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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone.

I call this meeting to order.

Thank you for joining us.

Welcome, members, to the third meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Pursuant to the motion we adopted last Thursday, September 18, the committee is meeting today to study Canada-United States border management.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, in accordance with the Standing Orders. Members may participate in person or remotely via Zoom.

The clerk, who is sitting in for Mr. Wilson, and I will manage the speaking order as best we can to enable a constructive and useful discussion. Thank you, as always, for your patience and understanding.

I would now like to welcome our distinguished witnesses.

From the Canada Border Services Agency, we have Jennifer Lutfallah, vice-president, commercial and trade branch, and Aaron McCrorie, vice-president, intelligence and enforcement.

From the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, we have Shannon Grainger, senior assistant deputy minister, portfolio affairs and communications, and Mike McGuire, director general, international and border policy.

From the Privy Council Office, we have Gerard Peets, deputy commissioner, Canada's fight against fentanyl.

Lastly, we have three representatives from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Assistant Commissioner Derek Santosuosso, Chief Superintendent Jamie McGowan and Sean McGillis, executive director, federal policing.

[*English*]

What we'll do now is have four of the witnesses each present a five-minute opening speech, which will be followed by a series of questions and answers directed by members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you raised your hand. Do you wish to speak?

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Yes, Mr. Chair.

For the record, I want to say how disappointed I am that, once again, interpretation for this committee meeting is being done remotely. During the first meeting, there were interpreters in the booth. For a unilingual francophone like myself, it's much more efficient when the interpreters are in the booth. Those who do the interpretation remotely are good too. I'm not questioning their skill at all. However, I would like arrangements to be made for interpretation not to be done remotely for the entirety of the parliamentary session. To reiterate, I have no issue with the quality of the interpreters working remotely; it's a proximity issue.

Mr. Chair, would you be able to arrange that on behalf of the committee?

• (1105)

The Chair: I certainly will.

The clerk will update us on this issue next Thursday. At that point, we'll see what conditions must be in place to facilitate interpretation. It's probably easier for the interpreters to do their work on site as well, whenever possible.

[*English*]

Thank you, Madame DeBellefeuille, for that important point, which I'm sure is also relevant for English speakers, those who prefer to listen to the English interpretation. As we noticed last week, this is going to be very much both in French and in English, so good interpretation will be key for every member of the committee.

This leads me to invite Monsieur Aaron McCrorie to start the presentations.

[*Translation*]

Aaron McCrorie (Vice-President, Intelligence and Enforcement, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am Aaron McCrorie, the vice-president of CBSA's intelligence and enforcement branch. I am joined by my colleague Jennifer Lutfallah, the vice-president of our commercial and trade branch. I welcome this opportunity to share with committee members insights on border management between Canada and the United States.

[Translation]

The Canada Border Services Agency is the country's first line of defence at 1,200 ports of entry. I am proud of our employees' conscientious work and dedication as well as their ability to adapt and respond to constantly evolving threats.

[English]

The agency has about 8,500 frontline employees, supported by intelligence and targeting teams that stay current on global trends, patterns and means of concealment, to ensure that we are well equipped to identify and prevent contraband, firearms and bad actors from entering Canada. The CBSA also employs criminal investigators, who investigate individuals and businesses that commit serious offences against Canada's border and border legislation. Abroad, the agency employs officers at 42 missions in 36 countries, who help push our border out.

Fighting transnational organized crime takes collaboration and multi-jurisdictional co-operation, and it would be unrealistic to think that any one agency, or even one country, could completely thwart their efforts. That is why collaboration and working in lock-step with the RCMP, as well as other domestic and international law enforcement partners, are essential to strengthen public safety and protect the integrity of our border.

[Translation]

By ensuring timely, effective intelligence sharing and cross-border co-operation, Canada and the United States can better track, disrupt and dismantle criminal networks.

[English]

The CBSA and the U.S. CBP have a long-standing and effective working relationship, which continues to this day. For example, we each have officers embedded in our respective targeting centres, and we always share intelligence. The agency regularly meets and collaborates with the U.S. CBP to discuss our countries' ongoing collaboration efforts, strong commitment to border security and strategic alignment going forward.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada recognizes that we have a strong border, but we can make it stronger.

[English]

Canada's border plan invests over \$355 million to help the CBSA bolster its front line and get the latest tools and technology to stop drugs and firearms. So far, as part of this investment, the agency has more new officers being trained at the CBSA College, who will be deployed to ports of entry by the end of 2025, increasing the agency's examination capacity, with more officers to be hired over a six-year period.

The CBSA has created special investigation and examination for greater enforcement capacity. This included Operation Blizzard, a month-long cross-country operation to intercept fentanyl and other illegal drugs at the border, resulting in over 2,600 seizures of narcotics and precursors. The agency will continue to allocate funding for these targeted operations in the weeks and months ahead.

The CBSA has spent over \$6 million for large-scale imaging or X-ray systems and committed another \$31 million for a range of other equipment. The CBSA is also in the process of procuring new detection technology tools that will enhance our ability to detect and identify illegal synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals at the border. These investments include imaging and trace detection tools, regional satellite laboratories and hand-held chemical analyzers, with an additional \$24 million of equipment planned for delivery in 2026, and more in the following years.

In terms of removals, from April 1 to September 15 this year the CBSA removed 10,585 inadmissible people. The border plan provided funding for the CBSA to increase the rate at which it removes inadmissible people from Canada.

• (1110)

[Translation]

To reach this target, CBSA has hired approximately 30 additional frontline personnel.

[English]

The agency is taking steps toward meeting its commitment to completing 20,000 removals by March 31, 2026, and maintaining that cadence the following fiscal year.

In collaboration with our partners, we are committed to keep working to strengthen our border security.

Jennifer and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McCrorie.

Did you want to say something, Mrs. DeBellefeuille?

Claude DeBellefeuille: I just want to check something, Mr. Chair. Did all of the witnesses provide their briefs to the interpreters?

We just heard a speech that was entirely in English, and I want to be sure the interpreters have those briefs. It would make their work easier.

Also, it will be pretty difficult for me if all the witnesses speak only in English. I was expecting part of their remarks to be in French.

The Chair: That's a very good question.

The clerk tells me that the speaking notes were not received in time to be given to the interpreters. That causes interpretation problems we need to take into account. I should point out that this is the beginning of a new parliamentary session, so there are some new ways of doing things, but we certainly do have to get off to a good start.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Could we ask the witnesses, especially public servants, to send their speaking notes in advance to enable better interpretation? That's particularly important when interpretation is happening remotely, as it is today.

Could we also ask the rest of the witnesses to speak a bit of French? I would be very grateful.

The Chair: Very good. I've taken that under advisement. We'll follow up with the clerk's office.

We'll suspend the meeting for a moment so we can get the speaking notes to the interpreters.

• (1110) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1115)

The Chair: Let's resume.

I'm letting the interpreters know that they'll soon be getting speaking notes, if they haven't already, for Ms. Grainger, the Public Safety Canada representative who will be speaking shortly, and Mr. Peets, who will then speak on behalf of the Privy Council Office. We haven't received notes from the RCMP representatives, so we can't provide those.

Ms. Grainger, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Shannon Grainger (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Portfolio Affairs and Communications, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members, for inviting us to speak today.

My name is Shannon Grainger. I'm the senior assistant deputy minister responsible for international affairs, including border policy, at Public Safety Canada. I am pleased to be here today along with my colleagues from throughout the portfolio to talk about our ongoing work to manage our border.

Public Safety Canada, in particular, plays a central and strategic role in border management, focusing on policy leadership, coordination and resource allocation to ensure both national security and the smooth flow of goods and travellers. We work closely with the agency colleagues represented here, as well as with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

[*Translation*]

Canada and the United States share the longest land border in the world. Our two countries have a long-standing history of working

together to keep our border secure while enabling the efficient flow of goods and people.

[*English*]

Both countries face similar challenges, including irregular migration, human smuggling and illegal drug and firearms trafficking fuelled by organized crime. To successfully tackle these challenges, we have worked together with our American counterparts, and we do this at both policy and operational levels.

Public Safety Canada is the main Canadian interlocutor with the United States Department of Homeland Security, or DHS. We engage with them to set the overall policy frame for Canada-U.S. border co-operation. This relationship is important because DHS oversees the American operational agencies, primarily U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, which is responsible for border management. While they are not here today, my colleagues at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada also play a role in interactions with our DHS counterparts on matters related to cross-border migration.

[*Translation*]

I recently met with my new counterpart from the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., and I can report that there is significant alignment on the work we are doing to secure the border and where we can do more.

[*English*]

Importantly, there is acknowledgement by both Canadian and American officials that Canada's \$1.3-billion border plan, announced last December, is making a difference and showing results.

[*Translation*]

Both Canada and the U.S. have increased the number of resources assigned to the border and are making investments in new technology and equipment to improve surveillance and detection.

[*English*]

Southbound irregular migration has decreased by 99% since last summer, thanks to joint efforts at the border and upstream work by our IRCC colleagues to ensure travel document integrity.

It is also clear that the fight against fentanyl is a common cause that both countries need to work on together, not something that divides us. U.S. data consistently shows that less than 1% of fentanyl seized in the U.S. comes from Canada.

[Translation]

What this illustrates is that border management is a joint endeavour, and that while the U.S. may look to Canada to address issues related to migration and drugs, Canada is also looking to the U.S. to address challenges with illegal drugs and firearms coming north. This is why our day-to-day co-operation with them is so important and why having a strong working relationship at all levels remains a priority.

• (1120)

[English]

It is also why there are many examples of long-standing Canada-U.S. co-operation in border management. Pre-clearance operations are just one example exemplifying bilateral co-operation at the border, with eight of Canada's largest airports hosting U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers who pre-clear Canadians so that they can arrive in the U.S. as domestic travellers. This provides significant economic and security benefits to both countries.

Also, on a personal note, under this program, roughly 400 U.S. officers are posted to Canada. They live here with their families, who attend our schools and are part of our local community. This is just one example of the kind of integration we have with our American counterparts.

[Translation]

Finally, as you know, the Government of Canada has introduced Bill C-2, the strong borders act, to ensure that law enforcement has the legislative tools to keep our borders secure, combat transnational organized crime, and crack down on money laundering. Many of the measures proposed in the bill will also support shared Canada-U.S. objectives.

[English]

With that, I will now turn to my other colleagues to speak to the roles of their agencies.

My colleague Mr. McGuire and I look forward to taking your questions.

[Translation]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Grainger.

I'll now give the floor to the representative of the Privy Council Office, Gerard Peets.

Gerard Peets (Assistant Deputy Minister, Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl, Privy Council Office): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Thank you, members of the committee, for having me here today.

My name is Gerard Peets, and I'm the deputy commissioner for Canada's fight against fentanyl. I lead a team at the Privy Council Office in direct support of the fentanyl czar, or the commissioner for Canada's fight against fentanyl, Kevin Brosseau. The office was created in February 2025 to lead Canada's response to the scourge

of fentanyl, which claims over 20 lives each and every day. Established within the PCO, the core function of the fentanyl czar is to align efforts in support of this urgent, complex and multi-faceted fight.

I'd like to start with some information about fentanyl and the illegal fentanyl trade.

[Translation]

Fentanyl is a deadlier drug than any that came before it. As a synthetic opioid, it can be made anywhere, and made cheaply. Because it is so potent—between 20 and 40 times as potent as heroin—it can be sold in small quantities and is therefore easy to ship. Its potency also means that it is highly addictive and difficult to stop using. And of course, its potency means that even small quantities can be deadly.

[English]

For the most part, fentanyl consumed in Canada is produced from precursor chemicals that are imported into the country, with a significant source being China. Many of these chemicals have legitimate uses, but they are being diverted to produce fentanyl.

It's important to note that while Canada and the U.S. are each experiencing their own domestic fentanyl crisis, Canada is not the source of the U.S. fentanyl crisis. Based on volumes of seized fentanyl reported by U.S. Customs and Border Protection since 2022, about one-tenth of 1% of fentanyl seized is attributable to the U.S.'s northern border region. Nevertheless, both Canada and the U.S. are confronting the fentanyl crisis in our respective countries, and it is vitally important that we work together in doing so.

A key interlocutor for the fentanyl czar and our office is the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. The ONDCP coordinates across 19 federal agencies to provide a whole-of-government approach to addressing addiction in the U.S. The fentanyl czar engages regularly with ONDCP and many other counterparts in the U.S., Mexico and other countries, both to advocate for Canada and to better understand their priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration. In those exchanges, we can report that our U.S. counterparts appreciate and value the actions that Canada has taken, and continues to take, to fight the scourge of fentanyl.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Our partners here today, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency, have a long and established track record of exemplary collaboration with U.S. officials.

New measures—whether they be investments in our border or domestic law enforcement, or legislative, like Bill C-2—are geared toward serving Canadians, but they are also welcomed and watched closely by our U.S. counterparts.

Here in Canada, our work at the office of the fentanyl czar includes close collaboration with Health Canada to respond to the demand for illegal opioids, although no representatives from the department are here today.

Health Canada leads on the Controlled Drugs and Substances Strategy, which is the federal framework that guides Canada's approach to substance use through four integrated pillars: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.

[English]

While broader than fentanyl, the CDSS is a foundation of federal efforts to address the demand side of the fentanyl crisis—how to help those facing addiction. The fentanyl czar and his team work with Health Canada in pursuit of this goal, in partnership with many others. This notably includes the provinces and territories, which bear primary responsibility for health care, social services and policing.

We also talk to frontline and community workers, including people who are delivering valuable services to provide treatment and the hope of recovery to those facing addiction. We work with domestic law enforcement in their tireless effort to keep people safe from the effects of the fentanyl crisis within communities. More information on what we've heard from these and other groups is available in the interim report of Canada's fentanyl czar, which is available on the Privy Council Office website.

In closing, it is a privilege to be here today. I look forward to supporting you in your study in any way I can.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Peets.

I would now like to invite Sean McGillis, from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to conclude the opening remarks.

Sean McGillis (Executive Director, Federal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members.

I will make my remarks in English this morning to simplify interpretation. Afterwards, I will be able to answer questions in French, if the committee has any.

[English]

I would first like to acknowledge I am speaking today on the traditional and unceded lands of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Thank you for the invitation to appear before you, alongside my colleagues from the Canada Border Services Agency, Public Safety and the Privy Council Office, to speak about Canada-U.S. border management.

My name is Sean McGillis. I am the assistant deputy minister of federal policing strategy and business management. I am joined to-

day by my colleagues Chief Superintendent McGowan from our federal policing border integrity program and Assistant Commissioner Santosuosso from our specialized policing services.

Border integrity is a shared priority for both Canada and the United States that requires strong co-operation between the RCMP and U.S. law enforcement agencies. Canada and the U.S. are contending with new threats to border security marked by global instability and shifting migration patterns, which are being exploited by organized crime groups. It is therefore essential that Canadian and U.S. law enforcement agencies maintain their collaborative and effective partnerships to preserve our shared border.

The RCMP works adeptly with its portfolio partners, law enforcement agencies and indigenous partners across the country to ensure operational readiness to address any border challenges.

The RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency hold a shared responsibility for securing Canada's borders from inbound and outbound criminal threats. The CBSA manages the access of people and goods to and from Canada at our ports of entry, whereas the RCMP is responsible for securing our borders between the official ports of entry.

The RCMP's duties and authorities related to border security are identified in the RCMP Act and regulations, the Customs Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and regulations. The RCMP's federal policing program conducts investigations related to cross-border offences such as illegal entries; human, drug and firearm trafficking; and other illicit activities.

As you are aware, Bill C-2, the strong borders act, was introduced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Public Safety in May of this year. Bill C-2 represents the next step in Canada's border plan and proposes a suite of measures that will support three pillars.

The first is securing the border. This includes amendments to the Customs Act, the Oceans Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act.

The second pillar is combatting transnational and organized crime and fentanyl. This includes amendments to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the Criminal Code and introduces the supporting authorized access to information act.

The third is disrupting illicit financing. This includes amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act.

In parallel, the RCMP continues to advance several initiatives under Canada's border plan as part of its commitment to detect, investigate and disrupt the most significant criminal threats to public safety in Canada.

The RCMP has deployed an aerial intelligence task force comprising helicopters, drones and mobile surveillance towers to monitor between the ports of entry and ensure rapid response to any border incidents.

The RCMP is also advancing efforts with U.S. partners to implement a North American joint strike force to target organized crime and the trafficking of precursor chemicals and illegal substances, including fentanyl. This initiative includes teams of law enforcement, border security and intelligence professionals across Canada and the United States. It will also involve new resources and front-line personnel, as well as technical operations capacity and infrastructure. The strike force complements and builds on existing operational efforts to tackle fentanyl across intelligence to criminal operations, both domestic and international, acting as a force multiplier.

Recognizing that money laundering underpins most criminal activity, including fentanyl trafficking, the integrated money laundering intelligence partnership was established in support of the permissible sharing of money laundering and organized crime intelligence between the RCMP and Canada's big banks.

In addition, the newly established joint operational intelligence cell is actively bringing together security agencies and key law enforcement partners to bolster the broader flow of intelligence on transnational organized crime and fentanyl.

To conclude, the current global landscape pushes us to recognize that border management is not simply about managing the movement of people or goods across the border. It's about ensuring that law enforcement has the right tools to keep our borders secure, combat transnational organized crime and stop the flow of illegal fentanyl.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I look forward to discussing Canada-U.S. border management.

My colleagues and I will be pleased to take any questions you may have.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's wonderful.

Thank you for those inputs.

We will now move to questions and observations from members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

We will follow the order and speaking times established by the rules we adopted last June. For the first round, the Conservative Party representatives will have the floor first, for six minutes each,

followed by the Liberal members and the Bloc Québécois member, who will also have six minutes. Then there will be a second round and probably subsequent rounds, the details of which I will provide a little later.

[*English*]

We'll start with representatives from the Conservative caucus.

Mr. Lloyd, you will be the first to speak.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Mr. Peets, you stated that it was identified that only one-tenth of 1% of the fentanyl seized in the United States was attributed to be from north of the border. My question is this: Was that fentanyl that was seized at the border, or was that all fentanyl that was seized in the United States?

Gerard Peets: That is an excellent question.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection maintains a website that can be accessed publicly. It is possible to download data on fentanyl seizures as well as other kinds of—

Dane Lloyd: I'm sorry. I have limited time. I just want to know if that was fentanyl that was seized specifically at the border or if that was the total fentanyl seized within the United States itself.

Gerard Peets: It was fentanyl seized in what they refer to as the northern border region.

Dane Lloyd: So in terms of fentanyl seized at the northern border, they say that only one-tenth of 1% was attributed to be from Canada, and yet that's one-tenth of 1% coming from the northern border, out of the total amount of fentanyl seized.

● (1135)

Gerard Peets: What they do is provide numbers about fentanyl seized in the northern border region, and they provide numbers about fentanyl seized in the southern border region.

Dane Lloyd: I see.

Gerard Peets: When you do the division, over that period of time, you get 0.01%, or one-tenth of 1%.

Dane Lloyd: So we can't know about the total supply. We know that there is more fentanyl being seized at the southern border than at the northern border, but is it possible that we're just not catching the fentanyl at the northern border and it's skewing the statistics to be lower at the northern border?

Gerard Peets: Colleagues at CBSA and RCMP will have something to say about that question. When you look at the patterns and at the evidence, evidence presented in U.S. Senate committee hearings, where there's detailed evidence provided by northern police chiefs—such as the police chief of Spokane, Washington—describing fentanyl enforcement actions in the U.S., in the north, of Mexican-originating fentanyl, the amounts of seizures are orders of magnitude higher even now.

Dane Lloyd: Canada has long been very proud of the longest undefended border in the world. In comparison with the border in the south of the United States, which is a much more militarized border, it seems much more likely that they would catch a lot more fentanyl coming from the southern border than from the northern border.

Is there any way to determine the provenance of fentanyl? I'm wondering if there's a chemical compound such that you could say, "This fentanyl originated from here", or if it's chemically the same regardless of the provenance or the jurisdiction it came from.

Gerard Peets: This would be a good question to ask Health Canada officials in a future conversation. There are investments being made in understanding those kinds of issues.

Dane Lloyd: So you don't know yet. Okay. Thank you for that.

My next line of questions will be for the RCMP.

Back in January, the RCMP moved to contract four American Black Hawk helicopters to assist at the border. Are those Black Hawks still in service today?

Sean McGillis: We currently have three Black Hawk helicopters in operation. We have entered into procurement arrangements where we are chartering them at the moment and working on a longer-term procurement strategy.

Dane Lloyd: Those are the ones that were done in January. Is that correct?

Sean McGillis: Two were done in January, and a third was added in June.

Dane Lloyd: Are these Black Hawk helicopters still operating under a special airworthiness certificate?

Sean McGillis: I will defer to Chief Superintendent McGowan on that. I believe we have all our authorities in place, but I'll let Chief Superintendent McGowan answer that question.

Jamie McGowan (Chief Superintendent, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): The three Black Hawk helicopters being used by the RCMP are currently operating under the Canadian aviation regulations, in accordance with the regulations that are in place for conducting aerial work. We are wholly within—

Dane Lloyd: Are they currently under a special airworthiness certificate?

Jamie McGowan: I would not be able to provide that information at this time. They've been certified to operate in Canada.

Dane Lloyd: They were given an exemption from Canadian safety rules back in January. Is that exemption still in place, or do those Black Hawks now comply with Canadian safety rules?

Jamie McGowan: This would be a question that's best referred to Transport Canada for a specific answer. The way we are operating is wholly within our regulations.

Dane Lloyd: The Black Hawks, as procured, were not certified to carry passengers, and they were not certified to fly over built-up areas. We know the Canadian border is, in many places, very built-up.

Are you saying you don't know whether those Black Hawks are currently operating under Canadian safety regulations or are still operating under an exemption?

Jamie McGowan: Mr. Chair, that's not at all what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that the helicopters are permitted to operate and conduct aerial work. The police work we're conducting in them is inclusive of that. They are not permitted to carry passengers for air taxi under Canadian air regulations.

Dane Lloyd: That's understood.

The Chair: That's what you meant by airworthiness.

Dane Lloyd: In my final 45 seconds, was this the RCMP's primary recommendation for the helicopter to purchase or contract?

Jamie McGowan: Do you mean in terms of the type of platform?

Dane Lloyd: I mean in terms of the specific helicopter, the Black Hawk.

Jamie McGowan: It was operationally driven, based on the requirements we have for work.

Dane Lloyd: Were there no Canadian helicopter company platforms that were capable of fulfilling these requirements?

Jamie McGowan: Given the totality of the requirements and the operational need for the specifications for those helicopters, we went to an operations-based model to procure them, as we're doing right now for—

Dane Lloyd: Were there no Canadian helicopters that could do the job of these Black Hawks?

Jamie McGowan: No, there were not.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lloyd, for these important questions.

I will now turn to Madame Dandurand.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us.

I have to tell you that I live in a border region, the riding of Compton—Stanstead. You will probably recognize the name Stanstead. I'm particularly wondering about the impact of the closure of Roxham Road on operations at border crossings.

What's going on? I know you're not an immigration expert, but how do you go from one side to the other? Are you seeing any impacts on border crossings, and if so, what are they?

The Chair: I think that question is more for the Canada Border Services Agency.

Aaron McCrorie: I'll try to answer the question.

[English]

With the new protocol for the safe third country agreement, which effectively closed Roxham Road as a point of entry, we have seen a small shift of people going to the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle crossing instead.

What's interesting is that the overall numbers, I think, went down considerably for irregular crossings into Canada. What we've seen in 2025 is about 42% decline in the number of people making asylum claims. However, at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle through this year, there's been a small increase. Last year, we had about 6,000 people make asylum claims at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. This year, the number is 13,000. That's at just that particular boarding crossing.

Nationally, we had 47,000 asylum claims last year. This year, it's down to 27,000. Therefore, the STCA's new protocol shifted people away from illegal crossing between the ports. It hasn't eliminated it, but it has shifted people away from it. They've now moved to regular ports of entry.

At Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, in particular, we saw a little uptick through the spring into the summer, but not a huge increase compared to what we were seeing three or four years ago.

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand: Thank you very much.

Along the same lines, what are the main threats identified at border crossings from the United States?

There's a lot of talk about the threat to the United States from fentanyl coming from Canada. However, what threats are coming from the United States, particularly at border crossings like the ones in my region, which are smaller, particularly in the context of some border crossings that are now closed at night?

So what threats are we currently facing?

Also, could you give me an idea of the relative magnitude of the threats? Is it mostly immigration or weapons, for example? Is it really happening in small regions like mine?

I'd like to hear your perspective on that

[English]

Sean McGillis: Thank you for the question.

I will start from an RCMP perspective, but I think there's probably a CBSA element to this answer as well.

Between the ports of entry, we definitely see that the corridor along the Quebec border remains probably the most intense part of the country in terms of illegal crossings. Most of what we are seeing does not involve firearms and does not involve drug trafficking, although we do encounter those types of interdictions when we're going on our response calls. We work very closely with our U.S. counterparts in border patrol on the American side and have integrated operations with them to ensure we are doing what we can. As well, we are using our technology to detect and deter any illegal migration that is coming across between the ports of entry in that region.

As my colleague mentioned, the numbers are down. I don't see threats from the people who are coming across the border, necessarily. These are typically people who are seeking asylum, and we're largely seeing the same populations or nationalities coming across. Haitian, Venezuelan and Colombian are the top three nationalities that are coming across the border illegally, seeking opportunities for asylum claims. These are not threats per se from a national security perspective but are definitely something we are monitoring from an illegal entry perspective.

Aaron McCrorie: I would echo that we're not seeing any national security threats from the people coming to make asylum claims, either the ones brought to us by the RCMP or the ones showing up at a port of entry, although we do assess every individual for the threat they may pose.

In terms of contraband, the way I'd frame it is that transnational organized crime is exploiting the border both ways. Canada is a market for drugs, so we're seeing cocaine coming into the country, sometimes from the United States and sometimes from other places. Canada is a source of drugs; we're actually an exporter of cannabis. Canada is also a transshipment point. There's not a unidirectional threat; we're seeing threats moving both ways. That really emphasizes why it's so important for us to work with our colleagues in the RCMP, for example, but also with our colleagues in Customs and Border Protection, with whom we'll collaborate on targeting initiatives, or our colleagues in the Australian Border Force, as some of our biggest meth seizures have been the result of working with them.

The threats are going both ways when it comes to contraband, and it really emphasizes why we need to collaborate.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand: That leads me to another question.

In my neck of the woods, there are communities that live on the border. What kind of discussions are being held with the United States to ensure that these people can continue to circulate relatively freely? It seems as though the communities are increasingly being shut down.

In terms of public safety, are you having discussions with your American counterparts to see how we can manage these situations?

The Chair: Please answer quickly, Mr. McCrorie. We can come back to it later if we need more details.

[English]

Aaron McCrorie: The short answer is yes. We collaborate very much with our U.S. counterparts. Our colleague Rob Chambers, who's vice-president of the travellers branch, works very closely with his U.S. counterparts around coordinating hours of service.

The CBSA has a dual mandate. On the one hand, there's a security mandate to stop bad goods and people from coming into the country, but on the other hand there is a facilitation mandate. We try to find the right balance between the two.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Indeed, the link with American collaboration is quite relevant. We can explore this aspect further a little later.

I now give the floor to Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to welcome the witnesses and thank them for their presentations.

I want to start with a quick question for the RCMP.

I, too, am in a border riding. Almost all irregular crossings are in my riding, in southern Quebec. I'm thinking of Hemmingford, Franklin, Dundee and Akwesasne.

Leasing helicopters costs the RCMP nearly \$5 million. Is it planning to buy helicopters and stop leasing them?

Sean McGillis: Thank you very much for the question. I will try to answer it in French.

Currently, we have a contract with two different companies for the three helicopters. We are in the process of developing a plan not to buy, but to lease. The next step is to lease the helicopters. We're trying to lease four. Ultimately, we don't have enough money to buy the helicopters, because they're very expensive. Right now, it's better for us to lease the helicopters with the equipment.

Claude DeBellefeuille: That's perfect, thank you very much.

My next question is for the Canada Border Services Agency.

We know that it takes 18 weeks to train border officers who have the authority to enforce the Customs Act. In your statement, you said that 1,000 officers would be added by the end of the year. We know that the capacity of Rigaud college is around 581 officers. We also know that roughly the same number leave through natural attrition.

Are you informing the committee that another category of border officers will be created? Can I make that assumption?

Aaron McCrorie: I must correct your assumption.

There is indeed a plan to hire 1,000 border officers, but we are not yet in the process of doing so. This year, we have hired 30 new officers for removals.

[*English*]

Jennifer Lutfallah (Vice-President, Commercial and Trade Branch, Canada Border Services Agency): I'm going to add to what my colleague said.

Under the border action plan, we are hiring 36 new border officers. Those officers are already in training, and we anticipate that they will be sent to the front line in March. I just want to point out that these individuals will be people whom you would see at a booth when you first enter Canada. As a result, they will be replac-

ing more senior officers, whom we will then take and train on detection technology.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Chair, I don't want to interrupt the witnesses, but I would ask you to allow a few more seconds for the answers. Since French is a bit laborious, it takes a little more time.

My question was clear. The government has committed to hiring 1,000 border officers who can enforce the Customs Act. What I am asking you is how you are going to achieve this by the end of the year when, mathematically, it is impossible.

Are you creating a new category of officers who will not carry weapons, for example, to help you meet the government's hiring commitment?

[*English*]

Aaron McCrorie: Again, the plan is not to hire 1,000 new agents this fiscal year. We are developing a plan to hire 1,000 agents, and we'll have to plan out what that looks like in terms of hiring new agents over a period of time.

The plan this year was to hire—

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Excuse me for interrupting. I will clarify my question.

Every year, 580 border officers are trained and approximately 580 leave. I am not a mathematician, but I know that adds up to zero.

The plan to hire 1,000 officers is spread over three years. How are you going to achieve this goal if you hire border officers who have the power to enforce the law?

What I am asking you is whether there is a plan to develop another category of border officers who would not have the power to enforce the law or carry a weapon, but who could carry out monitoring and surveillance activities.

[*English*]

Aaron McCrorie: No, the plan will not be to create a new category of border services officer. We will look at how we increase their throughput through the college, but not all of the people we will be hiring are necessarily going to go through the college. For example, criminal investigators don't necessarily come from the ranks of the BSOs. They may come from other policing agencies, for example, so we'll hire people in that way.

Where we need people to work at the border, the plan is to put them through the college as we normally do. We recognize that, with attrition, we have to increase our throughput through the college, and we're working through that plan now.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you may ask one last question.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There was a plan to create a new campus in Chilliwack, British Columbia, to accelerate officer training. Will this project go ahead? Has the agency selected this project in order to increase the number of border officers trained to enforce the act?

[English]

Aaron McCrorie: We're considering all of our options for how to increase that throughput. We haven't reached any determination yet. We're working through that as we speak.

[Translation]

The Chair: We will certainly come back to this later.

I now invite Ms. Kirkland to speak for five minutes.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Thank you so much for being here today.

I would like to ask one more question in continuation of the last line of questioning, and it has to do with the promised 1,000 border agents. It sounds like we're working toward that.

Can you give us some indication of how long it would typically take to accomplish the hiring of 1,000 new border agents?

Aaron McCrorie: I'm going to struggle, because I'm not the human resources person. We are probably looking at a two- or three-year runway to put those in place. As I suggested, some will have to go through our college, but not all of the staff we would look at hiring will have to go through the college, because criminal investigators, for example, do not necessarily come from our frontline ranks of BSOs.

A lot will depend on what mix of employees we need and where we want to allocate them. We look at how we allocate them on a risk basis. Where are the risks and where do we need them—

• (1155)

Rhonda Kirkland: I'm sorry for interrupting.

To clarify, we're looking at a runway of two to three years, potentially more.

Aaron McCrorie: I would say so, yes.

Rhonda Kirkland: Do you think it will be more than three years?

Aaron McCrorie: It's hard for me to say. I think it's a two- to three-year runway.

Rhonda Kirkland: Two years is probably the minimum, from what you're saying.

Aaron McCrorie: I would say so.

Rhonda Kirkland: It's a minimum of two years. Okay. Thank you, Mr. McCrorie.

I will continue with a couple of quick questions. Earlier this year, there was a joint CBSA and OPP investigation into the illegal hiring of foreign nationals that led to the sentencing of three business-

es— actually, in my riding of Oshawa—and I have a couple of questions regarding that. My understanding is that, in total, there were 700 foreign nationals who were employed without authorization.

Are there any concrete measures that the CBSA is taking to prevent similar large-scale illegal hiring networks from operating—especially in the GTA and eastern Ontario—in these corridors and border towns?

Aaron McCrorie: I'm not familiar with the specifics of this particular case, but I'd say that's exactly what our criminal investigations function is all about. It's about looking at pursuing criminal investigations where we think there is illegal hiring of people or an exploitation of people, and conducting the investigation either on our own or in partnership with law enforcement.

Rhonda Kirkland: Excuse me. I have to ask this question, because you said you weren't familiar with it, yet you were quoted in the article about it. You said:

The charges and the sentencing reflect a thorough investigation and our commitment to maintaining the integrity of Canada's immigration system. CBSA officers and investigators work diligently with law enforcement partners, including the OPP, to secure the border and ensure that those who break the law are held accountable.

That's specifically on this instance.

Can you tell me any concrete measures that are being taken to prevent that kind of large-scale...?

Aaron McCrorie: The measures that are being taken are the criminal investigations that we undertake through this process.

Rhonda Kirkland: So is it preventative? Is the plan to prevent?

Aaron McCrorie: Criminal investigations are reactive. If you think about the entire immigration continuum, part of it sits with IRCC, from a visa point of view, and we work with IRCC on the issuance of visas, for example.

There's a whole continuum of measures. They're preventative in terms of what needs to be fulfilled for somebody entering the country, and then once they're in the country, they're based either on tips or on undertaking investigations.

Rhonda Kirkland: Thank you very much. I'm going to move on.

I have a question or two, if you don't mind, for Ms. Grainger.

We know there are a number of missing foreign nationals who were convicted and supposed to be deported, but have not been. They've disappeared. We believe there are probably about 600 of them.

Can you tell me what is being done to locate them? Can you share any of that? Would it be better for Mr. McCrorie to answer that?

Aaron McCrorie: As part of our inland immigration enforcement program, we have inland investigators. Part of their role is to actively seek people who are in our wanted inventory. Offhand, I think there are about 30,000 people in that. We have active warrants on those. We're actively monitoring and investigating that inventory and looking for people as we pursue those removals through our own investigations—or if local police come across these people, they'll be referred to us. When we find them, more often than not we need to put them in detention because they are a flight risk, so we'll put them into one of our three immigration holding centres, and then we can—

Rhonda Kirkland: I'm sorry to interrupt, but these are folks who are missing. In terms of finding them, what can we possibly do to find them through these investigations? Is there anything specific?

Aaron McCrorie: Normal investigative techniques look at understanding who they are, what their patterns of behaviour are and what their relationships are, and following up on those. As I said, we have warrants for them. Sometimes they come to our attention because police of jurisdiction have come across them in a traffic stop or something, so there are any number of investigative leads that we can follow.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm sorry, Ms. Kirkland, but you—

Rhonda Kirkland: Am I out? I wanted to ask another question, but maybe I can do it off to the side.

The Chair: We'll be pleased to hear from you later, hopefully.

That leads me to MP Sari.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all very much for being here today. I appreciate the very interesting and encouraging information we have heard today.

You know that the chair, even though he seems very nice, will interrupt me after five minutes, so I would be very grateful if you could keep your answers quite brief.

I would like to address two other aspects, which are related to two key words.

The first is integration. I have heard this term used several times today. Could you give me an idea of how you operate in terms of information integration, in particular?

Mr. McGillis, I found the conclusion of your presentation regarding the need to equip yourselves with certain tools to be very relevant. Are there technologies that are common to all three levels of intervention here in Canada, but that we also share with our partners to the south? Can we talk about this level of integration?

Are there any technological gaps that need to be filled?

The question is open to anyone.

• (1200)

Sean McGillis: Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

I spoke about integration in my opening comments. We work very closely both with our domestic law enforcement partners and with our international partners. Collaborating, working together, is probably the fundamental thing that we need to be doing as law enforcement.

Part of our operations requires intelligence, so we have a new effort under way, called the joint operational intelligence cell, which is bringing together the security and intelligence community within Canada in a way we never have before. We're using classified and sensitive information to help inform our law enforcement's investigative efforts across the country. At a federal level, we work in that space all the time, from a national security perspective, and we are able to turn that into actionable intelligence that we can share with police of jurisdiction, either at the provincial or at the municipal level, who would typically not have access to this information. A lot of efforts are happening, in that sense, to work more closely together as a broader law enforcement community. When I say that, I include CBSA, FINTRAC and others in that discussion.

There is also quite a bit of work.... I think all of us touched on the point of the importance of taking action against money laundering and financial crime. There is another effort under way that we are leading with financial institutions, in which we are sharing intelligence with the private sector in ways that we'd never been able to before. This is part of the opportunity to bridge the gap between the public and private sectors, and to work closely together to tackle some of the most serious criminality that's affecting Canadians and Canadian interests.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: This brings me to the subject of partnership and information exchange and integration with our partners to the south. I understand that the United States has commended our efforts to combat fentanyl.

Are we basing this on indicators of results, performance or efforts that you could tell us about today?

Gerard Peets: I apologize, I tried to use the earpiece, but I didn't hear the question.

[*English*]

Abdelhaq Sari: I can ask the question in English, if you want.

[*Translation*]

I can repeat it in French, too.

Regarding information integration and exchange with our southern neighbours, the United States, you said that the efforts we made were commended.

Do you also exchange performance indicators, which you could also share with us today?

[English]

Gerard Peets: One of the important aspects of the work of the fentanyl czar is to look at all the various silos and to consider performance indicators that cross different parts of the federal government. We do that. Similarly, in the United States, the Office of National Drug Control Policy runs an exercise in which it does that on a comprehensive basis for all the various federal organizations. That will include things like the help aspects, the demand side, the enforcement, the anti-money laundering, all the various components in the fight against fentanyl that my colleagues are active in.

We have exchanged the methodology that's used in the United States and the methodology that we use, to make sure we're speaking the same language, of course. Speaking the same language in terms of data is important if we are going to collectively manage the process.

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: On another topic, we sometimes notice that the methods used by criminals unfortunately change more quickly than the tools available to fight crime, whether it be car theft or fentanyl trafficking, for example. In other words, in many cases, criminals are much more agile than the organizations that fight crime. The Montreal Police Service has experienced this phenomenon.

Can you tell us about the agility levels of all the stakeholders here in this regard?

• (1205)

The Chair: Please respond quickly.

[English]

Gerard Peets: I'll be very quick.

The main way in which fentanyl is delivered is by taking precursor chemicals, combining them into fentanyl and then selling that. Organized crime is constantly changing the chemicals and the formulation of different analogues.

Important investments being undertaken by Health Canada will include the Canadian drug analysis centre that is being stood up. It will look at that and be able to produce some of the forensic evidence that was asked about earlier. It will be much more responsive and nimble in terms of tracking organized crime.

As well, some of the important measures in Bill C-2 related to the regulation of controlled substances will add flexibility for the minister. It will add responsiveness. We will have the Minister of Public Safety talking to the Minister of Health in working together to try to keep pace with organized crime.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sari.

[English]

I'll suspend for five minutes so that we can stretch. For those who want some food, you can do that.

When we come back, I will turn to Madame DeBellefeuille, and then MP Gill.

Thank you.

• (1205)

(Pause)

• (1210)

[Translation]

The Chair: We will now resume the meeting.

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Given the limited time available, I would be grateful if witnesses could provide brief answers.

Ms. Lutfallah, I would like to understand something. Under an agreement with the United States, we are required to clear the cargo of ships that dock at a municipal port or a port that is not a port of entry if their cargo is mixed, that is, if there are both bulk and containerized goods. What I don't understand is how it was possible to bring large quantities of drugs into Canada in automobiles that arrived here by train. As we know, border officials do not inspect rail cars coming from Mexico that transit through the United States to Quebec.

How can you explain this disparity in container inspection requirements?

[English]

Jennifer Lutfallah: You have a number of questions in there. I'll try my best to answer all of them.

With respect to the agreement with the United States, after 9/11 there was an agreement signed by Canada and the U.S. that ships coming into our ports have to be subject to radiation detection. That is why CBSA mandates container ships to pass through certain ports of entry. These are called first ports of entry.

I'm not sure what you're referring to with respect to—

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Let me clarify my question.

In fact, I already know everything you have said. What I want you to clarify for me is why this requirement only applies to ships docking at ports that are not ports of entry.

Are railway companies subject to the same requirement to scan the contents of rail cars arriving in Canada from abroad?

Let's take the example of a shipment of cars filled with drugs from Mexico transiting through the United States to Canada. Does that mean that the contents of rail cars arriving from international destinations have not been scanned?

[English]

Jennifer Lutfallah: That's not completely accurate. Train cars that are coming from Mexico are scanned by U.S. CBP. They're generally in transit as they approach the Canadian border, so they have been scanned by U.S. CBP.

I agree with you that there may be very few instances where material could be unloaded in the United States, but that is the reason our intelligence officers get advance information to subject every railcar and every conveyance coming into Canada to a risk assessment. We perform targeting activities, and depending on the risk that's identified, we subject those cargo containers or railcars or whatever in your examples to certain types of intervention by BSOs.

If a very high risk is identified—let's say there's a shipment of cocaine in a particular cargo container—our officers generally will de-stuff the entire container, or we could subject it to some type of imaging process to see where the drugs are, and obviously that would help our officers determine where they should be looking. This is all risk-based.

I don't agree with the assertion that they are not scanned. They are scanned by U.S. CBP, and it has been agreed—sorry, I don't know the particular name of the MOU—that we operate on the principle that the United States has scanned it. It's in transit. It's coming to our border. We assess the risk. We get advance information, and we take appropriate action.

• (1215)

[Translation]

The Chair: That's very good, thank you. Both the question and the answer are very useful to us.

Mr. Gill, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): I want to start by saying thank you to everybody who has come to act as a witness today and answer questions.

My first question is with respect to the Vancouver port and containers that offload there. From what I know, only 1% of the total containers are being scanned or checked there. What measures have you guys taken to strengthen the process of checking containers there? What have you guys done?

Aaron McCrorie: About 1.5 million containers come into Canada each year. Each and every one of them is assessed by our national targeting centre. We get advance commercial information that allows us to look in that haystack of 1.5 million containers and identify which ones we think need additional examination. We identify those, and we provide that information to our colleagues in the field, who will then do an examination of those containers, either manually or using technology. That's where Jennifer's team takes over, in terms of doing those examinations.

I would argue that every container coming into the country is assessed, but to me it's like a RIDE program. A RIDE program stops everybody, but it doesn't give a breathalyzer to everybody. The police officer will do an assessment based on indicators and behaviours about whether or not a breathalyzer test is required. We assess every container coming into the country, and on that basis we will do a deeper examination of those.

Sukhman Gill: Are you saying that every container is being checked when it lands in Vancouver?

Aaron McCrorie: Every container is being assessed before it lands in Vancouver. We're assessing those containers on their way to Vancouver, so that when they arrive they can be checked.

Jennifer Lutfallah: Yes. If our targeting identifies a high risk, then the commercial officers will undertake intervention. As I indicated to the previous member, that could include de-stuffing a container or subjecting it to some type of imaging or a visual or manual intervention by our officers, but it's predominantly based on risk.

Sukhman Gill: Okay.

Have you guys taken any new measures to add scanners or more accessibility or more technology to make sure that we can make it more efficient?

Jennifer Lutfallah: The border action plan provided us, I believe, with over \$300 million to enhance our detection technology capability. Based on that investment from the government, we are going to be increasing our overall inventory by 25%.

Sukhman Gill: What is the timeline on that?

Jennifer Lutfallah: It's over a five-year period. This year, we are deploying a number of imaging technologies, and this will go until 2029-30.

Sukhman Gill: All right.

My next question is for Mr. Peets.

I'm from the rural riding of Abbotsford—South Langley, B.C., where a fentanyl super lab was seized that was capable of producing multiple kilograms weekly.

I want to know the measures that you have taken to prevent the creation of super labs like those that were found in my riding.

Gerard Peets: This is a question that I'll ask others to jump in on.

As part of the border action plan, a number of investments have been made to ensure that there are domestic enforcement measures, such as joint intelligence work and co-operation among law enforcement agencies, not only on the intelligence side but on the enforcement side.

I would invite my RCMP colleagues to talk about that a bit more.

Sean McGillis: Thank you, Mr. Peets, and thank you for the question.

We're actively involved in our organized crime investigations. We have federal teams across the country that are dedicated specifically to looking at the illicit drug trade. The lab that you mentioned is an example of something that we are coming across more and more often across the country. It's predominantly isolated to British Columbia and, to a certain extent, Alberta, and we're seeing some of these labs in Ontario and Quebec.

• (1220)

Sukhman Gill: What's the increase in super labs that you've seen?

Sean McGillis: I would not characterize them as super labs, but they do have the capacity to produce large amounts of fentanyl. I don't want to get caught on quoting exact numbers, but since 2018, if I'm not mistaken, we've taken down 50 of these types of labs across the country.

Sukhman Gill: Okay.

As I'm running out of time, I have one last question.

As we anticipate the outcome of the \$1.3 billion for the border security plan, what are the prevention tactics that you are putting in place to make sure that it is an effective plan that we have at the border? What measures are we meeting here and what measures have you put in place?

Shannon Grainger: As we mentioned earlier, the \$1.3-billion plan is multi-faceted. We are looking at ensuring that each piece of the plan is effective and useful to law enforcement and our enforcement body, the CBSA. Specifically, we are looking at the deployment of those resources, many of which have already been deployed within the RCMP, CBSA, Health Canada and IRCC.

The second phase of effectiveness is the legislative measures that are currently contained in Bill C-2, which will give further tools to law enforcement to make more effective some of the commitments that have come about as part of the border plan.

Our website, publicsafety.gc.ca, gives a full breakdown of where we stand on our border, including a summary of the commitments made under Canada's border action plan.

Sukhman Gill: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Very well, thank you very much.

I now invite Ms. Acan to take the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Hello. Thank you very much for coming here today.

I have a few questions, and I will start with the CBSA.

Recent R and D and field reports show promising portable, non-contact detection and imaging methods that can rapidly detect and identify. I want to ask some questions to understand CBSA's capability limits and plans to scale detection at the border and at the ports specifically. In terms of detection and prevention, what current technologies and inspection measures does the CBSA use at ports to detect stolen vehicles before they are shipped overseas? How effective have the container scanners and intelligence-led inspections been in identifying stolen vehicles?

Please speak to the technology, Ms. Lutfallah, as you provided the numbers to us.

Thank you.

Aaron McCrorie: If I may start, Mr. Chair, it really is about being intelligence-driven. Again, with 1.5 million containers, 4.5 million trucks and 1.5 million railcars, you can't scan everything, and it's not effective to do so, so it's about being intelligence-driven.

You referred to auto theft. With auto theft, the vast majority of the vehicles we're recovering are based on either intelligence referrals from police of jurisdiction or our own intelligence targeting, and then technology is leveraged to do those searches. The starting point really is about being intelligence-driven and about targeting.

I'll let Jennifer talk about the technology.

Jennifer Lutfallah: We utilize a range of tools at the ports of entry. Some of them you've probably seen at certain ports of entry. We have large-scale imaging, where trucks are driven into a certain area, and it produces an image of the cargo container that is on the truck.

We utilize detector dog units, which are very useful in determining whether, let's say, travellers have drugs on their person or in their suitcases. I want to point out that, on the detector dog teams, the border action plan is allowing us to implement or release three additional dog teams into the field. On this note, we are collaborating with CBP in providing us a pseudo drug unit, for lack of a better term, that we can use to train our dogs to detect fentanyl.

As well, we use ion mobility spectrometry. This is used to identify trace residue of narcotics and explosives. We are deploying and utilizing a unit from the RCMP with respect to backscatter vehicles. In the case of the stolen vehicles, we did locate an RCMP backscatter vehicle to provide us imaging of cargo containers, to see whether or not there were stolen vehicles in those containers. We also have mobile scanning technology that we utilize. Overall, those would be the high points that I would like to underline for you.

• (1225)

Sima Acan: Thank you very much, Ms. Lutfallah. You pretty much answered my next question, but attached to that, I was going to ask you how CBSA is working to integrate advanced technologies—such as AI, data analytics, licence plate recognition or blockchain tracking—into the container and cargo inspection systems. Has CBSA considered expanding real-time data sharing with the police forces and the manufacturers to flag high-risk shipments before they leave Canadian ports?

Aaron McCrorie: There are a couple of different parts to your question. In terms of our targeting, for example, we're always looking at how we can improve our algorithms and the data behind them, and then, also, how we can leverage machine learning or advanced analytics to assist in our targeting.

In terms of sharing information with police of jurisdiction, for example, we get a lot of information for administrative reasons that we can use for targeting, but we have to have certain controls around it. We can't blanket-share information with police of jurisdiction. However, to use auto theft as an example, every time we recover a stolen vehicle, the police can then come to us and make a request for additional information. So far this year we've had about 2,400 requests for information from police of jurisdiction, which allows us to give them all the information they need about the shipper, the shipping container, the destination, etc. They can use that to pursue their own criminal investigation. We can't necessarily push information out, but we are very responsive when we get requests for information.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Acan. That's already five minutes. Time flows very rapidly.

That leads us to MP Au. After MP Au, it will be MP Ehsassi.

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Thank you.

My first question is this: What is the volume of fentanyl seizures in B.C. and in what form—the border, ports or other means?

Aaron McCrorie: From a border perspective—and I apologize that I can't give you the breakdown by province—this year we've seized 2.59 kilograms of fentanyl. Of that, 1.73 kilograms was seized during Operation Blizzard in February.

Chak Au: Through what means?

Aaron McCrorie: It's being done through a variety of means.

Primarily, we're seeing a lot of fentanyl now moving in the postal and courier modes, so we're seeing it in our postal centres. Often, in Operation Blizzard, the majority of it was probably outbound. We saw a pattern of what we call micro-traffickers sending small amounts of fentanyl south. We see it coming inbound. We also see fentanyl coming in with individual travellers. That's what our experience has been.

The challenge with fentanyl, as you probably know, is that a very small amount can be very potent in so many awful ways. It's very easy to conceal, which makes things like postal and courier the preferred modes for shipping it.

Chak Au: You mentioned that there's no breakdown province by province. Can you provide that information?

Aaron McCrorie: We'll do our best to provide that.

Chak Au: Thank you very much.

I have another question, just for clarification.

How many agents have been hired so far to meet your goal of 1,000?

Aaron McCrorie: Again, we have not started the process of hiring 1,000 new agents. We're developing the plan to do so.

Chak Au: Have you recruited any new agents this year?

Aaron McCrorie: Yes, we have. On my side, we hired 30 new employees to assist with removals. Jennifer's team hired 36 new employees to help with the implementation of detection technology. Those are both under the border action plan.

Chak Au: How have they been assigned or deployed?

Jennifer Lutfallah: The 36 are still completing their training, and we anticipate that they will be deployed probably in March of next year.

• (1230)

Aaron McCrorie: The 30 for removals are in place.

Chak Au: Okay.

It's been repeated time and again that 1% of the seizures happen at the border. For every 1% that you seize, how many fall through the cracks?

Aaron McCrorie: Well, there are two things.

I think the 1% is perhaps a stat that Gerard was referring to in terms of CBP seizures and the amount of fentanyl. That doesn't reflect the CBSA experience in terms of seizures.

It's impossible for us to know. We don't know what the denominator is. We're very effective in terms of what we're doing. We've seized large amounts of cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamine this year, as well as the fentanyl, but absent seizures, we don't know what we don't know.

Chak Au: Would that figure be misleading? You know, 1% seems to be insignificant, but actually we know the problem is much bigger.

Aaron McCrorie: If you're talking about the U.S. seizures, I'll let Mr. Peets respond.

Gerard Peets: Thanks very much.

This is just to note that I'm having a bit of Coca-Cola here because I'm type 1 diabetic. I'm just getting some sugar in me. I'll let you know if I have any issues.

Importantly, on the seizures, my figure was one-tenth of 1%. That is comparing apples to apples. It's American data and it's comparing American data on the northern border with American data on the southern border.

To give an example of some of the recent numbers, in August 2025, just this past month, the U.S. CBP seized two and a quarter pounds in what they call the northern border region, and they seized 679 pounds in what they call the southern border region. If you look at the trend over the last few years of U.S. data and divide the Canadian data as a portion of the total, it's less than one-tenth of 1%.

I shouldn't have said "Canadian". It's the amount seized in what the U.S. CBP attributes to the northern border region, which may or may not come from Canada.

Chak Au: Okay.

Do you have the number of organized crime groups that you have been monitoring and identifying? How many groups are you looking at right now?

Sean McGillis: I can answer that question.

From an organized crime perspective, we rely on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. They have recently come out with their latest report, which is available online. If I'm not mistaken, they cite 350 organized crime groups operating in Canada that have the capability of manufacturing and trafficking in fentanyl.

I don't know off the top of my head what the total number of organized crime groups is, but that is their recent number in terms of who may be involved in the market here on Canadian soil.

Chak Au: How effective have you been in monitoring these groups?

Sean McGillis: It's a shared responsibility. It's not just the RCMP. We're the police of jurisdiction in many parts of the country, but not the entirety of the country. We work very closely with an organization called CIROC, which is the Canadian integrated response to organized crime, in which the 36 largest police forces in the country come together.

We've been undertaking fentanyl sprints now for the last several months. We had one early in the calendar year, in January and February. We're completing one right now. We should have the results in early November, which will be announced publicly through a press conference.

When you think about some of my earlier comments around the importance of partnerships and integration across law enforcement at all levels of policing and with our federal partners, this is a prime example of where we're having a sustained impact on the fentanyl trafficking issue within Canada by working together with our partners across the country.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Au. I'm sorry, but your five minutes are already over.

I'll turn to MP Ehsassi, and then Madame DeBellefeuille.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm very grateful. Thank you, also, to all the witnesses. This has been very helpful.

I'll start off my questions with Mr. McCrorie.

Recently, a few of us had the opportunity to go to the Gordie Howe bridge. They were very pleased with their new imaging technology. For every significant crossing we have at the border, do we have imaging technology deployed?

• (1235)

Jennifer Lutfallah: The deployment of imaging technology depends on the risk, the infrastructure and a number of other factors. Right now, Gordie Howe does have large-scale imaging, as does

Vancouver. Those are fixed. The CBSA deploys more mobile technology and moves it around based on operational requirements.

To your question as to whether we are deploying based on the trends with respect to the importation of fentanyl and guns, yes, we are. It depends on risk. Not all ports of entry have fixed, large-scale imaging like what you would have seen at the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: As I understand it, only two of those crossings definitely have it. Others could conceivably have it. Do we plan on expanding it to all the significant border crossings?

Jennifer Lutfallah: At this point in time, we've invested in mobile technology. For example, we are taking possession of a number of backscatter imaging units in, I believe, the last quarter, which is early next year. Those will be deployed to certain ports of entry to do scanning where we have deemed the risk to be high.

In terms of further deployment of fixed, large-scale imaging, at this point in time we have no plans.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: In your opinion, or in Mr. McCrorie's opinion, is that sufficient, or is that something you'd like to see considered?

Aaron McCrorie: Again, I would reflect on the importance of taking an intelligence-based approach to this and understanding where you're targeting your efforts. The technology is a tool, and—

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Chair, on a point of order. I understand English, but I am listening to the interpretation and the sound is cutting out a little.

Since the interpretation is being done remotely, I would ask the interpreter to disconnect and reconnect. That might solve the problem.

The Chair: I usually listen to the floor channel, but I was listening to the interpretation earlier and it was working. That said, if I understand correctly, it works inconsistently.

Claude DeBellefeuille: The sound is like that of a robot.

The Chair: There really is a connection problem. We will come back to this before the end of the meeting. I will summarize the points relating to interpretation that will need to be reviewed before the next meeting.

In the meantime, I invite officials to do what they can, given the situation.

[*English*]

Aaron McCrorie: The point I was going to make was that the technology is a tool, and you don't use a hammer to saw a board. What's great about X-ray technology is that it can help me find something that's hidden in a container or within something.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: All I'm asking is whether, from your perspective, that's sufficient, in terms of resource management.

Aaron McCrorie: I think that, with the combination of the mobile technology and the intelligence, we're being very effective in terms of how we deploy our resources.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Excellent. Thank you so much.

I have another question. Auto theft is a big issue in my riding and in my region of the country, which is Toronto and York Region. The numbers have gone down over the course of the past six or seven months. Could you explain to us what significant changes were made that allowed us to see a decline in auto theft? I'm not sure who would be best to answer that.

Aaron McCrorie: It was a team effort. If you think back a couple of years, in terms of the level of effort, we were working with our RCMP colleagues and we were working with our police of jurisdiction colleagues. That sustained effort of CBSA collaboration with police forces and collaboration among police forces is why you started to see an impact.

From a CBSA perspective, last year we recovered about 2,300 or 2,400 vehicles. This year, we're at around 1,100 and are probably on track to recover about 1,500 vehicles, so it's down a little bit. That reflects the fact that auto theft is down generally.

What's really interesting to me is that last year we responded to 2,400 requests for information, and so far this year we've responded to 2,400 requests for information. Those are police forces in the country coming to us and asking, "Do you have information we can use to pursue a criminal investigation?" We're saying, "Yes, we do." That joint effort is making a difference.

• (1240)

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

Most of these auto theft vehicles were being shipped out through the port of Montreal, so from Toronto they were moved to Montreal. As I understand it, we have cameras all over Highway 401. Do we deploy those cameras for these types of purposes as well?

Aaron McCrorie: It really wouldn't be the CBSA doing so.

Sean McGillis: That would most likely be a law enforcement question. Jurisdiction for the 401 falls with the OPP. If they had information, in partnership with CBSA and other law enforcement, we could deploy the CCTV cameras along the 401 to help support vehicles if we knew something was being transported. I can't say for certain that's happening, but I would suspect the OPP is taking advantage of that technology.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Ehsassi.

I now give the floor to Mrs. DeBellefeuille for two and a half minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for you, Ms. Lutfallah.

The mandate of the Canada Border Services Agency is to ensure border security without hindering commercial activities on Canadian territory.

All along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, there are small ports that are not ports of entry and are not equipped with the infrastructure to scan containers.

As I speak, a Quebec operator is about to lose a major contract. He is going to pick up excavators in Greenland and bring them

back on his large ship to the port of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. However, since the ship will be carrying 20 containers, it will not be able to dock at that port because the containers will not have cleared customs.

The same is true for the ports of Hamilton and Quebec City. Many small ports have asked the Minister of Public Safety to convince the agency to be less rigid and to agree to clear ships with mixed cargo, i.e., bulk and containers.

The entire maritime community is even prepared to commit to clearing a maximum of 1,000 containers per year. Currently, the agency is refusing to do so, which is hindering trade. Trade is therefore moving to the United States because customers do not want to dock in Montreal and pay to transport equipment by truck to the port of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, for example.

Are you aware that six mayors in Ontario and Quebec have already asked the agency to be flexible and agree to clear a few containers from a ship's cargo that docks in small ports that are not ports of entry?

[*English*]

Jennifer Lutfallah: Thank you for the question.

Yes, I am aware of the different ports you mentioned, as well as the mayors' concerns. I received a copy of their letter.

The CBSA is not being rigid. In order to clear containers, there are certain requirements that have to exist at those ports of entry. One of those requirements is having an adequate number of CBSA officers at the port of entry. Another thing would be the RADNET portal. I think you referenced that earlier. Per our agreement with the United States, we need to ensure that cargo containers don't have radiation in them. As well, we need to ensure we have enough space to do our job.

Every port of entry is designated based on what it can accept. It's not just a matter of CBSA being more flexible. We need the appropriate tools and space to do our—

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: I apologize for interrupting, but my speaking time is limited.

I am aware of that. However, I can tell you that, during—

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I am very sorry, but your speaking time expired a minute ago. I encourage you to ask the question again at the next opportunity.

Claude DeBellefeuille: I would like to go out to lunch with our witness to discuss this further.

• (1245)

The Chair: We will all be jealous if you only invite our witness. We would also like to be invited to this nice meal.

Mr. Lloyd, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

To the RCMP, what are the operational capabilities of the Black Hawk helicopter that made it the only choice for Canada?

Sean McGillis: I will start the answer, and then I will hand it over to Chief Superintendent McGowan.

As a point of clarity, when we defined our operational requirements, we worked closely with Public Services and Procurement Canada. We leveraged a national standing offer that already existed and had pre-qualified suppliers on there, which ensures that they have the capability we require, but also value for money, from a fair market value perspective, to make sure we are paying only what we need to be paying.

In terms of the exact operational requirements, I'll turn it over to Chief Superintendent McGowan to speak to those.

Jamie McGowan: In terms of the operational requirements, there's not one specific requirement that we used to define which helicopter we were looking to use. It was an aggregate of all the requirements, including the range of the helicopter, the capacity to lift a certain amount of weight—

Dane Lloyd: What would be the weight that you're lifting, people or equipment?

Jamie McGowan: It's a combination.

The helicopter is a best-in-breed platform in terms of the operational requirements. When we looked at the PSPC standing offer, based on our operational requirements there was only one helicopter that met those requirements, and that was the Black Hawk helicopter.

Dane Lloyd: Was it PSPC that determined it, not the RCMP?

Jamie McGowan: No. The RCMP determined our operational requirements, and from that we looked at the national standing offer and determined it.

Being aware of some of the concerns that have been raised about these particular helicopters, we're in the process of our long-term lease, which is operationally spec-driven. It will be going to PSPC as an open contract that anyone who meets the requirements can bid on.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

My next question is going to be for all the witnesses who are here today. I think it's a yes-or-no question. If the answer is no, you don't need to say anything. However, if the answer is yes, then I encourage you to speak up.

Is there any testimony you've given today that you would have any concerns about being made public?

Shannon Grainger: No. I have no concerns.

Dane Lloyd: I'm the longest-standing member of the public safety committee, and know this was great testimony today. There was really interesting information that I think Canadians need to know about. I wasn't at the last meeting, Mr. Chair, but I just find it bizarre that this meeting on this important issue is being held in camera.

Given that not a single witness has stated that they have any concerns with the testimony that has been given today being made public—this is all very basic testimony that we're hearing today, nothing top secret—I would like to move that we move this committee out of camera and that the testimony that has been delivered today at committee be made public.

The Chair: Thank you.

This is a motion that touches on both the in camera aspect and making public material that was discussed prior to the meeting being in camera. It is a matter that I will need to turn the attention of the clerk to, because that's not the usual dilatory motion. Not being in camera—therefore, the public aspect of the remaining time—is for the MPs to decide.

I understand you are moving that, from now onwards, the rest of the meeting would be public. Is that the case?

Dane Lloyd: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead, MP Sari.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: I thank Mr. Lloyd for his contribution. However, the meeting is not yet over. The questions that were asked were answered, but there may be other questions.

I have no objection to the decision to make the information public. That said, before we decide whether to publish the minutes of the meeting, we must first finish the meeting. Otherwise, we cannot know at this point whether witnesses will be uncomfortable to see some of their future answers made public.

In short, on the issue of transparency, I fully agree that the content of the meeting should be made public. I have no problem with that whatsoever. On the form, however, I think we need to finish the questions and answers before deciding.

• (1250)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sari.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ehsassi.

[*English*]

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to remind the members here that during our last session this was an issue that was raised.

As I understand it, Mr. Lloyd was not here, but it was decided that it was best to have it in camera, because it's a generally understood concept that the chances are if it's in camera then the witnesses will feel more at ease to provide all the necessary information. The reality is that we did decide on this, and the member who was not here now trying to raise this issue again is, in my opinion, not something that's generally done in good faith.

Thank you.

The Chair: Madame DeBellefeuille.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: I would like to remind Mr. Ehsassi that the reason this meeting was held in camera is that witnesses are normally more talkative in such a setting. They give us more relevant or more confidential information. That said, I don't think that was the case today. In my opinion, we heard a very general presentation that did not really contain any sensitive security information.

I was present when the decision was made, and that was the argument that was put forward. It was even Mr. Sari who argued that public servants talk more when they testify behind closed doors. However, I did not feel that the witnesses were more talkative today. They gave very proper testimony and were co-operative.

We simply need to set the record straight and clarify the reason why it was decided to hold the meeting in camera.

The Chair: My memory may be failing me, but if I recall correctly, the reason given was also that many of the members present around this table are new and would feel more comfortable addressing senior officials in a private setting at this initial stage.

As Mr. Lloyd so aptly put it, the information shared today is useful now, but it would also be useful in a public context and in the study that Mrs. DeBellefeuille has requested for the coming weeks, in particular.

This is therefore a kind of warm-up exercise in private that will very soon lead to discussions that will probably be even more useful in a public session.

[*English*]

That is the reason we didn't have a public meeting until now. The question now is whether we want to have the remaining meeting in public. Therefore, I ask members of Parliament whether they support that. Who is supportive of turning it into a public meeting?

Four MPs are not supportive, and four MPs are supportive of moving to a public meeting. That turns to me, and the chair typically keeps the status quo in these types of environments, which then—

Mr. Lloyd, do you have a question or a point of order?

Dane Lloyd: No. I want to speak after you're done. I'm just letting you know.

The Chair: Okay. You have another minute and 37 seconds.

Dane Lloyd: You were saying something, Mr. Chair. I want to hear what you have to say, and then I'd like to speak after you.

The Chair: What I am saying now is that we are remaining in camera, and we have one minute and 37 seconds for you to terminate your questions and comments.

Dane Lloyd: Okay. Thank you.

My motion was really a two-part motion. The first part was that we move the meeting out of camera, which failed due to the tiebreak from the chair, but the second half of the motion was that we make the testimony given here today public testimony. I'd ask for a recorded vote on that motion.

The Chair: Well, I would first need to turn to the clerk for procedural advice, because it having been the understanding that this meeting was in camera until now, deciding a posteriori that it now becomes public is not a usual thing to do. It would be counterintuitive to start in camera and then suddenly declare that everything that had been said until then would become public. It's just a matter of procedural accuracy and appropriateness that I want to check with the clerk.

• (1255)

Dane Lloyd: Of course, Mr. Chair, and we have the clerk right here. Can the clerk let us know what those thoughts are, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: I can suspend for a couple of seconds, and then we'll come back.

• (1255)

(Pause)

• (1255)

The Chair: We do indeed have a motion that is debatable. The motion that MP Lloyd is moving is that the meeting we have had until now would lead to proceedings that would be made public. The usual content of the meeting that has been produced until now would be made public. The in camera understanding until now does still allow, if the committee wants it so, those proceedings to be made public.

That is the motion, which obviously allows for a debate.

I'll turn to MP Acan.

Sima Acan: Being new, I want to understand better. Mr. Lloyd has divided the motion into two, so would we have the entire meeting in public or just the testimony part? It's pretty much the same.

Could you please explain it a little bit? Thank you.

The Chair: Sorry, I was a bit distracted. What is it you want me to explain, MP Acan?

Sima Acan: The motion was divided into two pieces. The second part of the motion would make the testimony part of the meeting public. Is that correct?

The Chair: That is correct. The first piece was defeated. The motion to move to public from in camera was defeated. Now the question is whether the committee wants the proceedings until now to be made public, and that's a matter for debate.

MP Ehsassi, go ahead.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Could the clerk kindly advise, as a matter of procedure, whether that would give rise to any complications or difficulty and how often it would happen that something that was meant to be in camera is then deemed to be public?

The Chair: I'll turn to the clerk in a moment, but she has already advised me that it can be done. That's why we are debating the motion now. Whether it creates technical or other difficulties is a good question.

Madam Clerk, could you indicate whether that would be operationally feasible?

[*Translation*]

Geneviève Dubois-Richard (Committee Clerk): Yes, it is possible to make in camera testimony public.

The Chair: Agreed.

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Since we have confirmation from the clerk, I agree.

As you said earlier, this will be very useful for the study that the committee will begin in early October. All of this very interesting testimony will enhance our study and allow us to delve deeper into the matter.

I do not agree with returning to a public meeting, but I do agree that the testimony should be made available to us so that we can use it. I think that would be really helpful.

• (1300)

The Chair: Very well, thank you for your contribution.

Mr. Sari, you have the floor.

Abdelhaq Sari: This is more of a procedural question, in terms of content. I am speaking on my own behalf, of course.

Mr. Lloyd was right to ask the witnesses for permission. The members of the committee also expressed their views on this. Everyone needs to feel comfortable. This motion should not be put to a vote. If someone spoke knowing that the meeting was in camera, and they are not comfortable with their comments being made public, I don't think we can easily make them public.

If I spoke knowing that it was in camera, I think I still have the freedom to keep the content of that in camera meeting confidential at any time. For me, it's really a procedural issue.

The Chair: You raise a good point. From a procedural standpoint, it is possible, despite the discomfort it may cause.

Ms. Dandurand, you have the floor.

Marianne Dandurand: I see that time is passing and I believe that the time allotted for the meeting has expired, but I have a question about what happens next. From now on, if we make what has been said public, does that also include the rest of the meeting? We don't know what will happen next. That said, we may have reached the point where we need to adjourn the meeting.

In short, would the rest of the proceedings also become public?

The Chair: I believe so, since the entire meeting would be made public. It is a bit unusual, actually. It would become public even though we voted for the meeting to be held in camera. That's how it is.

Marianne Dandurand: That would include what happens next, even though we don't yet know what will happen.

The Chair: The decision rests with the committee.

Madam Clerk, could you please read the motion?

[*English*]

The Clerk: The motion on the floor is to make today's in camera testimony public.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We must hold a recorded division.

(Motion agreed to: yeas, 9; nays, 0)

The Chair: The motion therefore has unanimous support.

Ms. Dandurand, you have the floor.

Marianne Dandurand: I move that the meeting be adjourned, as the scheduled end time has been reached.

The Chair: Very well, that is what I will do, since it is already past 1 p.m.

The meeting is adjourned.

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