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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order.

[Translation]

Welcome to meeting No. 63 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House Order of June 23, 2022, and therefore, members can attend in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

[English]

Should any technical challenges arise, please advise me immediately. Please note that we may need to suspend for a few minutes, as we need to ensure that all members are able to fully participate.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, the committee is resuming its study of foreign interference and threats to the integrity of democratic institutions, intellectual property and the Canadian state.

In accordance with the committee's routine motion concerning connection tests for witnesses, I am informing the committee that all witnesses have completed the required connection tests in advance of today's meeting.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses. First is Kenny Chiu, a former member of Parliament. We then have Michel Juneau-Katsuya, who is the former chief of the Asia-Pacific unit of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and Jonathan Manthorpe, international affairs columnist and author. Victor L. M. Ho, retired editor of Sing Tao Daily, British Columbia edition, is with us online. We also have Dan Stanton, who is the former executive manager of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and Artur Wilczynski, senior fellow of the graduate school of public and international affairs in the faculty of social sciences at the University of Ottawa.

I thank all of you for being with us today. We have two hours, so we're going to have 30 minutes of opening statements at five minutes each. I'm going to keep to the timelines today, so that we can get as much in as we can.

Mr. Chiu, you have five minutes to address the committee. Please commence.

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Former Member of Parliament, As an Individual): Thank you, Chair.

In general, for many years our national security apparatus has identified foreign interference efforts by the top perpetrator countries as being Russia, Iran and the PRC.

During my term as an MP, I actively supported and worked with Canadians in the Persian community to tackle foreign interference and coercive transnational repression here. However, I shall share my views and experience, using the Chinese Communist Party example as a window into how it is implemented here in our country.

The aim of the CCP regime's shadow operation is to exploit what it sees as weakness to advance its interests and influence our decision-making process, domestically as well as internationally. Because of language barriers and cultural challenges, we have diaspora communities that feel most comfortable with, and even exclusively consume, ethnic media content.

Popular CCP-sanctioned monolithic technologies, such as WeChat, also provide a convenient platform to either suppress dissension or promote and spread disinformation. That presents a golden opportunity for the CCP.

As filed by Alliance Canada Hong Kong in a 2021 submission and a March 2023 Radio-Canada investigative report, the Communist regime has successfully monopolized Chinese ethnic media, either through complete takeover or being caught up via the carrot-and-stick approach with business interests. With the successful execution of this strategy, the CCP has effectively controlled the diaspora communities' hearts and minds.

In the long run, it perpetrates a false narrative of a complete equivalence of the Chinese Communist Party and China, the state, and the Chinese race. Therefore, criticizing the CCP will quickly escalate into anti-Chinese racism. Globally the CCP is also consistently spreading a lie, weaponizing nationalism, that the western world led by the U.S. is selfishly suppressing a rising China, that the CCP's miraculous achievements are the reason all ethnic Chinese can finally lift their heads high, that there remains much colonial imperialistic anti-Asian racism in these hypocritical western democracies, and that only the CCP's interests align with the welfare and betterment of ethnic Chinese worldwide.

This explains why the recent CSIS whistle-blower reports by reputable media such as The Globe and Mail, Global News and the CBC have been portrayed by some pro-CCP mouthpiece media and commentators as Canada's deliberate racist acts under the U.S. command to undermine a rising China.

The lack of reliable and reputable fact-checking resources in their language further perpetrates the miscommunication. It sends a deep distrust and resentment of Canadian society in general, and pits the we versus they, divide-and-conquer struggle among us. With that long-term foundation laid, and continuing to be laid as we speak, the regime can activate its political influence by spreading seemingly authoritative commentary or news stories at the right time.

For example, in 2021 a complete mischaracterization of my proposed establishment of a foreign influence registry was circulated in WeChat and WhatsApp groups, saying that it was anti-Chinese or a pretext for a future Chinese internment effort, or that if elected prime minister, the anti-Chinese Erin O'Toole, then Conservative leader, would ban WeChat, jeopardizing the only familial or business link they so rely on. Their goal is twofold: to install decision-makers they have access to or control of and to remove those who stand against their efforts—vocal detractors, if you will.

To be clear, being a beneficiary of these efforts does not necessarily imply collusion. The CCP not only honours the age-old philosophy that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, but also practises equal opportunity among races, with corruption and collusion with anybody willing to submit, within or outside of the Chinese community.

In 2018, Australian Senator Sam Dastyari resigned in a Chinese government-linked scandal. This serves as a good reminder. Indeed, to link any effort against foreign interference with anti-Asian racism not only plays into the CCP playbook; it is a racist comment on its own, since it implies that the CCP will corrupt only ethnic Chinese, ignoring all the cries and demands for action from the very same community, some of whom have taken the great effort of speaking in front of a House committee, such as yours.

• (0850)

In conclusion, foreign interference and transnational repression are complex geopolitical issues. Unfortunately, in my humble opinion, Canada has run out of time in dithering and procrastinating. This is the moment not for more talk and virtue signalling, but for legislative actions that aim to protect Canada, your home and home to many cultural communities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chiu.

Next we're going to go to Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

Sir, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya (Former Chief of the Asia-Pacific Unit, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, members of the committee, for giving me the opportunity to tell you my thoughts and analyses, based on over 30 years of work, research, investigations and analyses on the activities of the Chinese intelligence services in Canada. I did that work as a counter-espionage officer, and as a security consultant in the private and academic sectors.

[*English*]

I can today claim openly, with evidence, that CSIS has known about Chinese foreign interference in Canada for at least the last 30 years. Every federal government, from Mr. Mulroney to Mr. Trudeau today, has been compromised by agents of Communist China. Every government was informed at one point or another. Every government chose to ignore CSIS's warnings. Every government was infiltrated by "agents of influence" acting on behalf of the Chinese government.

Every government took decisions that were "questionable" about China and can be explained only by interference exercised from within. Every government let their decision process be manipulated for two main reasons: partisanship, and agents of influence succeeding in controlling the message.

Every prime minister and/or their staff chose to ignore the seriousness of the threat. Not only has the sitting government been compromised, but all political parties have also been compromised at one point or another. The inaction of the federal governments led to attacks on many municipal and provincial governments; ultimately, every government has been part of the problem, not part of the solution, and I will remind you that it is not only China that is practising foreign interference.

Again, we have the evidence, names and circumstances of when all this happened.

• (0855)

[*Translation*]

The principle of interference is to put temptation in the path of target individuals. That is one of the weaknesses of a democratic system. Chinese agents have understood it very well and proved that they know how to exploit it. It is therefore up to us to finally take concrete measures to strengthen our defences.

In light of these facts, I would like to propose a few possible avenues for consideration.

First, it is essential that the country enact a criminal law against foreign interference that would define the activities considered illegal and provide the penalties that could be incurred.

Second, I welcome the initiative of wanting to create a national office to counter foreign interference. However, it is not appropriate that it be under the authority of the Minister of Public Safety. I have said, and I repeat: all previous and current governments have been part of the problem, not the solution. They have all received warnings and have ignored them. Requiring this body to report to a minister would reproduce the same pattern and would be doomed to failure and exposed to political interference.

The office therefore needs to be independent, separate from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, and from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, and needs to report directly to the House of Commons, with a director appointed by the House. There needs to be a law that gives the office powers to investigate, search, arrest, and prosecute, without having to request permission from anyone, and to be able to inform the public without politics interfering. As well, a budget of \$13.5 million over five years is inadequate. There have to be investigators who can cover all regions of Canada, and to do that, there must be local offices that would work not only for the federal government, but also to assist the provinces and municipalities.

I would add that the \$48.9 million over three years promised to the RCMP to protect communities is likely to have little impact in the absence of a national office. As well, neither the RCMP nor CSIS could be the investigative bodies, since their present structure has not enabled them to get governments to act in 30 years. How can we believe that this would change overnight?

[English]

Third, establish a mandatory process whereby future election candidates must swear and sign a declaration that they are not under the influence or acting on behalf of a foreign government or entity. This form will clearly warn of possible criminal procedures in case of intentional deception. A similar process must be established for all political staff and volunteers during the hiring process.

Fourth, eliminate the possibility for foreigners to vote for the selection of candidates and nominees. This is an obvious nonsense.

Fifth, prohibit, for a period of three to five years, all leaving cabinet members and senior public servants from working or participating in any activity or job related to their previous functions.

[Translation]

In closing, I would like to make a brief comment about the idea of creating a commission of inquiry.

In my opinion, that is not the right avenue. A public commission will inevitably reveal the investigative methods our security services and thus diminish our effectiveness in detecting and neutralizing the threat, while putting human resources at risk. With the revelations disclosed, we have already helped the Chinese to counter us. There is every reason to believe that in the current political climate, attention will be focused on the timeline of events, trying to lay the guilt at the government's doorstep when its predecessors all did the same thing. It is time to prioritize national security in a non-partisan manner and to protect the future of the country.

[English]

Thank you very much.

I'm looking forward to answering your questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

[English]

Next, on video, we have Mr. Manthorpe.

Sir, you have five minutes to address the committee.

Mr. Jonathan Manthorpe (International Affairs Columnist and Author, As an Individual): Good morning, everyone. Thank you for this opportunity.

I'm also honoured to be among such a good raft of witnesses for you. Let me just say that I agree with everything that you've heard so far this morning. I think those were both excellent presentations, and I'm sure it will be the same from the other witnesses.

I'm going to be very brief and basically just outline what is covered in my 2019 book, *Claws of the Panda*.

Relations at the official level between Canada and the Chinese Communist Party began in China in the 1930s—over 80 years ago. What is remarkable is how little the attitudes towards the relationship and the objectives of both sides have changed over those eight decades.

In their early encounters with Chinese Communist cadres, Canadian officials showed a fundamental naïveté about the purposes of the party that continues to this today, despite all the evidence that they are delusional.

From the start, though, the Canadians saw the Communists as a reformist rather than a revolutionary party. They nursed then, and many still do, the hope and expectation that the Canadian models of politics, administration and law would be templates for reform that the Chinese Communist Party would follow.

The Huawei affair, which started just as my book, *Claws of the Panda*, was being published, should have dispelled that blind optimism. It should have made it clear, beyond doubt, that we have no shared values with the Chinese Communist Party, and that we cannot have a normal relationship with a regime whose first instinct when there is a problem is to take hostages.

The Chinese Communist Party's objectives in the relationship have been equally consistent.

First was, and is, to make Canada a supporter of Beijing on the international stage where possible, and to minimize Ottawa's criticism if there is no support.

Second was, and is, to gain access through Canadian universities and research institutes to Canadian and United States technology, especially technology with military uses.

Third was, and is, to get unrestricted access to Canadian agricultural and natural resources. The Chinese Communist Party does not believe in market economics.

Fourth was, and is, to have open access to Canada's market for Chinese manufactured goods.

Fifth, and critically important in my view, was, and is, to be able to control and use Canadians of Chinese heritage, especially those advocating for reform in China.

By my count, the Chinese Communist Party has achieved all its objectives in Canada, while we have hardly had a shot on goal.

I will end there, and I will be happy to try to answer any questions from committee members.

Thank you.

• (0900)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Manthorpe.

You're well under time, which I appreciate, because it will give us more time for questions.

Mr. Ho, you have five minutes, sir, on video, to address the committee.

Mr. Victor L. M. Ho (Retired Editor-in-Chief, Sing Tao Daily, British Columbia Edition, As an Individual): As a retired journalist who worked for a Chinese-Canadian media organization for 25 years, I observed that the most efficient way for the CCP to control Chinese-language media is to co-opt the top management of the targeted company. The editorial policy of that medium will then always follow the party line in China.

Here are several tactics of the CCP that are usually used in the local Chinese community.

One is propaganda. In earlier days, short propaganda radio programs prepared by the United Front Work Department were broadcast by radio AM1320 in Vancouver. Such efforts have now been expanded to full-page ads in local Chinese papers to demonstrate massive support for the PRC's draconian policies.

Two is embedding pro-PRC media personnel in various Chinese-language media to speak well of the PRC narratives. They influence Chinese-language media CEOs and editors by inviting them to tea at the Chinese consulate compound and with leverage via advertising dollars.

Three is arousing a distorted sense of nationalism toward the motherland by exploiting selected parts of B.C. history to reinforce ideas of western imperialism, colonialism or racism toward ethnic Chinese.

Four is identity politics. People of a particular race and culture develop political agendas that are based upon these identities. Identity politics is deeply connected with the idea that some groups in society are oppressed, and it begins with the analysis of that oppression.

Five is magnifying the narratives and success of the PRC and propagating the CCP mantra that we are moving into an era of a rising east and declining west.

Six is disinformation. They accuse the west of treating assumptions as facts and of being jealous of China's success to the point of unfair trade practices—like, say, Huawei and TikTok—and of stigmatizing the entire Chinese community with the recent suggestion of a foreign influence registry bill, etc.

Seven is polarizing and dividing the community through a choice of pro-PRC news commentators who will ridicule or reiterate the

failures of the west, and through references to the presence of patriots and traitors in the context of Hong Kong.

Eight is assisting during elections by supporting candidates favoured by the PRC and by not interviewing candidates critical of the CCP, like Kenny Chiu.

Nine is establishing the CCP's own Chinese-language media on Canadian soil.

Thank you.

• (0905)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ho.

Next we're going to go to Mr. Stanton. You have five minutes, sir, to address the committee.

Mr. Dan Stanton (Former Executive Manager, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning, members.

My insight and understanding of PRC foreign interference comes from 32 years of operations with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, most of which was in what we called counter-intelligence. I worked in CI against hostile states—posted in the field and in headquarters—for a number of years. This also includes what we refer to as state-driven foreign interference.

When I started working was during the Cold War, and espionage was the all-consuming threat in the west, and in Canada in particular. That was what we worked against—against various state actors. There has been an evolution since about the implosion of the Soviet Union, and, in fact, espionage has become rather passé. It's high risk. It's very difficult to do against hard targets. You have to get people to commit treason. It's a lot easier with foreign influence.

What we have seen in the last 30 years is that foreign interference has eclipsed classic espionage as a national security threat in terms of both its scope and its speed. Why risk stealing another state's secrets when you can influence and manipulate the targeted country's policy-makers? You can get close to what we consider the soft underbelly of the state through its democratic institutions.

The People's Republic of China, in this effort, is the A-team. It's the best at this. Its level of sophistication, confidence bordering on arrogance, has made it probably the most daunting threat from a foreign intelligence perspective. While China continues to play chess, Canada plays whack-a-mole. We need to raise our game.

There has been some talk recently that we don't have any legislative hammer to hit foreign interference with, that there isn't legislation, like with espionage and terrorism. I respectfully disagree with that. If you look at the Security of Information Act, particularly at the back of it, in subsection 20(1)—I will just read a little of it to you—and in section 3, you have the language that is appropriate, in my opinion, for prosecuting foreign interference.

Subsection 3(1) says it's "prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State" if someone commits an offence punishable by two years or more in prison to advance a political objective or to benefit a foreign entity.

If we move to subsection 20(1), we see that it's an offence if, "for the benefit of...a foreign entity", a person "induces or attempts to induce" or causes something to be done that "increas[es] the capacity of a foreign entity" or "is reasonably likely to harm Canadian interests."

These offences are easily captured by the Security of Information Act, in my opinion. I think that perhaps this committee or others might want to take a look at some of that. I have highlighted that in the legislation.

We know now that this is an existential threat. What really has been done? What has been done since the allegations came out in November?

Well, there has been the proposal for a foreign-agent registry listing, which has merit, but unless I'm mistaken, there already is a bill in the Senate, Bill S-237, which is a foreign-agent registry bill that has been there since August. Why don't we just move it through the Senate and the House of Commons, instead of going across the country and having town halls to see what people think of it?

I don't mean to be facetious, but I really think that if the government wants to have a registry—and I know a lot of Canadians want to—we have already done some groundwork there.

We're allocating millions of dollars to the RCMP, I learned last week, with no investigative strategy, no prosecution strategy. We're just saying, "Here. Take this money and use this." In 32 years of national security work, every time we have had a crisis, every time we have had an incident, that's what the government has done. It'll throw money at the RCMP. It'll say, "You folks have to sort that out." I don't think that's really an appropriate response.

We haven't had a national security policy renewed since 2004. That's the first time we ever had a national security policy written. The threat landscape in this country has changed enormously in the last 20 years—qualitatively. There are new threats with AI and all sorts of things. I think Canadians deserve something like that, and it should be a national security policy that is China-centric.

I don't mean to sound partisan. I don't mean to blame any particular government. I worked this threat from the PRC for many, many years. I actually was the national program manager 12 or 13 years ago. It was a different government at the time, and the reaction to foreign interference reporting—as I think was suggested earlier—was no different from what it is today. There was nobody home. There really wasn't much of a response.

This really isn't a partisan issue for me. I think this threat and how the government is going to react, or how it reacts to it historically, has transcended party and time. What we really need is a more holistic approach to pushing back against that threat.

Finally, I want to say that I'm so delighted to be here to speak today, but particularly with Mr. Ho and Mr. Chiu as panel members—and the other fellows, as well, of course. However, I think it's ex-

remely important that we have Chinese Canadians, that they have a platform to talk about what has been going on.

• (0910)

They need to have a voice, and not simply as some PR exercise to find out what they think now and then. These are the people who have been in the crosshairs of the People's Republic of China's regime for 30 or 40 years, and they are the people who need to come forward. They need to have the trust and confidence that there are going to be outcomes and a follow-up if they are going to take a risk and come forward to say what's happening. Not only does the government have to listen, but Canadians have to listen to our Chinese Canadian community for once and hear what they have to say.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Wilczynski, like a volcano, you look like you're ready to explode there. You've listened to the other speakers, and you're the last one.

You have five minutes, sir. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Artur Wilczynski (Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to come back to what was said by my colleague Mr. Stanton. I want to thank Mr. Ho, Mr. Chiu and Mr. Manthorpe for telling us about their experience with foreign interference. I believe it is absolutely essential to listen to what the Chinese community and the other communities targeted by this interference have to say and to hold an effective discussion so we can address and restrict the harmful activities of foreign governments.

During more than 30 years in the public sector I was able to observe how governments work from numerous angles. As director general of international affairs and border policy at Public Safety Canada, I negotiated security agreements with the United States. I was director general of security and intelligence at what is now Global Affairs Canada. I was an ambassador to a NATO ally and director general of intelligence operations at the Canadian Communications Security Establishment. I am therefore intimately familiar with the functioning of the Canadian security and intelligence community.

[*English*]

I have been a consumer of intelligence and have managed intelligence production. I have done so with a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. The complexity of foreign interference requires us to understand the links between a wide range of interconnected issues. Foreign interference by hostile state actors such as the People's Republic of China is a profound challenge, as we have heard. The security and intelligence community has been responding and speaking about this threat for years. Nevertheless, as my colleagues have so clearly pointed out, much more can be done to address this threat.

I'm glad we're having this national conversation on foreign interference, and we need to listen, as I said, to the lived experiences of affected communities and individuals. What is regrettable is how we got here and how this conversation is unfolding. The illicit disclosure of intelligence, the awkward response by some in government, and hyperbolic accusations against government and its institutions have resulted in a toxic environment that has impeded our ability to address the threat. The tone and content of the conversation has further shaken Canadians' confidence in our democratic institutions. The debate has been reduced to sound bites and tweets. It has become a vehicle for partisanship rather than a forum where we can work together to confront foreign interference, build resilience in our institutions, and restore the shaken confidence in our democracy.

Disclosures may have focused national attention on foreign interference, but they have also caused damage to our efforts to confront the threat and are incompatible with defending democracy. When, as public servants, we gain access to classified information, we swear an oath of secrecy. It is an oath to follow the law and a range of compliance measures. To violate that oath with little understanding of the predictable consequences of disclosures is profoundly irresponsible and likely illegal.

While I completely understand the frustration about the pace of addressing foreign interference, the disclosure of classified intelligence is illegal for a reason. It compromises techniques. It compromises sources and makes them less likely to co-operate with security intelligence officials.

When government officials leak intelligence, it undermines the human rights of the individuals named. As this is the committee responsible for access to information, privacy and ethics, I think that would be of particular concern to the members of this committee, Mr. Chair. That information is released without due process, without a presumption of innocence, and with no ability for them to effectively defend themselves.

All of this impedes both specific investigations themselves as well as the ability to nurture sources in the long run. It is also fundamentally anti-democratic. You cannot say that you are defending democracy while breaking the laws passed by Parliament.

As the former assistant deputy minister for people, equity, diversity and inclusion at CSE, I know operational security is essential to persons with origins in hostile states. For them, it is a matter of personal and family safety. Disclosures affect them directly and profoundly.

● (0915)

[*Translation*]

Because of these questions, I have supported the calls for a public inquiry. We need an impartial inquiry to examine what has happened and to make sure we have the necessary tools to preserve the resilience of our democratic institutions.

During that inquiry, we would have the opportunity to examine classified information. The inquiry would have to be coordinated with the reviews being done by other bodies, such as the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. It should also

make recommendations that take into account the entire threat, not just what happened in 2019 and 2021.

[*English*]

The threats to our democracy are complex. Foreign interference is evolving. An inquiry will provide Parliament with options to mitigate the threats and ensure that Canadians have confidence that their representatives reflect our popular will. The only ones benefiting from what is happening now are the enemies of democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilczynski.

For anyone who has been following the committee, and for the benefit of the witnesses, I'll let you know that I'm kind of old school when it comes to interaction. I don't believe that we need to go through the chair all the time, so any of the questions that happen can be direct. The answers can be direct to the members, as well.

With that being said, we're going to start with Mr. Barrett for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for joining us this morning and providing us with their expertise.

It's very nice to see you here today, Mr. Chiu, as a former colleague of ours. Thanks for making the trip. It's quite early back home in B.C. for you, so I'm so happy to see you here.

I'd like to start with a question for you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya. Do you have evidence of interference or interference attempts, or evidence that Canadian governments have been informed of these activities?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes, but I don't have them with me. Since I was with CSIS, it remained with CSIS.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay, so you don't have any information that you'd be able to transmit to the committee for its review.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Other than the normal briefing that has been provided at various times over the last 30 years—all the senior command, all the chain of command, have spoken to various governments at one point or another—no, I don't have it. It was regular briefings given according to the seriousness of what we had discovered at that period of time.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do you know how many federal ridings have been targeted by the Communist regime in Beijing?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Over the last 30 years or the recent...?

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'm interested in both numbers, actually.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Well, over the years we have seen similar ridings constantly being targeted, particularly where there was a great number of Chinese Canadian residents. These were the hunting grounds of the consular office. The work is done by consular officers most of the time, and like I said, we have a certain number, but they were all the time the same ones targeted. They would fluctuate over time when a specific MP or candidate would present themselves newly against the Chinese government when it was not usual to have aggressions or resistance coming from that riding. If somebody became vocal, then suddenly they would deploy some effort. However, it was fairly stable throughout all of Canada.

• (0920)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Would you believe it to be productive for you to furnish this committee with a list, in writing, of those ridings?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: I could try to put it together.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay. Thank you.

Are you familiar with the 2022 case of Christine Lee in the United Kingdom? She was the subject of an alert by MI5.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: No, I'm not.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay. I see Mr. Stanton is nodding.

Sir, are you familiar with that case?

Mr. Dan Stanton: Yes, very much. I was following it quite closely, so I read all the media on it.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay, so you're aware that House of Commons Speaker Hoyle issued an alert to members of Parliament to warn against interaction with Ms. Lee.

Mr. Dan Stanton: Yes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Here's a similar situation: Are you aware of an alert that was issued by the Speaker as a result of information from MI5 concerning Russian influence attempts the year prior?

Mr. Dan Stanton: If I'm thinking about the same one, there was a case in Britain, and I think MI5 was involved. However, I think, from what I read in the media, it's of questionable accuracy whether this.... This was, I think, a British subject who claimed that he reported to MI5 and it didn't take seriously what he was saying.

Mr. Michael Barrett: No, the case that I'm referring to was influence activities targeting 100 members of the U.K. House of Commons by Russian state actors looking to colour their perspective of the activities of the Government of Ukraine.

However, we'll stick with the situation that you're familiar with—

Mr. Dan Stanton: Okay.

Mr. Michael Barrett: —which is that of Ms. Lee. This issue was raised by MI5 and brought to the Speaker of the House, and then members were warned.

Why do you think that this is not a practice that's employed here in Canada? We've heard testimony here this morning already that there are state actors working at all levels of government in all political parties. I think that is surprising. Everyone would say, "Oh, it

must be in another party. It must have been another government." Members couldn't be blamed for that, because we have an intelligence service that has never told us otherwise.

Why don't we have that process in place here?

If you could keep your remarks pretty tight, I'll try to get to the other two speakers.

Mr. Dan Stanton: I'll be really brief.

I think that particular case in Britain was so egregious. They had intelligence that it was coming from the United Front Work Department and the PRC through this British citizen, going right into an MP's campaign fund. I think there was probably a lot more going on, but it wasn't hitting any legal thresholds, so the best the British could do was send out this all-points bulletin to everybody, identifying her and basically saying to stay away and stay clear because she's a foreign-influence actor.

Now, I wouldn't say for the allegations we have in Canada, based on what looks to be pretty sketchy information coming from the media—little dribs and drabs—that the Canadian government would issue something like that.

That's just my opinion, but I think that British case was so blatant that it provoked that.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'm out of time, but I'll circle back on this issue and give you an opportunity to respond, Mr. Wilczynski and Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

Thanks for your response.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

We have roughly an hour and a half of questioning here, so you'll have another chance.

Mr. Bains, you're up next for six minutes.

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As technology advances, tactics evolve and foreign state relations evolve, like we've heard today, I believe the threat to democracy has a lot to do with disinformation and misinformation from foreign state actors and non-state actors—and even domestically here.

We've heard that this has been going on for a long time, so thank you all for joining us here today for this very important study.

My first question is for Mr. Wilczynski. I hope I said that correctly.

We have a strong, vibrant Chinese diaspora in the city that I live in, Richmond, where Mr. Chiu is also from. Some families have been here for well over 100 years, while others are first-generation Canadians.

You wrote in the Ottawa Citizen that Canadians of Chinese descent are the primary victims of interference from the CCP. Can you elaborate on that for the committee? I think we heard a bit about it before, as well.

• (0925)

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: The reason I wrote that is based a lot on what you've already heard from the other witnesses, who have spoken first-hand about how they have experienced some of those forms of pressure. There are many instances in the public domain, written about by members of the community who have highlighted and enumerated the various ways in which interference has negatively affected...whether it's through intimidation or whether it's through coercion.

There have been a lot of elements in the public domain. That's why I think it's really important and why I'm so pleased that Mr. Chiu, Mr. Ho and Mr. Manthorpe have all been here to share that experience and that research they have done in terms of the effects that manipulation has had on the community.

There are, unfortunately, too many pressure points that can be exercised by hostile states, and we have to be mindful of them. I think that's why it's important for us to listen to members of the community as we craft strategies to respond to that kind of threat.

Mr. Parm Bains: On that note, are there other communities that you think are impacted in the same way?

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Yes. Again, that's been mentioned at this table. I think...and this is all in the public domain. You don't need to look at classified information, because the communities themselves have spoken about it.

I believe the Iranian community have spoken very directly about how they have been affected by foreign interference. We also have seen, in many instances, in the public domain.... You don't need to go out for classified information on how Putin's regime in Russia has tried to influence a wide range of issues that are of interest to that state. It affects not only, I think, members of ethnocultural communities, but also members of other targeted communities that might be vulnerable to the actions of those hostile states.

I'll elaborate on that if you'd like.

Mr. Parm Bains: Yes.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Specifically, on the last one, also in the public domain, I have been particularly critical of the actions of the Russian government when it comes to targeting the LGBTQ2+ community and trying to highlight, amplify and specifically undermine Canadian support for and social cohesion around equality rights for a historically marginalized community.

For me that might not necessarily be interference so much as malign influence, but it is a hostile activity by a state actor that I think negatively affects specific Canadians.

Mr. Parm Bains: How as MPs can we protect ourselves from bad actors when we aren't provided with the tools? One of the issues is that even if we proactively reach out to public safety agencies or anyone else and try to ask who we should stay away from, that information isn't shared, because, quite frankly, it could compromise something.

What can we as MPs do?

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Having these kinds of sessions is profoundly important, as is having officials, both current and previous, from the national security and intelligence community share what they can in a public environment about what the threat is.

Personally, I also believe there can be far more transparency from Canada's security and intelligence communities. We have the ability to speak to the public, to parliamentarians and to others around the issues of foreign interference in, I think, a more regular and more frank way.

Part of the challenge has been a long history of reticence and risk aversion when it comes to having those conversations, and I think one of the effects of that history of risk aversion to regular, forthright conversations is that many Canadians—and unfortunately a number of parliamentarians—lack a deep understanding of the way security and intelligence works and how we can work more effectively together to counter the threat posed by hostile state actors and other threats to Canada's national security.

Mr. Parm Bains: In the article I referenced before, you discuss how disclosure of classified documents undermines efforts to address foreign interference.

Can you expand on why that is?

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Yes. Again, when one sees illicitly disclosed intelligence, there is a lot that intelligence services can determine by having access to that information. They can figure out what the source of the information is. They can figure out who, potentially, would have been seeking the information in the first place, thereby compromising individuals within the security and intelligence community themselves.

Once intelligence services acquire that knowledge, they can develop strategies to avoid similar tactics in the future. When they avoid those tactics and those tactics evolve, the ability for security and intelligence services to maintain access and to have transparency and visibility into what they are doing—whether through human sources, as happens for organizations such as CSIS, or through signals intelligence, if there's disclosure—is closed, because then targets of that intelligence collection can modify their behaviour in a way that closes that ability.

• (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilczynski and Mr. Bains.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you're up next for six minutes.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here this morning.

Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, you are back with us. I have a number of questions for you, so I would like you to answer simply yes or no. We will see where that takes us.

You say every federal government, from Mr. Mulroney's to Mr. Trudeau's, has been compromised by China. Is that correct?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Okay.

Every government has been informed of this, is that correct?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. René Villemure: They all chose to ignore the warnings from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, is that correct?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. René Villemure: They were infiltrated by agents of influence at the invitation of the Chinese government, is that correct?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Right.

As you said earlier, the governments made debatable decisions concerning these cases of interference.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Oh yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Right.

So every government up to now has been part of the problem.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Right.

You said that a law should perhaps be enacted. Can Hong Kong's National Security Act, which was enacted in 2020, serve as a model for this?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Are you talking about Hong Kong or Australia?

Mr. René Villemure: I'm sorry, I'm talking about Australia.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: In the case of Australia, it was in 2018.

Yes, I think it's a good start. That act has been in force in Australia for five years, and its intelligence services are able to use it. It can tell us a bit about the upgrades we could make to our laws. Ordinarily, all laws include a sunset clause, which provides for a review every five years or so. That is exactly the time that has elapsed since that act came into force in Australia. We could certainly look to that law.

The United States and England have also passed appropriate legislation that we could look to for enacting a law on the Canadian model.

Mr. René Villemure: That's great.

You also say that the investigative office that was proposed this week is not suitable because it is not independent.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: That's correct.

Mr. René Villemure: So the office should be independent of the government and of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: That's it.

Mr. René Villemure: How could that independent office be created?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: It could be done in the same way as with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada: a person would be appointed by the House of Commons after being approved by all members of Parliament. That person would report to the House of Commons.

The purpose of the investigation office would be to restore the integrity that our democratic system needs, whether in the eyes of our international allies or of our fellow Canadians. It is very important that the office be independent and maneuverable. It must also have the appropriate powers for conducting investigations. As Mr. Wilczynski said, the person in charge would ensure transparency, which is greatly lacking at present, as was said earlier. For too long, this lack of transparency has prevented Canada from issuing warnings to the public.

In fact, I recall an incident involving the Security Intelligence Review Committee. When the Canadian Security Intelligence Service wanted to approach major corporations to pass on warnings, somewhat like what Britain's MI5 and MI6 do once a year at a national conference, the Security Intelligence Review Committee did the opposite and reprimanded CSIS, telling it that it should only inform the government. We have done that for 30 years, but it has produced no results.

Mr. René Villemure: Do you think artificial intelligence is going to present a new challenge, in terms of interference or controlling it?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes, the challenge is going to be huge. Artificial intelligence is going to enable a country that wants to go on the offensive and engage in interference to get much more information and to much more easily identify the targets to attack in this country.

● (0935)

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

Mr. Chiu, during the last parliament, you introduced Bill C-282, An Act to establish the Foreign Influence Registry.

What happened to that bill?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Nothing. It just sat on the House of Commons floor, and with the Prime Minister pulling the plug on the 43rd Parliament, it just went away.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Did introducing a bill like that have consequences for you?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: As I mentioned, during the election there was a significant amount of disinformation being spread, especially with the diaspora Chinese community, primarily through WeChat but also on WhatsApp. I was mischaracterized as somebody who is anti-Chinese and even hating Chinese...that I must not be allowed to be re-elected, and nor should then Conservative leader Erin O'Toole.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: So this is first-hand testimony; you have told us about your personal story.

Is that right?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: That is correct.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Do you think you are a victim of foreign interference in the last election?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: I would say that it played a role in my defeat. I was actually glad there was a whistle-blower in CSIS, because, to a certain extent, it confirmed my subjective observation and also the intelligence that we, the local campaign, had received and reported to CSIS all along, even though CSIS never got back to us.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: So you believe that your opponent had an advantage. Is that right?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Yes. I believe he is the beneficiary of the disinformation.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Right. Do you think the fact that your opponent is sitting here today is a conflict of interest?

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: That is a question, I think, better answered by my opponent, who is sitting here at the meeting.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Right.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure, that's all the time you have.

[English]

Mr. Green, you have six minutes. Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you very much, and thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Obviously a lot has been reported on publicly. There are a lot of opinions floating around. It's good to have some subject-matter expertise. I particularly enjoy the opportunity to have former members of our security apparatus here before us. I talk often about the duty of candour, which you are legislated to extend to the courts. I wish we had a deeper commitment from our security apparatus to

have the same duty of candour to Parliament. Perhaps we'd be able to avoid situations like this in the future.

Mr. Stanton, in the interview on CBC Radio, you stated that Canada needs to amend its CSIS Act to empower national security agencies to deal with foreign influence, not just foreign interference. I think that's an important point.

Can you please explain the difference between foreign influence and foreign interference?

Mr. Dan Stanton: I don't remember suggesting that the CSIS Act be amended, but are you just asking me about the difference between foreign interference and foreign influence?

• (0940)

Mr. Matthew Green: Yes, please.

Mr. Dan Stanton: That's a good question. There are two types of foreign interference.

The first one, which is the easy one, involves the foreign state basically targeting the diaspora communities in relation to homeland issues. This could be through manipulation or intimidation. Members of a community don't want to talk about it, and they're used. CSIS will target that type of activity. It's usually dealt with fairly well. It's a less nuanced threat than the other foreign interference is.

The other foreign interference, probably the reason we're here in these committee meetings, involves the state targeting three levels of government, targeting politicians, targeting journalists and targeting those from all walks of life, using clandestine methods. There has to be clandestine activity; otherwise, it's simply lobbying. That's why there's been, I would say, such a lack of government reaction to the reporting over the years, because give it a cursory glance and it appears to be just lobbying. People say, "What's the big deal? Don't you people have more important things to talk about?"

If, however, you work it for a long while and if you use that criterion of clandestinity, where the agenda of the foreign state is not clear to the target, then you can see the threat manifestation.

That's what we're dealing with more—the other type of foreign interference, which is very hard to identify and can be difficult to counter, although we do have legislation that can be brought to bear. The first kind of foreign interference, in which you have a representative of a foreign state directly intimidating part of that community in Canada, is a little more “in your face”.

Mr. Matthew Green: For the purpose you referenced—AI—I attended a workshop this week on Russian interference and Russian actors online, particularly with respect to troll farms and social media. We know that, at least in a cursory way, through the convoy, there were massive spikes in online presence by Russia in that regard.

Can you just share the way in which technology and social media have helped blur the lines between influence and interference in terms of our being able to know what is clandestine?

Mr. Dan Stanton: I have to say, actually, that the technology aspect of disinformation is an area that I really do not have a lot of background on.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: I can try to answer part of that.

The online environment is obviously fairly complex, and it's evolving. The important part to understand is when behaviour is inauthentic, when countries use various tools either to covertly amplify messages they know run counter to the interests of the countries they're targeting or to specifically amplify their own interests.

There is inauthentic activity through things such as bots, but you also have to understand that they've cultivated a range of supportive actors within a state, who will amplify those messages. Sometimes inauthentic behaviour may actually look authentic, because it is being amplified by legitimate actors in a certain state.

It's all going to be made much more complex, as colleagues have mentioned, by AI, including things like deepfakes. On the front page of the Ottawa Citizen the other day there was a story about how images and videos are going to be manipulated in such a way that it will be very difficult to tell the difference between what is real and what is fake. Those kinds of tools, in combination with the kinds of amplification that can be done in an online environment, are going to make it particularly challenging. I think, for average citizens and also for national security intelligence organizations to be able to constrain and address that behaviour. It's something we have to pay particular attention to into the future.

Mr. Matthew Green: I recall a famous Steve Bannon quote that talks about cognitive warfare and trying to create complete chaos and disorder. This came from somebody who, at the time, was a key American adviser to an American regime.

We've spent a lot of time focused on China. Can we perhaps take a moment to step back and provide a bit of an overview about other international actors, both those we may consider to be friendly allies and hostile actors, because it feels like we're missing a pretty significant part of the equation here when we focus on only one country, given the global complexity of this kind of zero-sum game.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: I'll just jump in very quickly on that.

The Chair: Be very brief, please.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: I am particularly worried about non-state actors and particularly non-state actors from friendly states. I think that it doesn't take a big stretch to see how ideologically motivated, violent extremist organizations, particularly those based in the United States, are trying to amplify certain messages that divide target minority communities, whether it's promoting anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia or transphobia, and undermining democratic principles and values. Lots of folks are out there doing so in a non-transparent way. They're not state actors; therefore, the ability of governments like ours to address them is a challenge. That's one of the things I think an inquiry should look at as well.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilczynski, and thank you, Mr. Green.

We're going to move to our second round of questioning and start with Mr. Kurek.

You have five minutes.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you very much.

Let me thank all of our witnesses for joining us here today and talking about this very important subject.

Mr. Chiu, it's good to see you again. Since you're a former colleague, it's nice to have you before this committee.

I want to provide you a bit of an opportunity to share your experience, what the attacks against you and your personal character looked like, specifically during the last election, and the issue surrounding your proposal for a foreign agent registry. Could you unpack, in about a minute or so, the impacts that had on you, both professionally and personally?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Thank you for the opportunity. It's good to see everybody.

I would characterize it as an isolation process. It was partly due to the COVID pandemic, but, on the other hand, I used to serve on the Chinese ethnic media quite frequently and actively.

During my term, especially after I tabled the private member's bill on the foreign influence registry, I was given the cold shoulder in many of the Chinese media, and they didn't invite me to their talk shows, even though they opened their lines for criticism of my bill. All that culminated during the election with this disinformation that I'd never been to Xinjiang, so how could I be voting with the rest of the parliamentarians that there is a genocide fulfilling the definition as stated by the U.N.? Also, why would I hate my own race, the Chinese, since I put into place this foreign influence registry?

It had a big impact, because I had left my profession in middle management of personnel in software development, and it's been difficult to get back into my profession. However, I'm glad that I was able to table this issue on the national discussion scene, as has previously been mentioned.

To many of us, this may sound like *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, but, to many of us in the community, it's everything everywhere all the time.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Chiu.

I'd like to dig down a little on the ethnic media side of things.

Mr. Ho, you mentioned something about that. Could you describe, for the benefit of the committee, how this process is used or weaponized for the benefit of the Communist dictatorship in Beijing?

Mr. Victor L. M. Ho: The basic principle for the CCP is to intimidate the so-called “hostile voices” in our Chinese community. On the other hand, they manipulate information and misinformation—even fake news—on social media like WeChat and TikTok, to spread official propaganda to sidetrack from the core problem.

For example, in the COVID-19 era, they spread the anti-Asian hate campaign. This was a national, even transnational—it was even in the United States—anti-Asian hate campaign, which made the agenda a racial issue rather than a public health issue. During the election period, they coloured the entire opposite views in the Chinese community—that is, anti-CCP action or commentary—as a racial problem, and sidetracked—

● (0950)

Mr. Damien Kurek: I hate to interrupt, but time is short here.

I have a quick follow-up on that. Because it's often in languages that many Canadians wouldn't understand—Mandarin, Cantonese, etc.—is this the sort of thing that hides in plain sight, Mr. Ho?

Mr. Victor L. M. Ho: Yes. This is an ethnic language problem, so mainstream society has no idea what has happened in our Chinese community in the past.

The Chair: Thank you, sir, and thank you, Mr. Kurek.

Mr. Fergus, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

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

I would also like to thank all the witnesses who are with us today. I am extremely grateful for their expertise.

Mr. Wilczynski, you said that the way this story played out undermined national security and Canadians' fundamental rights. Can you tell us more about that?

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Certainly. I tried to explain a bit earlier that I believe respect for the law is a fundamental component of our democracy. We have to follow the laws that have been made. Laws are made because they are supposed to constrain us to obey the rules and give us a framework for how to act as national security officers. We have special powers that authorize us to conduct investigations and take measures to advance our national interest.

[English]

When government officials do not follow the law and do not respect the rules by which we have been appropriately constrained in the compliance that we have put in place to measure our behaviour, the effects are multiple, particularly, I think, on the human rights of individuals. When it's a government official using the powers and authorities to access information and then on their own, outside of the framework of the laws that govern us, deciding to provide that information without context, without explanation and without analysis to a public domain, that violates a whole range of things. It's not only their obligations, but the rights of the individuals named in those disclosures—their rights to privacy and rights to due process.

I think that is profoundly troublesome when people are working in security intelligence, in particular in an enterprise that has had a

challenging history in Canada. To do so outside of the rule of law, again, is why I think it's fundamentally anti-democratic.

I'm sorry. Very quickly, I want to pick up on the earlier question, because it's related to it. One of the effects.... I mentioned it a bit in my statement. We in the security intelligence community need far greater diversity in our ranks, precisely so that we are able to understand language and cultural context, and to be able to provide the kind of insight that is essential. When members of those communities feel that we have not lived by the rule of law and we have not protected them to the extent that we need to, our ability to entice them to come and join us and be members of the security intelligence service is negatively affected. That in turn negatively affects our ability to be effective protectors of Canadian national interests.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you, Mr. Wilczynski. I noticed several people nodding their heads.

Mr. Stanton, you have also talked a lot in the media about these alleged leaks from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS. Do you think those leaks are actually coming from CSIS, and whatever your answer is, what are your reasons?

[English]

Mr. Dan Stanton: No, I don't. I don't believe they're coming....

I'll be careful how I answer this, because I've been following this quite closely. You have two different lines of...we'll call it reporting with allegations, and there are qualitative differences between them.

People who work in intelligence, in professions like CSIS, don't get worked up about outcomes. If you work in counterterrorism, in some cases you're indifferent, really, whether someone's going to be arrested and go to jail.

I remember when 18 Soviet diplomats were kicked out. I was working the Soviet section—I was working the KGB desk—and I think I was saddened for about three weeks that it had to happen, because there were all sorts of investigative equities in there and all sorts of things that go on in counterintelligence beyond kicking a diplomat out.

It's the same with someone being arrested or charged for various things. People who work in intelligence are professional. They're not thinking about outcomes that some policy-maker may or may not carry. I know that because I spent 32 years in there. I know the culture.

I also look at some of the stuff that's been in the media, where we now have this leaker idolatry. They're sort of held up as patriots who are outraged by this egregious cover-up, and they're going to now protect Canadians through the leakage. That also doesn't sound like people I know in a culture that I worked with for many, many years.

I could read a lot into the testimonial in the Globe. I can read a lot into the Globe's editorials on the subject as well. There's a bit of a slant towards SNC-Lavalin and things like that. It's a bit partisan.

I have an idea where these leaks are coming from, and in some cases they're coming through various filters to the reporter. In some cases it may be a document. I'm quite confident that the organization I spent a lot of time in is not the source of those leaks.

Some of it could be attributed to some third party, but I don't believe the documents are coming from the organization.

• (0955)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stanton.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Fergus.

Mr. Villemure, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Manthorpe, I liked your book "*Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada*" a lot. In it, you talk a lot about trust. Considering the current situation, with these leaks, allegations and so on, what might help us restore people's trust in our institutions?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Manthorpe: That's a very broad question, and I appreciate it.

I'm in the middle of writing another book about the problems of Canadian democracy, which maybe we can talk about when the book comes out.

I think we do have a problem of trust in our democratic institutions that goes beyond foreign interference. There have been several people who have mentioned this morning that it's not just the People's Republic of China that has gone beyond the bounds of lobbying and into the area of serious interference in Canadian public life. I think we need a registry for just that reason. This is a general problem, not something deeply concerned with only the People's Republic of China.

I think the level of trust in our institutions has degraded over the last 20 or 30 years for various reasons, perhaps more than is appropriate to go into with this committee today. I wrote a book that came out in 2020, called *Restoring Democracy*. It looked at the whole period from the end of the Cold War and the various pressures on democracy in the last 30 years.

My latest book, which will hopefully come out next year, deals particularly with Canada in that context. I suspect that this may not be a matter for this committee at this moment, but I'll happily answer any other questions you have.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Manthorpe.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

Mr. Green, you have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

Mr. Stanton, could you maybe—I'm picking up on this line of questioning—expand on other foreign agents, countries or actors that are out there that we should be focused on?

My concern—and maybe you can comment on this, because I've heard a lot about it—is that we're solely focused on China, and I think, in doing so, we may miss the broader picture. Can you comment on that?

Mr. Dan Stanton: Sure. That's a great question.

I think we're solely focused on China because it is, as I've said, the A-team when it comes to foreign interference. There is absolutely no comparison in terms of scope and qualitative differences.

One of my colleagues alluded to Iran. We've seen a shift in Iranian interference, such that they're now contracting out in the private sector. This is in the media in Canada, the U.S. and Britain. They're using private investigators to follow people. There are some shifts in how they do this, which is related to harassing and doing worse with dissidents.

Russia has always been a player, but Russia is very strong on its intel and intelligence services. It's somewhat different from China in the way it does things.

One country I'll say is India. India does foreign interference in Canada. We've seen this, and we've seen it in the media.

There are a number of foreign states. As one of my colleagues says, they're not necessarily all hostile to Canadian interests. Some of them are neutral, I guess you can say. Some of them could be allies.

It's hit-and-miss in some areas. I don't want to go back to belabouring the PRC, although that is the reason we're here. They just do it extremely well. They really do. It's a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach. You know about the national security law that was passed in 2017, whereby anyone with Chinese status anywhere in the world has to co-operate.

There are other players. They're just not at the same depth.

• (1000)

Mr. Matthew Green: In your opinion, if we're dealing with the apex A-team in this, and we're providing legislative recommendations and frameworks from this committee, in dealing with China as a case study, is it your opinion that we would then cover off all of them?

Are the differences that you identified between the ways in which different foreign actors operate going to require a broader understanding of the different tactics and strategies used in order to safeguard our democracy?

Mr. Dan Stanton: I think in the general, macro sense, yes, we have to have these legislative tools. We have to have a capability of enforcement. We have to have some end games on that. You could use that template with other states.

There's a deterrence effect, as well, when you have legislation. You can use that to mitigate a bit of the threat.

However, they are different. Russians are different. Russians operate differently, and Iranians clearly operate differently, so I wouldn't want to suggest that we have some sort of broad review of all the state actors and try to come up with some common approach on things.

I think what we really should do is deal with what we're seized with right now, which, of course, is the PRC.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stanton, and thank you, Mr. Green.

We're going to go to Mr. Brock. Welcome to committee, Mr. Brock.

You have five minutes.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses for their attendance at and participation in this important study.

I'd like to start off by saying hello to Mr. Chiu. I have a number of questions for you, sir.

I understand that it wasn't just you who were impacted by foreign election interference but, in fact, your former colleagues Alice Wong and Bob Saroya. I've done a bit of research. I understand that all three of those ridings have very large Chinese-Canadian populations.

Can you opine as to what you believe to be one of the factors, or a number of factors that contributed to the number of traditional conservative Canadians in those ridings who, for whatever reason, simply did not vote?

I understand there was a substantial drop in the percentage of voting, not only in your riding, but also in Ms. Wong's and Mr. Saroya's. Can you offer some information on that for me please?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Absolutely.

There have been studies conducted that show that across Canada, wherever there's a high concentration of Chinese population in ridings, the amount of support that the Conservatives received in 2021 dropped. This bucked the trend of all the neighbouring ridings.

I think this is the effect of the disinformation that was spread. Yes, they targeted specific candidates, such as me, in ridings that I represent or where I was running, but at the same time, they also generalized this and used it across Canada in many of the Chinese ridings to indicate that the party itself and the leadership itself had taken an anti-Chinese role.

The fact is that they misconstrued that Mr. O'Toole and the Conservative Party would ban WeChat. Put yourself in their shoes. If you relied on WeChat as the only lifeline to connect you to your family and to conduct business in Canada, and a political party was going to do that, and in that particular party there's also an MP who proposes a foreign registry that would put you and your descendants in jeopardy, would you be voting for them, even though they align very well with your values?

I believe across the country, it hurt many of the ridings, even those we won, but potentially with a smaller margin.

• (1005)

Mr. Larry Brock: I guess it really highlights the importance of social media to Chinese Canadians, particularly the platform WeChat.

Were there other platforms on social media or other ways that they spread the message that people ought not to be considering Conservatives in the next election?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: It's not just WeChat. It's not just social media; it's multi-dimensional. It's on the airwaves that the CRTC is supposed to be regulating. It's on printed media. It's also on websites. These multi-dimensional disinformation campaigns help to solidify the mistrust of certain particular politicians or a political party. It's very effective, especially during election time.

Mr. Larry Brock: Were any of these issues prevalent in your election success in 2019? Did you feel pressure from Beijing?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: In 2015, I had an opportunity to sit down with the consul general in Vancouver. I believe that she was trying to size me up back then.

In 2019, they decided that I was completely beyond hope. The information that I got from my Chinese supporters has been that they've told people not to vote for me, but there is no active campaign against me that I can observe.

Mr. Larry Brock: In 2019, NSICOP, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which is made up of parliamentarians of every stripe, studied the whole issue of foreign election interference and made a number of recommendations that, it would appear, the Liberal government did not follow through on.

Our Prime Minister most recently, in light of all the information that has been leaking, has indicated that he has to do a better job and follow the recommendations.

How does it make you feel, sir, knowing that the Prime Minister, who had this information four years ago, essentially ignored all those recommendations?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Thank you.

I try to be as non-partisan as I can, but frankly, being a targeted person of a particular ethnic race, I feel like I'm vulnerable and that my government is not there to protect me when it's needed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chiu, and thank you, Mr. Brock.

Mr. Bains, you have five minutes. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Parm Bains: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As candidates, we're all victims of misinformation and disinformation when we're in an election. There were campaigns against me that I was going to legalize hard drugs and things of that nature.

I want to go back to Mr. Stanton, because the community I live in has Filipino, Indo-Canadian, Hong Kong, mainland Chinese and strong Muslim Canadian communities. We have a five-kilometre corridor in the city, called the "highway to heaven". Every religious institution, about 28 of them, are all along this corridor. It's a very mixed community that I've lived in my whole life. It's important to me.

We had a list of all the nations you were talking about, including the U.S.A., India, the PRC, Iran and Russia. Are there more that we need to be mindful of?

I understand that you said that China is number one; they're the A-team. Are there others that are maybe developing a bit more?

It's clear that Canada is, as we've said for many years, a long-standing target. Everybody wants to trade. Everybody want to get an advantage.

Are there other nations that are emerging?

Mr. Dan Stanton: In terms of foreign interference as it's defined in section 2 of the CSIS Act, no, there aren't a lot of others. We have to also bear in mind that foreign states do want to influence what goes on in Canada. That is part of normal diplomacy and engagement. It's no surprise that a certain state would probably, with a particular diaspora community, want to have some engagement there. The service looks at it only when there's evidence of clandestine activity and things like that.

I would say, probably on a positive note, no. I wouldn't say that a lot of those communities are targeted by, let's say, their foreign state equivalent in interfering in that. It's just a few principal ones.

Bear in mind that CSIS doesn't look at elections, which you would be happy to know. They're just looking at a target of a threat, the individual who may happen to run for office, or you may happen to do that. They don't have investigations in which they're looking at communities and the politics that goes on or things like that.

• (1010)

Mr. Parm Bains: Do you want to add anything?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes. I would like to add a bit to complete Mr. Stanton's comment.

There are other countries that have been identified, as well. Radio-Canada in Montreal, for example, has found out that Rwanda sent three agents to the community to monitor, intimidate and report.

We also have Saudi Arabia, for example, sending people to do exactly this type of bullying in the community. They are being very aggressive in that respect.

Dan also mentioned India, which is very active in the community, and has been for decades in that respect.

We could go on like this.

There are also some friends. France, for example, has been doing it since *Vive le Québec libre*.

We've been subject to those kinds of foreign interference for a long period of time. Unfortunately, we don't have the tools to investigate properly. Unfortunately, even the \$50 million that will be given to the RCMP... What will it do? Will it simply take the complaint?

We don't have anything in terms of a law that will be capable of punishing people. They are not only foreign states; they are also agents who are Canadians, who are recruited by and who are acting on behalf of those foreign states. That's where we are very much lacking.

Mr. Parm Bains: Go ahead, Mr. Wilczynski.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: The only thing I'd add to what my colleagues have said is that we shouldn't only be looking backward at the actors that have, in the past, targeted our democratic institutions. We need to look at how the threats to our democracy are evolving and how technology is, quite frankly, going to democratize the ability for hostile actors—state and non-state—to undermine confidence in our democracy and undermine the social cohesion that holds Canadians together.

Mr. Parm Bains: Yes, and that's why I was trying to find out about other emerging nations that are there. That's why it's important for me to be here.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bains.

We have about 35 minutes left. We're going to go to the next round and start with Mr. Barrett for five minutes.

Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I can take the full 35 minutes, Chair.

The Chair: Is there any objection?

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have several questions, noting that I have only five minutes.

Could I have a few quick, yes-or-no answers from you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya?

Is it your belief that the current Prime Minister knew about foreign interference—not influence attempts—in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: I wouldn't be able to say if Mr. Trudeau was informed. I can go only with the allegations that were presented in—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Pardon me for interrupting.

Based on your experience over the last 30 years, is it your belief that he would have been briefed on it?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do you believe that sufficient action was taken in response to it by the government?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: No.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do you believe, based on media reports and on your experience, that the current government benefited in any way from interference attempts in the 2019 or 2021 elections?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Potentially.

Mr. Michael Barrett: We know that the CCP undertook a campaign to gain influence with Mr. Trudeau through clandestine funding of his family foundation, the Trudeau Foundation.

Do you believe that campaign has been effective?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Yes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Stanton, it's been reported that in June 2017, the Prime Minister's chief of staff requested a brief on foreign interference in Canadian politics and that the briefing said there is a substantial....

Are you familiar with this report, sir?

Mr. Dan Stanton: Not really.

Mr. Michael Barrett: You're not familiar with the reporting of this.

Are any of the panellists familiar with the reporting of the 2017 request for a brief by Ms. Telford on foreign interference in elections?

Some voices: No.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay. I'll move on.

Based on your experience in the security apparatus, how would a prime minister or their staff be briefed on foreign interference issues by CSIS? Specifically, who from CSIS—what level of individual—would typically deliver that briefing to a prime minister?

• (1015)

Mr. Dan Stanton: Who are you asking?

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'm asking anyone who has an answer.

Mr. Dan Stanton: I don't have an answer from my experience of particular vehicles of briefing or personnel. I know CSIS provides a whole range of intelligence products, from assessment to law. You'd be looking at the Privy Council Office and at various departments. As to how that would make its way to the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's national security adviser, I really have no insight.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Stanton, are you familiar with the case of the Winnipeg lab and the fact that, on CSIS's information, two scientists were fired or removed from their employment there?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Do you believe they were CCP agents?

Mr. Dan Stanton: I don't necessarily.... Here's what I believe, based on the media reports. I've been following it.

The service provided advice in terms of clearance. Whether it's clearance renewal or whether it was clearance, it goes to the deputy head of the department. It's their decision what to do; it's not a decision for CSIS. They simply say that they would perhaps recommend not renewing. I think these two individuals basically returned to mainland China.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Your belief is that they're not still in Canada.

Mr. Dan Stanton: From what I've read in the media, it looks like no one is around. I think the fact that no charges have been laid might reflect that. I look at this, and I see that there was an issue there. Perhaps proprietary information was sent back to China. Who knows? It probably doesn't meet the threshold of espionage.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have about 30 seconds left.

In my previous round of questions, I talked about this issue of MI5 and the FBI making a public announcement with respect to that foreign agent acting in the U.K. Those are two of our Five Eyes partners who are publicly communicating on issues of foreign influence and foreign interference, yet it's radio silence. Then we're left to question whether we have CSIS agents who are leaking, because we don't have anyone from CSIS who's speaking to the real issues that we all know, for a fact, are happening and being perpetrated on this country by state actors from around the world, including from Beijing.

How do you fix that?

Mr. Dan Stanton: Here's my answer.

The Chair: It has to be real quick.

Mr. Dan Stanton: I will be really quick.

In those cases of allied releases, it was probably based on very convincing intelligence, probably corroborated intelligence, so they did the release. All we're getting through the media, with all due respect, are allegations. Why would the Canadian government not make these warnings and send emails to everybody? It may be that they weren't meeting that threshold of solid, reliable intelligence, where MPs need to be advised.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

Next we're going to go to Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

You have five minutes. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to split my speaking time with my colleague Mr. Ferguson.

Mr. Chiu, I want to come back to the election campaign. You said there was interference, particularly because of the positions transmitted by WeChat.

However, when we look at the results of the election, we see that the vote for the Liberal Party and the NDP rose considerably. Rather than laying your defeat at the doorstep of interference, do you not think the voters simply voted for a progressive government? I'm referring here to certain positions of the Conservative Party about the LGBTQ+ community and on other issues.

[English]

Mr. Kenny Chiu: If you look into the election results in 2021, the number of voters who turned out dropped significantly. There were 3,000 fewer voters in 2021 versus 2019. As well, the number of my supporters, the ones who voted me in 22 months prior to the 2021 election in 2019, was 4,400 fewer. My opponent, the one who took the riding, increased support by a mere 1,800 votes. That is a significant discrepancy. In other words, there are many Conservative supporters who stayed at home.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: I take it that you do not agree that the votes for the NDP and the Liberals also rose.

The Chair: Mr. Chiu, wait a minute, please.

Did you want to speak, Mr. Villemure?

Mr. René Villemure: It seems to me that it's the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that is considering the subject of elections as such. At our committee, we had agreed that we would look at the issue of interference in general.

[English]

The Chair: Right, and I appreciate that, Mr. Villemure, but we do give a little latitude to members of Parliament to deal with their specific questions.

I stopped the clock.

You have two minutes and 48 seconds, Madame Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I had said, I am going to give the rest of my time to Mr. Ferguson.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

Mr. Stanton, your answer to my last question piqued my curiosity considerably. Your intuition, which is the result of your long career at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, tells you that the

source of the leaks is not a CSIS officer. Can you tell us where your suspicions point?

You have said who it isn't, but I want to know who it is.

Mr. Dan Stanton: Do we have enough time?

[English]

I really have no idea. I don't know. I just really have no respect for this at all. I think there's an awful lot of damage that's being done. I could carry on from some things that Artur has mentioned, but I have no respect for it.

I think, to profile the leaker—I can provide that—it's someone who's seeing a small piece. It's someone who's not privy to the big picture. They don't see all the work and all the effort that goes into countering certain threats. They're just seeing a little piece of the pie, and then, on their own, I'd say somewhat arrogantly, deciding they have the prerogative to inflict this damage for whatever cause they may have.

I think some of this is being filtered a bit and a little embellished by the media to provide a certain nobility to it. We may find, when the dust settles, that it's not such a big personality that did this. It may be someone who didn't get enough attention. I really don't put a lot of respect in what this person or people are doing. That's not the reason I'm saying, "Oh, it's not CSIS, because I worked in CSIS, and we're all wonderful," but people who work in the business don't get mad and angry. They'll go take mindfulness or something if they do. They don't decide, "Oh, this is terrible. They're not responding to our reporting," and then go to the media.

I really don't think so, because we're talking about professionals. The Canadian intelligence community are professionals. The person leaking it is not necessarily involved in the collection or the assessment; they may just be seeing reports and want to use them for a certain agenda. They may even be manipulating the media as well, if I may say so, to control the whole thing, but I'm convinced that it's someone who's not in the service.

As for speculation, Ottawa is a big town, and there's a lot of paper that was circulating, although I imagine right now there's probably not a lot of paper being circulated and shared. It's anybody's guess, but I think it's somebody who has an agenda, and I think they want to—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Dan Stanton: Yes, right, that's enough.

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Ferguson.

Mr. Villemure, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you.

Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, in view of the picture you have painted, what would be the risks of not creating an independent investigative office?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Not creating an independent investigative office would be very damaging to national security. If I may offer an analogy that may make people laugh, it's a bit like when you drop your crumbs on the floor in your kitchen and the ants start coming for them. Two or three ants are no big thing. But if you leave them there and you aren't careful to clean up, you will be infested by ants. And if you wait even longer, you are going to need experts to fumigate your entire house. It's a bit like that.

As Mr. Stanton said, the work done by the Chinese intelligence services and the extent of that work are amazing. We are facing what is probably the most formidable adversary in human history, because of the resources it has, the subtlety with which it works, and the extent of its operations. It must be pointed out that this is not the only group carrying on this kind of operation. A lot of countries are doing the same thing.

However, there is a very big difference between influence and interference. We have to be able to recognize it and circumscribe it properly, so we can crack down on interference.

• (1025)

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you.

Following on the question asked by my colleague Mr. Fergus, do you believe the leaks are coming from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: I can't say exactly where the information is coming from. I agree with Mr. Stanton that the information may have been collected by someone in the wider security and intelligence community. It is difficult to answer that.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you.

Mr. Wilczynski, I think you would like to add something.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Yes, and it's in response to the question you asked my colleague Mr. Juneau-Katsuya about the creation of a new independent investigative office. In my opinion, creating a new body to deal with interference would also carry risks.

We have to recognize that there is already an independent police force and there is a law governing the actions of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. However, when you create a new body with new mandates, there is always a risk that the objectives it is assigned will be more difficult to achieve than if the direction given to bodies already in place, like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, were reviewed.

Mr. René Villemure: That's interesting, but we are being told repeatedly that it has not been working for 30 years.

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: Clearly the way the problem is currently being managed presents challenges. However, that does not mean that we must completely reject the model of an independent police service and an independent intelligence service with binding legislation governing the way they operate.

I think that as parliamentarians, you could give the intelligence community clearer directives concerning the threshold for investigations, so the problem would really be addressed. With 30 years'

experience as a public servant, I always see the problems that creating new institutions creates.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Green, you have a little more than two and a half minutes. There's a bit of latitude on that time, so I'll give you about three minutes, sir.

Go ahead.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you so much.

Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, you raised the issue around nomination processes. I'm wondering if you could talk a bit about how foreign interference can happen at the start of an electoral process, which is the nomination process.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Basically, what we know and what we realize is that we have foreign agents and even diplomats engaging in foreign intelligence activities who are capable of identifying and maybe even farming out individuals who will be capable of simply positioning themselves.

The concept of infiltrating a mole into either an intelligence service or a government is very old. We've been doing that for ages.

Mr. Matthew Green: More specifically and more succinctly on the process, I think you talked about having citizens versus non-citizens voting in nominations.

What has been your experience of nomination processes being directed, guided or influenced by foreign actors through pressure to vote for certain candidates over others?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: There are many different operations that have been done. It is the concept of having agents of influence capable of guiding or misguiding certain individuals.

Back in 1995, for example, I was working on a specific file called Project Sidewinder. I discovered that Elections Canada had found out that the Embassy of China was that year giving money to the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party at the same time, because they were going to nourish influence within those political parties.

Back in the mid-1990s, the Chinese government was very clumsy in its way of doing it. It became much more sophisticated and it has increased the amplitude of its operations to a size that is difficult to capture now, even by our active intelligence services—

• (1030)

Mr. Matthew Green: I have only 10 seconds left.

Mr. Stanton, have you ever been aware of foreign actors? I know in Ontario there were allegations around Patrick Brown using foreign nationals during the nomination processes.

Is that something that's ever been flagged across your desk?

Mr. Dan Stanton: No. I've been retired from the service for a few years, but no. It goes back to how CSIS doesn't look at the elections. It doesn't look at processes. In the course of investigating an individual target, no, I'm not aware of that coming across the radar.

Any issues that the service would get involved in are around who's voting at a nomination, or who's donating and what status they have.

This is a politically explosive issue, but from a threat perspective, in a way, it's low-hanging fruit. How should I put it? It's not a priority to get in and investigate it in that type of detail.

Again, they're focused on the target, not what's going on in elections.

Mr. Matthew Green: I understand.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stanton, and thank you, Mr. Green.

Next we're going to Mr. Kurek for five minutes.

Go ahead.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Manthorpe, on the Winnipeg lab issue, it's been asked of a number of the other witnesses, but I'd like to ask you specifically, if you could, in about a minute or a minute and a half, to talk about some of the concerns that have been highlighted about that and how, because of what was an election call, that issue kind of disappeared after the last election. Then I'll ask you about some of the other techniques that the Communist dictatorship in Beijing uses to influence university campuses and whatnot. I'm wondering if, in about a minute and a half, you could maybe expand on some of that, Mr. Manthorpe.

Mr. Jonathan Manthorpe: I don't have any direct information about the Winnipeg situation, but it does fit into a pattern that goes back to the 1940s and 1950s, and particularly after diplomatic recognition in 1970, when, very soon afterwards, there were arrangements made for the exchange of students and of researchers.

What is very noticeable is that the Canadians who went to China went to study language and culture, and the Chinese who came here gravitated toward the technical faculties of universities and other institutions, and that has carried on.

Of course, as we know, it has also involved, more lately, Chinese or Communist Party-associated institutions financing research here, using our expertise to their own ends, and often the patents that have resulted from that research go to the People's Republic of China; they have not stayed here.

It's a very broad effort here in our technical institutions and also, of course, it has been accompanied by a very large influx of Chinese undergraduate students, with the result that a lot of the revenue of some of our universities.... In some universities, more than half of the tutorial revenue comes from foreign students and, in some cases, most of that comes from China.

They have made a very consistent and lengthy effort to use our universities to their own ends.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Manthorpe.

Mr. Stanton, my colleague Mr. Barrett mentioned.... Were you still at CSIS in 2017?

Mr. Dan Stanton: That's the year I left. It was October 17, 2017.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Barrett mentioned a 2017 briefing that mentioned there was a substantial body of evidence that the CCP and their officials were pursuing a strategy to influence Canadian officials. Are you aware of what that body of evidence may be or what it would include?

Mr. Dan Stanton: I was working in the field office. I really don't know; I have no idea.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you for that.

Now, Mr. Chiu, in about the minute or minute and a half that I have left, we've heard about the bill that you tabled on the foreign influence registry. I'm wondering if you could expand a little on why you believe that would be an important tool to help restore some of the trust that Canadians need in their democratic institutions.

• (1035)

Mr. Kenny Chiu: It would be consistent with what CSIS has been advising the leadership of our country, that sunshine is the best disinfectant and that openness and transparency is the best way to deal with foreign interference issues and also regain much of the lost trust of Canadians in our institutions. It would also remove political partisanship from all the issues.

Disinformation is most effective when it is used in the shadows, under the table. At the same time, though, by repeating itself, it becomes more and more effective, so by having a registry and allowing our society, the investigative journalists, to look at that.... For example, through my research I was able to find that the Liberal Party of Canada had an entry in the United States FARA, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, in 2019, fundraising among the Canadian diaspora there. Transparency like that would definitely help protect our confidence in institutions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kurek, and thank you, Mr. Chiu.

Next I have Mr. Bains for five minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Parm Bains: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll be sharing some of my time with Mr. Fergus.

Mr. Stanton, I'm going to go back to you on this topic of the registry. Several countries have had them. You've mentioned that the new tactic is that proxies have eclipsed traditional spies. If foreign agents are using proxies to conduct their work, how can we enforce legislation? How do you broadly put the net on these Canadian proxies?

Mr. Dan Stanton: Here's the thing. The Security of Information Act is where we're going to get that enforcement. There's an actual legislative and regulated way you could use.

I know there are a lot of people who want the registry. I think it has merits, but I don't think that it should necessarily be the priority over the legislation. People who are going to put their name on the registry are people who represent some foreign agency, whether it's a Canadian diplomat overseas, a business or whatever, so they're not going to get a fine. There are clandestine actors. If you want to link them to the United Front Work Department, they are not going to be putting their name on a registry. There's no box to tick.

A lot of the most damaging foreign interference activity is clandestine. What it's really going to do—and I think a registry is good—is allow the government to have some control over lobbying and rein it in a bit, because I would have to identify if I am representing a foreign country.

Is it going to really blunt PRC foreign interference in our democratic institutions? In my opinion, it's not.

Mr. Parm Bains: Thank you.

Hon. Greg Fergus: I have two quick questions. I know that it's a risk to do this en masse and both at the same time. I hope we can get answers. They're very different questions.

Monsieur Juneau-Katsuya, everyone here has acknowledged that this issue has been going on for decades. When we formed government, we created NSICOP, NSIRA, the SITE task force, the election protocol panel and the rapid response mechanism. The list goes on.

Why do you think these kinds of tools were not developed by previous governments, since we all recognize that this was a long-standing problem?

The second question I would ask is probably to Mr. Wilczynski again.

You mentioned the importance of having diversity as part of the security establishment. It seems that we are always running behind, because we don't have direct connections into the diaspora communities that are subject to intimidation and pressure.

What can we be doing? Are you aware of whether your former colleagues who are now in place are seeking to deal with that issue?

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: Very quickly, I think it's a problem of culture. It was mentioned by my colleagues.

For too long, Canadian governments have not developed the culture of security to warn the general population or elected officials of the temptations or danger that they will be facing. If you have access to power, you become a target. You are somebody who might be approached and used. Intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or unconsciously, you will be used.

Let's remember one thing. The Chinese wrote the book 2,000 years ago: *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu. It's right there, how to use influence. They know exactly how, and they're really, really good at it. They've become even better, so we have to develop a new culture.

• (1040)

Mr. Artur Wilczynski: I'll speak very quickly on equity, diversity and inclusion within the national security and intelligence community.

Just a few days ago, colleagues from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service released their equity, diversity and inclusion plan. Before I retired from CSE, that was my main task, to work both inside and with colleagues on the development of a similar strategy.

The objective was to make the institutions more welcoming of that diversity, so that people's experiences, when they came in, were positive, and not only were we able to recruit them, but we were able to retain them.

I think part of the strategy needs to be, again, more transparency to engage a broader range of Canadians, so they understand what our roles and responsibilities are, they know they're welcome, and, when they come, they will be productive and contribute to Canada's national security. We have to be deliberate and quite open in understanding their lived experiences as they join Canada's national security community.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilczynski.

I have enough time for about two minutes for each round for Mr. Barrett and Ms. Martinez Ferrada. I believe she is on the list for the Liberals.

You have about two minutes, Mr. Barrett. Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks, Chair.

Again, thanks, everyone, for providing us with your experience and perspectives today.

We have been crystal clear that we think having a public inquiry, an open and transparent mechanism, is the best way to remove this from the political sphere and to provide openness to Canadians. I think there's definitely a place for the type of transparency in the examples I mentioned from the U.K., when there are incidents that give rise to that.

What would the benefit be of having an open, transparent, public inquiry on foreign interference in our elections?

Go ahead, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya: The only way the inquiry would be beneficial is if we make sure that it doesn't turn into a partisan fight in a ring.

If we are capable, just like my colleague Artur has mentioned, of bringing more transparency, it will bring greater awareness and greater warning to the population, and demonstrate the sizable threat that we are currently facing. Eventually, hopefully, it will give the adjustment and power to the intelligence community to be capable of being much more efficient and of warning our leaders of all parties in due time.

The Chair: That was quick.

You have two minutes, Mrs. Martinez Ferrada.

Go ahead, please, *pour deux minutes*.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chiu, in an article published on March 20 of this year...

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: I have a point of order, Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Please wait a minute, Ms. Martinez Ferrada, someone has a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: The interpreter said that the audio quality is not sufficient for interpretation. It's not an approved headset.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I think we do have a problem with Ms. Martinez Ferrada's headset, because this is the second time we have not been able to hear her voice properly. However, I believe the member is going to split her speaking time with Mr. Fergus.

[*English*]

Go ahead, Mr. Fergus, please.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus: I would like to thank Ms. Martinez Ferrada for suggesting the question for me to ask.

Mr. Chiu, in an article published on March 20, your colleague and former Conservative candidate Mark Johnson stated that he had never noticed interference during his campaign and that no one had reported anything to him after it ended. He is confident that our elections, his included, were neutral, honest and accurate, and he acknowledges that his opponent won fair and square. In his opinion, the larger debate regrettably lacks a sense of proportion, and the rhetoric is becoming overheated, potentially exaggerating the

problem and misleading voters about the quality of our elections, and most disturbingly, sowing mistrust towards an ethnic group.

Do you agree with your former Conservative colleague?

• (1045)

[*English*]

The Chair: You have about a minute, Mr. Chiu. Go ahead.

Mr. Kenny Chiu: I'll try my best to answer your question. The interpretation was not at its best.

I believe those who are on the ground with many of the witnesses can attest to the fact that there was a coordinated effort in the 2021 election across the country, using disinformation and employing lies and completely false statements, to attack certain political parties and, particularly, certain candidates. I believe that is true. Unfortunately, the country doesn't seem to have any interest in getting participation and involvement.

Throughout the election, I was not involved with SITE. Nobody from CEIPP, NSCIOP or NSIRA was contacting me. None of these organizations were investigating me. Actually, to date, other than CSIS, which I provided information to, nobody—no Canadian official—has approached me and talked to me about my experiences so far.

My experience has been that Canada is open to foreign interference, and we are not doing anything. We have been expressing a lot of concerns and worries. Disinformation continues to be spread, not just by state actors, but also by non-state actors. For example, the fact is that many of the interested parties are from foreign countries, and maybe they are acting on their own behalf and not necessarily on behalf of foreign governments—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chiu, and thank you, Mr. Fergus.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today. I know it was an action-packed event. We had six witnesses, which is somewhat unusual, but we had two hours.

The committee is going to be on a break for two weeks so, as chair, I really wanted to bring what I thought was an informative panel together. You all accorded yourselves very well today with the information that you provided, not just in your opening statements but in responding to the questions as well.

Thank you to all members of the committee.

I want to say to our witnesses, thank you, on behalf of the committee and on behalf of Canadians, for being here.

Analysts, clerks and technicians, thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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