone is actually putting this information out there, I think it would be hard to assess. Is that correct?

• (1140)

**Mr. Newton Shortliffe:** Obviously I can't comment on specific operational activities that occurred, but I can speak a bit more generally about how we do our investigations.

We have a number of authorities under the CSIS Act. The CSIS Act permits us to investigate, to the extent that it's strictly necessary, threats to the security of Canada. We use a number of methods for doing that, including interviews, surveillance and things like that. We can apply for Federal Court warrants for intrusive techniques. To do a search of a vehicle, for example, would require a Federal Court warrant, and you'd have to be able to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there is a threat in order to get that warrant. That's in the CSIS Act.

The practical application is that sometimes we're in a position to provide useful intelligence and sometimes we're not.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you.

Given that the City of Ottawa essentially closed Wellington to vehicular traffic a few months ago, other than the parliamentary buses, which I think are able to pass in front and so on, it has eliminated that risk in the sense that vehicles cannot be parked on Wellington.

In terms of the coordination, we've heard a bit about how CSIS will be pulled in, or if you are aware of information that would be beneficial for the other partners to be aware of.... If the Parliamentary Protective Service were to take over the jurisdiction of, say, Wellington and Sparks, would having...I don't want to say "one less partner" to deal with, because obviously you'd still be working with Ottawa city police and so on and so forth, but would having a streamlined approach be beneficial?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I would say in that situation that we would always strive to share information. We always want to engage with our partners—police partners, protective services, RCMP—to ensure that we share the proper information, so we strive not to have any barriers to information sharing.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** This may be a bit out of your area of expertise, but given the tourist attraction of Parliament Hill, the seat of government, and parliamentarians and the people who work on Parliament Hill, would you, in your expert opinion, recommend that Wellington remain closed to vehicular traffic?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** We wouldn't be in a position to make that recommendation, but as we are all aware, that is the symbol of democracy of our country. It is always going to be a place that attracts and gathers individuals. When we are aware of large potential protests, we are always monitoring these for opportunities that could be presented to IMVE actors to promote or engage in serious acts of violence.

• (1145)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you very much, and thank you for what you're doing.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Gaudreau, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just have one question for the witnesses, and that is about what happened in 2014 as compared to what is happening today. I did not get an answer earlier as to who stepped in and who raised the red flag. I don't know whether it was the Ottawa Police Service, the RCMP, the Parliamentary Protective Service, or someone else.

Since the witnesses told us in their testimony that it has now been eight years, have they observed, in the course of their work, a difference in operational activities, a difference in the strategy for ensuring the security of the parliamentary precinct?

[*English*]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I wouldn't be able to comment specifically on the safety strategy applied within the parliamentary precinct. What I would say is that since the events of 2014 we have certainly worked tirelessly to ensure that we are closely coordinating on any potential threats to the national security of our country, any potential threats to any area in Canada that could be victim to a national security threat. We are collecting information to the best of our ability and sharing that. We are always striving to improve the information-sharing practices. It's extremely important that we improve communications, and we consistently work to ensure that information is appropriately shared.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Since I have some time left, I'm going to ask you another question.

What could be improved to help you to do your good work? What would be something very important that would enable you to keep better watch to detect potential threats?

[*English*]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** One of the things that would help us greatly in this day and age is the ability to really access and use data. We did get changes to the data regime in Bill C-59, but from what we're experiencing it is still not as fluid. We want to ensure, of course, that we respect the privacy of Canadians. We are fully bound by the charter, but we need to find an ability to crunch and use data to help us assess threats as we move into the future.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Blaney, you have two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to come back to one of the questions from Ms. Romanado around the security of the trucks. That was a significant concern. We have heard testimony that the RCMP did not have the technology required to determine what was in those trucks.

I understand you can't tell us everything, but I feel like there's a pretty significant gap there. Is there any way we can do better? Do you have any recommendations around that? Do you have any way to have intelligence on this issue? You don't have to talk specifically, but I'm concerned in the long term that if there isn't a process to make sure we can assess this, it provides a risk that we are now proclaiming to everyone, because this is on the public record.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** At that time.... What we tend to do—and Newton spoke about this—is we really closely monitor all the opportunities that could potentially arise in this type of environment. We're closely keeping an eye on the potential for anyone to incite or lead to engaging in violent extremist activities.

While, as I noted before, we do not monitor legal protests, we certainly keep an eye out to make sure we're aware of anything—any outward influences, external influences—that could lead to potential serious violence.

We also continue to monitor other streams of intelligence reporting so that we can collect and get a better picture. That's why it's so fundamentally important that we continue to communicate, because each agency engaged will have a small piece of the picture that could help create that better picture. Again, it goes back to really good communication and information-sharing, and breaking down any barriers that prevent that sharing ability.

● (1150)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Just quickly, what I heard is that your concern really focuses around lone actors who could provide violent outcomes, and that is directly linked with extremist groups. I just want to make sure that's clear.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I would say that our concern is not only lone actors. Lone actors are difficult to find on many occasions, but we certainly want to have a really good appreciation of the environment and any potential inciting that could lead to lone actors engaging.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mrs. Block, you have three minutes.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

It's good to be here again today. I've appreciated the testimony we've heard so far.

During the course of the testimony, we've heard that the engagement of CSIS is based on whether or not they perceive a possible threat to the national security of Canada and at what level.

My question goes to the documents that were tabled with the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency. According to those documents, the national security adviser's briefing to the cabinet on the protests the night before the invocation includes the comment, “CSIS/CSE: No concerns at this time.”

Can you shed some light on the service's lack of concern about the protests even the night before the Emergencies Act was invoked?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** While I can't speak to particular investigations, I can say that we were watching for any opportunities the protest could have presented for IMVE actors to promote or engage in serious acts of violence. We were constantly monitoring streams of intelligence reporting.

When we are doing our intelligence assessments, they are constantly changing and can evolve as we watch any situations evolving. What can happen one day may change the next, depending on what we learn through another stream of intelligence reporting.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Thank you.

During the protests, a few individuals, with perhaps a flawed understanding of the Constitution, promoted a so-called manifesto, which was rightly dismissed. However, some members of the Liberal government claimed this represented an attempt to overthrow the government.

On the other hand, the special joint committee heard evidence just last month from the Parliamentary Protective Service and from our Sergeant-at-Arms, who used to head the RCMP branch for protective policing, that they did not consider this to be a serious threat to national security at all. In fact, Mr. McDonnell said, “I didn't take that comment seriously.”

Does the service share the perspective of the House's own security professionals?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** As I noted, I'm not going to be able to speak to specific incidents. I can just say we were constantly monitoring. If or when, in any of these situations, we learn of anything that could be a threat to the national security of our country, we ensure that the proper authorities are advised and take that into their decision-making processes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Naqvi, you have three minutes.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

I want to thank the witnesses for their time today. It has been quite helpful to understand. I appreciate the sensitivity of the issues we're dealing with.

I just want to pick up from the questioning that Ms. Blaney has been engaged in, but starting perhaps from the top.

In your experience and assessment, was what we saw during the occupation in the earlier part of this year a fairly unique event, as it relates to Parliament and the parliamentary precinct here in Canada?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** That's a very interesting question.

I have been in this business now for almost 31 years. I would say that what we are seeing right now is unprecedented. We have threats facing us on all levels.

Today, we're speaking specifically about the IMVE threat that we are watching across the country, but we are also dealing with threats from foreign interference in our democratic processes, espionage and efforts to undermine our economic security. We're watching what is happening with Russia and the invasion of Ukraine.

From my appreciation of 30 years in this seat, we are in a very unprecedented threat environment at the moment. As we have been monitoring the IMVE threat, it has continued to really increase over the past few years. I think it is unprecedented.

• (1155)

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you for that very thoughtful, enlightening and concerning answer. In light of what you just said, it should compel Parliament to look at extra measures or steps to ensure that the parliamentary precinct and, most importantly, parliamentarians and staff are well protected from this enhanced threat you're speaking of.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** It's very important for parliamentarians and all Canadians to have a very good appreciation of the national security threat environment. We have definitely seen over the past few years an increase in violent rhetoric and actions taken against our parliamentarians. I believe they all need to ensure that they have personal security.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I have a few brief moments left.

Do you think expanding the parliamentary precinct that covers Wellington Street and perhaps even Sparks Street would help in further enhancing protection for parliamentarians and their staff?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I can't comment on that. I would leave that for professionals to determine exactly how, and the size of the parliamentary precinct, but what we as a service can do is continue to provide threat assessments as to what we see occurring in the country, which will hopefully help the policy-makers and decision-makers come to the proper decision.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

On behalf of all PROC committee members, I would like to thank you both for your time with us today. I wish you well for the rest of the day and so forth.

We'll suspend while we switch to panel two.

Take care.

• (1155) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Welcome back for our second panel today at the procedure and House affairs committee.

I would like to welcome our guests. We have with us Michel Bédard, who is the law clerk and parliamentary counsel. From the National Capital Commission, joining us by video conference, we have Alain Miguelez, vice-president, capital planning; and Tobi Nussbaum, chief executive officer. We also have Trish Ferguson, deputy chief with the Ottawa Police Service, who is joining us by video conference. Then, in person, we have Larry Brookson, chief superintendent with the Parliamentary Protective Service.

I would like to start with Mr. Bédard.

Welcome. You have up to three minutes for your opening comments.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bédard (Interim Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, House of Commons):** Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee for your invitation to appear today.

My name is Michel Bédard, and I am the interim law clerk and parliamentary counsel of the House of Commons.

[*English*]

The Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel provides comprehensive legal services to the House of Commons and its members. I trust that my testimony today will assist the committee in its study on the extension of Parliament Hill and the parliamentary precinct.

Under the Parliament of Canada Act, the Parliamentary Protective Service, or PPS, is responsible for all matters respecting physical security throughout the parliamentary precinct and Parliament Hill. Parliament Hill is defined in the act as “the grounds in the City of Ottawa bounded by Wellington Street, the Rideau Canal, the Ottawa River and Kent Street.” The “parliamentary precinct”, also defined in the Parliament of Canada Act, includes the premises used by the House of Commons, the Senate, their members and other parliamentary entities. They “are designated in writing by the Speaker of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Commons”.

The practice has been for the Speakers to make a joint designation that is tabled before Parliament.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada, through the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada, has ownership and general care over the grounds of Parliament Hill and the parliamentary buildings. This is, however, subject to the House's right to administer its internal affairs free from interference, which is usually exercised under the authority of the Speaker as guardian of the House's privileges, and that of the Board of Internal Economy pursuant to its responsibility over the premises of the House.

In addition, decisions pertaining to the use of the grounds of Parliament Hill are taken under the authority of the Committee on the Use of Parliament Hill. The Committee is co-chaired by the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms and the Director of Senate Corporate Security on behalf of their respective Speakers. Its membership also includes representatives from various government departments.

The Parliamentary Protective Service's mandate is limited to physical security; it does not police the Hill or the parliamentary precinct, and its protection officers are not peace officers. The police of jurisdiction for Parliament Hill and the parliamentary precinct is the Ottawa Police Service. However, their conduct of business within the precinct must take into consideration parliamentary privilege.

[English]

If Parliament so wishes, Parliament Hill could be expanded to include parts of Wellington Street and Sparks Street by making an amendment to the definition of "Parliament Hill" that is found in the Parliament of Canada Act. This will extend the PPS mandate to provide physical security on these streets.

I know that both streets are currently owned by the City of Ottawa. Making these streets federal property will make it easier for PPS to fulfill its mandate.

[Translation]

I would be pleased to answer any questions members may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bédard.

If I understood correctly, Mr. Nussbaum, you will be speaking on behalf of the National Capital Commission. Welcome, and the floor is yours for three minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Tobin Nussbaum (Chief Executive Officer, National Capital Commission):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good afternoon.

[Translation]

I am happy to be with you again today.

I am accompanied by Alain Miguelez, vice-president, capital planning and chief planner at the National Capital Commission.

[English]

In our role as principal planner of the NCR, we are pleased to be here with you today to provide our observations on the long-term impacts of the closure of Wellington Street.

In June we had the opportunity to highlight the importance of rethinking the stretch of Wellington Street in the parliamentary precinct as the symbolic heart of our nation along Confederation Boulevard. We discussed with you at that time how its reimagining should occur in the context of a number of ambitious capital and city building projects currently under way. These include projects such as the Cliff plant, the Alexandra Bridge replacement, the revitalization of the former Nepean Point and, of course, the rehabilitation of Centre Block.

We feel that this reimagining could also usefully think about studying and enhancing the street in its entirety from the Portage Bridge all the way to the east where it meets Rideau Street, which is an important intersection at the heart of our capital. This exercise could also fit well with an exercise that the NCC is currently engaged with, which is the renewal of one of our master plans, the capital core area sector plan, which will set out the vision for this area for the next 10 to 15 years.

From the NCC's perspective, it is also an opportunity to reimagine the space and contribute to an enhanced visitor experience and overall public realm, and to reconsider how the public will interact with the parliamentary precinct and experience the site of Canada's seat of government. This could include animation of the area and opportunities to build on the NCC's work with PSPC, expanding and complementing the current retail offerings on Sparks Street. This would give parliamentarians, their staff, residents and visitors a new way to interact with the area, while also contributing to the economic recovery and sustainability of the core of Canada's capital.

On the question of public transit, which I know we discussed in June, the work of the NCC transit office is well under way. This office will work and help the advancement of la Société de transport de l'Outaouais's tramway project. We see this project as a vital part of the reimagining of Wellington Street and a crucial step in enhancing interprovincial transit options.

• (1210)

[Translation]

In the longer term, the National Capital Commission hopes that the interprovincial transit loop will be implemented.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your comments.

[English]

We look forward to hearing more during the question and answer session.

Deputy Chief, we'll go over to you for up to three minutes.

**Ms. Trish Ferguson (Acting Deputy Chief, Ottawa Police Service):** Good afternoon, and thank you, Madam Chair and committee members, for inviting me here today.

I am Acting Deputy Trish Ferguson, and I'm responsible for overseeing information, investigations and serious and organized crimes at the Ottawa police.

We've been following the discussions at these committee meetings, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to again offer the perspective of the Ottawa police.

The testimonies we've heard and our recent experiences in policing large events in the city have confirmed the three priorities we previously identified to you. These are jurisdictional responsibilities, infrastructure and resources.

As you're aware, the Ottawa Police Service is the police of jurisdiction for the city of Ottawa. In fulfilling this role, we rely on cooperation and collaboration with other law enforcement agencies. As such, the service is used to dealing with questions of jurisdiction; however, the occupation we experienced in February confirmed the need to further clarify and even reconsider matters of jurisdiction around the Wellington corridor.

Jurisdictional boundaries within and around the parliamentary precinct need to be clearly defined. Collaborative strategies and responsibilities also need to be clarified in order to ensure that, in times of crisis and emergency, the statutes, regulations and authorities are already established and understood by all parties. This is particularly critical for situations in which events spill over established boundaries.

The second issue we ask you to consider is infrastructure. Since February, we have had several large events in Ottawa, such as "Rolling Thunder" and Canada Day, and we currently lack physical infrastructure that can easily and quickly be put in place to protect key locations and personnel. These events again stretched our resources thin, in part because we lacked adequate security infrastructure. For example, we had to bring in heavy trucks to establish a vehicle exclusion zone around Parliament. This was less effective and less reliable than security infrastructure would have been if we had set up, for example, bollards and protected pedestrian areas.

The third issue, as we discussed before, is the need for adequate resources for the police service. We must be prepared to maintain public security and protect the residents of Ottawa, no matter the size and scale of events. We also know that we cannot continually call on police from other jurisdictions across the province to help police events in our city. The demands placed on our service in the past year have strained our members and highlighted the need for adequate resources so we can safely and effectively respond to the needs in our communities, make intelligence-led threat assessments and enhance inter-agency collaboration.

Members of the Ottawa Police Service are committed to protecting Ottawa as an open and peaceful capital city, one where residents and visitors can move freely and that everyone can fully enjoy.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions.

• (1215)

**The Chair:** We look forward to that as well. Thank you.

Now we go to Chief Superintendent Larry Brookson.

Welcome to PROC. You have three minutes.

**Mr. Larry Brookson (Acting Chief Superintendent, Parliamentary Protective Service):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the promotion.

Good day, Madam Chair, honourable MPs and fellow witnesses.

[*Translation*]

I am happy to see you here again today to continue our discussion about operational security issues in the parliamentary precinct. I would remind you, as the acting chief superintendent of the Parliamentary Protective Service, that these discussions are of considerable importance for my colleagues and me.

While my opening remarks are brief, I will take this opportunity to raise a few points that were identified in my last appearance.

[*English*]

The service is responsible for the physical security of parliamentarians, staff, employees, visitors, buildings, grounds and assets on Parliament Hill and the precinct. Therefore, how the service trains its employees, how the employees engage with one another, how they collaborate and build their respective networks with our valued partners and how the service overall carries out its commitment to continuous learning and improvement are all critical components in how well our human assets can perform their duties and deliver security services to this community.

Beyond these distinctly human capabilities, and as I mentioned in my previous appearances, the service must also rely on how physical barriers and technologies need to be incorporated in order to better deliver the mandate. This stays true regardless of the precinct boundaries.

[*Translation*]

Operational preparation and the Parliamentary Protective Service's response capacity therefore depend on how human resources, physical barriers and technology function together to create an integrated physical security system that serves our parliamentary community as well as possible.

[*English*]

While security information can sometimes be sensitive, I recognize that today's meeting is being conducted publicly. Please trust that I will contribute to the discussions as openly as I can.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Now we will start our six-minute rounds, with Monsieur Berthold and then Monsieur Naqvi.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here with us today.

Ms. Ferguson, you said there was not enough equipment to control big events around Parliament Hill. Does that mean technical methods and infrastructure exist that would allow Wellington Street to be secured during big demonstrations, while allowing it to be kept open the rest of the year?

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** Thank you for your question. I am going to answer you in English, because I am more comfortable in that language for the technical terms.

[*English*]

You're asking if there are existing structures that could be put in place. From a policing perspective, I think we have many partners throughout the world who are policing capital cities and who we could potentially rely upon for best practices for any existing structures.

We have changed our processes in a number of larger demonstrations based on what we've seen around the world and on some of the trends that have taken place. I think back to Nice, France, several years back. That incident altered the way we respond to major events here, in terms of making sure that we are considering all potential threats and sources of threats. I believe that's something that could be put into place.

There are places where we'll keep the area open and free at times when everything is fine, but where we can have some infrastructure that would be rapidly put in place should we face a moment of threat or crisis.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Given that you seem to be familiar with what is going on outside Canada, could you send us a list of the places where protective infrastructure has been installed for problematic times, while maintaining access by vehicles and pedestrians the rest of the year?

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** Yes, I can send you a list of those details.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you.

I want to talk to you a bit about a little incident that happened to me on Wellington Street. At this time, the most dangerous thing on Wellington street is that it is a street with no real purpose. There are cars driving on it and pedestrians walking around pretty much everywhere in the street, plus bicycles and scooters; it is an absolutely dangerous place.

I have to tell everyone that last spring, I almost lost my life on Wellington Street. It was when the traffic lights were still operating to control vehicle traffic. One of my colleagues stopped me at the last minute, just before a car flattened me.

I want to thank the Parliamentary Protective Service, which helped me bring this up with the municipality of Ottawa. I wrote to the mayor of Ottawa and received a reply from a political staffer.

However, because a traffic study had to be done, it took a month before the traffic lights were removed and stop signs put up, when it could have been done in two days.

At present, the lives of parliamentarians and users of Wellington Street are being put in danger by maintaining the street's undefined status. What can we do to improve the situation and protect the parliamentarians and visitors who are currently using this artery?

Is it the role of parliamentarians to go and do traffic control and tell people to stop and pay attention? I don't think so. When politicians are allowed time to make decisions to protect people, we have cases like mine, where it took me a month to get an answer.

I don't think we are best placed to decide the best measures. Do you sincerely think that parliamentarians, elected representatives, are best placed to make decisions about the security of a place like Wellington Street?

• (1220)

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** What you have described shows exactly why we need to put something definite in place, with the infrastructure we need. I admit that a month is a long time, but I can't speak for the City of Ottawa or the decision that was made.

At the Ottawa Police Service, we absolutely believe in the security of the public and parliamentarians.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** My next question is for more or less everybody.

We have to decide whether to expand the Parliamentary Protective Service's security perimeter. What I understood from Mr. Bédard's testimony is that the Parliamentary Protective Service is supposed to protect individuals, not control vehicle speeds. The role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is to anticipate threats. The role of the Ottawa Police is to make sure that municipal bylaws and other provincial regulations are obeyed.

How can parliamentarians make such an important decision as the decision as to which security service should be in charge of part of a street or part of an area?

Mr. Brookson, do you want to answer?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Thank you for your question.

Once again, I am going to answer in English. It is easier for me to use technical terms to explain the situation properly.

[*English*]

In my previous appearances, I've been clear on needing the authority to make the precinct safe. I don't have the authority over Wellington Street. All I can do is have our protection officers keep eyes and ears on what's happening on Wellington. To this point, I can't engage on Wellington.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Naqvi, you have the floor.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Through you to Mr. Nussbaum, who knows that I listen to every one of his words very, very carefully, always, I'm still hanging on "finally". Can you finish your thought?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** The suspense is killing me.

**Mr. Tobin Nussbaum:** Well, I hope I don't disappoint, Mr. Naqvi.

I just wanted to reiterate that I think an important part in looking ahead to the future of Wellington Street is to double down on the collaboration and co-operation between federal and municipal partners. Some of them are here with you during this session. There are others, of course, such as PSPC and the City of Ottawa. I just wanted to underline our commitment to doing exactly that as we move forward.

Thank you.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** That's great. Thank you. I really appreciate that comment, because I think that will be key as we move forward.

I'll continue with you, Mr. Nussbaum. You were last here in June. We've had some major events, as the deputy chief was pointing out, since then, mostly of a festive nature, thankfully, including Canada Day. We've also had the sombre moment of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

What has been the experience, from the NCC's perspective, of the closure of Wellington thus far from vehicular traffic?

• (1225)

**Mr. Tobin Nussbaum:** In terms of the events we witnessed in the capital this past season, I think they went off very well. We had events like the Ottawa Jazz Festival in Confederation Park. We had the Ottawa Bluesfest at LeBreton Flats Park, and, of course, we had the Canada Day celebrations and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

I think the experience was positive. People understood that Wellington Street was closed, so they made their plans with that in mind. We have an interest, shared I'm sure with the City of Ottawa, in increasing use of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit. There's an understanding now, as the city moves to its phase two extension of that project, that more and more we want citizens who are coming to events in the core of Canada's capital to arrive there by other means than private vehicle, whether it's transit, walking or cycling.

The Wellington Street closure was well known, and as a consequence we didn't see the kinds of tie-ups we might otherwise have expected.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you.

I'll come to you, Mr. Brookson. Even though it's not part of the parliamentary precinct and thus PPS does not have much jurisdiction over it, has the closure of Wellington Street made it easier for your team to fulfill its mandate around providing safety for parliamentarians and staff?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** I think the current state of Wellington Street, the way it has been set up, is for law-abiding citizens. For anybody who has an intent or is a threat, it's wide open. There are no barriers.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Through you, Madam Chair, can you, Mr. Brookson, expand on the word "barriers"? Are you talking about physical barriers? Are you talking about psychological barriers? What's in your mind when you speak of barriers?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, when we look at Wellington and the physical barriers that were put up to prevent traffic from coming right down the heartland of our democracy, of both the triad and the south precinct buildings, the service is responsible for 30-some buildings, which house some of the most important people we have in this country, steering us in the right direction.

The suggestion that Wellington comes right down the heart of it unabated is a concern to a service that I'm responsible for, so although I can appreciate the reduced traffic since last winter, it's still extremely porous.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I have two minutes. I have two very quick questions for you.

Do you think expanding the parliamentary precinct to include Wellington Street up to Sparks Street would help in undermining the porousness that you speak of and enhancing security for parliamentarians, staff and the community writ large?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, my position has not changed and the answer to that is yes.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you.

My second question is this. Do you think the next step on top of that, which is to transfer Wellington Street from municipal government to federal government, will also further enhance your ability to do your duty well?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, yes, that's correct.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** That's excellent.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We really did get a lot of answers to our questions in the earlier meetings, but we see that a plan is taking shape. We have heard a lot about how there are concerns relating to infrastructure, resources and jurisdictions. Ms. Ferguson confirms this.

According to Mr. Bédard, it is possible, under the rules of the House of Commons, for us to perform our role and responsibilities better. Mr. Brookson says he has learned a lot and can make very clear recommendations. In the last testimony, there was a discussion of the six services associated with the command centre and the usefulness of working together. And last, Mr. Nussbaum talked about how important collaborating and coordinating are.

The crucial question is how to go about it. At present, we are talking about expanding the boundaries of the Hill, but more than that is going to be needed. During the five minutes I have, I would like each witness to explain precisely what we are missing for achieving the objective of the security of parliamentarians and Hill employees and having the necessary authority that each of you may have, and the resources.

I know that you have some items that can be added to the report, because this is our last chance at present.

I will start with Mr. Brookson. What are we missing? What do you need?

• (1230)

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** I think that if we want to expand the boundaries of the parliamentary precinct, we will have to invest in the Parliamentary Protective Service.

[English]

For the service to be successful, we need our partners to also be in a healthy position. If there's one partner on which I rely heavily, it's the Ottawa Police Service. It's a service that's been stretched and moved.

We have to look at this more globally. Again, I don't know where I'd be without the Ottawa Police Service with respect to the way the service I'm responsible for delivers on a daily basis. We need to look at this holistically to make sure all security partners are raised and elevated at the same time.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Mr. Bédard, can you add a comment on what is needed for the PPS to perform its role better, that role being different from the role of the police?

**Mr. Michel Bédard:** The solution to adopt, to ensure the security of parliamentarians, includes a geographical expansion of the PPS's mandate, so that it takes in part of Wellington Street and potentially other streets. The SPP's mandate is really performed based on the premises to be protected, that is, Parliament Hill and the parliamentary precinct.

At present, Wellington Street is not part of Parliament Hill, under the definition given in the Parliament of Canada Act. As I said in my testimony, the street is the property of the City of Ottawa. The proposal to extend the ground covered by Parliament Hill to take in Wellington Street and other portions of streets, and take the necessary measures for those streets to become the property of the federal government, is certainly a potential solution.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Ms. Ferguson, how are things working since it has been more or less closed and people can cross more freely? I would like to know your opinion on the subject, because weeks have passed since our last conversation.

[English]

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** For the Ottawa Police Service, I think what we really crave from this committee is a delineation of jurisdictions and statutes for roles and responsibilities. They need to be clear for all parties and encompass contingencies for times of crisis and emergency.

The Ottawa Police Service would continue to respond to any criminal acts that take place within the parliamentary precinct, which is as it happens right now, and we really want to make sure our members are provided clear lines as to where their role begins and where the parliamentary precinct police role would end.

Any changes to infrastructure that we're seeking would absolutely be necessary to make sure it respects the rights of parliamentarians to freely access any of the parliamentary buildings and the precinct itself. We would like to make sure that whatever key pieces are put in place in terms of infrastructure will allow for freedom of movement but also give us the capability to quickly and efficiently restrict access, particularly for vehicles, in response to a security threat.

That is something that I think has been highlighted already, that we haven't been able to do wholeheartedly on Wellington right now. The member who reported almost being struck by a vehicle.... Those are situations that we are very sad to hear about. We would like to be able to put something in place that is clear and doesn't put our members at risk.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Blaney, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for all of the testimony we've heard and for spending this hour with us. My first question will be for Mr. Brookson.

Living through this, I kept walking through that convoy every day and thinking, "Why are we here?" I don't understand, and I'm wondering what information the PPS received from the OPS prior to January 29. What input was there?

I'm still confused, when I look back, that all of those trucks were blocking our place of governance for the whole of Canada.

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, obviously the community shares its information among its security partners, so the date of departure, where the convoys started and the numbers that were coming were things the service was aware of, and we commenced our preparation for that, specific to our protective mandate.

The remaining policing operations were left to the policing partners, and the service did not have a role in that.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Okay. I'll leave it at that.

As we're having this discussion, I want to make sure citizens are well aware, because we know there are people living in the area where we're talking about expanding the jurisdiction.



To clarify and put on the record, if it was turned into federal jurisdiction, which would really allow for a lot more security for this place—you've made that very clear, Mr. Brookson, through testimony—would there be any interruption for citizens? If they were in trouble and they had to call 911, would that just continue as is?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, it would continue as is.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

Through the chair, Mr. Brookson talked about the accessibility still. We have blockades up. I appreciate that I can get across that street a lot more easily when I'm going to different meetings that I have to attend, but I still see people driving through and I often think that I don't think they should be doing that. Of course, they are doing that.

I will first come to you, and then I will come back to the deputy chief to ask a question about that.

If the jurisdiction was expanded, what kinds of changes would be there to provide more security for that space? How would we monitor it? What capacity would the PPS have to monitor that? If somebody drove on or came onto that space thinking they were going to take a shortcut, what powers would that department have?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, one piece that we've already commenced is that we have a considerable number of cameras that file into our OSC—our operational support centre.

A piece that I've asked for as of this morning, understanding that Wellington is going to be a bit more used by vehicles, is that I'm working with PSPC to get a list of authorized vehicles, so that when we see a vehicle going down that road, the service knows from the licence plate if it's authorized. For vehicles that are not authorized, we'll be contacting the Ottawa police partner through our OSC to respond and deal with those.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

I'll go to the deputy chief on this one. Again, this is something I have noticed. I wouldn't know if a vehicle was authorized or unauthorized. Right now, in this interesting stance that we are in, what are the police doing around monitoring that on Wellington Street?

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** Through you, Madam Chair, as I think Mr. Brookson explained, we are in very close contact with the PPS. We do joint training with them. We have done a number of tabletop exercises that have assisted us in getting some clarity around the response that's required.

As it pertains to vehicles, we know there are vehicles that have travelled up there. Certain vehicles are required for maintenance of property or for city officials who need to be in that area. We know it is not entirely solidified and a safe or secure space at this point in time. We look forward to some clarity around this from this committee, on where they would like to see that happen. We will certainly enforce and abide by whatever is decided.

• (1240)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

Through the chair to the deputy chief, one of the things I heard in the testimony very clearly was that the police are stressed and there's a concern, it seems to me, around human resources and not having the people to do the work, because the police have experienced a lot of challenges.

I'm wondering if you could expand on what that means for us in this place.

**Ms. Trish Ferguson:** Through you, Madam Chair, you are correct. We are very much in a place of lacking resources. Our members are stressed and stretched. However, we continue to police the city of Ottawa and the wide expanse of geography that we have. We do that to the best of our resources.

Ideally, we would be able to position officers at both ends and at any of the gaps along Wellington Street, but fundamentally that's not something we're able to sustain in the long term. We look for a solution to this and, as I mentioned before, are happy to support whatever is decided. Given that...and mentioning resources, we are very much looking forward to a decision on that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will go to Mr. Calkins for five minutes, followed by Mrs. Romanado.

Go ahead, Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is not our first chance to have a conversation, Mr. Brookson.

I think there's a reasonable expectation that Canadians have access to their parliamentary precinct. In the spirit of maintaining the openness that's here—the openness that's been here since I've been here, which is 2006—and seeing people come and go off the grounds and be on the front lawn of Centre Block, I can't wait for the day for that to be open again, to get Parliament looking the way it used to look.

Notwithstanding that, I've also seen significant security upgrades here. Basically, there are barricades now. We have two tiers of security even within our own precinct, not to mention the potential third tier that we're talking about, which is the outer boundaries of the parliamentary precinct and even the national capital region. In listening to your answers, I can understand where you're coming from. Your perspective, your mandate, is that you want to be able to secure this area as much as possible. Given those two solitudes, I don't think we can physically just restrict access and vet every single human being who wants to come in and out of the downtown core or even to the parliamentary precinct. I don't know if that's humanly possible. That means we have to rely not solely on physical infrastructure; we also have to rely on intelligence infrastructure.

I'm not sure what you're willing to share here, but based on conversations we've had in other places, I was left with the impression that the Parliamentary Protective Service was not treated as an equal partner in the eyes of the joint services that are providing security and protection and the sharing of intelligence. If we're going to extend your jurisdiction and your mandate, I would be remiss in my duties to protect people if you did not have the same capabilities to...or were not seen as being an equal partner with the Ottawa police and the RCMP, or an equal recipient of information from somebody like CSIS.

Can you tell me, if we were to recommend at this committee that the PPS expand its area of responsibility, that I can make that recommendation confidently, knowing that the PPS is completely capable and completely in the loop in the intelligence infrastructure of downtown Ottawa?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** First and foremost, certainly not within this service is the objective or the goal to put fencing and barbed wire around the parliamentary precinct, but I appreciate the extent of that question.

This service belongs to Parliament. It doesn't belong to the RCMP. It doesn't belong to Ottawa Police Service. In supporting Parliament, this service truly tries its best to work in the shadows. We're not here to impede. We're not here to obstruct. We're here to serve. That's the objective of the service, and that will continue.

With respect to our partners, the service has made leaps and bounds in the past few years in, first of all, being recognized. We know the service that was here before. Everybody just saw that service and didn't recognize or understand what the Parliamentary Protective Service was. That has changed significantly over the last two and half years.

Regarding intelligence, I know only how it's provided. I can't speak to what's being held back. I'm very comfortable with what I am receiving. That's from all security partners. I'm not going to name them all, for obvious reasons, but with all security partners, I'm well comfortable on that. If something's coming our way, my phone will ring or the team's phone will ring.

That comes through, whether it's the Ottawa Police Service, the RCMP, CSIS or our partners over... We've done a lot of work over the last three years with the multi-jurisdictional response initiative. This is an initiative that was born out of the 2014 incident. We've run tabletop exercises at that level—the commanders, who are my counterparts in all these services, because we can't do it alone—as to what the respective roles and responsibilities would be in a critical incident.

That work continues between the service and the Ottawa Police Service specific to critical incidents that the service would have control of. We all know how long a critical incident lasts for. It is roughly three to five minutes, then it's over. The service, as I've said before, has been built to sustain the first 90 minutes, understanding the length of time that it takes to get other partners to come in and assist.

Again, we've run the tabletop. Deputy Chief Ferguson has spoken about the tabletop exercises that our two services have done be-

cause, quite honestly, it's these two services that work hand in hand on a day-to-day basis.

I hope I've answered your question. I'm quite comfortable with the information we're receiving and the partners that we've established at all those levels.

Thank you.

● (1245)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I know he doesn't have time to answer, Madam Chair—

**The Chair:** You don't have any time to ask, either.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** All right.

I just wanted to know if you have the legislative tools you need to do your job. If you could submit that in writing to the committee afterwards, I would appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Romanado, you have five minutes.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll be quick, as I'm sharing my time with Mr. Ferguson.

Mr. Brookson, we just heard that Wellington Street has the jerseys between Bank and Elgin. We know the traffic lights have been removed on the corners of Metcalfe and O'Connor. We actually have not seen any police presence on Wellington.

I witnessed construction workers almost getting hit while trying to cross at the corner of O'Connor and Wellington yesterday. Walking here this morning to come to committee—my office is in Valour—we witnessed a car literally slalom through the jerseys and race down the street because the driver knew there was no police presence and there were no traffic lights. It's a quick shortcut now. I actually feel less safe crossing street now on Wellington.

Given the fact that Minister Tassi, when she was minister of procurement, said that 50% of parliamentary buildings are going to be south of Wellington within the next eight years, can we get this settled once and for all, so that parliamentarians, people who work on Parliament Hill and visitors don't get hit?

Can you comment, please?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The City of Ottawa, not the Ottawa Police Service, governs all the traffic and the safety measures that need to go in place. The service has been working with the City of Ottawa, too, as these barriers start to get manoeuvred. They are going to continue to get manoeuvred, particularly with the winter coming and the need for snow removal. It's not that I'm pleased about any of that, but that's just what's going to be happening.

We continue to work with the Ottawa Police Service and, as Deputy Chief Ferguson has indicated, they don't have the resources to put somebody there. This is where the service, which I'm responsible for in delivering this mandate, will reach out to the Ottawa Police Service and come up with something.

Now, if this means the service has to take on a resourcing requirement from the Ottawa Police Service, our partner, then I'm prepared to do that. It's not appropriate for us to be risking any of our parliamentarians crossing Wellington Street.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you, Ms. Romanado.

I have a very quick, lightning round of questions to close off a few things we heard in the testimony.

Mr. Nussbaum, are there any private businesses located on Wellington Street now?

• (1250)

**Mr. Tobi Nussbaum:** Through you, Madam Chair, I believe any businesses can access.... I know of one retail establishment at the corner of O'Connor and Wellington, but the access is from O'Connor. I don't think there are any other private businesses that are currently located right on Wellington Street.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Through you, Madam Chair, once again to Mr. Nussbaum, are there any plans for the NCC to establish a much greater degree of private businesses on Wellington Street?

**Mr. Tobi Nussbaum:** Through you, Madam Chair, I think it's part of the reimagining of Wellington Street in the context of, as you've spoken about, a larger precinct, including Sparks Street. We have an interest in ensuring a vibrant and active area for visitors, occupants, workers, parliamentarians and others. We have a real interest in making sure there is activity and animation in that area. Whether it can occur right on Wellington Street or on Sparks Street, those questions are going to need to be sorted out through the kinds of conversations we're having with partners.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Very quickly, this is going to be a large question, but I would really appreciate it if you could be brief.

Are there any national capitals where they have restricted private vehicular access around their parliamentary precincts?

**Mr. Tobi Nussbaum:** I can't necessarily speak to parliaments, because not all major capitals have parliaments.

Mr. Miguelez and I were in Washington, D.C. You may well be aware that in front of the White House and now in front of Congress there are various measures, such as physical barriers to the streets. We are actually undertaking an investigation to see what other capitals are doing.

The short answer is yes.

[Translation]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you for your answer and for keeping it brief, since I don't have a lot of time left.

[English]

Would restricted private vehicular access, combined with additional intelligence tools such as cameras, people on the street, etc., provide greater security for the parliamentary precinct, in your opinion?

[Translation]

My question is for Mr. Bédard or Mr. Brookson.

[English]

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, I'll take that one.

Yes, it would.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

[Translation]

Ms. Gaudreau, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In life, we have to evaluate what happened in the past in order to correct the future.

Mr. Brookson, I would like to hear your opinion on what was missing in the process, at the beginning, for us to have ended up with an occupation that, we hope, will not happen again, because we do not want any more of them.

[English]

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair,

[Translation]

As I have explained before this committee several times, it is to have authority over Wellington Street, and maybe Sparks Street, so we can close them in the event of some threat or other. In my opinion, that is what was missing.

Following the discussions I had with the Ottawa Police Service, I had asked at that time that Wellington Street be closed, but that request was not agreed to, for one reason or another.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** This is my last question. We were talking earlier about resources, which are a scarce commodity these days. If we did go ahead with an expansion, would you be able to continue providing protective services for parliamentarians, not just within a potential new delineation of the parliamentary precinct, but also outside it?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** I'm going to answer in English because there are technical terms.

[English]

For the exterior, humans will only get us so far. That's why we have technology to increase our capability. The exterior, on what can happen out there, is where the technology and the sensing capability needs to take place, whether it comes through cameras or existing technology, as well as effective barriers.

My biggest concern is vehicles being used as threats or weapons, whether they're large or small vehicles being weaponized. In terms of effective barriers and the technology, it's not necessary to have more guns on the Hill—I think we have enough—but we need other things to help.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Blaney, you have two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate this. These are interesting conversations we're having today. I'm going to come back to you, Mr. Brookson. I have a lot of questions.

We've heard proposed here some discussions about potentially increasing public transit along Wellington and finding ways to do that. When we talk about how concerned you are with the lack of capacity to block people, are there any concerns around public transit going through that space?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Madam Chair, I'll always be the voice of concern, but I'm also a voice in working with partners and understanding the requirements and the service deliverables for Parliament. If we're talking specifically about a tram line or buses, I'm working with that partner in having those vehicles checked before they come through. That's something I'm comfortable working with, whether they're partners at the NCC or whoever ends up having that.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Through you, Madam Chair, I think what we're hearing clearly is that this in-between state is really messy. That's just reality. When you're in between one thing and another in life, and you don't know where you're going, things can be problematic.

I am going to come back for one more question, Mr. Brookson, to better understand this. Even if the proposed expanded jurisdiction happens and we do see it increase, I understand that it will still continue to be multi-jurisdictional. I don't think that will change profoundly in any way. What will change in terms of safety for this place?

**Mr. Larry Brookson:** Through you, Madam Chair, you'll see an immediate deployment of our marked vehicles on Wellington Street. You'll see a considerable shift in our human assets being on Wellington Street.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** My last question is to you, Mr. Bédard.

You spoke, in your testimony, about some of the things we'll have to do around redefining the parliamentary precinct. I think that's what you said. Could you just explain what that means a bit more, what the process is and how hard or, hopefully, easy that could be?

**Mr. Michel Bédard:** In using the current tools established on the Hill and in the parliamentary precinct, currently the mandate of PPS is circumscribed to the Hill and the precinct. The Hill is defined as the Parliament of Canada. If you were to expand the definition of the Hill, you'd have to amend the Parliament of Canada Act. Whether it's easy or difficult to amend an act of Parliament, I'll leave to you.

Now the—

**The Chair:** Thank you. Since you've left it with us to do this important work, we appreciate that.

I really want to thank all witnesses for taking the time to join us today. The work you do is appreciated and noticed. I'll give a spe-

cial shout-out to Mr. Brookson and the PPS. We really appreciate the work of your men and women in uniform. They're always here. I have to say I appreciate them wholeheartedly.

With that, I hope you all have a really good day.

With committee members staying for 30 seconds, today is the conclusion of our witnesses for the parliamentary precinct study. We will enter into doing the report. The summary of evidence, as we've already agreed, has turned into the foundation of the report, so most of it is written.

What I will ask is for analysts to compile any of the additional information into that report so that it's up to date. I would ask colleagues to submit their recommendations—in both official languages—to the clerk by Tuesday, so we can get that turned around, get into the next steps and try to keep ourselves moving.

Go ahead, Madame.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Chair, could you repeat that, please?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The analysts will finish drafting the report—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** This report, right.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** —on the security briefing, yes. It was in our agreement that it's the first one that comes back to us. Then we will have recommendations. If you want to choose a recommendation together, you're welcome to. If you want to each submit your recommendations to the clerk, then we'll go through them as a committee to choose if the report will have a recommendation, multiple recommendations or where we're at.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** What is the deadline?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** It's Tuesday.

[*Translation*]

Right?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** That's perfect. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** You can submit those recommendations to the clerk.

Have a good day, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.







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