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Chair: The Honourable Jim Carr





## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Thursday, May 12, 2022

• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)):** I'd like to call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 24 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

I'd like to start by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin peoples.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, as you all know, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. You know that you have the choice of the floor, English or French translation that you can control.

Today, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motions adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 17, 2022, the committee is resuming its study of the rise of ideologically motivated violent extremism in Canada.

With us today, from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, we have Marie-Hélène Chayer, executive director, integrated terrorism assessment centre, and Cherie Henderson, assistant director, requirements. From the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, we have Robert Burley, senior director, Canada centre for community engagement and prevention of violence, and Lesley Soper, director general, national security policy. We also have, from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Deputy Commissioner Michael Duheme.

Welcome, everybody.

There will be five-minute opening statements by each of our guests or combinations of our guests.

I would now invite Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Whenever you're ready, the floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer (Executive Director, Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** Thank you very much.

Hello, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

[English]

As mentioned, my name is Marie-Hélène Chayer.

[Translation]

I am the executive director of the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre.

The centre's mandate is to analyze terrorism-related intelligence collected by various organizations and to share our assessments, notably with our national security partners.

[English]

One of our main priorities is to analyze the threats posed by ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, which, as you know, is complex and fluid and has been evolving over the years.

As you have heard in previous testimony during your studies, many of the ideologically motivated extremists who produce and disseminate violent and threatening rhetoric do not intend to carry out physical attacks themselves; however, they may sway and have swayed other individuals to mobilize and cause acts of serious violence.

These individuals, who may be susceptible to IMVE narratives because of their personal grievances or extremist beliefs, may not belong to known groups or associations. They can galvanize around a number of issues, including public health measures, authority or gender-related concerns. As such, IMVE attacks conducted by lone actors are quite difficult to predict. They do not necessarily require a lot of planning, coordination or capabilities, and they can be directed at various targets, depending on the perpetrator's specific grievances and extremist views. Such targets could include government facilities, health care workers, politicians and women.

[Translation]

The sense of uncertainty generated by the pandemic and by conspiracy theories provide fertile ground for ideological extremism. Furthermore, the relative normalization of using violent threats to express disagreement, in addition to the spread of disinformation, undermines social resilience. All of this contributes to favourable conditions for actors to mobilize to violence.

I will stop here and would be very happy to answer your questions.

I will turn it over to my colleague Cherie Henderson.

Thank you.

[English]

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand that the committee has voted to include the remarks that Tim Hahlweg, my predecessor, delivered to you last year on the same topic. Since I'm sharing my time with ITAC's executive director, I'll do my best to be succinct.

Let me begin by saying that the threat that ideologically motivated violence extremism, or IMVE, poses remains a high priority for CSIS.

• (1105)

[Translation]

CSIS has the mandate to investigate threats to the security of Canada, to advise the government on these threats, and to take steps to reduce them.

[English]

However, it is not illegal to be hateful, racist or misogynist. Freedom of speech is constitutionally protected, and while the Internet is filled with bigoted and misogynistic language and narratives, much of it falls under the category of “awful but lawful”.

As we explained in our annual public report released last week, IMVE is a complex and constantly evolving threat, and Canada is not immune to its impact. That is why we have been dedicating increased resources to investigate and counter this threat.

In total, there have been seven attacks and three disrupted plots in the Canadian IMVE space since 2014. These attacks have killed 26 people and wounded 40 others on Canadian soil, more than any other form of terrorism.

Most recently, in June 2021, an attack in London, Ontario, killed four individuals and seriously injured another.

In October 2021, a former Canadian Armed Forces reservist was sentenced to nine years in a U.S. prison for plotting serious violence with members of The Base, a neo-Nazi group that is a listed terrorist entity in Canada.

Overall, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, IMVE activity has been fuelled by an increase in extreme anti-authority and anti-government rhetoric, often rooted in the weaponization of conspiracy theories.

[Translation]

In that context, CSIS has observed a marked increase in violent threats to elected officials and government representatives during the past two years.

[English]

On the 2022 “freedom convoy”, as the director explained earlier this week to the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency, “CSIS is specifically prohibited from investigating lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, except when it is carried out in

conjunction with activities that constitute a threat to the security of Canada”. CSIS closely monitored for opportunities the protest could have presented to IMVE threat actors to promote or engage in serious acts of violence in Canada.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that the people of CSIS are committed to fulfilling our mandate to protect Canada, working closely with communities and our partners across the country to keep all Canadians safe.

With that, I will turn it over to Public Safety.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Yes, we will do just that.

I will now call upon Mr. Robert Burley or Ms. Lesley Soper to make a statement of up to five minutes, please.

Whenever you're ready, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Lesley Soper (Director General, National Security Policy, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Thank you.

Good morning, committee members. I'm very happy to be here today with my colleague from Public Safety's Canada Centre for Community and Engagement and Prevention of Violence, Mr. Robert Burley, as well as my colleagues from CSIS and RCMP.

The opportunity to speak before this committee on ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, as we call it, is a welcome one. My team and I at Public Safety have been following this study for the last several weeks. We have watched with interest the quality of witnesses who have come forward and offered their views and expertise, and we're pleased to be able to add to it today.

By way of context, Public Safety Canada's national security mandate is to coordinate the activities of federal departments and agencies representing the Canadian security and intelligence community, or, as we refer to it, the S and I community. In this role, it is the responsibility of Public Safety Canada to develop and provide policy advice to the Minister of Public Safety on national security matters in support of the many operational activities undertaken by the S and I community every day in service to Canada. This includes functioning as a centralized hub for coordinating work on a number of national security issues, including cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, countering foreign interference and, of course, counterterrorism and ideologically motivated violent extremism.

On this last point, I wish to highlight that Public Safety is also responsible for terrorist listings. It is worth noting that in 2021, Canada added 17 new groups to the Criminal Code list of terrorist entities, including six IMVE groups and one individual, raising the total IMVE-specific listings to nine. In fact, just last week, the RCMP charged a suspected member of the international neo-Nazi terrorist network, Atomwaffen Division, in Windsor Ontario. Atomwaffen Division is one of those six groups listed in 2021.

With respect to IMVE, in December 2021, the Minister of Public Safety received his mandate letter from the Prime Minister. In that letter, the minister was instructed to bring forward measures to counter IMVE and strengthen the capacity of police and prosecutors to bring terrorist suspects to justice to the fullest extent of the law.

We in Public Safety Canada, along with others in the S and I community, are actively working to support this commitment now and over the longer term, both internationally as well as domestically. We know that it will require significant effort and will not be resolved overnight. IMVE is a complex, ever-evolving threat, as this committee is well aware.

Internationally, the rise of IMVE is an issue that Canada's closest allies are equally grappling with. For example, countering terrorism and violent extremism in all forms was a key commitment in the road map for a renewed U.S.-Canada partnership signed by the Prime Minister and the President of the United States in February of 2021.

Countering IMVE is also a growing area of collaboration with our Five Eyes—U.K., U.S., Australia, New Zealand—and G7 partners, and is a subject of other multilateral efforts of which Canada is an active participant. The most notable among these would be under the Christchurch call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

I raise this point only to highlight that countering the rise of IMVE is not a uniquely Canadian issue, and that concerted international co-operation and dialogue will continue to be needed to effectively address it.

Domestically, we at Public Safety are aware of the need to be open and transparent with Canadians when it comes to making and sustaining progress to counter IMVE here at home. This means, in practice, engagement with civil society, academia, industry, provincial and territorial partners, and others in trying to understand Canadians' expectations of the federal government in this space, and to ensure Canada's approach is a whole-of-society one.

I also wish to underline that we recognize it will be highly important to hear from vulnerable and racialized communities, and ensure that their views and experiences are heard. We are highly attuned to the need for engagement that is respectful and reassures all Canadians of our understanding of IMVE for what it is, which is a serious threat confronted by Canada today.

In this vein, it is important to highlight the role of prevention as an essential component of a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society response. Prevention is key to countering—

• (1110)

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds left.

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence is leading efforts in this space, and my colleague Rob Burley is available to answer any questions in relation to that work.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I would call upon Deputy Commissioner Michael Duheme. Sir, you have up to five minutes to make an opening statement.

It's over to you.

**Deputy Commissioner Michael Duheme (Deputy Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members.

It is a beautiful day indeed.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to continue answering questions about IMVE.

As a quick refresher, I'm Mike Duheme, deputy commissioner of the RCMP in federal policing. This includes the national security portfolio that falls under my responsibility.

Over the past months, my team has been following the work being conducted by this committee. We commend you for bringing forward such a diverse and knowledgeable list of experts on the subject, as well as the key service providers and industry professionals who need to be part of the solution going forward. Throughout these appearances, you have been given a great deal of information, some of which has no doubt raised concerns about Canada's ability to effectively combat the growing threat around IMVE threat actors.

For the most part, the calls for concern that you have heard are real. We know the IMVE threat environment is rapidly evolving and complex, and is increasingly fuelled by misinformation and hostile rhetoric surrounding a host of grievances, many of which focus on the government's response to COVID-19 and other matters. This has sewn distrust in government institutions, including law enforcement, and has augmented the ability for extremist groups to both recruit new members and increasingly foster hostility.

For you and the majority of Canadians, this hostility has manifested itself in the daily news and social media. For many RCMP officers and our fellow law enforcement partners it has manifested itself in all too real confrontation, both during the occupation in Ottawa and the numerous border crossing blockades.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Since the onset of the pandemic, the RCMP has seen a marked increase in the number of instances of ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, occurrences, the majority of which come from threat actors who have no clear group affiliation, who are motivated by highly personalized and nuanced ideologies that lead them to incite and/or mobilize to violence.

During my last appearance, I described the scope of the problem the RCMP is facing. My appearance today will focus on what the RCMP is doing about it. Before answering that question, it must be made clear that the RCMP's Federal Policing Program is one part of the solution. Our enforcement actions are the thin edge of the wedge when it comes to a broader Government of Canada response. The bulk of our collective response needs to be focused on proactive measures, steps that can be taken before frustrations can be moulded into hate and violence.

Further, it is important to remember that the RCMP Federal Policing Program is specifically responsible for threats that cross into the national security space, which means criminality that meets the criteria laid out in section 2 of the CSIS Act. Police of jurisdiction maintain responsibility for investigating hate motivated criminal activity, which make up the vast majority of occurrences.

With that said, for the past year or so, the RCMP has taken concrete steps to get its own house in order. It began by talking to our investigators in the field in our various national security focused units, because these are the people who deal with IMVE threats on the front lines. We then met with the support teams at national headquarters who assist with and provide intelligence information to those officers. In both cases, we identified the real-life gaps and challenges that are being faced when trying to identify and take action on potential IMVE threat actors.

From that, the RCMP has developed a comprehensive strategy that will seek to address those gaps and challenges over the next three years. This will mean revamping everything from the training that our officers receive to reallocating resources to better fit the current threat picture. It will mean rethinking how we share information with key partners, as well as aligning federal policing resources to undertake what needs to be done to give our officers the tools they need to address this threat effectively and efficiently.

[*English*]

Like any broad approach to dealing with complex problems, the RCMP strategy also focuses on shifting from being largely reactive to being proactive. This will improve our relationships with key partners in the community and the respective local law enforcement bodies so that we can identify threats before they cross the national security threshold. It will be done by improving information sharing and building up our own intelligence capacity, specifically in the online space. By doing this, we will be in a better position to identify individuals and groups who pose a threat before they are motivated to violence.

In addition, the RCMP will continue to use all the tools that it has at its disposal when IMVE threats are identified. This would include the use of peace bonds, listing regime, revocation of pass-

ports, the use of the Secure Air Travel Act, the no-fly list and other tools that will disrupt the imminent. However, make no mistake. As several of the academics have informed this committee—

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds, please.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** —there is no one thing that can eliminate the IMVE threat.

Finally, over the coming months we will remain ready to support public safety and security partners to develop a broader whole-of-government approach to address the growing threat.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I will now open the floor to a round of questioning from members of our committee.

To begin, I will call upon Mr. Lloyd.

It's over to you, sir, for six minutes.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is for you, Ms. Soper. Are you aware that over 30 churches were burned down in Canada in 2021?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** Yes, I am.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Is Public Safety currently investigating the burning of over 30 churches in Canada last year?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** Public Safety does not have an investigative mandate. That might be better directed towards the RCMP.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** But you said in your testimony that you were given a mandate by this government in 2021 to bring IMVE perpetrators to justice. Now you're saying that you don't have a mandate to investigate?

• (1120)

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** We are not the police of jurisdiction for investigations into IMVE. I might defer that question to my colleagues on the policing side.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** So if you're not doing an investigation, are you doing anything about the 30 churches that were burned down in 2021?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** Again, I can't speak to the nature of any investigation that might be occurring in relation to those horrible events. I would defer the question to RCMP, who may be the police of jurisdiction in relation to some of those burnings.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Thank you.

I'll move on to CSIS and Ms. Chayer. I have a copy of your 2021 CSIS report. It lists off a lot of ideologically motivated violent extremist examples, but there's not one example of 30 churches being burned down in Canada last year. Why has that not been included in your CSIS public report?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer:** Thank you very much for the question. However, my organization is the integrated threat assessment centre. I think your question is probably more for my colleague Ms. Henderson.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Okay, but are you saying that it's not a threat that 30 churches were burned down in Canada last year, that this isn't your purview, that this isn't a terrorist attack?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer:** Sir, perhaps you'll allow me to explain just a little bit the mandate of my organization and how we come up with threat assessments.

ITAC is responsible for evaluating the threat. We do that according to a very detailed methodology. We look at the intent, the opportunities and the capabilities of potential threat actors. We do that according to—

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** So you don't believe these 30 church burnings posed a threat.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer:** If I may, sir, we do our assessment based on collected intelligence by other organizations. When we provide our assessment—

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Have you received any intelligence about the 30 church burnings?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer:** Sir, I really think I am not the best person to answer that question.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** I just find it interesting, because you do have extensive stuff in your public report about ideologically motivated extremism, religiously motivated extremism and politically motivated extremism, and yet 30 churches being burned down in Canada last year didn't merit a mention.

I also note what it says on page 30 of your report:

CSIS continues to engage with community leaders, members, and advocacy groups to offer support and solidarity and to reinforce the Government of Canada's position that there is no place in Canada for racial prejudice, discrimination and hate.

Can you tell us if CSIS has ever reached out to show support and solidarity with the communities of the 30 churches that were burned down in Canada in 2021?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Chayer:** I would defer to my CSIS colleague.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Go ahead.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Thank you for the question.

What I will say is that the service is always extremely concerned with any violent form of extremist activity. In this case, it had already gone into the criminal realm, so the RCMP may have further comments.

What we are always doing is trying to get out ahead to see if we can determine where the threat is coming from in advance of those horrendous sorts of activities. Absolutely the burning of churches—

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Of course, but your report does talk about a lot of things that happened in the past, so clearly you're not just talking about the future. You have talked about terrorist attacks happening since 2014, ideologically motivated violent extremism, and yet in 2021 there's not a single mention in your public report about 30 churches being burned down in this country.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Well, what we are trying to do is make sure that we understand the underlying threat so that we can try to prevent that sort of activity happening into the future. We definitely are always very concerned about any serious acts of violence that can impact the national security of our country, so—

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Can you tell me, yes or no, has CSIS reached out to show support and solidarity with the 30 church communities that had their churches burned down last year?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I can't speak to certain investigations that may be ongoing, but we are definitely concerned with any acts of violence that impact national security and could threaten Canadians.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Do you know if you've reached out to show support and solidarity?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I can't speak to what may be happening in the operational space in an unclassified environment.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Okay.

It would have been nice to have a statement of concern, at least, from CSIS for these communities, considering the fact that at 4 a.m., in my town of Morinville, over 50 people had to be evacuated from their homes because a church was burned down. There was a massive threat that a seniors home and apartments were going to be burned to the ground. It was only due to the heroism of 50 local volunteer firefighters that this blaze was brought under control.

This could have been potentially one of the highest mass casualty terrorist events on Canadian soil in our modern history, yet it doesn't seem to have merited a single mention by our security services. I want to put that on the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (1125)

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

I now turn to Mr. Chiang, for six minutes.

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning. Thank you to the witnesses for being with us today.

My question is directed to the RCMP. What type of communication does the RCMP have with the integrated terrorism assessment centre and other threat assessment agencies to ensure that threats of terrorism can be adequately addressed by law enforcement agencies in Canada?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** We work very closely with Madame Chayer's team. We actually have a couple of people embedded in ITAC to assist, to provide the law enforcement perspective, and to better illustrate the overall threat when Madame Chayer and her team are developing the threat assessment products.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** What measures can be taken to enable law enforcement agencies to act more proactively to prevent instances of violent extremism before they arise?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** I'm a firm believer that it starts with prevention. We need a strong prevention outreach program, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, to get to the folks before they actually get into that world of violent extremists.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Have you been having any success with that? Do our laws need to be updated to ensure that law enforcement has the proper tools to ensure safety of all Canadians?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** It's sometimes difficult to measure success when you're looking at outreach. The thing I would say with regard to our laws is that, as you have probably heard at committee, social media is a big platform of concern for us when these messages are spread and the senders garner additional membership for their causes. If there's legislation to be looked at around social media platforms, that's something we should be looking at.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you so much, deputy commissioner.

Ms. Soper, as a director general of national security policy, what do you believe are the areas we could improve in Canada to enhance our national security capability?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** I would begin with the significant effort we're placing on the prevention end of the spectrum, including work within our own Canada centre. I might ask that our expert, Robert Burley, speak to the amount of work that's going on in the IMVE space.

Between terrorism listings, the items that Mike Duheme already referenced, the no-fly list, and the SATA list, there are a number of tools we can lever to begin to minimize the threat to Canadians, and also to work concertedly on the prevention end of the spectrum.

There is more to be done. There's a significant amount of strategic thinking occurring across all of our national security organizations to understand whether or not the framework that we have in place is adequate. We're keenly interested in some of the recommendations that are likely to come out of this committee to understand where we might place our resources and better impact outcomes in this space.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you.

Speaking of resources, do you think the threats we are receiving in Canada are local threats? Or do you think there are foreign actors involved in IMVE threats against us?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** My colleagues at both ITAC and within the RCMP and from CSIS would be better able to paint a picture of the types of actors we're speaking of, but I think what is most important to understand about IMVE is that it is a homegrown phenomenon. It's not a phenomenon unique to Canada by any stretch; it is transnational in nature. Many of these organizations have cross-border and transborder relationships, but these are not threats being perpetuated from abroad. These are threats that are being fostered within our own society.

• (1130)

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you so much, Ms. Soper.

My next question is directed towards CSIS. Could you give your perspective on some of the greatest terrorism threats facing Canada today? What action can our government be taking at the federal level to address these threats?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Thank you for the question.

Today, right now, we are faced with threats from all across the spectrum, and we look at what we term "ideologically motivated violent extremism," which we're here to speak about today, as well as religiously motivated violent extremism.

In the service, we have moved a lot of our resources across over to look at IMVE. We see that as an increasing threat at the moment within Canada.

As indicated by my colleague from Public Safety, this is a threat that is not only within Canada. All of our allies around the world are experiencing the same rise of ideologically motivated violent extremists. The challenge with this particular...and I can't even call it a group, because it is a—

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds, please.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** —variety of groups. It is across various spheres.

Those are the two biggest threats on the terrorism side that we're facing these days.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I would invite Ms. Michaud to begin her six minutes of questioning.

It's good to see you, Ms. Michaud. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here.

Mr. Duheme, you are practically a regular at the committee now. Thank you for your availability.

I was discussing this very matter recently with Mr. Sauv e-Laframboise of the National Police Federation, which you are very likely familiar with. He said that one of the greatest challenges facing the RCMP right now is staffing. There are clearly not enough officers on the ground. In his opinion, even if the government were to implement new regulations or new policies, it would not be enough. As MPs, we want to create a legislative framework, but if there is no one to enforce it, we will be no further ahead.

Is this a problem you are facing in combatting the rise of IMVE? Are you aware of this lack of human resources?



**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** It is not unique to the RCMP. Other police services in Canada also have difficulties recruiting members. The RCMP has also had its share of problems brought on by the pandemic.

I will talk about what we are doing in our program. In terms of IMVE, we prioritize files and work closely with CSIS to keep pace with emerging threats. One advantage of our program is that I can reassign resources to other priorities.

This is a temporary measure, but we have made progress. We are now hiring civilians as investigators, which will help address the staff shortage. We will catch up on the backlog in due course, but it is indeed a challenge right now. We are addressing it by mobilizing various resources.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** That is interesting. Thank you very much.

Mr. Sauv -Laframboise also said that one of the reasons for the staff shortage is the bad publicity about police in recent years.

As in any occupation, some people can slide into extremism. The media said a lot about former RCMP or armed forces members being involved in the “freedom convoy”. That of course did not help the image of these organizations. It is unfortunate, but it is the case for all organizations. In the case of an organization that is supposed to protect the public, however, that hurts us more.

To your knowledge, have any specific internal steps been taken to raise awareness among your team members in order to prevent them from getting involved in extremism or this kind of movement? Even if everyone is in good faith, it can happen to anyone.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** Ms. Michaud, the identification of those people internally starts right at recruitment stage. That is when we determine whether candidates have the necessary personality traits to do police work.

Throughout the career of a police officer, RCMP officer or certain employees, we regularly review their security clearance. I believe it is every ten years for a secret clearance. The challenge is identifying people when they are starting to shift to a different outlook that is in keeping with these ideologies. This can be challenging, and we are aware of it.

Unfortunately, we have no control over people when they retire. Sometimes they even derive self-esteem from their experience as police officers and use that to gain a certain status in these groups. This challenge is not unique to the police. Various departments face the same challenge and have to identify these people in advance, before they join this group.

• (1135)

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Duheme.

This is for the witnesses from CSIS.

Some media outlets reported that your office that countered right-wing extremism was closed in 2016. I assume it has been reopened, but that is part of my question.

Mr. Vigneault, the service director said that your service did not necessarily have enough staff to effectively monitor all kinds of ex-

tremists and that you might have some catching up to do as regards changes in technology and the threat.

Can you tell us whether you have reopened that office? Why are you paying particular attention to all extreme right-wing and ideologically-motivated violent movements?

[English]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Yes, you're right. Back in 2016, I think it was, we did take down our investigation on what we were terming “right-wing extremism”. After the attack at the mosque in Quebec, we again really highlighted the threat of what we have now termed “ideologically motivated violent extremism” and the importance of engaging on this file to try to protect the safety of many Canadians.

We often see that the IMVE realm goes against our marginalized communities, our minority communities and women. We worry about the impact on the LGBTQ community as well.

It really did cause us to relook, and expand and reopen our investigation.

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds, please.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** As the director and I have noted, we have moved resources. About 50% of our CT resources have moved into that last year.

**The Chair:** Mr. MacGregor, we'll go over to you, sir, for your six minutes of questioning.

The floor is yours whenever you want it.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for appearing today.

The last couple of days have been a very sombre time for the NDP caucus. As our witnesses are probably very well aware, on Tuesday in Peterborough, our leader, Jagmeet Singh, had to wade through a group of people who were calling him a traitor. They were hurling expletives at him and saying they hoped he would die. They were hounding him all the way to his waiting vehicle.

This is the exact same kind of behaviour we saw littered throughout the occupation of Ottawa. It's time for us to wake up to the fact that this kind of behaviour has real physical manifestations and real threats.

I want to know from public safety and from CSIS.... You did talk about the rise of this, and I'm glad to see that this issue is being taken quite seriously, but the rhetoric we saw in Peterborough on Tuesday was the exact same kind of rhetoric we saw throughout Ottawa during the convoy and in its lead-up.

My question is for Public Safety. In the convoys and rallies we have seen, is there evidence that these have been used as recruiting tools to foster greater connection and co-operation between various IMVE groups?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** I will begin, but I think the question is better placed with Cherie Henderson from the service on the data and what we understand about the threat.

Certainly we don't see the terrorism threat as indistinct from other broader societal issues that are going on. We have been looking to Heritage Canada and the work they have been doing in the online hate space and in the anti-racism space. We've been looking to those cues about how we can best work with those bigger policy issues. They are important.

As I indicated in my initial remarks, this is a whole-of-society question. There are certain preconditions that have given rise to incivil discourse and the type of treatment that—

• (1140)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Can I just interject? This is not the first time it's happened to Mr. Singh. We had someone from an anti-Islamic group called Rise Canada interrupt him in 2017. There was a man named Brian Kidder who followed him down the street in September 2020, threatening to arrest him. We've just had this latest incident.

I guess we have this growing evidence of the threat that exists out there. How much longer do we have to wait before we treat this seriously and put in place the tools to prevent this? I'm really worried about the trajectory our country is headed in.

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** In relation to the protection of parliamentarians, I would like to turn the floor over to the RCMP, because there is significant work happening in that space, so perhaps we'll start there.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** Thank you, Lesley.

To your question, sir, the protective policing, again under my program, has responsibilities to protect members of Parliament. We do have a ministerial liaison team that liaises with not only the ministers but also with the leads of the official parties to discuss any ongoing security concerns.

I did find out about this. We are following up on it. It's unacceptable. It's not the first time. I'm well aware of Kidder because it happened here in Ottawa, and we're following up on it to determine what can be done.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you.

We had a brief submitted by Dr. Stephanie Carvin. She lamented the fact that there seems to be a general lack of interest from Parliament, and I don't think our politics reflects the level of concern that there should be about IMVE. She lamented the lack of interest in national security legislation. She identified the fact that Australia, for example, usually introduces legislation to update its national security laws every couple of years. By contrast, we do it about once every decade.

I think as parliamentarians we need to understand from the experts before us today about what your agencies are missing both in policy and in legislation. Maybe you could just take the next minute

to inform us as parliamentarians of the tools that you would like to see Parliament fully and responsibly discuss in order to allow your agencies to fully meet this threat and to keep Canadians safe.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Perhaps I can start. As you are all very well aware, the CSIS Act was created back in 1984, and the threat environment has changed dramatically since then. When the act was created, there was no awareness of where technology would be today, so the service definitely needs to have technological tools we can use to run really good investigations and get all the data we need. Of course, at the same time, we need to make sure that we respect privacy, that we're operating in a clear, legal environment and that we respect that rule of law in Canada.

And in another spot, we could—

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds, please.

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Another spot would even be the ability to share information beyond the federal government. Under section 19 of our act, we can only really share information—

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Colleagues, we'll now move to the next round of questions.

To lead us off, I will invite Ms. Dancho for her five minutes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for your testimony today.

I want to ask CSIS a few questions about some recent ransomware attacks in the United States, the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack, and the threat level in Canada.

I'm sure you're very aware of this, but the FBI was involved in the investigation there. The attack shut down a critical pipeline for several hours. Seventeen states and Washington, D.C. declared a state of emergency. Then, of course, this past February we saw the attack on the Coastal GasLink pipeline in B.C. There was millions of dollars of damage, and the workers were terrorized. The damage to sites we saw was unbelievable.

Can you elaborate to the committee on what investigation you're doing in this regard? Is it on your radar? Are you concerned about attacks on our critical infrastructure such as pipelines?

• (1145)

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Yes, we're very concerned about attacks on our critical infrastructure. As you can imagine, when a critical infrastructure attack happens—and I would even point you to an attack against a health care system and what happened in Newfoundland—how that impacts lives of everyday Canadians on a very serious level.

We are definitely very concerned. We are totally alive to the issue around ransomware. Ransomware can be used both in a criminal element, but we also monitor it to determine whether or not foreign interference or foreign states are engaged in that ransomware attack because of the detrimental effects it can have.

Definitely we saw what happened to the pipelines, and we want to ensure that there is no underlying foreign interference and that we can try to help those critical infrastructure sites pre-protect themselves from that type of attack.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** What work has been done to investigate the attackers of the Coastal GasLink pipeline?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I can't go into the specifics of what we do in an investigation, just to ensure that we can protect our methods, but I can say that we certainly do look at these, and we use all of our investigative powers.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Are you looking at the attacks on the Coastal GasLink? Can you confirm that?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** I can't go into the specifics of an investigation.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay.

Maybe the RCMP can elaborate.

Are you investigating the attacks? Has anyone been arrested?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** I can confirm that the matter is being investigated, but that would be on the provincial side because there is no element right now that would fall under the federal policing mandate.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** As for arrests, Madam Dancho, I'd have to follow up because I'm not up to date on that file.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Can CSIS elaborate?

Are you aware whether anyone has been arrested?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** That would not be under us. That would be with the local police of jurisdiction.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay, just to be clear, you're acknowledging that this is a very serious threat. Of course, we know that if GasLink pipelines were shut down in the middle of winter, people would literally freeze to death in many cases. One of the greatest threats, I think, facing our critical infrastructure is our ability to get these carbon-based fuels through these pipelines, making sure they're protected.

What I am hearing from you is that both the RCMP and CSIS are not aware whether anyone has been arrested as a result of the attack on the B.C. Coastal GasLink pipeline. I find it a bit surprising that you cannot confirm or deny.... It just doesn't seem that you're paying very close attention to it.

Do you care to elaborate on why you're not aware whether someone has been arrested?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** If that were directed at me, as I mentioned, Madam Dancho, this falls into another wheelhouse. It's not under my program, but I'd be more than happy to follow up.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I appreciate that, but CSIS just confirmed, of course, that this is a critical issue facing our country. We should all be very concerned if there are ransomware attacks or further attacks on our pipelines, and I am not really being reassured. You can't even answer whether you know if someone has been arrested, and this was a multi-million dollar attack on a pipeline.

We've seen ransomware attacks on a critical pipeline in the United States. CSIS, can you confirm that you're not aware if anyone has been arrested?

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** What I would say is that I am not familiar with the intricacies of what's happening in regard to the police investigation. What we are trying to do is to make sure that we can get out there. We're aware of where the ransomware attack is coming from, so we can try to help with some preventive activity and to make sure that whatever we learn in those investigations can be shared among other critical infrastructure sites so that we can protect and help those...protect themselves.

However, in regard to the intricacies in an investigation, that's for the police of jurisdiction in a criminal case.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I appreciate that.

As the official opposition, I think we would collectively urge you to ensure that you're paying much more close attention to these attacks, given what we've seen in the United States and the importance of pipelines, particularly to fuel the nation and to keep us warm in the winter.

I am honestly quite shocked that neither the RCMP nor CSIS is aware whether someone has been arrested for the attack on Coastal GasLink pipeline. I am shocked.

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

I would now give the microphone over to Ms. Damoff, who has five minutes for her questions.

Go ahead.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

My question is for CSIS.

I wonder if you could just explain to the committee the difference between horrific crimes and when those moves into being a national security threat.

● (1150)

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** That's a very good question, and thank you very much.

When we are looking at paragraph 2(c) of our act, we are looking at any sort of individual who wants to engage in serious violent activity in order to pursue a specific objective, and that can be a political objective.

When we are carefully monitoring, we're trying to determine whether or not that's already breached into a criminal.... As activity may be just criminal, versus trying to actually achieve a political change or some sort of policy change. There is a slight differentiation there.

When we do start to look at these sorts of investigations, we work extremely closely with our RCMP partners to make sure that if it is moving into, or has already been, in the criminal space.... We leave it to them so that we are efficiently and effectively using our limited resources, or our constrained resources, if I can say so, to make sure that we are using them to try to track or stop those future potential acts.

It is a bit of a balancing act, and we work very closely with our police partners, just to make sure that we are all alive and in tune to what would be criminal and what would be a terrorist attack in order to achieve a political objective.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay. Thank you for that.

My next question is actually following up on my colleague Mr. MacGregor's question about attacks on politicians as well as public officials. We've seen attacks on public health officers. Certainly, I know my colleague Michelle Rempel has talked about aggressive attacks on her, and I've received threats, as did the Prime Minister during the election campaign. Most recently, there were the horrible attacks that the leader of the NDP experienced in Peterborough.

Are there additional steps that the government should be taking to ensure that politicians and those in the public eye are not being subjected to these kinds of threats? I recognize that there's work being done by the Parliamentary Protective Service and the RCMP, but it seems like there are many times when these are not followed by criminal charges being laid. It still feels like it's a matter of time before this rhetoric and these kinds of aggressive anger turn into something more violent.

Perhaps that's for the RCMP.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** If I can bring you back to my last appearance before this committee, I shared with you some numbers that we looked at during the period of 2019 and 2020. Out of 273 files that met the criteria we selected for IMVE, 145 never met the threshold. The other ones were investigated or passed on to the police of jurisdiction.

It is a challenge with regard to meeting that threshold. When we do have a file with regard to potential threats, be it online, via phone or directly, we engage with PPSC, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, to discuss the file to see if we've met the threshold for these threats. It is a challenge, I can say from an RCMP perspective.

I did mention that the ministerial liaison team is reaching out to all the ministers on a monthly basis, as well as the leaders of the opposition. I know that the director of the PPS as well as the Sergeant-at-Arms are doing a lot of work on their front with regard to the members of Parliament—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I only have a minute left.

What interaction do you have with the police of jurisdiction? I know that in Halton when I called, they asked what I wanted to do. I'm not an expert on policing.

That's not a unique experience. Down in the Niagara region, the police refused to investigate an MP's constituency office that was vandalized.

What kind of liaison are you doing with local police services and should there be more?

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** When there's a complaint or a situation of concern, we do liaise with the police of local jurisdiction. Usually it's through our INSETs, our national security teams. As well, we liaise with the Sergeant-at-Arms to make sure that he is aware of what's going on.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I will now turn the floor over to Ms. Michaud for two and a half minutes, who will be followed by Mr. MacGregor for two and a half minutes, which will take us to the end of this panel.

The floor is yours, Ms. Michaud.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is for the witnesses from CSIS.

Mr. Hahlweg, another official who appeared before the committee, talked to us about the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act, or CLOUD Act, in the United States. Such a law would theoretically give CSIS easier access to data stored on servers located outside Canada.

Knowing that many such cases of violence begin online, can you confirm that the enactment of legislation similar to the American law might help you in your work?

Ms. Soper noted earlier that we have to keep dialoguing with our allies, internationally, on how to counter the rise in IMVE. Would it be helpful to enact that kind of legislation? What changes might it mean for CSIS?

• (1155)

[*English*]

**Ms. Cherie Henderson:** Yes, this sort of legislation could help us, because it then allows us access to greater volumes of information, but what we would need to do is ensure that any sort of legislation on this front also respects the privacy of Canadians, because we want to ensure that any investigations we are doing are in the rule of law of our land and respecting our democracy.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Precisely, on that point, perhaps you could reply, Ms. Soper.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** I believe our minister announced that we've entered into negotiations in relation to the CLOUD Act agreement. It would be a lengthy process. Two of our international partners, Australia and the U.K., have also commenced negotiations that are nearing completion with the U.S.

A CLOUD Act arrangement would put in place some mechanism that is as robust in its adherence to rule of law and civil liberties protections as the current mutual legal assistance arrangements. However, it would allow much quicker access to warranted access to communication, which are housed through communication service providers in the United States, such as Google, Facebook, Apple, etc.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** It is a very important mechanism.

**The Chair:** Mr. MacGregor, it's over to you. You will take us to the end of this hour with two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Quickly, to Director General Soper, can you confirm, as the national security policy director for Public Safety Canada, that it is right-wing extremism that is on the rise in the world today?

**Ms. Lesley Soper:** I hate to disappoint. It is not. I don't think I can state that clearly.

What my colleagues in the intelligence world could explain more cogently is that there are a significant number of individuals who are adhering to diverse sets of voices out in the world. They're galvanizing their discourse. It may be aligned toward what we would traditionally call "right-wing extremism". It may be motivated by other factors, such as being anti-mandate. It could be motivated by other societal factors.

Cherie can speak much more cogently to this question, but I—

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I want to get to the RCMP, as well. You spoke about the training that's going on for RCMP officers in relation to IMVE. I know there's a broader conversation about what the appropriate role of the RCMP should be with respect to community policing or a more specialized role.

Could you maybe, for our committee, specifically elaborate on what the training involves for the RCMP with IMVE? I'd like you to expand on that point a bit further for us, please.

**D/Commr Michael Duheme:** Really quickly, considering the time, there is a better understanding of what IMVE is all about. How do we reach out?

This is not only within the RCMP. We want to join with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to have that same training for all law enforcement people across the country on what those key indicators are that we can identify early on. These would alert us, if you wish, to a possible IMVE group or maybe a person who is going in that direction.

The work is in progress, but it's not limited to the RCMP, as I said. We want the whole law enforcement community across Canada to be trained in the same manner.

• (1200)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Colleagues, that ends this panel. We will now take a very short break, but before we do that, I want to say thank the witnesses on

your behalf for the testimony that has been brought before this committee.

You live these issues every day. You have brought your wisdom, your expertise and your experience to this committee. On the members' behalf, I thank you.

Colleagues, I think it's going to be a very short turnaround.

Clerk, will we be ready in, say, two minutes? It's a two-minute break, and then we'll be off to the second hour.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1200)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

I'm very pleased that we have this morning, as individuals, Mr. Richard B. Fadden and Mr. Vivek Krishnamurthy, who is the Samuelson-Glushko professor of law at the University of Ottawa. They will each have five minutes to make their opening comments.

Mr. Fadden, I'll turn to you first, sir. The floor is yours for five minutes.

• (1205)

**Mr. Richard Fadden (As an Individual):** Thank you very much.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to you on a topic that I think is of growing concern, but one that has been around for awhile, which is something I think we sometimes forget.

As you know, my knowledge today of IMVE is based on what I glean from the media, but I hope that my experience over the years will enable me to make a few useful points and to answer any questions you might have.

As I noted above, IMVE has been around for awhile. Indeed, it was on our radar, although not with the priority it has today, when I was at CSIS. The difference is that then there were far fewer people involved, and in some ways it was less intense, and it was less organized and less coordinated. To state the obvious, the better organization and coordination today are because of the Internet in its various manifestations. Also, those involved with IMVE clearly feel much more intensely about their concerns than was the case I think a couple of decades ago.

This last point, the growth and intensity over the years, is the case in part because no one has really tried to get at the root of the causes of the dissatisfaction that is at the base of IMVE. I know that your order of reference does not specifically direct you to examine the causes of IMVE, but I would urge you not to ignore that aspect of the problem.

Whatever preventative and legal measures are necessary to deal with violence, I'm convinced that alone they will not be enough to stamp it out. Even if we succeed in doing so, it will not be the end of IMVE because, like most national security issues, it is not purely domestic in nature. Whatever the origins of IMVE, it always receives some ideas and moral support from abroad, if not sometimes funding and training.

Unless we do what China does, and isolate Canada from the Internet, which is unthinkable, I do not see how we can stop ideas and support from abroad, which brings me back to my point about addressing the causes of IMVE, as well as its kinetic effects. To deal with the violence, we will need control and punitive measures, but these must be built as narrowly and transparently as possible, or, without intending it, we will be promoting the further development of IMVE.

This leads me to the question of who is best suited to deal with the root causes of IMVE? While they may have a role, in my view at any rate, it is certainly not CSIS, the RCMP, nor police more generally. Provinces, cities and civil society will have to be involved. Perhaps the federal role should be developing a framework, coordinating and perhaps providing some funding.

In summary, IMVE has been with us for awhile and has deep roots. It goes to the effectiveness of our democracy. Violence is not acceptable even if we must accept extreme views. Dealing with IMVE's root causes is an integral part of dealing with the problem, and this must involve more than the police and security agencies. Control and punitive measures are certainly necessary to suppress violence, but they must be narrowly targeted, lest we make things worse.

Thank you.

I think for the first time I've appeared before this committee I finished before my five minutes.

**The Chair:** It gives me a chance to thank you, not only for your testimony, but also for your many years of distinguished public service to Canada, sir. Thank you.

Now I would ask Mr. Krishnamurthy to take the mike for up to five minutes for opening comments, sir.

**Mr. Vivek Krishnamurthy (Samuelson-Glushko Professor of Law, University of Ottawa, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It is a pleasure to be appearing before you today. My testimony will focus on how we should think of the role of different kinds of online platforms in facilitating IMVE and what we should do about it.

To begin, I'd like to start with an analogy as to how we can think about online platforms. The analogy, since I'm travelling internationally, is to an airport. An airport is sort of a real-world platform that allows passengers like me to connect to airplanes going to many different places around the world. We can think about online platforms in a similar way. Online platforms are points of connection that connect people to different kinds of organizations or other individuals around the world for different purposes.

Until now, the focus of legislative efforts in Canada has been around regulating platforms for expression, such as YouTube, Twitter and the like. These are platforms that curate and distribute user-generated content. I'm very honoured to be on an expert panel, appointed by Minister Rodriguez, to think about the regulation of these kinds of platforms and the harms they cause. Platforms come in many different stripes. As we've seen with the Ottawa convoy protests, there is now a focus on crowdfunding, but this is not the only kind of online platform that is in need of regulation. There are many others that impact our daily lives as Canadians. We think

about platforms for transportation, Uber and the like, and platforms that enable the sharing economy, Airbnb and so forth. There are many different kinds of these.

It seems to me that a useful approach for this committee and for Parliament to consider in dealing with the kinds of harms that can be facilitated by platforms is to move beyond a focus on platforms that facilitate expression to those that facilitate various kinds of real-world impacts. Certainly, expression can have a tangible impact in the real world. It can incite violence among other things. It can cause harm to people's dignity. Of course, the challenge in regulating platforms for expression is the constitutional protection of free expression in Canada under the charter. By contrast, it is far easier for governments to regulate conduct on other kinds of platforms precisely because of the nature of the activity they facilitate—economic exchange, the movement of goods, the sale of goods and the accommodation of other services.

The previous witness spoke about root causes. Certainly, online platforms that permit the sharing of extremist content have an important role to play in reducing the flow of extremist ideas that lead to recruitment and the like. There's an important role for governments working in international partnerships. As the previous witness mentioned, this is a transnational problem. There is certainly an important role there, and an important interest to reconcile, but I would suggest that we also need to deal with the problem in public policy that we've provided other kinds of online platforms with a sort of digital exceptionalism from regulation.

This is now being corrected with regard to crowdfunding through the extension of generally applicable rules that apply to other financial intermediaries that facilitate transactions in the bricks and mortar world to crowdfunding sites. This is a welcome development. I would suggest that it would be a useful approach for Parliament to consider to extend regulation that applies in the bricks and mortar physical world to activities online, especially those that could be used to facilitate and incite online violence or violence in the real world.

Thank you very much.

• (1210)

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

We'll now move to our opening round of questions. We may not get beyond an opening round of questions. It will be close.

I'll start by inviting Ms. Dancho, who has six minutes for questions, to go ahead, please.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

My questions will be for you, Mr. Fadden. Thank you for your service to our country.

I'm very interested in what you said in your opening remarks about the root causes of IMVE. Can you just give the committee, in perhaps a minute or less, an overview of what you believe to be some of the causes? What drives people to extremism in this regard?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Thank you.

I think fundamentally what drives people to this sort of thing is the sense that they are not being listened to. Fundamentally, they come to the conclusion that the political structures we have at various levels are ignoring them. We find their views sometimes distasteful and they are driven over time to what we would call "acts of desperation".

I think fundamentally our democratic institutions have not adapted to dealing effectively with people who have views that fall outside of the mainstream. That is infuriating and I think it drives people to violence.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** If the Prime Minister of the country says certain people have fringe and unacceptable views and he calls people misogynistic, do you think that fuels any of that?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I don't think that attacking views is helpful on the part of anybody—not by you, not by me and not by the Prime Minister. You can disagree with them. That's a different issue, but I think the Prime Minister went a little bit beyond that and I don't think it was helpful. It's the sort of thing that reinforces the sense that they're not being listened to.

I actually disagree with most of the views that were being expressed in that general context, but that's neither here nor there. We need to find some means of dialoguing. When I used to work, I used to argue that we have to find some means of dialoguing, for example, with the Taliban. If you don't talk to them somehow, you aren't going to stop fighting them.

My argument is that we cannot start a priori by arguing that they're wrong. You can argue that they must not engage in violence. That's an entirely different issue and I want to separate that very carefully. If they pass that line and become engaged in violence, you have to do something about it, but we need to find some way of talking to them.

• (1215)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That was certainly the position the Conservative Party took, which was that we need to not be pouring fuel on the fire because that only makes it worse. It sounds like you would be overall in agreement with the position that we need to open up that dialogue.

Do you feel that any government's exclusionary policies could drive people to extremism? For example, there was the impact of vaccine mandates—although I'm not looking to debate the mandates specifically—of excluding certain people from society.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think it can.

On the other hand, if we're going to live in a society that believes in the rule of law, if you take that view, you have to face the consequences. I don't think you should be ostracized for doing it, but if the law says you have to be vaccinated in circumstance X, Y or Z

and you're not, and the law provides for penalty, then you have to deal with the penalties.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Certainly it's important to maintain the rule of law and order in society, but I appreciate that you used the word "ostracized". We've had several different witnesses talk about those who are ostracized from society—lone wolves and those who feel isolated.

Again, do you feel that anything that isolates those people from society or ostracizes them from public life could drive them to extremism? When we see this again, we could talk about radical Islamic extremism as well or really any form of extremism, but in particular I'm asking about a side effect of the vaccine mandates and their exclusionary impact on society in certain areas. Again, I'm not debating the necessity or validity of that.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** No, I think that ostracizing anybody is not helpful. That can range from my ostracizing my son if I'm really disagreeing with him.... You need to find a way to dialogue.

If I can just raise a point I made in my opening remarks, I think it's important to figure out who is best equipped to do the dialoguing. On the basis of my experience, I don't think that the police and CSIS are particularly well-equipped to do it. They have entirely different mandates, which are to try to prevent and to deal with actual crimes. It would be like, "Hi, I'm from the RCMP. I'm wearing a gun and I can arrest you. I'd like to dialogue on your views." It's not to be disrespectful of the RCMP. It's just not what they are paid to do, I would argue. Should they be involved in this in some way? I think so, but it's a role for civil society generally.

As I was arguing, national security isn't national anymore. It's both international and subnational. This is not a partisan comment; I would apply it to both of the major parties. I would argue that it's not a federal issue exclusively. I think until we get our head around that fact, we're going to continue to have difficulties. We have to involve the provinces and municipalities. We do also involve the international environment far more than we used to.

Unless we do that and take advantage of opportunities to deal with civil society, and even in school boards, to start talking about these things early, we will end up having to use control and punitive measures to deal with violence.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

Yes, and I'll just go back to the Prime Minister's remarks that those who didn't agree with him had fringe, unacceptable views and were misogynists. He is frankly the most powerful man in the country and he should be leading by example. Regardless of how you feel about it, it certainly sets the tone about how other authorities who report to him can act and what they can say.

I'll just throw the last few seconds back to you. Can you further elaborate? When you get that kind of power and speak in that way and double down, for example, what impact does that have on those being driven to extremism?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think it has a negative impact, but to prove that I'm non-partisan and have had that beaten out of me after 40 years of public service, I would say that certain members of Parliament who actively supported acts of unlawfulness were not any more helpful.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I appreciate that.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I will turn to Mr. McKinnon for his five minutes of questioning.

Sir, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Again, Mr. Fadden, I found your remarks that we need to focus on the root causes of ideologically motivated extremism interesting. I believe you said that this was not a role for CSIS. Is that correct?

• (1220)

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think they have a role. I do not think they have the lead role.

I think CSIS's job fundamentally is to collect information. That's the basis of the statute that created CSIS. Their job is to find information, analyze it and pass it on to government, generally to try to prevent problems. That does not preclude their trying to think about dealing with the root causes, but I don't think....

I can remember that when I was director of CSIS we had complaints when CSIS officers knocked on the doors of people, just asking them for information. They said they were being harassed. This was largely because of people who came to Canada from abroad, but you have to remember: the mindset that a lot of people have about CSIS and the RCMP is not entirely positive. It's not their fault. It's their job. I think they have a role, but I don't think they should have the lead.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** You mentioned that there should be a federal framework to address IMVE. Can you imagine what that framework would look like and what kinds of powers or roles it might have?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** First of all, I think it should be a national framework, not a federal one. I think it's one that should be developed with provinces and others. It should, I think, try to identify the harm or the evil that we're trying to suppress. I was listening earlier on when your other witness was before you, and I think there was some difficulty in answering your questions about what exactly becomes a national security issue, what's an old-fashioned crime and what's in the middle.

I think we need more of a dialogue about what exactly we're trying to suppress, and I think that's something the federal government could lead on, because it creates the criminal law, but on the other hand, the provinces implement it through the police. I think it should involve probably roles for civil society, for universities and for organizations and possibly provide some funding.

I mean, that's a very general answer, and I don't mean to be unhelpful, but it just seems to me that limiting ourselves—by “ourselves”, I mean the federal government—to suppressing IMVE and trying to find out about it before we need to repress it is not enough. We need to think about it more holistically and more broadly, both conceptually and with other parties.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Do you see this framework as being not enforcement oriented? It's more about communication. It's more outreach oriented. Is that your view?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** Yes, I would put it on a spectrum. At one end, there's sending somebody to a federal penitentiary. At the other end, it's somebody—I don't know who, but maybe a municipal councillor—talking to somebody who's really unhappy about the vaccine mandate that was mentioned earlier, and there's everything in the middle.

I think part of the challenge, and I admit that it's a challenge, is dealing with every point on the spectrum. I would argue that we made the same mistake—and I include myself in this—when we were dealing with terrorism. We concentrated too much on this end and not enough on the other end and what's in the middle.

I would argue that we have to deal with every point on the spectrum and try to.... We have to accept that violence is unacceptable, period. There is enforcement, there's prosecution and there are arrests, but the idea is to push it to this end of the spectrum to reduce the likelihood that the police will have something to do.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Is the framework a kind of adjunct to our police services and our intelligence services, something that gives them intelligence or something that kind of steps into the community and does, I don't know, various actions...?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think it's the latter, because if it becomes known in an instant that this effort is going to feed the intelligence community, nobody's going to talk to them. I think that's just old-fashioned horse sense, if I can put it that way. I think it's mostly people understanding that there's a possibility of a problem.

For the various incendiary people who were in the convoy in Ottawa and who participated across the country, it would be interesting to know if there's any mechanism today that would allow follow-up to talk to them, other than the police going to see if they can arrest them. Now, if they committed a crime, they should be arrested, but most of them didn't commit any particularly serious crime.

But if we don't talk to these people—and I mean other than CSIS or the RCMP—they're going to continue to be annoyed and we're going to have a problem over time. At least, that's my submission.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** In our last panel, CSIS mentioned that the CSIS Act was created in 1984. It needs substantial upgrades regarding IMVE. I'm not sure that would conflict with your perspective, or whether there is still room for those kinds of tools in keeping with your perspective.

If so, what might those tools be in your view?

• (1225)

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I was a bit of an unpopular person to some degree when I was still working, when people asked about whether or not we needed additional legislation on a whole raft of issues.



We may well do in specific instances—I don't mean to close the door—but I think the larger problem is cultural. It's cultural within these organizations, because people feel constrained, either by history or baggage of one sort or another, and not fully utilizing the powers they have. There's also constraint because of all of you. Every time somebody asks for a power—

**The Chair:** Answer in 10 seconds, please.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** —we in Canada pile on accountability, control, and review, all to the good. However, I would argue that Parliament didn't create the national security agencies to provide opportunities for review; they created them to promote national security.

I sometimes wonder if we don't get the balance in this country. I'm not directing this at any particular government, to be clear. I'm not sure we always get that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Michaud, the floor goes to you for a six-minute block of questions, whenever you're ready.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for being here.

Mr. Fadden, thank you for your participation. Your remarks are very interesting, and I will continue in the same vein as my colleague, Mr. McKinnon.

You talked about a national framework and said that the solution does not lie entirely within CSIS or the RCMP, and that members of civil society would have to contribute more to the solution, as well as universities and municipalities.

Could you please clarify what role those members of society could play? What role could they be given in fighting IMVE, in your opinion?

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** One of the challenges we have in Canada in dealing with IMVE, terrorism or things of this nature is that, aside from you and a few of your colleagues, unless there's a crisis, we do not talk about it. We just don't. To be blunt, there are no votes for you from talking about national security unless there's a crisis. There is a whole raft of other problems to be talked about and to be dealt with.

The first thing that civil society could usefully do is talk openly about these things, so that we don't think everything has to take place under the colour of darkness. When that happens, people very quickly find themselves driven to the end of the spectrum that I was talking about. A lot of it is talking about it. A lot of it is having organization.

I hope I'm not going to get myself in trouble today, but I really think that political correctness has reached the point today where it's almost impossible to have a conversation about a whole raft of issues. If you're frustrated with government and society to begin with, this is not helpful. Simply organizing and, if necessary, funding dialogue and conversation that could eventually work their way

up to you and your colleagues with suggestions for change is where I would start.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** That is very interesting. That might also be an approach to prevention. There are many vulnerable people who might get caught up in this kind of movement. If we reach out to them before they become directly involved and be proactive by engaging in dialogue about this, I think that could be very helpful to them.

In many cases nowadays, it all starts online. There is quite a rise in online violence and we are trying to create legislation to address that. As said, it will take more than new legislation, but I do think extra effort is needed in this regard. Our reality today is that many things happen in the virtual world and then have negative effects in the real world. We saw this in particular with the “freedom convoy”. Some things that were said online materialized in the real world.

In your opinion, how can we address this situation or enact legislation without unduly affecting freedom of expression? I think that is the big challenge. In your opinion, how can we find the right balance between these two?

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think you put it very well, and it was what I was trying to say in my opening remarks. If you choose to regulate in this area, you should do so as precisely as possible, articulating very clearly the harm that you're trying to prevent and do no more, and then talk openly about how you're doing it. This may be surprising for somebody who's worked in security for a good chunk of his career, but I would tend to do as little regulating of the Internet and social media as we can actually get away with, because it is a dangerous path to go down. Today, we're doing it for this narrow reason and the next day, we're doing it for something more broadly.

I do think, on the other hand, that we can monitor more carefully what is on social media and what's on the Internet generally. Possibly, we should find some way of not contradicting, but articulating opposing views to those that are set out and that promote violence and other things. That's a very difficult thing to ask of any government, but I wonder if it's worth thinking about and talking about. Maybe encourage universities to do it, I don't know.

I would go back to what you were saying, that we should be very careful if we're going to start legislating what is or is not acceptable. If another country did this in eastern Europe or in Asia, Canada would be the first country to condemn it, so we should be very careful not to go down this path unless it is absolutely clear that there's a harm that has to be suppressed and there's no other way to do it.

I used to have a friend who was the deputy minister of justice, and he used to say he would block any legislative initiative unless he was absolutely convinced there wasn't a non-legislative way of doing it. I'm not sure we do that all the time now as much as we should.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

Your answer is interesting.

I remember when learned that Elon Musk was going to buy Twitter, a few days or weeks ago. We raised questions about this in committee, because we had some concerns. We wondered what would be accepted in the interest of freedom of expression and what would be regulated by the new head of a social network where a lot of things happen.

My colleagues can also testify to the fact that we receive a lot of negative comments on Twitter from anonymous accounts that people hide behind to send messages that are in many cases violent.

To your knowledge, do any countries other than Canada have legislation or regulations addressing this?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Sorry, but we're going to have to wait until Mr. Fadden comes back to talk to us again to hear the answer to that very good question.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you. I will continue later.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The last six-minute slice of question time in this round, the last round, goes to Mr. MacGregor.

Go ahead, sir.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Fadden, for joining us.

I very much agree with you. I think we need more dialogue in this country, and I have actually noticed an improvement in our politics since we started getting off of Zoom and interacting with each other in person. It has definitely helped to see our colleagues from all parties again.

With regard to what you were talking about, we had a very interesting witness last week, Mr. McAleer, who is a former white supremacist who reformed himself and started an organization called Life After Hate, where he uses his personal knowledge of the white supremacy movement to reach out to people who are in that movement to help them get out. I was asking him about the challenge we have as policy-makers where on one hand we as the public want to denounce hateful ideology, but on the other hand we want to try to reach out to an individual. He was talking to us about how that can be extremely difficult, because when a person's identity and ideology become intertwined so they are one in the same, when you are denouncing their ideology, that person feels that their identity is being attacked.

Following Ms. Dancho's line of questioning, it is important that we set a model of dialogue in our politics, but Mr. McAleer also said that while we never condemn, we also never concede. I'm wondering about your thoughts on that, because I think there's also a responsibility for our political leaders not to set an example that is

encouraging that type of behaviour. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on that approach and if you can further elaborate on those concepts.

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** It's a good question. I had not thought about that. It seems to me that it goes back some degree, though, to what I was saying a moment ago, which is that, broadly speaking, these national security or serious crime issues are not things that we want to talk about, period, in this country. We just don't talk about them. I supported ministers over the years, and they would do virtually anything to avoid having to deal with a national security issue because there's no win in it. You can't win in national security; it's just not possible. You're irritating somebody somewhere.

It seems to me that the beginning of what you're talking about is talking about these things positively and negatively. I don't know how that's going to be possible, because, if you'll forgive me for saying so, the political environment in Parliament today is very, very partisan. Anybody who takes an initiative slightly off the beaten path is susceptible to being beaten about the head, if you'll forgive me for saying so.

I'd argue, as somebody who's worked in this area for a long time, that national security should be an area where there's less partisanship. We've seen this come and go over the years, but there's a real risk in doing this, and I think that if you don't create a bubble around people who are trying to do this, it isn't going to work. If you can't do it, then who can is the next question for you political leaders. I think there are other leaders in society who are amenable to doing this.

I continue to believe that the universities have a role in this sort of thing today, but as I was perhaps unwisely saying, political correctness is preventing much discussion now about some of these issues.

I'm not doing a very good job at answering your question, and I apologize, but it just seems to me that more discussion, generally, with some protection for somebody who's willing to take a little bit of a risk would be a good place to start.

• (1235)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I want to follow up on your comment about our taking as a starting position avoiding regulating the Internet as much as possible. I think that's a smart place to start from, but in identifying the harm, I took a look at the website BitChute this morning, and there are all manner of.... You just go down a rabbit hole when you look at some of the videos that are on there. I guess the problem is that, yes, a lot of what's on the Internet is awful, but it's lawful, and the problem is when that stuff leads to something physical, when someone takes their cues from those videos and acts upon them.

We've had a lot of witnesses talk about deplatforming individuals and trying to cauterize the wound to isolate them. Do you take the view that sunshine is the best disinfectant to expose these people as much as possible, or is it best to try to isolate the people who are causing the most harm, as some of our witnesses have suggested, through the agency of deplatforming them?

**Mr. Richard Fadden:** I think the light of day is always the best place to start; I really do. Having said that, there are provisions in the law now that allow the government to go to the courts and to seek orders suppressing various platforms and whatnot. I don't think that's been used very much, and I think that to some degree it is a cultural issue. It's a new way of doing things. It's a bit risky, and anybody or any minister who authorizes this is taking the risk that he'll be accused of really not protecting constitutional rights.

I would it's say it takes the light of day, some dialogue and, if need be, suppression— but suppress as precisely as you possibly can.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you. I'll concede there, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

That is all the time we have for this panel, which is too bad, because I'm sure we could have gone on for a very long time. Maybe there'll be other occasions when we can continue this very important conversation.

Thank you to the witnesses for taking your expertise and putting it in such digestible form for the committee.

Colleagues, we now take a very short break.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** On a point of order, during testimony over the two sessions today and the last committee hearing, I've heard the terms “Islamic terrorism” and “Islamic extremism” used. I know there's no bad faith or ill intent when people use them, but we do have a term that is used now by government and CSIS, which is “religiously motivated violent extremism”. Although we are coming to a close on this particular topic, I'd ask that in the future we do stick with that terminology.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. Thank you.

We will now break for a very few minutes and then resume.

Members who are connected through the Zoom platform, please use the in camera link and password that was provided to you by email.

We'll take a very short break. We'll come back in camera in just a few minutes.

Thank you.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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