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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 16 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee is meeting on its study of foreign election interference.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the Standing Orders.

Members are all here but have the option to attend via Zoom. I would ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards in front of you. There's a short video; please consult it. This is important for the health and safety of everyone here, especially our interpreters.

I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, raise your hand. If you end up on Zoom for some reason, use the “raise hand” feature.

I would like to welcome our first panel.

From the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Nicole Giles is the senior assistant deputy minister and deputy director of policy and strategic partnerships; from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère is the associate assistant deputy minister and national counter-foreign interference coordinator.

You must both have extensive business cards.

You have five minutes each to make an opening statement, but I believe only Monsieur Aubertin-Giguère will make a statement today.

You have five minutes, please.

[Translation]

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère, and I am the national counter foreign interference coordinator at the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

[English]

The Chair: There's no interpretation.

Okay. If you could, please start again.

[Translation]

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: My name is Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère, and I am the national counter foreign interference coordinator.

My responsibilities include coordinating government-wide initiatives to counter foreign interference, addressing transnational repression and overseeing the implementation of the Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, or FITAA.

In recent years, the Government of Canada has taken significant steps to strengthen its ability to detect, deter and counter foreign interference in our democratic institutions.

[English]

FITAA received royal assent in June 2024 as part of Bill C-70. The act establishes an independent commissioner and a public registry of foreign influence activities. It's designed to strengthen transparency in public affairs and protect Canada's democratic institutions from undue foreign influence.

Under the FITAA framework, individuals or entities who enter into arrangements with foreign principals and undertake activities intended to influence governmental or political processes—at any level of government—will be required to publicly register these activities. They include foreign influence efforts targeting federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous government decision-making, policy development and legislative processes.

Transparency is at the heart of this initiative to empower Canadians with the right knowledge. There are three key pieces that need to be in place for the act to come into force.

First, we need to establish the office of the foreign influence transparency commissioner, or FITCO, including the appointment of the commissioner and the supporting staff.

Second, regulations must be developed to set out detailed requirements for registration, exemptions and compliance.

Finally, there is the development of a secure IT solution to support the registry and the case management behind it.

Work is under way on all aspects, and we're working towards bringing the act into force as soon as possible.

There's a dedicated transition team in place at Public Safety Canada to establish FITCO. We have permanent space identified, and it's currently being retrofitted, but we have interim space that's available right now to ensure continuity of operations.

The appointment process of the commissioner is governed by the act, which requires consultations and approval by resolutions of both the House and the Senate. Potential candidates have been identified, and we have moved forward with the necessary steps to confirm suitability. They need a top secret clearance, and there's a due diligence process required prior to formal consultations with the House and Senate leaders, reflecting the sensitivity and importance of the role.

Regulations are needed to set out detailed requirements for the information that must be disclosed to the commissioner, how the registry will operate and the processes for enforcement and oversight. We're working to deliver a fully integrated, robust registry to support and provide the infrastructure and tools to effectively administer the act.

Lastly, we're working closely with national security partners and other government departments and agencies to develop compliance and enforcement policies that are clear and effective. Clear enforcement mechanisms will ensure compliance and maintain public confidence in the registry.

I look forward to your questions about this important initiative.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I will now turn to questions.

We'll go to Mr. Cooper from the Conservatives for six minutes, please.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Thank you to the witnesses.

I'll start with assistant deputy minister Aubertin-Giguère.

With regard to the foreign influence registry, the Liberal government promised to get it up and running no later than June, one year after Bill C-70 received royal assent. It's six months later, and as you noted, we don't have a registry in place. We don't even have a commissioner appointed.

In the face of that, when can we expect the registry to be up and running? You said "as soon as possible", but what exactly does that mean?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: All the necessary elements need to be in place for the law to come into force, so it means essentially that you need an office and the necessary staff. You need the IT solutions and the regulations in place before it comes into force. All of these elements are being worked on right now. We're very close to the finish line.

Michael Cooper: I appreciate that, but we've had a series of dates. First, it was June. Well, actually, it was before the next election, but at the latest in June, one year after royal assent. We had an

election. It wasn't in place. June came and went. There was no commissioner, no office and no registry.

The Minister of Public Safety said in the summer that a commissioner would be appointed by mid-September. You've said we don't have a commissioner. We don't even have a final candidate selected by the government yet. The minister also said that the registry would be in place in December, but as you noted, certain steps have to be taken, including—among other things—leaders of recognized parties being consulted about the commissioner who was supposed to be in place in mid-September.

We've had date after date promised and date after date missed, so I ask again: What is the timeline?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: The initial timeline was based on the expectation that there would be an election no later than October 2025, but the early election made us revisit the timelines.

The minister stated publicly that he has identified the preferred candidate, and we're working toward completing the necessary consultation steps. That's all I can say at this point. All the necessary elements for the delivery and implementation of the act are being worked on, and we're very close to the finish line.

• (1110)

Michael Cooper: Okay, thank you. You're not able to provide a timeline. Is it fair to say that you can't provide a date? Can you provide an approximate date? Is it six months? Is it a year? Do you have any insight with regard to that?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: I am not in a position to commit the minister to a specific date. I can say that we are very close to the finish line, and the minister's statements reflect his desire to have this implemented as soon as possible.

Michael Cooper: Okay. Now, with respect to the consultation process for a commissioner, did you say the minister has selected a candidate or has a preferred candidate? Can you just clarify what you said?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: I just want to say what the minister has said. He has identified a candidate, a very high-quality candidate.

Michael Cooper: Thank you for that.

Has the consultation process with leaders of recognized parties begun with respect to this individual?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Has it been done?

Michael Cooper: Has it commenced?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: No, not yet.

Michael Cooper: Not yet. Okay.

There's still a lot of work to be done, because the minister said all the way back in June that he was very close to the finish line, and here we are six months later.

Now Ms. Giles, I want to ask you this: Were any accredited diplomats on CSIS's radar for interference-related activities in the lead-up to or during the 2025 federal election?

Nicole Giles (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister and Deputy Director, Policy and Strategic Partnerships, Canadian Security Intelligence Service): Thank you, Mr. Cooper, for the question.

Part of our responsibility is to be constantly vigilant and to be constantly monitoring and examining any potential acts of foreign interference that might be occurring on Canadian soil. Part of our job is to ensure that we are scanning, that we're monitoring and that we constantly have our eye on whether there are any diplomats or any other individuals in Canada who could be perpetrating activities that are not allowed.

Michael Cooper: Can you answer on whether any such accredited diplomats were identified as being involved in interference-related activities in the lead-up to or during the 2025 election?

Nicole Giles: During the 2025 election—or GE45, in our nomenclature—one thing done differently by the SITE task force—the task force for security and intelligence that was brought together to provide advice to the government and to Canadians during the election—was to have weekly technical briefings for the media and Canadians on foreign interference threats that were identified. No threats were reported as part of the process that emerged from diplomats during the election. There were two potential incidents of foreign interference identified and reported through the technical briefing process.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

You're over time, Mr. Cooper.

We'll now turn to Madame Kayabaga from the Liberals for six minutes, please.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): I would like to welcome our witnesses.

I'm going to start with you, Mr. Aubertin-Giguère.

Our law enforcement agencies at the federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous levels play an essential role in countering foreign interference. Recently, we've seen a law enforcement demand for lawful access to be updated. I'd like to hear your view on lawful access in relation to defending Canadians against hostile foreign actors.

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: That is not my file, but I can say that for the legislative proposals in front of Parliament, it is quite essential for law enforcement agencies to have modern tools to be able to access information lawfully and address the threats.

• (1115)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Obviously, you think this tool would be really important to help address foreign interference.

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: I'm sorry...?

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Is this an important technological tool that you think would be helpful in addressing foreign interference in Canada?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Yes, absolutely. This is on top of any enforcement of Canadian legislation in general.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Would you mind describing the measures and mechanisms that the security and intelligence community currently has in place to counter foreign interference and transnational repression in Canada?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: The federal government has many tools to monitor, counter and disrupt foreign interference. I would say that when it comes to transnational repression itself, at the federal level, we've collectively prioritized making sure that individuals who are either victims or potentially at risk of transnational repression have the right knowledge to better protect themselves.

We've been doing workshops across Canada to engage directly with communities at risk and teach them, essentially, what laws protect them, how to engage with the police and how to tell their story so that police of jurisdiction, when they first encounter these cases, know what to do with the information.

We also teach them the basics of digital security and personal security, as well as what to do when they travel, at least on a personal level. We also make sure they are introduced to local police of jurisdiction and federal law enforcement. At the very least, they know we're there to protect them and they have the right knowledge to protect themselves, and then we establish this relationship.

It's one of many tools we have in place, but we've been prioritizing this approach.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: What do you see as the role of provincial and territorial governments, as well as of the different bodies that are partners in addressing this issue? What do you think their role is in all of this?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Foreign interference affects all levels of government. It is the role of all levels of government to be vigilant and aware.

My colleagues from the service are part of this exercise. We are engaging quite often and regularly with our provincial and municipal colleagues to discuss the threat and what we can do in terms of response.

When it comes to transnational repression itself, I think awareness is the first step—making sure they understand the threat landscape. We have briefed provincial officials, at their request, to give them a perspective on the transnational repression threat landscape in their provinces, and we've discussed response options.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Obviously, we've seen diaspora communities often being targets of foreign intimidation or even targets.... They go through the diaspora communities. Could you maybe, Madame Giles, mention a couple of mechanisms that we may have in place to protect and counter the tools used in diaspora communities to intimidate them? Sometimes it's intimidation through repercussions for family members who are still back in their countries. What tools are we offering our diaspora communities to feel safe enough to call this out and to make sure they stay safe from foreign interference?

Nicole Giles: This is one of the most significant issues that is targeting Canadians directly, so it's obviously an area of significant concern for CSIS and for the activities we undertake. We find that transnational repression really does disproportionately target human rights and political activists, journalists and others in cultural, ethnic and religious groups. We've observed that, in Canada, it's very often in the form of surveillance; spreading false and discrediting information; extortion; threatening loved ones abroad, as you mentioned; or of course, in the most extreme format, threats to safety and to life. We see the full range of activities.

We're carrying out the activities that we have within our mandate to investigate, to collect intelligence and to advise, and under the authorities that Parliament gave us as part of Bill C-70, to build the resiliency of the groups most targeted.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I'll turn to the Bloc.

[Translation]

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you very much.

Ms. Giles, in the Johnston report on foreign interference, one of the flaws identified was the lack of tracking when a document containing sensitive information was sent to certain departments, such as Global Affairs Canada, for example. People receive an email and can forward it on, but no one knows who is on the receiving end.

Is CSIS still aware of this flaw? If so, how do we prevent sensitive information from falling into the wrong hands if it is not being tracked?

Nicole Giles: That's a very good question, and it's one of the issues we dealt with very deftly after the investigation.

[English]

We've taken several measures to ensure there is very clear tracking of documents that have been sent to ministries, so we understand who it's gone to and we can provide direction on those individuals who might require the information and intelligence to inform their actions and decisions. We've also put in place various measures so that we're able to help ensure the advice is provided, along with that information, to help inform decision-makers. There are improved systems of tracking the documentation and of proactive provision of intelligence so that it gets to the right hands at the right time.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I would like to ask you another question along the same lines. We know that Canada is part of the Five Eyes, a group that exchanges sensitive information. In your opinion, has our lack of tracking in the past been an obstacle to receiving information from abroad? Could other members of the Five Eyes have withheld information, knowing that it might not be adequately protected once it arrived here?

Nicole Giles: That's another very good question

[English]

Within the Five Eyes alliance for sharing of information—it's us, the U.K., the U.S., Australia and New Zealand—we work together very closely to ensure we're sharing information that's appropriate with each other so that the appropriate actions can be taken. We also work very carefully to ensure that a strong element of trust exists within the alliance.

As with all strong alliances and relationships, we're able to share the information and work through whatever issues might emerge. At this point we are not concerned about the information sharing: It is flowing as it should between members of the Five Eyes alliance. We're also very confident that we're receiving the information that we require to execute our mandate for Canadians.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I will now turn to you, Mr. Aubertin-Giguère.

My Conservative colleagues have spoken about appointing a commissioner. You mentioned two other points: regulations and establishing a computer system for the registry. I am hoping you can talk about regulation. The enabling legislation has been in place for a year and a half now. Regulations are generally put in place more quickly, since they are enacted by order in council.

Why haven't they been put in place yet? What relevant or essential regulatory elements are missing that would allow us to move forward with establishing a registry?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: In general, it takes between 18 months and two years for the government to complete a regulatory process. It depends on certain factors. In this case, the process is progressing very well. There are no obstacles. We are very close to the finish line.

Christine Normandin: Can you give us an idea of what is still missing and what regulatory elements are needed in order to have an effective register?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Several elements must be defined in the regulations under the act, including the information that must be submitted to the commissioner, how the commissioner must dispose of this information, the information that may be included in the registry and information-sharing agreements with partners.

There are others, but those are the main elements.

Christine Normandin: What about the IT side of the registry? Unfortunately, as we have seen in the past, involving the government in IT isn't always a success. I would like to know where we stand.

Are we aiming to create our own system or partner with a private company to set up an electronic registry?

• (1125)

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: There are two elements. First, there will be a website allowing the public to submit information to the commissioner, as well as a public registry. This solution will be in place when the law comes into force. However, we are working on a longer-term solution, and a procurement process will be put in place shortly to enable us to work with an external partner, most likely. The longer-term solution depends on the outcome of the procurement process.

Christine Normandin: I don't have much time left.

I understand that the goal is for the registry to be public, but will the information collected also include sensitive information about people who register, for example?

[English]

The Chair: Give a very quick answer, please.

[Translation]

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Essentially, without going too far into the regulations, I can tell you that there will not be a big difference between the information provided by members of the public who are required to register and the information that will be published in the registry. Obviously, information such as people's home addresses will not be published, but no information will be collected beyond what is absolutely necessary for the registry.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to our next round. I'll let everyone know that, given the time, I'll add one minute to everyone's time coming up.

Mr. Cooper, you have six minutes, please.

Michael Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Giles, to follow up from where I left off, you concluded by referencing the SITE task force report in respect of two incidents made public by the critical election incident public protocol panel. My question was more general. Simply put, were there interference-related activities identified in respect of accredited diplomats in Canada in the lead-up to or during the 2025 election?

Nicole Giles: What was observed over the course of the election and the immediate period beforehand was really observed instances of foreign interference, such as transnational repression, inauthentic and coordinated amplification of online content, and online threats,

such as scams and disinformation. We observed this very much at a small scale.

It is often very difficult to attribute certain activities to a specific foreign actor, but ultimately the conclusion was that this did not interfere with Canadians' ability to have a free and fair election.

Michael Cooper: To be clear, the SITE task force's report specifically identified Beijing as being involved in transnational repression efforts, as well as disinformation campaigns using social media platforms to target certain candidates or to influence the election. That's fair, right? It's in the report.

Nicole Giles: The—

Michael Cooper: This is an issue. These are activities that Beijing broadly was involved in.

Nicole Giles: The task force identified at the outset of the election what it was anticipating in terms of likely behaviour and what would likely continue. It also identified in the course of the election the two incidents that you're referring to, sir, as being elements and platforms based in China and linked to PRC actors.

Michael Cooper: Thank you.

It's now well established that in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections, accredited diplomats from Beijing, including diplomats operating out of Beijing's Vancouver consulate and Toronto consulate, engaged in interference activities. Can you provide assurance that no Beijing accredited diplomats engaged in such interference activities during the 2025 election?

Nicole Giles: The after-action report was a really great evolution in terms of being able to provide direct information to Canadians, including parliamentarians, about threats to the election that were observed. As mentioned, the threats that were observed were really small-scale. They were related to TNR. They were related to the online activities.

• (1130)

Michael Cooper: Respectfully, I would disagree with you. I don't think the activities in, for example, Don Valley North were small-scale. Is this your characterization of what happened in Don Valley North?

Nicole Giles: I'm referring to the size of the activities. The impact in Don Valley North, certainly on the constituents and on Mr. Tay specifically, was not small-scale at all. What was experienced was very significant to those individuals.

Michael Cooper: This is precisely why I'm asking whether you can provide the assurance that no Beijing diplomats were involved in such interference activities.

Nicole Giles: I think the after-action report was very clear in terms of what was observed and what was reported by the task force. While the impact on the individuals in this particular riding was very significant, the overall activities of attempted interference or potential interference in the election did not have a large-scale impact on Canadians' ability to have a free and fair election.

Michael Cooper: I'm not hearing an answer that, yes, you can provide assurance, so I take it you can't fully provide the assurance that Beijing diplomats were not involved. They may very well have been involved in such activities.

Hypothetically, if CSIS was aware that an accredited diplomat was involved in interference activities, would this information eventually be passed on to the Minister of Foreign Affairs?

Nicole Giles: I would just like to clarify that, as reported.... We reported the activities we observed. The activities we observed did not include any activities by accredited diplomats. I just want to clarify that, at this point, in terms of what the report referred to.

Certainly, if there were activities we had observed that did involve the behaviour of foreign accredited diplomats in Canada, this is exactly the type of information that would be provided to our Global Affairs colleagues, and of course through them to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Michael Cooper: To be clear, in your answer, you referenced that CSIS did not observe activities by diplomats in respect of Don Valley North, correct? This was the answer you provided; it was not more broad than that.

Nicole Giles: During the 45th general election, per the after-action report, no activities of accredited diplomats engaging in potential or actual acts of foreign interference were reported.

Michael Cooper: My question wasn't simply what was reported. My question was beyond what was reported.

The Chair: You're at six minutes, Mr. Cooper.

If you have a very quick answer, go ahead.

Nicole Giles: We reported what we saw. What was reported and what we saw were not the activities the member is referring to.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Madame Brière, you have six minutes, please.

[Translation]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being with us this morning.

We know that threats such as cyber-espionage, foreign interference, sabotage and online radicalization are evolving rapidly.

How does CSIS plan to adapt its priorities and resources in the short and medium term to remain effective?

Nicole Giles: Thank you very much for that very good question.

Whenever we see a threat, we pivot and redirect our resources.

[English]

One thing we are constantly doing, as different threats emerge and the threats evolve, is adjusting our investigations. We are adjusting our collection efforts. We are adjusting our response. This can include the redistribution of resources or moving them from one investigation or area of activity or assessment to another. Mr. Rogers, the director of CSIS, spoke about this in his annual speech, which was given a couple of weeks ago.

[Translation]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: On the same note, do you have to do anything specific to protect the Arctic and Canada's Far North?

Nicole Giles: Yes, of course. Protecting the Arctic is one of the issues of concern to us, as well as the government and many Canadians these days.

[English]

One thing we are ensuring is that we continue our collection. We're working with our partners up north, who, of course, are potential targets of economic security threats, espionage and other security threats, to ensure that they have the information they need to be resilient. Of course, we're working with our private sector partners, as well, to ensure that they have the information to protect themselves from potential threats up north.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Earlier, we talked about the Five Eyes group. What role do our closest allies play in helping us combat foreign interference? In your opinion, are there lessons to be learned from our Five Eyes partners that could improve our own methods of combatting foreign interference?

Nicole Giles: Another very good question.

One thing that is very relevant for Canada and its allies is that when we work in partnership within an alliance, we are all better equipped.

[English]

We're stronger partners when we work together in alliance. One thing distinguishing us from our adversaries is having enduring relationships of trust in which there are shared interests.

We are in a constant pattern of providing information and our experiences to our Five Eyes partners and our allies, as well as receiving from them the lessons learned. That's one thing we saw in the setting up of the registry: learning lessons from our international partners, for example.

[Translation]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Would you like to add anything on this question, Mr. Aubertin-Giguère?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: No. Ms. Giles has covered the subject well.

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: More broadly, how important is it for all Canadians, particularly elected officials and university students, to be aware of and sensitized to the threat of foreign interference?

Nicole Giles: Again, that's a very good question.

[English]

One of our best defences is ensuring that we have an aware and well-educated public that can identify the threats in advance and take measures to protect themselves, to build their resiliency and to prevent the threats from materializing in the first place.

For that reason, one thing CSIS does is a campaign of resiliency disclosures to ensure that this information is provided. We put out a series of publications. This morning I shared with the chair and vice-chairs the very snappily named “Foreign Interference and You” publication, which helps people identify foreign interference.

Really critically, we work very closely with all our partners across Canada to ensure that they understand the threat. Critically, it's a two-way street. If they see something, if they observe a threat, they're able to share the information with CSIS so that it can also inform our investigations and our collection.

[Translation]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Can you give us a profile of someone who engages in foreign interference here in Canada? What are the different characteristics? What do you find in each case of foreign interference?

Nicole Giles: Many different methods and techniques are used by the many people who engage in these activities. Clandestine activities fall under the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS.

[English]

When the activities are clandestine, deceptive and covert, they reach CSIS's threshold for investigation and for action. We tend to see attempts to obfuscate the role a particular foreign state may have or proxy actors may have. We see foreign states undertaking these activities to try to advance their strategic interests at the expense of Canada's interests.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Madam Normandin, you have three and a half minutes, please.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Ms. Giles, I would like to return to the issue of tracking. For example, we know that there is a bit of a revolving door at Global Affairs Canada. Civil servants can be transferred quite frequently.

In general, when there is sensitive information or reports to be transmitted, are the documents sent to a generic address or a specific addressee?

Nicole Giles: It is really up to Global Affairs to provide answers about its methods, its administration and the email addresses used.

• (1140)

[English]

When we send information over, there are follow-ups to ensure that the information is getting to the right people at the right time. There's also a series of different committees that assistant deputy ministers sit on, in which we discuss the intelligence that has been

seen to ensure that there is awareness of the threat, so it can be acted upon.

[Translation]

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Your question implies that information is primarily circulated via email, which is not the case. Classified information goes through a system where there is a designated person responsible for distributing and controlling the information. It is therefore not circulated by email without some sort of control. The information goes through a system. Every organization and every department has people responsible for controlling information.

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

That opens the door to a follow-up question. One of the issues we looked at extensively in the Johnston report was whether information was getting to the right people, particularly the Prime Minister. Last time, that was an issue. It was all hearsay. Did the Prime Minister receive the information?

Should there be a formal obligation to forward certain information to the Prime Minister with the possibility of receiving an acknowledgement of receipt, whether electronically or otherwise? Would that prevent the kind of drama we experienced that led to the Johnston report?

Nicole Giles: It is really the Privy Council Office that is responsible for the information provided to the Prime Minister. Most of the time, CSIS does not deliver documents directly to the Prime Minister.

[English]

It's really the office of the national security adviser to the Prime Minister that ensures the information they deem relevant makes it to the Prime Minister. This was spoken to quite extensively in the Hogue commission, as well as in various committees.

From a CSIS perspective, if there is a critical piece of information, we work with our colleagues and partners to ensure that the right ministers and the Prime Minister have seen the information.

As well, there has been quite an extensive government structure set up by the national security and intelligence adviser, which includes a committee of deputy ministers who regularly meet and talk about the intelligence being seen, and then take decisions on what might need to be moved up the chain.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: There are three seconds left. I'll give them to you next time.

Mr. Van Popta, you have six minutes, please.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

Ms. Giles, I have a question for you. When Mr. Cooper was engaging in a conversation with you a little while ago, you said that, despite foreign interference in our last few elections, the interference did not amount to interfering with Canadians' ability to hold free and fair elections.

You're echoing what Madam Justice Hogue said in her report, that despite occurrences of foreign interference in 2019 and 2021, the election results at the national level were not affected. In other words, with or without foreign interference, the election results would have been the same—a minority Liberal government with Mr. Trudeau as the Prime Minister.

Can the same be said at the local level, though? I'm thinking of perhaps Don Valley North or, in the 2021 election, Richmond East—Steveston. Can you assure Canadians that the elections there were fair and free despite obvious foreign interference in those campaigns?

Nicole Giles: I think, as you mentioned, the report from Madam Hogue, the report from Mr. Johnston and the after-action report that emerged after GE45 from SITE, as well as from the panel of senior officials, were all very clear in terms of the ultimate impact on Canadians' ability to have a free and fair election, which is that there was none.

Tako Van Popta: What does “ultimate impact” mean? Does that mean at the national level, or does that also telescope down to specific ridings?

• (1145)

Nicole Giles: That means at the national level. I think as well that the reports did not go into every specific individual riding. I also just want to clarify—

Tako Van Popta: Only two or three were important.

Nicole Giles: —the responsibility of CSIS. It would be inappropriate for an intelligence agency to be responsible for passing judgment on each and every individual riding; this is not the responsibility of the intelligence agency. We support those assessments by providing information and intelligence to those—to Elections Canada, to the commissioner of Canada elections—who make those decisions.

We saw in GE45, as mentioned, a couple of incidents related primarily to transnational repression, to the manipulation of information. The determination was that they did not ultimately impact the outcome of any of the races.

Tako Van Popta: The ultimate outcome is that there was a minority Liberal government, with the Conservatives' being in opposition again, but it does not telescope down to specific ridings. Some ridings may have gone the other way if it hadn't been for foreign interference. At least the possibility is open.

Nicole Giles: I don't want to be in a position in this committee to question the findings of previous reports, and I'm certainly not in a position to be able to do so. I think the government stands by the reports that have been previously issued.

Tako Van Popta: Ms. Giles, just to continue with you for a moment, you appeared before the ethics committee on May 21, 2024, and I'm reading from your testimony there: “CSIS has long-standing investigations into specific threat actors believed to be targeting

Canada's democratic institutions through clandestine, deceptive or threatening means. This is foreign interference.”

How do you identify threat actors? Ms. Brière was asking you questions about that. At what point do you say, this is a threat actor that we need to follow?

Nicole Giles: That's a good question.

There are various ways threat actors will come to our attention. Certainly, we are constantly in a process of putting our resources towards the most significant threats to Canada. As part of that, certain thresholds have to be met in order for CSIS to instigate an investigation. There are thresholds that need to be met in terms of reasonable grounds to suspect, in terms of reasonable grounds to believe, when we use certain of our authorities.

There are various sets of information that come to us. Some of the information is information we have collected ourselves as an intelligence service. Sometimes there's information provided to us by partners that will help to inform our assessment of those threats. As mentioned by our colleagues, critically, there will often be information coming to us from foreign partners, which also helps to inform our decision on whether to put our attention towards a particular threat or a particular series of threats that are manifesting.

Tako Van Popta: At what point do you involve candidates and bring them into the discussion, informing them that perhaps they are being targeted by foreign interference players? I don't want to use myself as an example. I'm sure all of us have a situation where we have many citizens in our ridings who speak different languages that I don't speak, for example, Chinese or Korean. Most people get their information from social media nowadays. I can't read what they're reading. Is somebody tracking this, or am I vulnerable?

The Chair: We need a very quick answer, please.

Nicole Giles: One measure set up for GE45 was a mechanism for candidates to provide information to the Privy Council Office and, through them, to the SITE task force if there were concerns identified. There was also a very robust system of briefings set up for cleared members from all parties.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Mr. Wilkinson, you have six minutes, please.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver—Capilano, Lib.): Thank you to both witnesses for coming.

I'll maybe just ask you a question around one of the big changes we've obviously seen in the last few years, which is the rise of artificial intelligence. I'd be interested in both of you speaking to how big a threat it is from a foreign interference perspective and what we are doing in the context of trying to address the threat.

• (1150)

Nicole Giles: One challenge that we face as a country—and certainly, as an intelligence service—is an increasing velocity and volume of threats. This is being amplified by advances in technologies, including artificial intelligence. This is very much increasing the sophistication of foreign states and other actors as they seek to perpetrate those threats.

One thing we are doing, as Canada's intelligence service, is ensuring that we constantly challenge ourselves to adopt new technology and techniques, and then also work with our foreign partners to learn from them and to share information and techniques as we seek to counter those threats. It's certainly a challenge, but it's a challenge CSIS is up to tackling.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Aubertin-Giguère, did you want to add anything to that?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: Artificial intelligence reduces the entry threshold for threat actors to conduct information operations. It also helps in the response, because you can leverage AI, so it's an arms race in many ways. However, the Government of Canada is well aware of this evolution, and we're constantly looking for options to make sure we are up to date in our capacity to monitor the threat landscape and to respond.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Let me ask you a similar question but with respect to social media. Certainly, social media manipulation is something people are increasingly concerned about. As Mr. Van Popta said, many people get their news these days through social media platforms. How are you folks engaging that, particularly as it relates to the election? What's the engagement with the social media platforms when we have concerns?

Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère: The Privy Council Office maintained a table of engagement with social media platforms during the election period, raising issues and discussing specific files. The rapid response mechanism at Global Affairs Canada also engaged with platforms on specific cases in which problematic information was found online. These mechanisms already exist.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: We talk a lot about this particular election and other federal elections. I'm curious as to what we do with respect to provincial elections or municipal elections, in which these issues can also come into play. How do we engage those levels of government, and how do we share information—which I know has been a challenge in the past?

Nicole Giles: One of the things that are most challenging in the evolution of the threat landscape is that the target of the threat activities is no longer simply the federal government. It is all levels of government—municipal, provincial, territorial and indigenous.

We engage with multiple levels of government to ensure that they're aware of threats and to provide information to help them better understand each threat and counter it when appropriate.

For example, in our regional offices across Canada, our regional officers engage and work closely with the provinces' and territories' elections commissions to ensure that they're receiving the information they require and that we're providing advice on how to identify and mitigate those threats.

We work closely with all levels of government, including indigenous partners.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Do I still have time?

The Chair: You still have over a minute.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Great.

You referenced the speech your boss gave a month ago, and we touched on this a bit. In the speech, he stressed the importance of public resilience and informed citizens.

I hear you in terms of putting out publications, but if we really think that a better-informed citizenry is extremely important in the context of addressing this, what more do we need to do? It seems to me this is not nearly enough.

Nicole Giles: One challenge is that there is so much noise and information coming at Canadians constantly. I think it's a challenge we all share in terms of how we cut through the noise to ensure that it's really specific and focused information.

CSIS is part of the ecosystem, so we will put our information out. For those of you who don't know, we have a YouTube channel where we also put information. We are doing our best to engage with the multiple forms of media, as well as doing one-on-one engagement with communities in various parts of civil society and levels of government.

However, this is not a CSIS-only responsibility. It is a whole-of-society responsibility, and this includes members of the media, some of whom are in the room with us today. It also includes academics and politicians. We all need to work together to ensure that the information is provided to Canadians and that we are listening to Canadians and not just talking to them.

• (1155)

The Chair: I'd like to thank our witnesses.

We will suspend for five minutes while we change our panel.

• (1155)

(Pause)

• (1200)

The Chair: I would like to welcome our second panel. We have Wesley Wark, a senior fellow from the Centre for International Governance Innovation; Joe Tay, a former Conservative candidate from Don Valley North, by Zoom; and, from DisinfoWatch, Marcus Kolga, founder and director.

We'll start with the individuals in the room for five minutes. We'll go to Mr. Wark.

Wesley Wark (Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation, As an Individual): Chair and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear and speak to the issue of the implementation of the foreign influence transparency registry. I'll refer to it in these brief remarks as the FITR.

This will be my third kick at this particular can. I took part in stakeholder discussions on the FITR, which were run by Mr. Aubertin-Giguère, prior to the tabling of Bill C-70. I testified on C-70 during its very rapid passage through Parliament in June 2024, and here I am again.

I will begin with a point I'm sure we can all agree on: The government needs to get on with implementing FITR. I won't go into the details of what that requires. You've heard a bit about it already.

Now I'm going to make some observations that might find less agreement in this room.

The concept of the FITR is based on three broad principles: that it would serve as a deterrent, that it would be country-agnostic and that it would enhance transparency objectives. The rationale underlying these principles is easy to understand, including the desire to ensure that the FITR is not seen as a blacklist for diplomatic or societal purposes.

In designing the foreign influence transparency registry, government officials had access to the Australian experience, which dates back to 2018, and to the building of the U.K. foreign influence registration scheme, with its two-tier approach. In my view, the ineffectiveness of the Australian model and the changes of approach introduced by the U.K. were not sufficiently considered in the building of a Canadian scheme.

While it is valuable as a deterrent and transparency scheme, the FITR addresses political foreign influence and will have little impact on covert practices of foreign interference. There is a risk, in my view, of the FITR becoming a wasteful register of good guys—wasteful because of the country-agnostic approach and to the extent that it draws resources away from dedicated intelligence collection and analysis, as well as from law enforcement endeavours. It may prove ineffective, as—I would suggest—the Australian model has been. Certainly it should not be oversold as any kind of panacea. It will duplicate other efforts by the security and intelligence agencies at community engagement and even public education.

Part 4 of Bill C-70 is, of course, law. My point is not to suggest that it be undone, but I want to draw the committee's attention to two things by way of conclusion.

One is the importance of Parliament's continuing to scrutinize the effectiveness of the FITR regime once it's established over the long term. This could include future scrutiny by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

The other, more immediate, thing is to call your attention to subsection 31(1) of the legislation, which calls for "a comprehensive review of this Act and its operation" by a committee of Parliament "During the first year after a general election". This time frame for a statutory review is highly unusual, as you will all know. In theory, that time is now—although it would be absurd to launch such a review before FITR has actually come into operation. This statutory requirement should be timed, in my view, to begin following the tabling in Parliament of the FITR commissioner's first annual report.

This would give Parliament the opportunity to seriously consider whether a country-agnostic approach is the correct one or whether the British approach might be better suited to our needs, as well as to gauge whether the adoption of something like the British two-tier approach, including the capacity of a minister to designate countries with a special national security concern, would be more appropriate to the Canadian situation. It would also give Parliament an

early chance to weigh in on the designs for public guidance that will be crucial to the operations of the FITR.

Thank you.

• (1205)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll now turn to Mr. Kolga for five minutes, please.

Marcus Kolga (Founder and Director, DisinfoWatch): Thank you, Chair, and honourable members of this committee. It is an honour to appear before you today.

I've also been asked to comment on FITR's implementation.

For nearly 15 years, I've worked to document and expose foreign interference targeting Canada, whether orchestrated from the Kremlin, Beijing, Tehran or Minsk. Since 2020, much of this work has been carried out through DisinfoWatch, the organization I founded to monitor and counter these threats.

In parallel, I've spent just as long advocating for human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists—those struggling for freedom inside authoritarian states and those in exile who continue their work while facing harassment, intimidation and transnational repression from the regimes they oppose. For that work, I am one of three Canadians named to both the Chinese and Russian sanctions lists, along with my colleagues Charles Burton and Sarah Teich.

The efforts of foreign authoritarian governments to undermine the integrity of our democracy, pollute our information space with falsehoods, erode social cohesion and silence critics constitute a direct threat to Canada's democratic and cognitive sovereignty. Democratic sovereignty is our ability to govern ourselves without external coercion; cognitive sovereignty is our ability to form opinions and participate in our democracy based on facts, not narratives engineered abroad to distort our understanding of events. Today, hostile authoritarian states are attacking both.

They do not need tanks or missiles. Instead, they use covert influence networks, disinformation, intimidation of diaspora communities and the deliberate exploitation of our democratic openness. Their aim is clear: to weaken trust, polarize society, manipulate our policy debates to serve their own interests and silence those who challenge them. We've already seen these violations here in Canada.

Threats from the Chinese government against activists who stand for office, such as Joe Tay, represent a direct assault on our democratic sovereignty. Members of Parliament Jenny Kwan and Kenny Chiu have also been targeted by coordinated disinformation campaigns designed to intimidate voters and punish critics of the Chinese Communist Party. Members of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project and Canada Tibet Committee have been sanctioned by Beijing without any meaningful Canadian response.

Russia's disinformation and foreign influence operations are equally aggressive and extensively documented. Ukrainian and Baltic communities in Canada have long been targeted by Kremlin narratives designed to dehumanize them, falsely branding them as fascists and enemies of Canada, just as Russia has attempted to smear Ukraine's democratically elected Jewish president with the same slur. These narratives are a form of incitement to hate that has fuelled real-world harassment and vandalism in Canada.

Much of the danger comes from the use of local Canadian proxies, some knowingly and others drawn in by pressure or ideology, as well as profit. Moscow has relied on recruiting susceptible Canadians for nearly a century, a pattern revealed in the 1945 Gouzenko affair.

Without credible deterrence—meaning transparency, accountability and consequences—our adversaries will continue to exploit these blind spots. Deterrence means holding accountable those who carry out these operations and, where appropriate, using sanctions laws to impose meaningful costs.

In June 2024, thanks in large part to the advocacy of vulnerable communities, including the Canadian coalition for a foreign influence transparency registry, led by Gloria Fung, Parliament passed the FITA Act. Passing the act was an important step towards transparency, but legislation alone does not defend us; implementation does. With repeated delays in operationalizing the registry, we risk sending conflicting signals about Canada's commitment to confronting foreign interference.

At the same time, it is essential that public servants developing the regulations are given the time and resources to get them right, ensuring the registry's purpose is clear, its infrastructure is easy to navigate and it is enforceable in a consistent and meaningful way. We will not get a second chance at implementation. Delays beyond spring 2026 would considerably erode the trust of the communities most vulnerable to foreign intimidation and cast doubt on Canada's determination to defend its democratic sovereignty.

• (1210)

Finally, the commissioner appointed to oversee the registry must have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the full spectrum of foreign influence threats—those posed not only by the Chinese Communist Party but also by Russia, Iran and other authoritarian actors. Anything less risks creating more blind spots, which our adversaries will definitely exploit.

Thank you again for asking me to appear. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Mr. Tay, go ahead, please, for five minutes.

Joe Tay (Former Federal Conservative Candidate, Don Valley North, As an Individual): Okay. Thank you.

Chair and honourable members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Joe Tay. I'm a Canadian citizen, a former singer-actor in Hong Kong and the federal Conservative Party candidate for

Don Valley North in the last election. I'm here to give first-hand evidence of foreign election interference.

Presently, there are 300,000 Canadians who, like myself, have chosen to build their careers between Canada and Hong Kong. Transnational repression is real, highly sophisticated, coordinated and totally destructive; it aims to silence voices, end careers and erase people from their public lives.

For over 30 years in media, I was blessed to be a household name worldwide in my community. In 2019, I openly supported the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, and my career was abruptly terminated. I was told to stop speaking out or I would never work again. Days before the national security law of Hong Kong came into effect, I returned to Canada, yet the repression followed me and my family here.

During my 2024 campaign, I faced non-stop foreign election interference.

First, there was coordinated disinformation during the election. Canada's security and intelligence threats to elections task force identified a coordinated foreign operation targeting Don Valley North across Chinese social media platforms and Facebook. It aimed to curb any positive coverage and amplified made-up negative news about me, painting me as a fugitive to voters.

Second, there were summons by the Chinese consulate. During my nomination, a venue owner hosted a birthday party I was invited to—among many guests. After the party, the owner was summoned twice by the Chinese consulate for allowing me on the premises. Complaints were made to the consulate, sadly, by two or three local city councillors whom the owner was too afraid to name.

Third, a bounty on me was encouraged by a sitting MP. The most dangerous incident of all was when Mr. Paul Chiang, a then Liberal MP and someone sworn to protect Canadians, openly ignored Canada's clear position and condemnation statement by Global Affairs Canada, which was issued within 24 hours of my bounty.

Allow me to cite part of the statement: “This attempt by Hong Kong authorities to conduct transnational repression abroad, including by issuing threats, intimidation or coercion against Canadians or those in Canada, will not be tolerated.”

Mr. Paul Chiang knowingly went on to organize a selective press conference, attended mainly by Chinese consulate-friendly reporters, suggesting that anyone who handed me to a Chinese consulate could claim the \$1-million bounty. He expected the press to make it more public. This put me and my family in harm's way, and Paul made himself an instrument of CCP interference in the election. To me, what's worse is that the leader of the party then, now our Prime Minister, defended him and made excuses for Paul's CCP position statement.

Fourth, there was harassment of my extended family. Hong Kong authorities interrogated and pressured my extended family in Hong Kong, attempting to make me a burden to my own relatives.

Fifth, there was administrative tools manipulation. HSBC and the government tax agency of Hong Kong were used as extended arms and tools to freeze our accounts. False accusations of made-up tax evasion claims were an attempt to administratively criminalize me in the U.S. and Canada. My wife, Angie, an insurance agent, is required to renew her licence every two years. Any financial criminal offence worldwide will lead to a licence suspension.

Sixth, there was surveillance and intimidation during the campaign. Volunteers and I were followed and photographed, and our home was monitored by strange vehicles. These things were all reported instantly to the local police and the RCMP.

Seventh, there were violent threats to one of our supporters. A female supporter who simply met me for a chat over coffee received a parcel containing a dress splattered with red paint—simulating blood—and stabbed through the chest with a knife. It was a graphic warning not to support me.

Eighth, seniors were targeted. People were sent door to door to seniors' apartments within our riding, spreading the same social media message within the Chinese community: that if they voted for Joe Tay, the Chinese consulate would know, and they would lose their visa to visit China. Targeting our senior voters through direct intimidation, surveillance, travel restrictions and fear of retaliation suppressed their democratic rights. We know for a fact that many were too afraid to vote.

• (1215)

Finally, the RCMP made an unscheduled visit to my house to inform me that they had intercepted a credible source of a threat to harm me during the election. This resulted in all my campaign activities being suspended, depending on day-to-day safety warnings, until the end of the election. My campaign became the quietest.

Chair and honourable members, this CCP-initiated foreign interference is evidence of intent to harm. These are well-organized, evil schemes that target Canadians and our electoral institution, turning parliamentarians and councillors into bad actors—or at least being used to erode trust in our institutions.

On behalf of my family and myself, I am here with the hope that by speaking up, every Canadian and our democracy, for which so many have laid down their lives, will be protected.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll now turn to questions.

We'll go to Mr. Cooper for six minutes, please.

Michael Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Tay, you referenced that Paul Chiang, the then Liberal MP for Markham—Unionville, convened a press conference with Chinese-language media, at which he specifically raised the bounty against you and encouraged community members to turn you in to Beijing's Toronto consulate. At the time, you were seeking the Conservative nomination in his riding of Markham—Unionville.

You characterized the press conference as “selective”. By that, what do you mean?

Would it be fair to say that MP Chiang organized the press conference for the purpose of publicizing the bounty against you and smearing your reputation within the Chinese diaspora communities in Markham—Unionville and throughout the GTA?

Joe Tay: I sent the committee clerk a list of the reports and the video, but there wasn't enough time to translate them.

I stressed that it was selective because among those at the press conference, as shown in the video, there were many invited and only one that reported to the media, which was mainland Chinese community-focused, Mandarin-speaking media, aiming to target only the Chinese crowd. Selective means that within the crowd, there were many reporters within the venue, but only one media reported the case. That was mingshengbao.com, which is a subsidiary of Ming Pao Daily in Canada.

By selective, I mean they selected the platform to publicize this public bounty. Those people who read the news were prone, whether because their ideology was with China or because of economic bad times...to want to harm me because of the money involved.

• (1220)

Michael Cooper: Can you elaborate a bit on the fallout from the press conference within the diaspora communities on social media platforms?

Threats, intimidation.... Would it be fair to say they intensified as the broader issue of the awareness around the bounty...? How might this have impacted your electoral prospects in terms of support from diaspora community members?

Joe Tay: The media report was published on January 22, 2024. Immediately, a lot of the Chinese community, especially my volunteers, came back and told me that online—on the WeChat platforms, on the Chinese social media platforms—they were describing me as a fugitive and saying there was a bounty.

Among all these comments—on the side of a thousand comments—there were people who said it was a good time to get my head or hurt me to get the bounty.

The risk is actually... By that time, I was just notified...because of my past career. I think this was just comments and not action.

The news was not picked up by the mainstream until maybe one and a half—

Michael Cooper: Thank you.

On March 23, 2025, you became the Conservative candidate for Don Valley North. The next day, the RCMP attended to your home to warn you that they had intercepted credible threats to your safety. Is this accurate?

Joe Tay: Yes, it is accurate.

Michael Cooper: The RCMP contacted you at another point to tell you it was no longer safe to canvass door to door. Is that correct?

Joe Tay: Not at that moment—

Michael Cooper: No, I'm talking about later in the campaign.

Joe Tay: Yes, you are correct.

Michael Cooper: Can you explain what happened? As I understand it, you had to check in, or the RCMP would check in with you to tell you, on a day-to-day basis, on whether it was safe for you to go door to door. Is this accurate?

Joe Tay: Yes. I think it was especially when I was visited by the RCMP, and I reported their visit to the Conservative Party of Canada, to the headquarters. We had discussions and communication between the RCMP and the Conservative Party of Canada. These were established to exchange information to make sure that, every day, I would be advised of updates on any threats, so whether I went out to do door knocking or canvassing really depended on the day-to-day safety advice.

Michael Cooper: Just to get an understanding of the level of threat, were you followed?

Joe Tay: Yes.

Michael Cooper: Your residence was surveilled.

Joe Tay: My residence was. This is one incident I remember—

Michael Cooper: It was with a vehicle. Is this right?

Joe Tay: It was with a vehicle. Strangely, it was when we were almost home. There was a strange car. We know our neighbourhood really well, and we never saw a car like that. My wife was smart enough to say to me that maybe we could go around one more time and come back from another angle. The car had already parked closer to our house and actually just outside our driveway.

Michael Cooper: Also, volunteers were harassed and intimidated.

Joe Tay: Volunteers—

The Chair: Just give a yes or no answer. We're already over.

Joe Tay: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Louis, go ahead please for six minutes.

• (1225)

Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Canada has seen first-hand how hostile foreign actors attempt to distort our democracy and to quietly influence our political process. The foreign influence transparency registry is the next step to shine a light on these covert arrangements and to give Canadians more confidence that our democratic institutions are protected.

I want to thank both of you for your contributions and for your time as witnesses.

I would start with Mr. Wark, the senior fellow for the Centre for International Governance Innovation in the Waterloo region.

You talked about the registry needing to be a deterrent and needing to increase transparency. You said ongoing review will be necessary. We're seeing a bit of a cat and mouse between law enforcement and foreign actors. What would public guidance, in your words, look like?

Wesley Wark: Thank you for the question.

What really comes to mind—and I think it's illustrative of what's ahead for the implementation of FITR—is the set of very detailed guidance publications put out in the U.K. scheme. This was one of the first things the U.K. did as they set up their own scheme.

There's guidance about both tiers of their scheme—the enhanced tier and the regular tier—which were designed, I think, with two purposes in mind. One is to try to make sure not only that the public fully understands the nature of the registry and what it's trying to accomplish but also that people who may find themselves required to register would fully understand why they're required to register, what's involved and how elements of their data may be protected under the U.K. scheme.

You've heard a bit in this committee about the steps that remain to be undertaken to get FITR up and running. However, I would say that, beyond the obvious steps of having a commissioner appointed, regulations made and the website established, being able to put together these comprehensive documents of guidance is going to be a critical test for the effectiveness of this scheme.

Tim Louis: Mr. Kolga, I would give you the chance to respond also. I see you nodding.

Marcus Kolga: Thank you for the question.

I don't have all that much to add. The point I would make is that anyone with legitimate business in this country and without anything to hide wouldn't have a problem registering with FITR. For example, if I were doing academic work sponsored by one of our allies in NATO, or for NATO itself, I wouldn't have any issue registering myself on the FITR list. I don't think anybody else would either. We need to make sure Canadians have an understanding of the process, in terms of registration for FITR.

Tim Louis: Thank you.

Mr. Wark, you've spoken about the importance of Canada's having its own independent intelligence assessments, and we've heard from CSIS and other organizations about information sharing. There's a balance between having transparency and publicly available information and information that we can't share with the public, and then there's having our own information versus sharing and using other countries'. What's your advice on the best way to find that balance—our own information versus sharing information with other countries and the information being publicly available versus tipping our hand on what we're looking into?

Wesley Wark: Thank you for the question.

It's a complex issue that any security intelligence community, including Canada's, struggles with.

I would say it's perhaps typical in a Canadian context that we overstress the need to secure information against the need to inform the public. I don't think we've ever found the appropriate balance between the two prerogatives. There are lots of efforts under way to increase transparency around national security and intelligence activities. I don't think we're anywhere close to the end of the road of those efforts.

I would say to members of the committee that there are two things I regret about recent developments.

One is that, when the government introduced its national security transparency commitment in 2017—not a law, but a commitment—it contained, I think, some very valuable principles around transparency and how it would be delivered. Very little of that has actually been acted on in the eight years since.

The second—and this goes, in a way, to a question Mr. Wilkinson asked earlier about things that remain to be done—we are still waiting in this country for the issuance of a national security strategy. The last one was issued, as members will know, in 2004. A new one was promised in May 2024, which is a bit like FITR, as we're still waiting to see it appear.

Thank you.

• (1230)

Tim Louis: I have time for one more question.

You have cited Robert Huebert's warning that state actors may bandwagon on disinformation. What does bandwagoning look like operationally, and how can we detect and counter it?

Wesley Wark: Marcus may want to take this question first. I'm happy to join in.

Marcus Kolga: Sorry, if you could just repeat the....

Tim Louis: Yes, the term is “bandwagoning”. I believe you talked about taking misinformation that already exists and expanding on it.

The Chair: Answer very quickly.

Marcus Kolga: I have not heard the term “bandwagoning” before, but certainly, amplification of disinformation by domestic influencers is a very serious threat to our democracy.

We've seen this happen. We've seen foreign authoritarians pay influencers to engage in these sorts of operations.

In September 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice issued an indictment against two employees of Russia Today, RT. This is Russia's state media platform. It's been identified by Global Affairs as a key component of Russia's intelligence operations. This scheme basically saw RT—

The Chair: In a very rare moment, I'm going to have to cut you off. We are well over time. Hopefully we can get back into this. I'm sure—

Marcus Kolga: Okay. I'm happy to.

The Chair: —we have enough interest, or you could fit it into one of your future answers.

To all the witnesses, the next set of questions will be in French, so please, if you require it, have your headset at the appropriate channel.

Mr. Tay, I'm sure they told you to have the channel on English so you can receive interpretation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all of the witnesses for participating. I am very grateful they have joined us.

I have a question for Mr. Wark and Mr. Kolga. You both spoke about the importance of deterrence, which may be one of the objectives of the registry.

Mr. Kolga, you also spoke about Canada's response to intimidation against Tibetans and Uyghurs. I would like to move beyond the scope of the registry.

Can you hear the interpretation?

[*English*]

Marcus Kolga: I'm getting it now.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: That's great.

In response to what you mentioned about the intimidation of Tibetans and Uyghurs, I wanted to bring up the issue of Canada's weak response. The registry is important, but there are other aspects, so I have a related question.

The Bloc Québécois proposed a bill to address importing goods made with forced labour. This bill specifically targeted Xinjiang and Uyghur labour.

Are laws on aspects other than the registry another signal that Canada can send to malicious foreign actors?

[English]

Marcus Kolga: Certainly, I strongly believe that the existence of the legislation, and of course its implementation—whether it's against forced labour or FITR itself—definitely has a deterrence effect. That is a very important aspect of this legislation.

When there are individuals who perhaps clandestinely may look to profit from aligning themselves with and supporting authoritarian regimes, whether it's with information and influence operations or whether it's through transnational repression, they will think twice about doing it.

Will all of them? Will it terminate all clandestine operations, as Mr. Wark has said? Probably not. This will depend on its proper implementation. However, the existence of the legislation itself is a strong deterrent.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Kolga.

I now have a question for you, Mr. Wark.

You mentioned your concern that the registry could eventually become a register of “good guys”.

Is there a risk that people with malicious intent will voluntarily register in order to divert attention or to provide themselves with a kind of good faith umbrella, while continuing to engage in negative clandestine transactions?

• (1235)

[English]

Wesley Wark: Thank you. I'll respond in English to this interesting question.

It wouldn't be the smartest approach in the world, in my view, to sign up to the registry if you intended to continue covertly practising some form of foreign interference. It would put you in the sights of both monetary penalties and potential criminal sanctions, as well as making you an easily identifiable target for either law enforcement or CSIS. I don't think it's very likely.

In terms of my concern about it being a registry of good guys, I take Marcus's point that it will contain many good guys who will sign up, understanding the purposes and transparency objectives. My concern is really the resource implications this will have and trying to measure those requirements against potential outcomes.

This is something I encouraged Public Safety to think about very seriously from the beginning: The best example of a registry that has been around for quite a long time but has been proven, I think, to be pretty ineffective in terms of leading to any real outcomes in terms of legal action is the Australian one. Marcus might correct me on this, but I believe only one prosecution has followed from the Australian scheme, and even this was somewhat controversial. It probably would have been caught by other criminal legislation and by a combination of Australian security services and federal police in that regard.

There have been a lot of complaints and criticisms in the Australian context about the wastefulness, frankly, and of people's hav-

ing to go through a very complex registration process. A former politician, for example, might have to do this.

I'm not opposed to the idea of the registry. I think it's very important to continue to measure its effectiveness. This is a role Parliament can play. The annual reports of the commissioner will be very important in that regard. However, I fear a bureaucratic sinkhole, to be honest. I fear the drawing away of resources from other law enforcement and intelligence activities, for which Canada has, frankly, limited resources.

This was one of the things that was of great interest to me in Dan Rogers' recent public address, in which he was talking about the challenges of trying to move very rapidly from one threat to the next and the need to constantly change the resources CSIS could allocate.

My concluding remark about this is that I think we have to be very careful to keep the foreign influence transparency registry as targeted, tightly managed and resource-unintensive as possible.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have 15 seconds left, Madam Normandin. I'll give it to you next time.

I will be very serious on the timing moving forward.

Mr. Calkins, you have five minutes. I will cut you off at five.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Thank you.

It's a conundrum having three interesting witnesses, but I'll have to focus my questions on Mr. Tay.

Mr. Tay, can you hear me okay?

Joe Tay: Yes, I can hear you.

Blaine Calkins: Good.

I'm going to follow up on a line of questioning from Mr. Cooper.

You were contacted by the RCMP and told it was unsafe for you to continue to campaign. Can you confirm that?

Joe Tay: Yes.

Blaine Calkins: Did they tell you it was you specifically, somebody in your family or somebody in your broader circle of loved ones who was most at risk? Was any of this disclosed to you?

Joe Tay: I specifically asked that question of the RCMP agents. They said they were only targeting me, and not my family, at the time.

Blaine Calkins: You said your volunteers were harassed and intimidated. Can you give us an example of what this looked like?

Joe Tay: During the door knocking and canvassing, there was a man following two guys and one lady with my team. They recognized that he had a camera and had a hand in his long overcoat. They were scared and reported it to me, and I told them to go to the police. They tried to door knock for maybe another half an hour. That guy disappeared for a while and reappeared on the corner of other streets, so they were actually followed. They reported it to the police.

Blaine Calkins: Did anything come of it?

Joe Tay: No.

Blaine Calkins: In addition to the things you've already disclosed, you said there was a disinformation campaign against you on the doorstep. My understanding, based on what I've seen in the media and such, is that the message going door to door was conveyed that if people voted for Joe Tay, Beijing's Toronto consulate would know and there would be consequences for them.

Can you confirm this is true?

• (1240)

Joe Tay: Yes. This was actually sent as an attachment to the clerk, who did not have enough time to have it translated. This will be provided if you need the piece of information that was distributed.

Blaine Calkins: How effective, how broad and how widespread do you think the door-to-door campaign was?

Joe Tay: The door-to-door campaign was very effective because it was all seniors. They actually visited, to my knowledge, at least three total seniors' buildings in Don Valley North. I think 70% of the seniors did not go, according to my volunteers. We tried to contact the building, and they were too afraid to share.

Blaine Calkins: Based on your GOTV, you were able to ascertain that a large portion of seniors in the constituency you were running in did not get out to vote. Is this right?

Joe Tay: They at least received the note and were very scared and had queries. Regarding the actual voting, I would have to look into the data itself.

Blaine Calkins: Do you think it was because they were threatened and intimidated and would lose, say, their ability to visit mainland China again? Was this the main threat?

Joe Tay: Yes, they believe that was true.

Blaine Calkins: Are you aware of any connection between this intimidation campaign and Beijing's Toronto consulate?

Joe Tay: I believe there is one. I think they are related.

Blaine Calkins: You do?

Joe Tay: I do.

Blaine Calkins: Okay.

Did you listen to the testimony of the witnesses in the previous hour?

Joe Tay: No, I hadn't come in yet.

Blaine Calkins: Okay.

The CSIS official who just testified said that, according to the reports they put out, no accredited diplomats from the PRC interfered in the 2025 election. Would you agree with this?

Joe Tay: No. At least for myself, I know I've been a target and a victim, simply by the public bounty. The press conference alone is solid proof.

Blaine Calkins: Do you fear any consequences for yourself or anybody in your family, etc., for testifying at this committee today?

Joe Tay: Yes, I do, because it will be made known. I think the continuation of people of influence.... They would want to silence them.

Blaine Calkins: Thank you for your courage in coming and testifying today and telling us this story. I can't imagine the duress and stress you must be under.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You are at exactly five minutes. That was excellent work, Mr. Calkins.

Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Tay.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Joe Tay: Thank you.

The Chair: Madam Kayabaga, you have five minutes, please.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Thank you so much.

I would also like to welcome our witnesses today.

I want to focus some of my questions on the diaspora community. You mentioned the diaspora and how they're used as a tool by hostile actors to use this avenue to move an agenda in a particular democracy.

Mr. Kolga, how do you perceive foreign governments' using economic leverage, whether it's through business associations or trade ties, if there are any, to indirectly or directly influence diaspora political behaviour in Canada?

Marcus Kolga: Thank you for the question.

These foreign authoritarian regimes use all sorts of levers to try to influence diaspora communities.

If we're looking at Russia, Russia tries to influence its diaspora community. It's usually done through state television promoting radical nationalist views and anti-Ukrainian views. More importantly, it also targets Canadians of Ukrainian heritage, Baltic heritage, and other central and eastern European heritage—including Polish heritage—with intimidation threats.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, these communities, for nearly 80 years, have been targeted with smears, suggestions that they are somehow fascist in nature—all of them. This is not based on any real political beliefs. It's not based on any historical facts. It is based primarily on the heritage of these Canadians. It has been ongoing and intensifying since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2020.

Of course, we've also seen the same sorts of efforts by the Chinese government in terms of trying to silence critics of this regime. I mentioned the Uyghur community, the Tibetan community and the Hong Kong community.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my support and thanks to Joe Tay for his courage in standing up like this. I've personally been targeted with significant death threats that were investigated by York Regional Police in 2019, 2020 and 2021, coming primarily from radicalized members of the Russian community—Russians who were aligned with the Kremlin. I also get regularly targeted by Russian state media articles in RT, Sputnik, Komsomolskaya Pravda and so on.

I have a small sense of understanding of what Mr. Tay is going through. The Canadian government needs to take this very seriously. This sort of targeting of individuals and communities is truly a threat to our democracy and our ability to clearly and independently make political choices and choices for our society.

• (1245)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: You mentioned that you've seen Russian interference evolving over time.

How do you think they're using social media to create this misinformation and disinformation to drive even the political agenda that they want to drive here in Canada?

Marcus Kolga: Well, they've become incredibly sophisticated at exploiting social media and all the digital technologies we have today. Let's not forget: Russia's been at this game for over 100 years.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Do they have influencers in Canada who are using their platforms to propagate—

Marcus Kolga: Absolutely.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Okay.

Marcus Kolga: I was starting to explain some of that earlier through this RT—

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Are there any you can name? Do you have any you could name on the record?

Marcus Kolga: Yes. It's well-known through the DOJ indictment that there were three Canadians named in the indictment as working with the Russians to set up Tenet Media. Lauren Southern, who's a well-known far right influencer online, was one of the podcasters who were part of the Tenet Media scheme. Lauren Chen was another one, as was Liam Donovan. All three are Canadians who were alleged by the DOJ to have been involved in this scheme. The influencers involved in this Russia Today-funded scheme were basically.... Some of them were getting up to \$100,000 U.S. per episode—

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Wow.

Marcus Kolga: —to try to influence not just American politics but Canadian politics as well.

As we know—

The Chair: I'm going to have to interject, given the timing. I apologize.

Marcus Kolga: It's the second time.

The Chair: I know. We are over time. Given the timing, there are other opportunities.

Madame Normandin, you have two minutes and 45 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Kolga, in articles this year, you have spoken about the importance of Canada working with other countries to counter disinformation. In particular, there has been talk of working with Japan to take action against Russian disinformation.

My question is for Mr. Kolga and Mr. Wark. With regard to combatting interference, specifically interference targeting individuals

that takes the form of threats against individuals, should Canada work more closely with other countries?

If so, which countries?

[*English*]

Marcus Kolga: Absolutely. We should be working with those countries that have experience in dealing with disinformation and that have successfully dealt with some of these threats. I would look to Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Sweden has set up a psychological defence unit within its government to specifically address foreign influence in the information operations targeting Swedes. It's also to warn Swedes and educate them about how to defend themselves and their democracy against these sorts of threats. Other European nations have also succeeded. France is doing a fairly good job of this.

In terms of the influencers I was talking about earlier, we should be working together with our European allies to expose them whenever they appear, whether they are Canadians, Americans, Europeans or others. Again, it's a question of transparency and accountability. It may be easier for our European allies to expose some of those influencers—rather than Canada itself. There's a lot of work to be done. I think there's a real opportunity to work with our allies to address this challenge and the threats.

• (1250)

Wesley Wark: Could I add to that very quickly?

It's important to understand that although Russia, for example, has a very sophisticated capacity to engage in foreign interference and influence operations around the world, not every country is subject to the same degree of Russian activities. The capacity is there. The question of the extent to which a particular country is targeted will depend.

One of the surprising outcomes—for me, certainly—of the Hogue commission inquiry was indicating that it was the view of the intelligence community, as well as the investigations that the Hogue team put together, that Russian electoral interference operations, at least, and operations against democratic processes were not conducted at a very intensive scale. We may not be on the top-tier target list for Russian activities. This has an implication in terms of where Canada might go to understand Russian foreign interference and learn lessons from allies, but certainly the Five Eyes partnership has to be critical to this.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Madam Normandin, you are out of time.

If there are items we haven't covered, or if I've cut you off, you can submit those items to the committee. They will form part of our study.

We'll go to Mr. Jackson, please, for five minutes.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thank you to the three witnesses. This has been very interesting for me, as a new member of Parliament. There was some debate about whether another foreign interference study by this committee was needed. Certainly, the Liberals were pushing back against it when it was proposed. As a new member of Parliament, I have found this very educational. I think it's concerning to a lot of Canadians, what's going on in this country right now and around the world, so I appreciate your being here today.

Mr. Tay, I'm just astounded by the situation you've had to deal with. I really am. It is completely unacceptable on Canadian soil. You have the PRC putting a bounty on a Canadian citizen's head as they are campaigning for elected office. You then have the Prime Minister coming out—after one of his candidates encourages a set of journalists to promote the bounty publicly and share it more widely—and saying it's not so bad that his candidate did that; it's a “teachable moment”, and the candidate is actually a “person of integrity”, when they incited media to promote a story about a Communist dictatorship putting a bounty on a Canadian's head who is seeking elected office in this country. I'm not sure what about that screams integrity...but very little of it to my constituents in the southwest corner of Manitoba; I'll tell you that.

I'd like to give you an opportunity to comment on that. I'm not sure we've really discussed how disturbing the comments from the Prime Minister are.

Joe Tay: Thank you for bringing this up.

I was really concerned. When Paul Chiang first announced this through the press and it was picked up by the media, my life was in exponentially more danger, especially during the three or four days when Mark Carney was protecting the candidate. It really scared me. It's a totally different ideology.

In Canada, MPs and everyone should be sworn to protect Canadians. When there was a direct CCP threat to our democracy through the election, and the MPs or the leaders were promoting it at the same time, it almost gave approval to the people who wanted to hurt me. It was like a green light. It was a really scary situation for me and my family.

There was a thought during my family discussions that I should terminate my running immediately after that, but I kept going. I thought there would at least be some protection from the system. Until now, I was wondering whether there was any follow-up on Mr. Paul Chiang's actions in stating the bounty. It looks as though he's retiring without any consequences. That should really alarm Canadians.

● (1255)

Grant Jackson: I thank you for your courage in continuing to seek elected office in this country. I know that the Prime Minister, shortly before this all took place, as chair of Brookfield secured a \$270-million loan from the PRC bank that is involved with the Communist Party. I wonder if you see any connection between the Prime Minister's unwillingness to speak out against the bounty they placed on your head and the fact that he had just borrowed \$270 million from them several months before.

Joe Tay: Well, I don't have any proof of the relation, but it is a fact that Canada will seek economic development with China. The Prime Minister is now initiating collaboration or deeper co-operation with China. Maybe Canada needs it economically, but there's a side note: Every Canadian and every member of Parliament should be made aware that there should be countermeasures to protect Canadians. An ideologically different country is collaborating closely with Canada. There should at least be some laws to protect against or have countermeasures against these kinds of threats.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds left, Mr. Jackson.

Grant Jackson: I just thank you very much for your courage, Mr. Tay, both for your actions during the election and for appearing before this committee today. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Louis, you have five minutes, please.

Tim Louis: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate it.

Mr. Kolga, we'll try for the third time to finish the line. You mentioned that the U.S. Department of Justice alleged that Tenet Media, a company founded by Canadians, accepted nearly \$10 million from Russian state-linked sources to amplify Kremlin narratives through far right influencers. Research also shows that far right media ecosystems in Canada are often spreading divisive narratives that align with foreign objectives. This opens up a different line of conversation.

How does this case illustrate the vulnerabilities in Canada's information ecosystem? In your view, how do these domestic networks amplify foreign disinformation that can threaten our democratic cohesion? What can we do about it if they are actually Canadian companies?

Marcus Kolga: The Tenet Media case is a clear smoking gun showing that, in contrast to Madam Hogue's conclusion, Russia is very much interested in manipulating Canada's information space and our democracy. These sorts of operations are not limited just to the far right; they are also happening on the far left, and there is a great example.

Back in August 2022, an article published by a far left journal based in Canada basically targeted Ukrainian and other central and eastern European Canadians with incitement of hate, with hate-based narratives suggesting that any of them who identified as victims of Communism are enemies of Canada. I would argue that the vast majority of central and eastern Europeans who now live in Canada, and their families—I am of Estonian heritage as well—came here because they were fleeing Soviet Russian terror, repression and colonialization. Because we identify as such, the far left suggested that we are enemies of Canada, suggesting that nearly three million Canadians of central and eastern European heritage are enemies of Canada. That is an incitement of hate. This is just one example.

These are the sorts of narratives moving around on the far left. It's not just a problem of the far right and far left: Russia successfully exploits both sides in order to polarize our society and divide us. That's the key, to sow chaos. That is Russia's primary objective in its influence and information operations targeting the western democratic world.

Tim Louis: To that end, younger generations are turning more to social media for their news than to traditional media. As people are digesting more of this information, what role would public education have? What role do different levels of government have? What role do journalists have? How do we find the balance of explaining how to detect misinformation and disinformation?

• (1300)

Marcus Kolga: Arguably, it's not just youth who are turning to social media: I think all generations are getting most of their information nowadays from social media. I'm one of the rare Canadians who still pays for a newspaper to come to my door, but most Canadians don't do that. I think that we don't value news, facts or journalism the way we did a few generations ago.

Will more public education fix the problem? I'm not sure. It requires a complete shift in culture, not just in Canada but in much of the western world. How we do that is going to take a whole-of-society approach, a non-partisan approach to dealing with these threats, and I'm not sure we're prepared to do that yet.

Our allies in Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have figured out ways to do this, to bring their nations together, to build that resilience. They're smaller and they're homogeneous, so

they're not like Canada. I think we have a lot of challenges in this country. Some of the things that make us stronger will also make it a bit more of a challenge to do that.

It's government taking leadership and bringing all of society together, including journalists, elected officials and civil society. Civil society is important. I include myself in that. We are on the front lines of this battle, along with journalists and academics. Bringing them all together to figure out a solution is what it is going to take, and we are not there yet.

Tim Louis: In the less than a minute I have, I'm joined by my colleague Ms. Chagger, from Waterloo region.

To Mr. Wark from the Centre for International Governance Innovation in our riding and in our region, do you have any closing statements to share?

The Chair: Please be very brief.

Wesley Wark: I will be very brief.

There is an important message that we all need to hear as Canadians, and it is that societal resilience in the face of foreign interference and a wide variety of other national security threats is vital. Education is part of the tool kit of ensuring societal resilience, but we must not start from a point of view that there is no societal resilience in Canada. To do this is, I think, an extreme point that is in fact undermining Canadian democracy itself.

We should have a very balanced approach to this. I think there is a lot of societal resilience in Canada to foreign influence and foreign interference, and I take some comfort in that.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Mr. Louis, thank you.

As a reminder, on Thursday we will begin our study on the Leaders' Debates Commission mandate and its experience during the 2025 election.

As a continuation of this study, we received a date from the Minister of Public Safety. He will appear in the first week when we return, on the 29th.

We thank our witnesses.

This committee has no further business, so we are adjourned.

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