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Chair: Jean-Yves Duclos



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• (1105)

[Translation]

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

Welcome to meeting number eight of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on September 18, 2025, the committee is meeting as part of its study on Canada-United States border management.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. We all know how to follow the instructions, so I will not go over them.

We have with us today the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety, and the Honourable Ruby Sahota, Secretary of State for Combatting Crime.

We are also fortunate to have three senior officials with us: Erin O'Gorman, president of the Canada Border Services Agency; Kevin Brosseau, commissioner of Canada's fight against fentanyl, from the Privy Council Office; and Michael Duheme, commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Welcome to all of you.

Minister Anandasangaree, you have the floor for five minutes for your comments.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety):
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

I am pleased to be here today to speak about how we are managing the Canada-United States Border.

[English]

Canada shares the longest non-militarized land border in the world with the United States. In many ways, the border defines the relationship between our two countries. I think all of us here can agree that, over our history, our relationship has brought real benefits.

[Translation]

Last year, nearly \$3.6 billion worth of trade and about 400,000 people crossed the Canada-U.S. border—every single day.

[English]

It also brings challenges. We are constantly having to balance the movement of legitimate trade and travel with measures to keep our border secure. Both countries are dealing with irregular migration, human smuggling, and illegal drug and firearms trafficking. All these are compounded by the involvement of transnational organized criminal groups.

To counter these threats, we have a long history of working closely with the United States each and every day. I recently met with my U.S. counterpart, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, in the U.K. Canada's Attorney General and I met with U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi over the summer. We have been in constant engagement with other officials, including U.S. border czar Tom Homan and the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, along with many of our officials here.

Public Safety Canada, the CBSA and the RCMP, along with the fentanyl czar, have regular daily interactions with their counterparts in the U.S. This week, the fentanyl czar, the RCMP commissioner and the president of the CBSA travelled to Washington, D.C. to meet with the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Terrence Cole, and with the commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Rodney Scott. These discussions build on the already strong intelligence and information-sharing work we do with the U.S., and they underscore the importance of this collaboration.

[Translation]

However, there is always more that we can do. That is why the Government of Canada is taking a number of steps to improve the security of our borders.

• (1110)

[English]

It starts with our border plan, which is already delivering results. We've increased the resources along the border and are investing in new technologies to improve surveillance and detection.

[Translation]

Southbound irregular migration between Canada and the United States has dropped 99% since last year.

[English]

Together with the United States, we launched a North American joint strike force to target transnational organized crime, precursor chemicals and illegal substances, including fentanyl. Here at home, we established a joint operational intelligence cell to strengthen collaboration among agencies and advance investigations into the illicit cross-border movement of fentanyl. Those efforts also reinforce our work with our American counterparts.

We are also training and deploying new border detector dog teams who can sniff out fentanyl. While less than 1% of illegal fentanyl seized in the U.S. is linked to Canada, we know how important it is to get this drug off our streets, whether in Canada or the United States. A safe and secure flow of goods and people across the Canada-U.S. border is critical to North America's economy.

That is why we continue to look for ways to make it easier and faster to cross the border without compromising the integrity of our immigration system. Under the border plan, we have strengthened visa screening and integrity measures. It also provides over \$55 million to CBSA to increase the agency's removals capacity. We're seeing results. The agency removed over 18,000 inadmissible people in 2024-25, the highest in a decade and an increase from approximately 16,000 the year before.

Finally, Mr. Chair, as committee members know, our government has introduced Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. This bill supports efforts to secure our border by tackling organized crime and money laundering and enhancing the integrity and fairness of our immigration system.

[Translation]

This bill provides the authorities needed to take decisive action and protect Canadians.

[English]

The measures in the bill also advance shared Canada-U.S. priorities, such as disrupting the cross-border flow of illicit drugs, strengthening law enforcement co-operation and improving information sharing. Given the importance of Bill C-12 to protecting our borders, I urge members of this committee to support its swift passage.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to the questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Ms. Sahota, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime)): Thank you.

Good morning.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak today.

I'm pleased to be able to join the Minister of Public Safety to talk about the measures that we're taking to keep the border secure.

[English]

My mandate as Secretary of State for Combatting Crime includes working to keep Canadians and their communities safe from serious organized crime, including its role in driving the opioid crisis, gun crime and auto thefts. Given my role, I will focus my remarks today on telling the committee a bit more about the progress we have made in specific areas thanks to multiple initiatives implemented since 2018, including the border plan-related measures announced in December 2024.

Given that border management includes tackling such issues as human smuggling and illegal drug trafficking, border management is of paramount importance to my work.

[Translation]

Finally, we know that transnational organized crime groups are involved in all of those activities.

[English]

Their ability to adapt and take advantage of vulnerabilities means we need to be ever vigilant and up to date in the tools that we use to stop them. The government's \$1.3-billion border plan has helped to put in place many new tools that will help keep communities on both sides of the border safe.

This includes enhancing trilateral coordination with Mexican and U.S. counterparts, international partners and law enforcement agencies; designating seven transnational criminal organizations as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code; launching a money-laundering intelligence partnership between Canada's major banks and law enforcement; deploying new helicopters, drones and mobile surveillance towers; increasing usage of artificial intelligence and adding imaging tools that will further help detect illegal drugs before they enter Canada; deploying new canine teams to intercept illegal drugs to augment the existing 80 detector dog teams located at various ports of entry across Canada; deploying new chemical detection tools at high-risk ports of entry; and accelerating regulatory processes to ban precursor chemicals and expanding lab capacity for synthetic drug analysis so border and law enforcement can take swift action to prevent their illegal importation and use in drug production, while strengthening federal oversight and the monitoring of emerging drug trends.

We are already seeing results. Thanks to the hard work of border services officers, the Canada Border Services Agency seized over 50,000 kilograms of prohibited drugs, cannabis, narcotics and chemicals, and more than 900 firearms just last year. More specifically, the CBSA interdicted over 34,000 kilograms of illegal drugs, including nearly five kilograms of seized fentanyl in 2024.

• (1115)

[Translation]

I would like to point out that 81% of the fentanyl seized in Canada comes from the United States.

[English]

I also want to take a moment to highlight some of the positive results achieved in tackling vehicle thefts since the launch of the national action plan on combatting auto theft in May 2024.

Motor vehicle theft saw a significant decline in 2024, with police-reported incidents dropping by 17%. Auto thefts have continued to decline nationally in 2025 also, with a 19% decrease reported in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period last year, according to the latest trend report from Équité Association.

The CBSA intercepted 2,277 stolen vehicles in rail yards and ports in 2024, which is an increase of over 25% compared to the previous year, and has intercepted 1,252 since the beginning of 2025.

These positive outcomes can indeed be attributed in part to the initiatives highlighted in the national action plan and carried in a collaborative manner within the PS portfolio with key government departments and across jurisdictions, including with provincial and international law enforcement partners.

[Translation]

Before I conclude, I want to thank—

[English]

The Chair: Secretary of State, you have about 10 more seconds.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: I have 10 more seconds, so I'd like to call on parliamentarians from all parties to support Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act.

With that, I am very happy to take any questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Secretary of State.

We will start with Mr. Caputo for six minutes.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Thank you. We meet again.

I'm going to be directing my questions, Mr. Chair, through you, to Minister Anandasangaree.

Minister, if you don't know the answer, please don't put the question to someone else. I just want to hear directly from you, please.

Minister, how many students does CBSA currently have working for it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: At this point, I can't advise, Mr. Caputo, but I can ask—

Frank Caputo: It's 839. I'll answer the question for you.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: As of today, I'm not so sure you could be that accurate. I would ask the president to maybe offer—

Frank Caputo: That number came from the union. It was 839 in 2024. I trust the union.

About—

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: The question you—

Frank Caputo: This is my time, Minister. I'm asking you questions.

The Chair: I'll ask both of you to make sure you don't overlap in your comments and questions.

Frank Caputo: Minister, it's 18.96% in 2024-25 at Trudeau airport. These are students who are meeting people at the point of entry deciding whether they are letting in a terrorist or deciding whether the person they are letting in has drugs.

Are you okay with a student with three weeks' training, one of which is for use of force, evaluating such important matters at the border?

• (1120)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I have had the opportunity to visit many ports of entry, including airports. I can assure you the role of students is critical to the operation of CBSA. They are trained. They are supervised. They don't work in a high-risk environment. They do very important work. They support, in fact, regular officers who sometimes are on vacation during the summer.

Frank Caputo: I have no doubt. They are the principal point of contact with people, one in five students. Are you okay with that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I met with many students throughout the summer. I know they are exceptionally good people who are well trained and well supported. They do not make decisions on high-threat environments. They do their job in a routine manner. At every port of entry there are different levels of expertise to support the work they do.

Frank Caputo: Thank you, Minister.

How many foreign nationals are awaiting deportation in Canada?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I can get back to you or I can ask Ms. O'Gorman to advise—

Frank Caputo: Why don't we actually refer to Mr. McCrorie, VP for Canada Border Services Agency? According to Blacklock's, he said that 30,000 foreigners are awaiting deportation. Number one, that number is shocking. More shocking is that you don't know it.

Where are those 30,000 people?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I'm not here for a spelling bee. Let me be very clear.

If your intention here is to micro—

Frank Caputo: Minister, you're the minister. The buck stops with you, Minister.

An hon. member: Point of order.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

What is it, MP Ehsassi?

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): You can go.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

This is the second time this has happened. Both are talking at the same time. Seriously, we don't understand anything they're saying, and I think the interpreters are also having trouble doing their job.

It would really be appropriate for one person to speak at a time.

[*English*]

The Chair: I agree. For the sake of good interpretation, it is the responsibility of everyone, including, if I may suggest, the staff, the minister and the secretary of state.

Frank Caputo: Minister, a spelling bee? You equate 30,000 lost deportations to a spelling bee?

I'm going to ask you again. Do you know where they are, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: These people are going through a system of enforcement and removals. I can tell you categorically that this year we are on target to remove over 20,000 individuals who are awaiting deportation removals. Next year we hope to enhance that.

Last year we had over 1,800 removals.

Frank Caputo: Minister—

The Chair: Mr. Caputo, I'm sorry to interrupt.

Frank Caputo: I'm going to reclaim my time here. With all due respect, Chair, I asked a very concise question, and I didn't get a concise answer.

Minister, you do not know where these people are. In fact, the CBSA says—

The Chair: Mr. Ehsassi.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I have been attending committee meetings for over 10 years. Generally, in these meetings, ministers do arrive with their officials in the event that they want to provide additional details. I don't quite understand why Mr. Caputo, right off the bat said that the minister isn't allowed to consult with them to provide further details. That is the norm around here. That is the procedure around here.

I would ask Mr. Caputo to provide the minister the opportunity, if need be, to consult with his officials who have taken the time to be here with us today.

Frank Caputo: On that same point of order, first of all, it's not a point of order. The Standing Orders don't tell us that we have to ask

our questions in a certain way. I will ask my questions on behalf of Canadians, not according to how the Liberals think I should.

How about this, Minister?

You won't tell us where 30,000 people are. How many of them are lost? How many do you not know where they are?

Just give a number.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, there are 30,000 people who are going through the system, and they are going to be removed. They are in the queue. We know their addresses. We know where they reside. Many of them have reporting requirements. They regularly report to our CBSA offices across Canada. They are sometimes reporting by telephone.

There is ongoing monitoring for those who are being removed. It is not in all cases, but the vast majority of cases.

Frank Caputo: I beg your pardon. You said that you know where they are.

The Chair: You have 30 more seconds, MP Caputo.

Frank Caputo: Actually, I have a minute and 22 seconds more, Mr. Chair. The point of order should not count as my time.

Minister, this was asked in committee. I believe it was Mr. McCrorie who said, "We don't track the location of each and every individual."

You just told us that you know where everybody is and you track their locations, yet the VP of CBSA contradicted you in a story from Blacklock's yesterday. Are you wrong or is he wrong?

• (1125)

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Ramsay.

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: The minister said he didn't know where all the individuals were. Mr. Caputo just said that the minister knew where they were. He should at least listen to the answer.

The Chair: That isn't a point of order. Rather, those are relevant pieces of information, but they can't unduly interrupt the conversation, the exchanges between the minister and the member. Even if everyone agrees with that and, I think, fully understands that, there is an expectation that the conversation will be fluid.

I would also like to inform Mr. Caputo that we will indeed give him another 30 seconds to take into account the interruptions. In the future, we'll remove points of order from the discussion time since they aren't part of the planned discussion.

You have the floor again, Mr. Caputo.

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: Thank you.

Those are two dubious points of order when we are talking about how the minister says that they know where everybody is, of the 30,000, and a vice-president for CBSA, in direct contradiction, says, “We don't track the location of each and every individual.”

Minister, are you right that you know where they are, or is the VP right?

I see you just got a note. Which is it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, we have addresses for individuals who are in the removal queue.

Frank Caputo: You are telling us that you are confident you know where those 30,000 people are.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Not every single one of them, but I believe we have—

Frank Caputo: What is the number? What is the per cent?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, if you want the correct answer, I would invite you to ask Ms. O’Gorman—

Frank Caputo: You're the minister. The buck stops with you, Minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: You're citing—

The Chair: I'm sorry. We'll have to stop. The time is up anyway.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, if I may, we're here to provide concrete answers to legitimate questions that both the opposition and—

The Chair: That's understood, Minister Anandasangaree, but the time is over for this particular intervention. There will be other interventions.

Let me turn now to MP Ehsassi.

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

Thank you, Minister, for once again having made yourself available. This is the second time in the course of the past few weeks, so thank you for being here with all of your officials.

Minister, you were talking about the interactions you've had with U.S. authorities. You've had many meetings. You recognize full well how important it is that we adopt a co-operative attitude with our southern neighbours.

How would you characterize the spirit during these meetings? Do you find that professionals are speaking to each other and that we're doing a good job of addressing some of the challenges that are important not only to us but to our southern neighbours as well?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi, for that very important question.

We've had a number of very important interactions at the political level through my predecessors, Minister Leblanc and Minister McGuinty. They've had ongoing conversations with border czar Tom Homan. I was able to pick up on those conversations when I was appointed in May. We had a really good engagement in Washington this summer with AG Bondi and her officials. Very recently, in London at the Five Eyes, we had a full day with Secretary Noem, her officials and her senior team.

This is on top of regular engagements operationally with the folks who are at the table, including our fentanyl czar, CBSA President O’Gorman, the commissioner and Dan Rogers, who is not here today as he hasn't been called for today's meeting.

I can categorically say that we have had a very strong relationship. It's one that speaks to the many decades, over 150 years, of relationship that's been nurtured.

We have some irritations right now. At every single occasion, we have identified fentanyl to be an issue that is shared by Canada and the U.S. I often cite that every community in Canada is impacted by the fentanyl crisis and so are the Americans.

However, we know the common denominator of fentanyl inflow to Canada or to North America is not from each other but from overseas. We have common ground to fight that. Some of the measures we've taken, including additional tools of law enforcement, will ensure that we do.

I would say it's very positive.

Mr. Brosseau, maybe you could highlight some of your more recent conversations.

• (1130)

Kevin Brosseau (Commissioner of Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl, Privy Council Office): Indeed, Mr. Chair, the tone and nature of the discussions that colleagues at the table and I have had over the course of the last number of months has been extremely productive in reaching that element of collaboration that is, in fact, building on a foundation of trust and co-operation decades long.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: You would sum it up as very constructive and very focused, and we're moving forward on priorities that are important to both of our respective countries. Is that correct?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Yes, that's correct.

I would go back to the statement President Trump made when Prime Minister Carney was in D.C. on the last occasion, when he said essentially that issues of fentanyl moving north to south had been drastically reduced.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

Now I will ask the commissioner a question.

Commissioner, as you know, it was quite regrettable that this week we heard some comments from the Leader of the Opposition, which, if I may, questioned the integrity of the RCMP.

I'm not quite sure whether you've had ample opportunity to provide some commentary so we all have a better sense as to what your thoughts are with respect to individuals in Parliament who question the integrity of the RCMP.

Commissioner Michael Duheme (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): I said what I said last Thursday at the press conference. Again, I invite Mr. Poilievre to meet with the key leaders of the organization and learn about the organization, because I find myself very fortunate to be the commissioner of such a wonderful organization filled with great people.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Could you tell us if the Leader of the Opposition has been receptive and whether he has seen to it that he meets with your senior officials?

Commr Michael Duheme: I have not heard back.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: You haven't heard anything back.

Commr Michael Duheme: No.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Okay, thank you.

That concludes my questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Ehsassi.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for six minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

You're well supported, Minister. It's always a pleasure to see gender parity. There are senior women who have managed to rise through the ranks in government.

I've asked you this question before, but I'll ask it again. You committed to consulting the opposition parties before appointing the commissioner of the soon-to-be-established office of the national counter-foreign interference coordinator. You've repeated that publicly.

However, my party hasn't been consulted so far about the candidates. You promised to announce the appointment on September 15. However, today is October 23.

When are you going to consult with the opposition parties, and when are you going to appoint the commissioner to head that office?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

I have made a number of commitments along these lines. Initially, my expectation was we would have a name to be shared with the opposition before Parliament convened. In my last appearance, which I believe was last week, I repeated those comments, and that still stands. We do have a name, and we look forward to presenting that name to the opposition and doing the consultation.

On our end, it will be coming forth in short order.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you.

Can you confirm that the RCMP's budget will be cut by 2% as part of the budget reduction effort that the Minister of Finance announced to all the agencies and departments?

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: We have. I believe I did confirm that as part of the comprehensive expenditure review, there is a 2% target for Canada Border Services Agency and 2% for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Notwithstanding those reductions,

they're both still getting an additional 1,000—CBSA as well as RCMP—personnel.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: As for the RCMP budget reduction, a figure of \$98 million seems to have been floating around. That represents a significant cut for an agency that has to deliver results and ensure the security of our border. I don't know if cutting the RCMP's budget by \$98 million is a good idea.

I also want to talk to you about another reduction that was announced. You want to give more power to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the CBSA, for example. However, in the context of Bill C-2, you agree that the budget of the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, or NSIRA, should be reduced by 15% over three years.

Don't you find it odd to reduce NSIRA's resources and clip its wings, when it is supposed to conduct investigations to ensure that the RCMP and the CBSA are doing their oversight work?

I find that a bit inconsistent. I'm really disappointed to learn that the government isn't very interested in the fact that agencies related to national security are losing their capacity to investigate and review files.

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: The comprehensive expenditure review is a very important undertaking by the Prime Minister. He has asked every single department to work with our officials to come up with areas of low, medium and high risk so that an assessment could be made.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Excuse me for interrupting, Minister. I don't mean to be rude.

This is an agency whose mandate is to investigate and review files. Its total budget is \$17 million. The government is asking it to make budget cuts, meaning that nearly \$3 million will be cut from its budget. You're telling us that you're going to grant our agencies more power to share information, but that you're going to reduce this agency's ability to investigate and review files. I'd like to point out that this agency was set up to do that work. I understand that everyone has to do their part, but I honestly don't think that's a wise decision.

I'll move on to another topic now. In fact, I'm going to give you the opportunity to clarify something, once and for all. There was confusion again last week when it came to your public statement. Correct me if I'm wrong.

The agency is going to hire 800 border officers, who will undergo 18 weeks of training in Rigaud or Chilliwack. You're also going to hire another 200 people, who will be part of the operational personnel. They won't be trained in Rigaud, and they won't take that full 18-week training.

Can you confirm that this is indeed the case, so that everyone understands the same thing?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I can offer more certainty today than I did the last time around. We announced last week that 1,000 new CBSA officers will be hired and deployed. The training will start in November, with the first cohort being out by—

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Minister, I'm so sorry to interrupt.

You're saying 1,000 officers are going to be hired. However, it won't be 1,000 border services officers who are trained in Rigaud, but 800. The president of the CBSA told us at her last appearance that 800 border officers were to receive training in Rigaud over 18 weeks and that 200 other people would be part of the operational personnel. That's the term the president used. We don't know what training will be offered to those 200 people.

It's important to stop creating confusion. We're talking about 800 border officers and 200 operational personnel. The latter won't be trained in Rigaud.

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I unfortunately have to interrupt you. You'll have a chance to come back to that question a bit later. In the meantime, perhaps the minister and the representatives of the organizations will have an opportunity to clarify or correct the remarks you just summarized.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lloyd for five minutes.

[English]

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

Thank you, Minister, to you and the parliamentary secretary, for being here.

Minister, are you aware of the recent W5 report that quotes RCMP Superintendent Mathieu Bertrand, who stated that at least seven Mexican cartels are operating in Canada and using our country as a transshipment point for drugs?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: As you're aware, Mr. Lloyd, we did list seven cartels—

Dane Lloyd: You're aware of this report from W5?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I haven't personally seen that report, but I'm aware.

Dane Lloyd: Well, it's a shocking report.

Minister, why do you think these criminal organizations have made Canada a central point for their operations in recent years?

• (1140)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Lloyd, across the world... I was with the Five Eyes in September and there's a common theme of transnational criminal entities that are expanding their reach. In this case, I don't think—

Dane Lloyd: You don't think this is a Canada problem?

The Chair: MP Lloyd, if we're going to avoid points of order and all sorts of other interruptions, we should make sure that the interpretation works and that we have a conversation that's understood by everyone. As I'm making those comments, I'm stopping the clock. I'm just inviting everyone to make sure that we have an intelligible conversation.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

Minister, you're saying that this is a world problem, but why has this grown in Canada in recent years? Why do you think?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: The issues around transnational criminal organizations are something that we're deeply worried about. We've taken some concrete action, and Canada, like other countries, is facing an increase in them.

Dane Lloyd: Okay. You don't have anything specific.

Minister, your government lifted visa requirements for Mexico in December 2016. Are you familiar with that decision?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I was not in cabinet at that time, but I am familiar with that decision.

Dane Lloyd: Do you agree that this decision expanded the cartel presence in Canada?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I don't have a direct causal link to that, but you're aware that last year, that restriction was closed.

Dane Lloyd: I'm aware. Do you think, though, there was a connection between lifting the visa requirements and the expanded presence of the cartels and the strengthening of their smuggling networks in Canada?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I'm not at liberty to speculate on that, Mr. Lloyd.

Dane Lloyd: Minister, I have a report from the Canada Border Services Agency from November 2016, one month before your government decided to lift the visa requirements. It says, "The visa lift will make travel to Canada easier in order to establish or strengthen existing cartel smuggling chains. In the next three years, Mexican drug cartels are expected to expand their presence in Canada."

That is in a CBSA report, which was written in November 2016, one month before your government lifted the visa requirements, and you're saying you can't see any causal link to that. Is the CBSA wrong, Minister?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: First of all, I haven't read that report, Mr. Lloyd, and I am not at liberty to speculate on the causal link.

Dane Lloyd: Minister, the CBSA was correct. It correctly predicted that your government's actions would expand the cartels' presence in Canada. It's plain for everyone in this country to see. Your government was warned and it recklessly chose to move ahead by lifting these visa requirements.

Minister, do you accept responsibility for your government's failure in making Canada a base for organized crime?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: My responsibility is the safety and security of Canadians. That is a task that I take very seriously each and every day. I work to ensure that the safety and security of Canadians are enhanced. This includes a number of measures that we've taken, including a number of bills, like Bill C-2, Bill C-12, Bill C-9 and Bill C-8—

Dane Lloyd: I'm going to interrupt, Minister. I've given you some good time to respond.

If you can't see the causal link between lifting these visa requirements and the increasing cartel activity in Canada, why did your government then reimpose the visa requirements?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: There were a number of considerations, as you're aware Mr. Lloyd, post-COVID. We made some changes. We had a number—

Dane Lloyd: Were you advised that the lifting of these visas had caused an increase in crime and that the implementation of these visas was necessary to staunch the stem of organized crime growth in Canada?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Lloyd, I wasn't the minister at that point, and I did not have that particular information—

Dane Lloyd: You're talking about borders today, and this is a critical issue in Canada. We've just had a *W5* report and you've listed seven South American and Central American cartels as terrorist organizations, but you don't know and you can't say whether your government's policies are intended to stop those terrorist organizations from operating in Canada. You can't say whether or not lifting the visa requirements caused it, Minister.

How can you not know these answers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: What I can tell you, Mr. Lloyd, is that we made a decision to list seven cartels as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code. It is a decisive step that's meant to curtail the influence and filtration of these cartels within Canada.

Dane Lloyd: Minister, in 2020, at a committee, you said systemic racism has permeated the RCMP. I'm glad we have the commissioner here today. Do you still believe, as you did in 2020, that racism permeates the RCMP?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I'm not sure if that's the exact wording, but I will say systemic racism exists within many of our institutions. It is one area that all of us will need to work to enhance. The commissioner and I have had a number of conversations as a leader. The commissioner is aware of some of the challenges that exist. It is about ensuring that our independent Royal Canadian Mounted Police is strengthened and able to do a much better job than it is doing right now.

I'm proud of the work it does, and I have full confidence in its ability to do that work.

• (1145)

The Chair: I apologize for interrupting, but that's all the time we have for this part.

Let me turn to MP Acan for five minutes.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is so sad to see the repeated behaviours on the floor. I'm new to the committee. I hope this is not how a committee is supposed to be. They're cutting off the answers, interrupting the witnesses and claiming that this is the way Canadians are asking these questions. As everybody knows, Canadians are very polite and respectful people, so I would like to continue the interrupted questions with the minister.

Minister, I agree that Canadians need to hear the answers without any interruption. You were answering a question about the 30,000 individuals. You were deferring to Ms. O'Gorman to give the answer. Can we continue from there, please?

Erin O'Gorman (President, Canada Border Services Agency): I'll just say a few things out of the gate.

We have about 500 officers dedicated to removals, and they're doing an excellent job. They are following up on their files, and they are removing people every day. That's important to know.

On removals in progress, there are a lot of things that go into that. Sometimes it's getting travel documents for individuals, and sometimes it's allowing people to have their children finish their school year so they can go, or it's just making travel arrangements.

In process means we're actively engaging with individuals to have them leave the country. Many will leave the country without engagement with CBSA because they have their travel documents and they're going.

The number is large. It doesn't mean some of those people won't try to abscond, but there's activity required to remove certain individuals.

We do have people on warrant who have absconded. CBSA has detention facilities, but it's the IRB that maintains detention. We will make the case, but CBSA isn't the sole authority in terms of detention. Sometimes an IRB decision will be not to maintain detention. People may abscond, and we put out a warrant for those people.

In terms of criminality, those are not criminals at large. They're criminals who will have served a sentence if it was imposed upon them. I'm not minimizing that. They are people who need to leave the country. They are the highest priority of our removal officers.

We also put people on warrant who are serving sentences. We actually know exactly where they are. They are in a correctional facility somewhere in the country. We put those warrants out to make sure they don't leave without our knowing. It's an administrative warrant, so when it is time, when they're done serving their sentence, CBSA is made aware, and we can come in and take carriage of the individual.

As you can see, it's a complex domain. There's activity all the time. As the minister said, we removed the highest number in a decade last year. We're on track to exceed that this year. The fact is there are other people coming in to our removals inventory. These are people who today will perhaps hear from the Federal Court that their request for reconsideration is denied. They will come in to our inventory. People are moving. These are points in time. People are moving through the system. They are moving into the inventory. They are, importantly, moving out of the inventory and leaving the country.

Sima Acan: Thank you, Ms. O'Gorman.

I know your answer will not make a super clip for our Conservative members here, but thank you very much for the answer. This is the answer I believe Canadians are looking for. It's an ongoing process, as we hear. Thank you very much for your efforts.

Secretary of State Sahota, you visited law enforcement across the country from coast to coast during the summer, and you're still doing it.

Could you tell us what key concerns frontline officers have highlighted? How will government legislation, such as Bill C-2 and Bill C-12, support their crucial work protecting Canadians?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: I appreciate the question.

It has been a busy summer learning and consulting with law enforcement across the country as to the supports, tools and changes in legislation that law enforcement is looking for.

On Bill C-2, across the board, whether it's a police association or chiefs of police across the country, they've all been in support of this bill.

What I, in fact, did hear was a lot of disappointment when the bill was amended to remove key essential parts. Five parts of Bill C-2 were removed in order to have the other essential parts that are in Bill C-12 move along the legislative process. The reason for the disappointment was a key area that the Conservatives disagreed with, which were unlawful acts of \$10,000 cash donations as money-laundering types—

• (1150)

The Chair: Secretary of State Sahota, please finish the sentence.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Those are very essential in order to provide law enforcement with the tools that are needed to investigate effectively and charge.

We are currently trying to fight tomorrow's crimes with yesterday's laws. It's really important to modernize and make sure we keep up with the times.

Sima Acan: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That's all of the time we have for this part.

[*Translation*]

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

Claude DeBellefeuille: Minister, the RCMP is going to be rolling out the hiring of 1,000 new officers. The commissioner made a commitment that the 1,000 officers will be trained at the police academy because he wants to maintain high standards of quality.

Can you confirm that, of the 1,000 officers the agency will hire, 800 will be trained according to high standards of quality at Rigaud college?

Can you tell me where and how the 200 operational personnel will be trained?

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: May I ask for clarification? Are you referencing the RCMP or CBSA? If it's the RCMP Depot...

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: The interpretation may have been too quick.

I was saying that the RCMP will train those 1,000 officers at the police academy because it wants to maintain high standards of quality. The CBSA seems to have made another decision, which is that, of the 1,000 officers, 800 will be trained to high standards in Rigaud. The CBSA says that the other 200 people will be operational personnel.

Minister, the big mystery is who will train those 200 operational personnel and how they will be trained. That's concerning to us, since border security is a priority.

Can you tell us how the agency's 200 operational personnel will be trained?

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: The training will take place in Rigaud—I think President O'Gorman can elaborate on the logistics of it—starting in November, and we hope to have the first cohort complete the training by March.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: What you're telling me is that there will be training in Rigaud and that it won't necessarily be 18 weeks of training, as it will be for the 800 border officers.

Minister, given the government's priority of engaging in border security, can you tell me whether you think it's reasonable to require the RCMP and the CBSA to make significant cuts? We already know that they're understaffed and overworked.

Don't you think it's a bit inconsistent to give them the necessary human resources tools, on the one hand, but on the other hand, to take away the budgets they need to do their job properly?

The Chair: Unfortunately, your time is already up. That's a very good question, but we'll have to wait for an answer.

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

[English]

Frank Caputo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, we just heard Ms. O'Gorman respond to a question from the Liberals. What wasn't included in there was this: How many people of the 30,000 awaiting deportation orders are on warrant right now?

Again, I'm asking you for just a number.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I can't give you that number as of today.

What I can suggest is that, if you want an answer that gives you more accurate information, you should ask Ms. O'Gorman.

• (1155)

Frank Caputo: Do you have an approximate number? You are the minister: The buck stops with you. Do you even have an approximate number? Is it 20%, 10%? Do you know? It is your job to know this, minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: What I do know is that CBSA is working towards removals. We had the highest removals last year of 18,000 individuals. This year we are set to surpass 20,000, and in future years we will be increasing those numbers. What we do have—

Frank Caputo: With all due respect, Minister, you have 30,000, so of the 20,000 you removed last year, we have 150% more awaiting. You don't know how many are at large. Do you know how many who have criminal records are at large?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: It's an evolving situation. Every single day there are people who are added to the inventory, and every single day there are people who are removed from the inventory because they have either left or regularized their status in whatever form. To be very clear, we are working towards removals. They're in an orderly manner.

Frank Caputo: That is not what I asked, Minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: There are instances where we are unable to send—

Frank Caputo: Minister, with all due respect, I asked a question.

I'll ask Ms. O'Gorman.

Do you know the number—just the number—of what percentage are warrants of those 30,000 removal orders? Give the number, please, approximate, even.

Erin O'Gorman: There are 30,000 removals in progress of people we are engaging. We have 32,000 warrants for people we are looking for.

Frank Caputo: I beg your pardon? There are 32,000 warrants?

Erin O'Gorman: These are people who are in our warranted inventory who we are actively looking for.

Frank Caputo: I'm sorry. You have—

Erin O'Gorman: I'll point out that all of this is posted publicly. These aren't secret numbers. They're on the CBSA website.

Frank Caputo: You know them, but the minister doesn't. Okay.

I'm sorry. There are 32,000 people set for deportation who are on warrant, which means you don't know where they are. Am I clear?

Erin O'Gorman: That's correct. We are looking for them.

I will point out, as I said, that these are points in time. Since we last met, we have removed more of those people on warrant. Unfortunately, we have had people who have absconded. These are fluid.

Frank Caputo: I understand that they're fluid.

Erin O'Gorman: There are 500 CBSA officers doing excellent work all of the time to remove these individuals.

Frank Caputo: I don't doubt that.

Ma'am, with all due respect, we have 30,000 deportation orders. This is half of Kamloops we're talking about. There are 32,000 people who are lost.

I'm going to leave it there and give the time to MP Kirkland. I'm befuddled at that number.

Thank you.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you to you all for being here. I'm going to try to be very succinct because I have a very short bit of time.

It sounded a lot like everything is fine. You indicated that you're working at this, that the borders are getting there, that we're getting secure, that we're on our way. It feels like you're saying that everything is fine.

Minister, this question is for you.

Violent crimes in Toronto are up 60%. Homicides are up 62%. Sexual assaults are up 73%. Extortion is up 245%. Police are now telling Canadians to follow a 9 p.m. routine. Durham Regional Police and Niagara police are asking people to shut their doors, lock their doors, put their alarm systems on at 9 p.m., and keep themselves safe.

Do you think this is the new normal under your watch in Canada?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I've had an opportunity to meet with many of the law enforcement agencies you cite. I can say that, overall, the trend of crime is going down. There are—

Rhonda Kirkland: I'm sorry; I just asked if you think this is the new normal.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: You gave a preamble, and I believe I have time to respond equal to the time you took to pose the question.

If I may, I've spoken to a number of police services you cite. Overall, the trend of crime is going down. Obviously, there are people who don't feel that way. I fully recognize that there have been a number of high-profile instances.

We are working as a government by bringing forward—

Rhonda Kirkland: Excuse me. I'm sorry, Minister—

The Chair: I'm sorry; I have to interrupt that segment.

I have to move to the last segment led by MP Sari.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I'm wondering what the purpose of this committee is. Our primary role as legislators and elected officials is to reassure the public. I want to thank the witnesses today because what they've said when they were given the floor is reassuring to the public. That's the most important thing.

I'd like to go to you, Ms. Sahota.

Crime has always existed and will always exist, especially around the borders.

How will the government's strategy be able to strengthen border security and better combat the transnational organized crime across the border?

I'd like to ask another question to other people, so I would ask you to kindly answer my question in one minute.

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Thank you.

I'll start by saying that today is a good day. The justice minister just tabled a new justice reform bill on bail and sentencing reform. There are many provisions to deal with the crimes that Madam Kirkland just spoke about, as well.

I want to say that police of different jurisdictions will always give advice to take the steps necessary for individuals to feel safe in their communities and will give the best advice that all homeowners should always take, given any circumstances, whether it's today, yesterday or decades from now.

In terms of cross-border activities, there are many measures that we've taken to strengthen the borders. I know that Mr. Brosseau will also get into that in the second hour. Through the RCMP and the CBSA, we have intercepted and seized many illegal guns and drugs coming across our border. It's because of the joint effort that the U.S. and Canada have undertaken for the past several months, and I think we've been very successful. That's one thing.

Questions were asked earlier about funding to our agencies, and there has been an injection of a lot of funding. Without it, our agencies would not have the equipment that we have provided, and that includes three Black Hawk helicopters, 60 tactical mission drones and 40 operational drones from the CAF. All of these technologies are being applied, and we now have 24-7 surveillance at the border.

These are all great measures and steps that are being taken by our government. I know the Conservatives have a lot of criticism, but under their government, there were not deep investments such as these. These investments are very important. The co-operation that we have with the United States and our Five Eyes allies is very important as well.

I would go back to giving police authorities the tools they need and making sure our regulations are keeping up with the times. That is why we've introduced Bill C-2 and Bill C-12. It's important that all aspects in these bills be eventually passed through this House, because that keeps us on par and in line with our Five Eyes allies.

Transnational organized crime is happening across all countries. There are checks that are done when somebody applies for an eTA from a visa-exempt country. As in the U.K., when somebody is coming and has a past criminal record, checks are done.

I want to address that issue as well. The reason the Mexican visa eTA was taken away was the increase in asylum claims that we saw. It's important to recognize that criminals who operate across the world do so in a very clandestine way and are not using their proper identity and information.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: I have two more questions.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

Abdelhaq Sari: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. O'Gorman, can you briefly give me some details on the warrants targeting 32,000 people and the 600 foreign nationals you're looking for?

I would also like to have time to ask Commissioner Duheme a question.

Erin O'Gorman: As I said, the data is published on our website.

Some of the 1,000 new people we're going to hire will certainly be dedicated to the files of people who are subject to removal orders.

Abdelhaq Sari: I'd like to ask one last question.

The Chair: Unfortunately, Mr. Sari, you won't have time to ask a question. There may be time for that in the second part of the meeting.

The minister and the secretary of state are going to have to leave. We thank them for being here and for answering our questions. The good news is that the officials are going to stay for another hour.

We will now suspend for a few minutes.

• (1205) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1210)

The Chair: We are resuming the meeting with the senior officials.

Mr. Brosseau, you have the floor for five minutes to make your presentation.

Kevin Brosseau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Canada's ongoing efforts to combat the illicit fentanyl trade and safeguard our borders.

My presentation will be brief to allow sufficient time for your questions.

[*English*]

It's important to note that while Canada and the U.S. are both experiencing domestic fentanyl crises, Canada is not a significant source of fentanyl to the U.S. Based on volumes of seized fentanyl reported by U.S. Customs and Border Protection since 2022, about one-tenth of 1% of fentanyl is attributable to the northern border region, but any amount is too much.

[*Translation*]

Nevertheless, both Canada and the U.S. are confronting the fentanyl crises in our respective countries, and it is vitally important that we work together in addressing this issue.

[*English*]

My role is to integrate and coordinate Canada's overall response to fentanyl aimed at both supply and demand. Since my appointment, I have worked with partners across all levels of government and law enforcement agencies, as well as with the U.S. and international organizations, to accelerate Canada's efforts to detect, disrupt and dismantle the fentanyl trade, a scourge that has led to the deaths of over 50,000 Canadians since 2016.

[*Translation*]

I have also heard directly from frontline stakeholders across Canada from key sectors involved in addressing this issue. They each have a role to play in the fight against fentanyl.

[*English*]

More information on what I have heard from stakeholders is available in my interim report, which I published this past July.

[*Translation*]

I look forward to your questions.

[*English*]

I look forward to your questions.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for being so concise, Mr. Brosseau. Your testimony will be very helpful.

Mr. Caputo, you have the floor for six minutes.

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: No, it's not me.

The Chair: MP Au, the floor is yours.

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

Thanks for coming and for your brief report.

We all know that the fentanyl problem is a big one and affects so many people. You mentioned earlier that you are not only working with the United States but you are also working with our international partners.

Can you elaborate on that?

Kevin Brosseau: Through you, Mr. Chair, thank you for the question.

In fact, as you understand and as we've already talked about, the trade in illicit drugs, and fentanyl in particular, is one that's transnational in nature by definition, and meaning more outside of Canada. As a consequence, last month, my colleagues, many of whom are sitting at the table, and I were in Mexico, where we met with senior Mexican officials, security officials, etc., to discuss how we can actually work together to combat this trade. That will culminate in further discussions trilaterally here in Canada in the next couple months or so between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

I've also had many interactions with European officials from the European Union Drugs Agency, again, trying to share best practices to understand what's working and what's not and what the nature of the crime and the nature of the trade is.

Mr. Chair, global transnational organized crime, in particular drug traffickers, change the way they do business rapidly. As a consequence, it is very important that we stay on top of it.

Chak Au: I'm sorry, but I just wanted to interrupt.

What has been identified as the weakness in the Canadian system in terms of intercepting or catching drug kingpins?

Kevin Brosseau: It's a complex question that I think deserves a complex answer. It's not simple. If there were a simple answer to that complex question and that complex problem, it would have been solved.

The transnational nature of crime is that different modalities will be used at any given time, whether it's crypto, whether it's the dark web or whether it's traditional supply routes, for instance. There are a number of different ways that drugs move through Canada all the time.

Clearly, what's important is that we remain in close collaboration and communication both domestically with agencies that are at this table and with other agencies that are tasked with combatting this crime around the world. Those are the important elements of why the organizations actually have to work together.

• (1215)

Chak Au: Okay.

Often, after your office had been set up, the administration had been talking about the quantity of fentanyl, because it's being stopped at the border and things like that.

I want to ask your opinion. Which is more important: the chemicals themselves or the people behind producing or trafficking those chemicals? What has been the result in terms of catching people and holding them accountable?

Kevin Brosseau: I'll let the commissioner of the RCMP and the president of the CBSA talk about the number of arrests, etc., they have made. Those are their responsibilities, and they have the proper data to be able to explain that.

It is a complex ecosystem with, again, precursors—chemicals, as you properly described—and, I will say, a voracious approach from an enforcement perspective where those who are choosing to profit from death and despair are held to account. I've certainly been briefed on the number of operations, including one earlier in the winter that resulted in dozens...I'll have the number wrong, but I'm happy to give the committee the numbers from the Canadian integrated response to organized crime, or CIROC. That involves law enforcement officers from every organization in Canada, because this is a local issue and it's a global issue, and there were a number of arrests related to that to hold people to account.

Chak Au: Yes. Again, I want to know the number of people we've caught or are going after.

Commissioner, do you have the number of people?

Commr Michael Duheme: If you're looking for the exact number of people who have been caught or arrested, I don't have those numbers with me. Sometimes they're charged with a certain offence, there's plea bargaining and then they plead guilty to another offence.

If I may, I'll go back to your initial question: What's more important, the precursors or the people? I think both of them have to be in parallel. The challenge with precursors is that they're legal when they come in. There's legislation that will allow Health Canada to shift more rapidly to make it illegal. The other side is that obviously you want the people who are working on it. To that question, then, I would say that both of them work in parallel. We work very closely with the FBI and the DEA to identify key companies or individuals involved in either the shipping or the fabrication of fentanyl.

Chak Au: How effective have you been in terms of identifying those people?

Commr Michael Duheme: Well, we have a couple that will be coming up in the next couple of weeks. We've been successful in a couple of files in the United States as well.

Chak Au: Okay. Good.

Commissioner, what systems are in place between your office and such U.S. agencies as the DEA and border patrol to share information on fentanyl precursors?

Kevin Brosseau: The systems for operational information sharing between those organizations exist between the organizations

that are represented here and not my office in particular. My office works directly with the Canadian agencies to coordinate the liaison with the American agencies. The information flows between them.

Commissioner Duheme and President O'Gorman can explain those processes.

The Chair: Unfortunately, that may have to wait. We need to go to the next segment.

MP Ramsay.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Brosseau, further to the question of MP Au, you said you are working to eradicate the supply side, but you're also monitoring and coordinating the effects on the demand side. Do we know in Canada how many users we have of opiates or fentanyl? Do we have an approximate number of people using? Do we have any trends? Are they more urban? Are they rural? Are they young? Do we know those sorts of things?

Kevin Brosseau: I do not have a very good handle on the denominator or the number of people who are using opioids at any given time. Colleagues from Health Canada certainly can provide you expert advice with respect to that. It's very difficult to be able to get a precise answer in terms of those who are willingly able to describe, in a self-reporting questionnaire, etc., using opioids. We do know that it is on a significant scale and scope in both small communities and big cities. That's why I've spent time in many communities in this country. I've spent time in indigenous communities as well. It has disproportionate impacts, depending on what part of the country you're in.

Fentanyl is a highly addictive opioid. That addiction is very, very difficult to shake. As a consequence, many of the actions that have to be taken to reduce the demand are in fact local in nature. What would work in one community may not work in another. What I've tried to do is bring people together to talk about the fact that if you push hard in reducing demand, in building awareness amongst young people, and in doing prevention activities, those are core things. I learned as a young police officer about what works. You prevent the crime before it happens. You prevent addiction before it happens. At the same time, you are ruthless on the supply side that the commissioner just talked about and pursue those investigations with rigour.

That is how we're going to be able to resolve this horrible situation where almost 20 people per day die a fentanyl death.

• (1220)

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay: With regard to Canada Post and the potential opening of mail, do you believe that the provisions in Bill C-2 are important for combatting drug trafficking in rural areas and in the north?

Kevin Brosseau: I thank the member for the question.

In many communities, it's only through Canada Post that people can receive parcels and do business. I've worked in northern Manitoba and the Yukon, and I've also heard from people in Nunavut that those provisions would go a long way toward helping police and communities prevent the trafficking of drugs such as fentanyl.

Jacques Ramsay: I'm going to turn the rest of my time over to MP Sari.

Abdelhaq Sari: Thank you very much, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Duheme, there are some things we already knew and others we've learned today.

What we already knew is that the Leader of the Opposition has expressed some reluctance to get his security clearance. Today, you're telling us that you invited him to meet with senior members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and that, once again, he ignored that invitation.

When was the last time the Leader of the Official Opposition met with senior officials from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Commr Michael Duheme: Since I've been in this position, there hasn't been a meeting, but that's not unusual. In the past, it has been very rare for the Leader of the Opposition to meet with members of the defence staff. Our people meet with Mr. Poilievre about his personal security, but it's not necessarily the defence staff that does that.

Abdelhaq Sari: How do you explain that someone who criticizes the work of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its staff is reluctant to meet with the people who make the decisions?

Commr Michael Duheme: It's not up to me to judge why Mr. Poilievre agrees to meet with me or not. It's not for me to decide.

Abdelhaq Sari: Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for six minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Duheme, there's a lot of talk about land borders in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway region. However, being very familiar with the part of the country I represent as a member, I know that there is a long stretch of navigable waters where a lot of smugglers operate. They have high-speed boats, and you don't have all the tools you need to fight these smugglers.

At the previous meeting, a witness told us that you had coordinated a radar project to be able to track what goes on over that whole stretch.

Can you explain to me why that stretch is now being abandoned? People in my riding who live on the shores of Lake Saint-François have noticed a significant decrease in patrols, both on the U.S. side and on the Canadian side.

Why did you abandon the plan to use radar to help you ensure the security of the border on navigable waters?

• (1225)

Commr Michael Duheme: You didn't mention the location, but I think I understand where it is.

This place has long been known for its roads, which are used by smugglers and gun traffickers. Any time there is a road, anything can go through. We have a very good relationship with the police force there. On Tuesday, we were in Washington, and my counterpart in charge of the border told me that he had the same concerns.

We are about to acquire new technologies, and we are thinking about a strategy that would address the situation in this region, which has been going on for a very long time.

Claude DeBellefeuille: I think the program that was piloted has proven its worth. However, in 2014, the government withdrew funding from the RCMP for installing these radars.

Since 2014, I get the impression that this border region, which includes Akwesasne, Lake Saint-François and Dundee, on the borders of Ontario and New York State, has been abandoned. I have met with people from the American authorities, and they feel the same way I do.

In the border security plan that the government tabled, there is a lot of talk about ports of entry. However, have you received the money you need to be able to also ensure security on navigable waters in this critical area for smuggling firearms and goods, as well as for human trafficking?

Commr Michael Duheme: The RCMP received \$667 million of the \$1.3 billion budget that was announced. A lot of that money is going to be invested in technology and, of course, in IT human resources.

I think it's unrealistic to have too many people at the physical border. We have to rely more and more on technology to ensure that police operations are more targeted, both in Canada and in the United States.

Relations with the United States are excellent, and they are experiencing the same problem as we are.

Claude DeBellefeuille: You agree that our report should include a recommendation that ports of entry are important, but that we also need technological tools and patrols. This would ensure border security at critical points on navigable waters.

Is that correct?

Commr Michael Duheme: Yes, I agree with that.

I would also like to add that, with the amount we received, we purchased portable radars. We can move them onto water or onto a piece of land, such as a field.

We've also increased the number of drones.

Finally, we can't talk about borders without mentioning the Black Hawk helicopters.

Claude DeBellefeuille: We see them a lot in our area.

Commr Michael Duheme: We hear them as well.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Yes, we hear them a lot.

Thank you, Mr. Duheme.

Ms. O'Gorman, I have time for one last question.

I've asked the minister this question a number of times. I don't know if the language barrier prevents us from understanding each other. Be that as it may, I would like you to explain everything about the 200 operational staff members.

What training are they going to get?

I heard you say that they're not going to get the 18-week training. However, they are investigators and analysts, and they need training.

Erin O'Gorman: Since the interpreters speak better French than I do, I'll answer you in English to make sure I'm clear.

[English]

CBSA is charged with making sure that what is coming into the country, be it people or goods, imports, and certain things going out of the country should be coming in and going out. It begins outside of Canada with our liaison officers. We will hire more liaison officers. They are typically drawn from the front line and typically are trained at Rigaud, but we're not going to put them into Rigaud tomorrow. We're going to take them from our current complement of people, and we will have to backfill them.

At the border, you are all familiar with the people you see when you come into the country, people at our ports of entry, our uniformed officers who do the 18 weeks at Rigaud. We will not change the 18 weeks. Everybody will get 18 weeks.

When they seize firearms, they are supported by the inland investigators who take those firearms and work with the prosecution, execute warrants and have people go to jail. Those people are typically taken from the front line. We're looking at maybe bringing some people in laterally. There are others with those skill sets. They might have to be replaced via Rigaud, but they will come in.

• (1230)

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. O'Gorman, since this is a very relevant but somewhat complex question, and the answer won't be satisfactory because of the time constraint, would you agree to provide an answer in writing to Mrs. DeBellefeuille's question?

Erin O'Gorman: Yes, I can do that.

Can I just add a little something about how complex the operations are?

The Chair: Yes, you have 10 seconds.

[English]

Erin O'Gorman: Our trade officers make sure that aluminum and steel don't come in and get dumped or undervalued in Canada. We have auditors. We take people from universities; we take people from CRA. They are not trained at Rigaud, but they are essential, and they are as important to our operations as anybody else, because they protect what's coming into our country.

There are a lot of moving parts. People are well trained. Our targeting officers don't necessarily come from Rigaud. They wear uniforms. We try to recruit from the other organizations in the security and intelligence community.

I'm happy to outline that, but it's complex. Some will come from our current front line and will have to be backfilled, and some will come from CRA. It's a complicated organization, and they're doing an excellent job.

[Translation]

The Chair: I've been generous. I gave you extra time. We very much appreciate what you are telling us, because we know that it is complex.

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you will have a chance to come back to this. We'll talk again about the follow-up that you might like to do.

Ms. Kirkland, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland: Thank you.

Through you, Chair, I have a couple of questions.

Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Brosseau.

You mentioned the crisis that we have. There are 50,000, I think you mentioned, in that crisis who we've lost to fentanyl as of 2024. I know we've lost a number since, so you understand the seriousness of my question. My nephew was one of those about six months ago.

My question is in regard to a recent article. A U.S. source reported that you have no authority to direct the RCMP, the CBSA or other police services. In fact, I believe your quote exactly was, "I have no authority to direct them or ask them to do anything."

Could you confirm that's what you said?

Kevin Brosseau: I don't know the source of that, but I can tell you what my authorities are as a senior official at the Privy Council Office. As I mentioned at the front, my job is to coordinate and integrate the efforts and not to replace a minister or a deputy head, both of whom are represented here.

It is powerful—I believe my colleagues will either dismiss me or not on this panel—to bring people together and bring a singular focus to enhance the efforts related to fentanyl because of the tragic stories I hear every day about people like your nephew and so many other people in this country.

Rhonda Kirkland: It sounds like it is correct that you don't have authority over those services. It feels like the position was created solely to appease the Trump administration without any real intent.... I'm wondering if you can explain how we address Canada's fentanyl crisis if you don't have the authority.

Kevin Brosseau: Look, we have a number of different organizations that have various mandates across that complex supply and demand ecosystem that I described. Prior to my appointment—and I'm last in line for credit and first in line for criticism—the coordination between those who are tasked with looking at demand and providing health services across the board federally, provincially and municipally as well as the enforcement organizations focused on supply perhaps was not as good as it could have been, related to ensuring that when you push on one side, it's going to impact the other.

• (1235)

Rhonda Kirkland: I'm going to have to stop here so I can give my time to Mr. Gill.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Thank you for being here today. I really appreciate that.

My questions will be directed to the president of the CBSA.

President, in my community of Langley, British Columbia, police recently uncovered a fentanyl superlab. Authorities confirmed that it was capable of producing multiple kilograms of fentanyl each week.

Given the scale of operation, how confident are you that the CBSA currently has the resources to prevent similar threats from reaching our communities?

Erin O'Gorman: I'm confident that the officers and employees of CBSA are constantly looking for fentanyl, for precursors, for contraband of all kinds, and I would note the seizure of 350 kilograms of methamphetamines in southern Ontario. A thousand new employees, new CBSA officers, will certainly bolster this, as will our co-operation with local police, with the RCMP and, per your study, our American counterparts.

In the discussion with U.S. DEA and my colleagues this week and with customs and border protection, we exchanged information, exchanged trends, and we exchanged intelligence. We're unrelenting in that mission.

Sukhman Gill: President, you say you're confident, but it's clear that our borders urgently need more support currently. The Liberal government has repeatedly promised to hire 1,000 new agents, yet the commitment remains unfulfilled. The public safety minister has even suggested that it's not his responsibility to do this hiring.

Based on your understanding of hiring and resources, when can Canadians realistically expect to see the commitment delivered? I'm asking for a clear timeline, please.

Erin O'Gorman: It's my responsibility, and the announcement of \$260 million—sorry, excuse me—\$617 million last week has certainly put a fine point on that.

Sukhman Gill: What's the clear timeline?

Erin O'Gorman: We expect over the course of three to four years to bring in those employees, those officers. As I was indicat-

ing in my previous answer, they will be deployed internationally. They will be deployed at the ports of entry. They will be deployed into our inland enforcement and our trade operations and our targeting and our intelligence.

Sukhman Gill: President, would you agree that every day that those positions remain unfilled—

The Chair: MP Gill, that's all the time we had for that segment. I'm sorry for that.

Let me turn now to MP Ehsassi.

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

I'll ask the commissioner a question, picking up from where my colleague Mr. Sari and I left off.

Commissioner, as you know full well, all of us who are public officials have an obligation and a responsibility to have a better understanding of how our institutions work, because you're all doing very sophisticated work and we have to make sure that we're informed of it.

I was wondering if you would be good enough to provide us with a response about the last time Mr. Poilievre met with the senior leadership of the RCMP. When was that? This is so we have it for the record.

It's terrible when the integrity of the RCMP and the leadership are impugned. Another member, who's here today, said earlier this week, "The actions of the leadership of the RCMP, I think, are indefensible in many instances." It doesn't do our country any good when they question the credibility and professionalism of the RCMP.

I was wondering if you could provide us with a summary of the integrity and professionalism that you see day in and day out in the RCMP.

Commr Michael Duheme: It starts at the very first phase of recruiting. We want to make sure that we have the right people, men and women, who are aligned with the core values of the organization.

We then look at the amount of work that has been done in all three of our mandates: frontline policing, the contract work we're doing and special policing services. Look at the work that's being done in the communities, some of the challenging areas where our people work and the respect that the people have for the RCMP.

There was a federal, provincial and territorial meeting last week in Kananaskis. The feedback I got from my representatives who were there was that all of the provinces and territories are very happy with the service the RCMP is providing. That's a testament to the excellent work that's going on out there and the people we hire.

• (1240)

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: When you hear public officials, any one of us here, making irresponsible or indefensible allegations about the RCMP or taking potshots at the professionalism of your organization, how does that affect morale?

Commr Michael Duheme: Any negative comments toward the organization will affect morale. My job as a leader is to make sure that I try to correct it as best I can.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you very much for everything you're doing.

I'll go to Mr. Brosseau.

Some of the members opposite were trying to leave us with the impression that Canada is the only country that has to contend with transnational crime. I suspect this is a topic of much discussion and attention for all countries, whether they be in Europe or in North America.

Could you tell us how much of a threat this is to all countries in the western world?

Kevin Brosseau: The threat transnational organized crime presents to western countries around the world that have open economies and open societies that can be preyed upon is primordial. As I mentioned, it is a complex ecosystem where billions of dollars are being laundered and traded around the world. That's why the coordination and the co-operation I discussed are so important. Commissioner Duheme and President O'Gorman can also talk about the way they work with their Five Eyes partners and other alliances and other partnerships around the world.

Organized crime and organized criminals work together. It used to be that they didn't, but they do now. It amplifies the importance of being able to work together.

This is not a problem that's unique to Canada. It doesn't mean that we let our foot off the gas; in fact, we have to be ruthless in the manner in which we attack this issue. It is by definition a global and transnational problem.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: It's growing in the United States and Europe just as much as it is in Canada.

Kevin Brosseau: It's everywhere.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

That concludes my questions.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Ehsassi.

[*Translation*]

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

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Duheme, the CBSA has stated on a number of occasions that the 800 border officers and the 200 operational staff will be hired within the next three to four years.

Can you confirm your deployment plan for hiring the 1,000 officers?

I've heard through the grapevine that it's more like a four, five, maybe six-year time frame.

Could you confirm that?

Commr Michael Duheme: What I can confirm is that the 1,000 employees who will be hired will include 750 police officers and 250 public service employees with the necessary expertise to meet the needs. It's no different from what Ms. O'Gorman said. The plan extends over four years, and we expect the objectives to be met within three and a half years. It's not a challenge.

What we're working on is the traditional way of training police officers at the RCMP. That will change. The training will consist of two components: basic training that all police officers must take and separate training for frontline officers and federal officers.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you for those clarifications, Mr. Duheme.

Ms. O'Gorman, you told us earlier that the 200 operational staff who will be hired will come from all kinds of backgrounds. They will be scientists and academics, for example, who will meet needs other than those that will be met by frontline officers. They could include intelligence analysts and remote targeting specialists.

Currently, you have about 180 officers on staff who can't use their weapons for all kinds of reasons and who have restrictions on the use of force.

Is your goal to add the 200 operational staff to the 180 officers who are currently helping out your organization?

• (1245)

[*English*]

Erin O'Gorman: CBSA has a duty to accommodate officers who cannot do the full range of their duties. Those individuals would have the opportunity to apply for and be put into funded positions, absolutely. The fact that they might not be able to do the full range of their duties makes them no less of an asset to public safety generally and to CBSA specifically.

There are processes around that. You mentioned that we need to make sure we have properly funded positions and that there is a process that's fair for everybody. Those individuals have skills and experience that we absolutely want to retain.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

Thank you, Ms. O'Gorman.

[*English*]

Let me turn the floor over to MP Lloyd for five minutes.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I'm going to start off with President O'Gorman.

I have a document here, which I obtained through access to information. It shows the number of enforced removals for calendar year 2024, and this chart is based on involvement with organized crime. I can see the numbers for Romania and India, but the figure for Mexico is redacted, and it's the only one that's redacted. Why is that?

Erin O'Gorman: I'm afraid I don't know the document you're referring to, so if I could see that, I could get back to you in writing as to the reason for the redaction and where it came from. Without seeing it, I can't provide any additional information, I'm afraid.

Dane Lloyd: Was there a large number of enforced removals from Mexico in 2024 for organized crime reasons?

Erin O'Gorman: I don't have that data with me. If I could see the document—

Dane Lloyd: Was it a high or low number?

Erin O'Gorman: If I could see the document, I'd be happy to get back to you.

Dane Lloyd: Okay.

Could you explain the rationale for reinstating the visa requirements for Mexico?

Erin O'Gorman: It wasn't a CBSA decision. It was a political decision, and it wouldn't have.... Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship have the visa policy.

Dane Lloyd: Did your department provide any advice for this decision?

Erin O'Gorman: We would have provided advice and data, yes.

Dane Lloyd: Do you stand by the 2016 November report from CBSA, which said that lifting these visa requirements would strengthen the presence of cartels in Canada?

Erin O'Gorman: I'd have to read it. It's hard to stand by a document from that long ago.

What I would say is that it's about the data. We did have a lot of Mexican foreign nationals come to Canada to seek asylum. Those numbers were large. CBSA processed those individuals at ports of entry, and it was part of security screening and—

Dane Lloyd: I just think Canadians were quite shocked when *W5* did a report about seven cartels—at least seven—operating in Canada. They had not been listed as designated terrorist entities.

I'm not saying there wasn't any activity in Canada 10 years ago, but it seems to have grown over the past 10 years, and I think that Canadians are wondering why. What decisions led to that growth in cartel activity in Canada?

Erin O'Gorman: I'm not sure what you mean by “what decisions”. I can talk about the asylum numbers and CBSA's role—

Dane Lloyd: I'll just move to the next question, then, which is for the fentanyl czar, Mr. Brosseau.

It has been reported that a criminal network called the dragon cartel, which comprises Chinese organized crime groups and Mexican cartels, are using Canadian ports to facilitate the trade of a rare fish called the totoaba—apparently, the bladders of these fish are highly valued in Asia—in exchange for precursor chemicals. Are you aware of this trade, which has been reported on?

Kevin Brosseau: I'm aware of the report, but that is all that I'm aware of.

It would probably be better to ask the commissioner of the RCMP or the president of the CBSA, but I'll just say this. Organized crime will use any modality to be able to traffic narcotics, contraband, people or whatever it is.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

CBSA, are you seeing a rise in the trade of this totoaba fish in Canada? Are you guys tracking the movement of these fish products through Canada?

It's not an endangered species, but it's a species of concern.

Erin O'Gorman: Any seizures we make, we track, and we share the information with law enforcement.

On that specific fish, I can certainly come back in writing as to what we've found. I'll say yes to tracking anything that we find that shouldn't be coming into Canada.

Dane Lloyd: Is it easier to facilitate a drug trade when people are exchanging goods rather than money? Is it harder when there's money being exchanged? Is that why people would be trading animal products for precursor chemicals?

Erin O'Gorman: Trade-based money laundering is extremely difficult, and it is on the rise. I'm working with all of my counterparts in other countries.

You might get a package of apples, and if the paperwork looks fishy, we might find—

● (1250)

Dane Lloyd: Fishy—that's an interesting pun.

Thank you. I'm going to move on.

We're very concerned. Canada has always been very proud of its beer. We've had commercials about it. Sadly, a 21-year old young man in New Zealand was killed when he drank a can of beer from Canada, which was carrying pure meth.

Why isn't CBSA doing more to stop the exportation of these drugs out of the port of Vancouver?

Erin O'Gorman: That was a terrible set of facts, absolutely.

We exchange information on cargo with New Zealand and Australia all the time. I received a letter from my counterpart to say the information we provided to New Zealand led to their largest-ever seizure of methamphetamines.

Dane Lloyd: I just hope that Canada doesn't continue to be the big source for that.

Can you please provide the advice or any documentation on the imposition of visas that CBSA might have provided? Is that something you can provide this committee—any policy information?

Erin O'Gorman: I'll look into it.

Dane Lloyd: We'd appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Lloyd.

Let me now move to MP Acan for five minutes.

Sima Acan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Commissioner Duheme, the opposition leader called RCMP leadership despicable, as we all heard, and just today in the House a Conservative member, who is here at the committee today, called the leadership indefensible. Both were looking down on our independent national police. However, we see your hard work. We also know the RCMP continues to work closely with international partners, including the FBI, to dismantle criminal networks and mitigate their impact on Canadian communities.

On that, could you please respond on the article Mr. Lloyd raised on the seven cartels?

Commr Michael Duheme: I could definitely add to what Mr. Lloyd said earlier with the seven cartels.

As you know, the Government of Canada has listed seven. Six are Mexican and the seventh one is from Venezuela. As to what that provides us, it provides law enforcement more tools to lay charges when we investigate and have enough sufficient evidence to lay charges.

The interesting thing about this one is it's going to be interesting to see how it's going to roll out. A lot of the organized crime groups in Canada are dealing with the cartels to get their supplies. If the cartels are listed as a terrorist entity, I can see down the road organized crime in Canada that is associated with these cartels being charged with terrorism as well because they're supporting a terrorist group.

Sima Acan: Thank you so much.

Could you please share with us the statistics on seizures and also give some information on Operation Blizzard? Can you also elaborate on the success of the RCMP in the U.S.?

Commr Michael Duheme: I'll let President O'Gorman share the statistics on Operation Blizzard, and I can share some of the statistics that I have right now.

Erin O'Gorman: In Operation Blizzard we looked at 691,000 packages in air, marine and postal mode, and 67% of the seizures were coming into Canada from the U.S., and 17% were going to the U.S. We had 116 fentanyl seizures totalling 1.73 kilograms. I can provide the others.

Of all of the packages we looked at, a very small proportion had a seizure rate. Most of the packages did not contain drugs, and of those, as I said, most were narcotics coming up from the U.S..

I would just say about the number of fentanyl seizures we made and others, the number isn't important. We've been working with the RCMP and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to follow those upstream and back stream to find out who is sending them and where they were going.

Commr Michael Duheme: From my perspective, there are a couple of statistics that I can provide to you, and Monsieur Brosseau mentioned earlier the CIROC, the Canadian integrated response to organized crime, which has launched a couple of sprints. CIROC is key police leaders from across the country who come together to meet, I think, two to three times per year. They exchange best-practice information and also look at who some of the prominent targets are in Canada. With regard to that first sprint, which took place from December 2024 to January 2025, there were 489 occurrences related to fentanyl, and there were 524 arrests. We've taken on the initiative to do that sprint again. It started in May and continues.

From a national perspective, this is where the RCMP doesn't have the responsibility to collect everything that's been seized across the country, but the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada took that on. What we're seeing right now is that, from November 2024 to September 2025, there were 498 kilograms of fentanyl and analogues. Analogues are just a derivative of fentanyl; they're just less product. The number of litres is 12.7, and the number of seized units is 110,000. That gives you.... This is reporting; it's not.... It's as good as the numbers fed in by the police forces. There are 194 police organizations across the country, and there are about 100 right now that feed in—because this is a new reporting process that we implemented.

• (1255)

Sima Acan: Thank you very much for the information.

Mr. Chair, do I have time?

The Chair: No, unfortunately, you don't. I'm sorry, MP Acan.

It's my usual behaviour to say no.

Sima Acan: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Acan.

There is not enough time to start a third round, so I will bring this meeting to a close.

Before doing that, I will thank all the officials who took the time and made the significant effort of preparing for this meeting and being here in person.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank them for everything they do for our country and for the people who depend on their services. Ladies and gentlemen, have a good day.

Mr. Ramsay, the floor is yours.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Chair, we would like to move a motion.

The Chair: It depends on the motion.

Jacques Ramsay: Can I read it?

The Chair: Yes, you can.

[*English*]

Jacques Ramsay: I move:

That in order for the committee to be prepared for its study of Bill C-12 as soon as it's referred to committee:

That the committee invite members to submit witness lists to the clerk of the committee no later than October 27, 2025, at 5 p.m.;

That the committee schedule four meetings to hear from witnesses, beginning as quickly as possible after the bill is referred to committee; and

Invite the Minister of Public Safety to appear for one hour and invite relevant officials; and

That, in relation to the study of Bill C-8, an act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts, the committee dedicate four meetings to the hearing of witnesses, including one hour with the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Industry.

Also the meetings with regard to Bill C-8 would be in alternance with the present study we're conducting.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

That's not a notice of motion. It's a committee business motion.

[*English*]

It's a committee business motion, which we can debate at any time.

Has a copy of this motion been circulated, including to the clerk and the other members of the committee?

Jacques Ramsay: It's been made available to Mr. Lloyd and to Madam DeBellefeuille, just recently, though. I apologize.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Please also send a copy of the motion to the clerk.

[*English*]

Dane Lloyd: On a point of order, I'm not saying that I'm against this motion necessarily, but we haven't been given the 48 hours' notice in order to debate this motion.

I'm wondering if the clerk could advise us as to whether this motion is in order.

The Chair: This is a committee business motion, which doesn't require any notice. If it were a content motion, it would have to be related to the business of the day; otherwise it would need to have, as you say, 48 hours' notice.

This is a committee business motion. We can debate it, but, obviously, it would have been much better if we had prepared the conversations earlier. I understand opposition MPs would have been consulted.

If that is the case, Madam DeBellefeuille, go ahead.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: We have just received the motion. Our reactions will be off the cuff. Maybe we need to do a better job of communicating if we're going to get consensus.

I'm not opposed to the motion. The only problem I have with that is that we had informally agreed to finish my study and then to alternate with the study of Bill C-8.

I'm not against putting Bill C-12 ahead of Bill C-8. I think that is in line with the motion as presented.

That said, I think it will be a bit difficult to submit a list of witnesses as early as October 27. However, if the clerk tells us that there's no problem and that he can bring in witnesses for the meeting on October 28, that's fine with me.

Mr. Chair, correct me if I'm wrong, but I understood that we were scheduled to hear from witnesses as part of the study of Bill C-8 on October 28 and 30. According to the motion before us today, the study of Bill C-12 would begin on October 28 and 30.

Before continuing, I would like to know if I have understood the motion correctly.

The Chair: Mr. Ramsay, do you want to clarify your motion?

Jacques Ramsay: Bill C-12 is still at second reading in the House of Commons, but it is expected to be referred to committee for study soon.

I sent the text of the motion to committee members, but I had already amended it orally to provide for the alternation between the study of Bill C-8 and your study.

The study of Bill C-12 would come first, then we would alternate between the current study and the study of Bill C-8.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Chair, in that case, could you ask Mr. Ramsay to move an amendment to his motion? What I have in front of me doesn't specify what he just said, that after the study of Bill C-12, the remaining meeting would be devoted to the study on Canada-U.S. border security. Right now, a lot of dates are circulating and there's a bit of confusion.

As I understand it, what is being proposed to us today is that the committee's next meetings will be devoted to the study of Bill C-12, if it is referred to the committee. We will then alternate between the study of Bill C-8 and the members' studies.

Am I understanding that correctly? Is that your understanding as well?

The Chair: I propose the following solution.

Obviously, we—when I say “we”, I mean the committee members, assisted by the House leadership teams—have already discussed some of this. I can see that people do not fully understand what's happening with the study of Bill C-12, which will be referred to the committee one day, perhaps sooner than expected. That's normal because discussions evolve quickly.

On the other hand, next week, the witnesses have already been invited for the current study. It will be hard to issue invitations quickly, as early as next week, to the witnesses for the study of Bill C-12.

Organizationally, I suspect the analysts and the clerk will not be able to do that. Therefore, we will continue with the program scheduled for next week, which is the one you described.

[*English*]

We'll come back next Tuesday with an improved understanding and sharing of what the work needs to be on Bill C-8 and Bill C-12, not forgetting the fact that we need to complete the study and also plan for the work thereafter. It's not only to stop the hearing of witnesses but also to plan how the report will be written.

MP Lloyd, would that be to your satisfaction?

Dane Lloyd: It sounds reasonable to me.

I want to make one point. Next week, we'll be continuing the study we're on right now. The Monday deadline for witnesses seems very premature to me. We should have a longer period of time. I don't think we need to continue discussing this in our committee right now. We should discuss this off-line and confirm what the House leader has said.

I am going to move that we adjourn debate on the motion.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone, for your hard work. We're making progress every time.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, everyone. Have a good day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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