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# Standing Committee on International Trade

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Chair: Judy A. Sgro





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• (1110)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to our witnesses and to our committee members.

This is meeting number 25 of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 12, the committee is going to start its study on recent developments in Canada's trade relations with China and with Qatar.

Before we get into hearing from our witnesses, I want to turn the floor over to Mr. Savard-Tremblay for a moment.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ):** I actually didn't specifically ask to speak, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I want to acknowledge and say that it was unfortunate to hear about the incident in which you were attacked in Brussels, if you want to give a bit of information to the committee on that experience.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** I've recounted the events and stages of what happened. I'm doing fine and I wasn't hurt.

I want to thank you, Madam Chair. The chair of the other committee on which I sit also started the meeting by saying a word about this.

I also want to thank all my colleagues who supported me and sent me very sincere messages. I think it shocked and troubled a lot of people to see that this kind of thing was possible. I'm a big guy, six feet two inches tall. I don't even dare imagine what a young woman or someone who doesn't have my frame must experience in this kind of a city where insecurity is constantly growing.

I hope that this example will serve others. Let's always be extremely careful.

You should also know that, specifically as it concerns members of Parliament, we have reported this incident to the Sergeant-at-Arms, of course, and I hope that the safety of members who are travelling can be improved.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for sharing that information with us. We're very glad to see you back here in Canada, where we hope it's safer. I don't know about that some days, but we're glad that you're back and you're safe and everything is all right.

Continuing on, then, we have with us today, from the Canada China Business Council, Bijan Ahmadi, the executive director and chief operating officer, by video conference. From StrategicEffects, we have Michael Kovrig, executive director, who is well known and respected by all of us, not just here in Parliament but throughout Canada.

We're very happy to have you here with us, Mr. Kovrig.

We will open the floor with Mr. Ahmadi for remarks for up to five minutes, please.

**Bijan Ahmadi (Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Canada China Business Council):** Thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee today.

Since 1978, the Canada China Business Council, CCBC, has served as the leading voice of the Canadian business community on China, working to advance practical solutions that support responsible commercial engagement and advance Canada's national economic interests. We represent more than 300 member companies from different sectors across Canada. Our membership includes major Canadian corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises that are actively engaged in trade and investment with China.

China is Canada's second-largest trading partner, with bilateral merchandise and services trade of around \$130 billion. The economic impact of the relationship is substantial. Trade and investment with China supports over 400,000 Canadian jobs nationwide.

China is also a major source of foreign direct investment into Canada. FDI stock in Canada from China and Hong Kong reached approximately \$65 billion in 2024. Investment and trade ties with China support economic activity in many different sectors across Canada, including oil and gas, mining, finance, forestry, agri-food, consumer products, manufacturing and tourism, among other sectors. Education ties are equally important and contribute significantly in terms of economic value and people-to-people ties.

In recent months, and particularly since Prime Minister Carney's visit to China in January, we have seen constructive progress in the bilateral economic relationship. High-level engagements by the federal government that began around the summer of last year have led to tangible and positive outcomes.

During the Prime Minister's recent visit to China, the two governments agreed to a package of solutions to address some of the irritants and tariff escalations that severely impacted bilateral trade, particularly with our agri-food workers and producers across the country. Through these agreements, starting March 1, China will lower tariffs on Canadian canola seed to a combined rate of approximately 15% from the current rate of 84%. China will also remove its 25% anti-discrimination tariffs on Canadian canola meal, lobsters, peas and crabs. In addition, China has dropped its ban on Canadian beef and is expected to accelerate restoring access to Canadian pet food. The Canadian government also agreed to a limited quota system that will allow 49,000 Chinese electric vehicles to enter the Canadian market, with a focus on bringing affordable EVs to Canada and opening up opportunities for joint investment by Chinese automakers in the Canadian EV supply chain.

The new Canada-China economic and trade co-operation road map, which was signed during the Prime Minister's visit, and the reconvening of dialogue mechanisms such as the economic and financial strategic dialogue, financial working group, ministerial dialogue on energy and joint agriculture committee provide important mechanisms for ongoing engagement to address current challenges and explore opportunities to further expand mutually beneficial economic co-operation. The Canadian business community has responded positively to Ottawa's efforts to recalibrate bilateral ties.

In CCBC's latest business survey, conducted by the Rotman Institute for International Business at the University of Toronto, 82% of surveyed Canadian firms indicated that the government's renewed approach to China would have a positive impact on their business outlook. A third of the surveyed firms reported that they are preparing to expand their business with China.

Looking ahead, I would offer four brief recommendations.

The first is to actively use the re-established bilateral mechanisms to address trade barriers and improve market access for Canadian businesses. To provide two examples, access for pet food and tariffs on Canadian pork are still challenges that we need to work on.

The second is to provide clarity and predictability in investment policy. There are opportunities to responsibly attract capital into both conventional renewable energy projects and to manufacturing and agri-food. Clarity on sectors open to investment, national security guardrails and an efficient review process are essential.

The third is to support Canadian business development efforts in China. China is one of the most competitive markets in the world. Canadian companies succeed there because of quality, reliability and brand strength. Further investment toward enhanced export promotion, trade missions and sector-specific support can help more Canadian firms compete effectively.

The fourth is to facilitate travel, education and business exchanges. Canadian companies frequently raise concerns about visa-processing timelines for Chinese partners, customers or prospective clients travelling to Canada. If we want to fully capitalize on renewed momentum in bilateral engagement, Canada will need to look at improving the efficiency of our visa processes.

In closing, the Canada-China economic relationship is complex, but it's also consequential. A pragmatic, disciplined and well-structured engagement strategy is not about ignoring differences. It is about advancing Canadian prosperity and national interest in a changing global environment. At a time when Canada is seeking to diversify its trade and double its non-U.S. exports within the next decade, China's scale and growth trajectory remain highly relevant.

● (1115)

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ahmadi.

We'll go on to Mr. Kovrig, please, for up to five minutes.

**Michael Kovrig (Executive Director, Strategic Effects (GNSE)):** Thank you very much, ma'am.

It's an honour to speak to the committee.

In January, Prime Minister Mark Carney visited China and restored leader-level political relations and diplomatic dialogue mechanisms. If that were all his trip achieved, I would have considered it entirely successful. However, the visit went beyond that by reviving strategic partnership language and making agreements to reduce trade barriers and explore further trade and investment opportunities.

As a short-term tactic, this was an expedient way of buying economic breathing room while Canada adjusts to a more challenging geopolitical environment. The important question now is what the government does next.

Over time, normalizing relations without accountability and seeking relief from renewed coercion through bilateral deals risks confirming to the Chinese Communist Party that democracies will yield to pressure and accommodate power. If such acquiescence continues, Canada risks setting an example that weakens the very alliances and coalitions that Mr. Carney himself called for in his speech in Davos, and it risks his efforts to modernize and strengthen those very coalitions.

It's crucial to recognize that the CCP's objectives include dividing and weakening the west and making China the pre-eminent global power. General Secretary Xi Jinping himself has articulated a geo-economic strategy to seize the commanding heights of advanced technology and manufacturing and increase other countries' dependence on China while minimizing China's reliance on others. That is not a free trade agenda; it's aggressive mercantilism that's ultimately harmful to Canada's interests.

Consequently, the narrow monetary benefits from increasing economic relations with China must be weighed against the asymmetric costs of protecting Canadian society and democracy from foreign influence and interference and the risks of helping the CCP achieve long-term goals that threaten Canadian and allied sovereignty, prosperity and national security. I think Canadians will find that once the full costs are calculated, far fewer trade and investment agreements with China would pass a net benefit test.

Let me provide some specific examples of why turning to China to hedge against America-first policies is ultimately risky.

Trading with China without structural discipline risks relegating Canada to a second-class role as a supplier of commodities and to dependence on Beijing for the critical technologies of the 21st century.

On trade, first, opportunities to sell more commodities are limited. China is running enormous trade surpluses and investing heavily in self-sufficiency in energy, food and advanced technologies. Its imports are stagnant, and its growth is slowing.

Second, in exchange for market access, the party state will demand more political and economic concessions.

Third, replacing lost manufacturing exports to the U.S. with commodity exports to China while importing more from Chinese manufacturers makes Canada more vulnerable to external shocks, not less. The trajectory is neither true diversification nor resilience, but rather the erosion of Canada's remaining industrial depth.

Fourth, increasing agri-food sales beyond past peaks would deepen dependence and increase Beijing's leverage. They are highly concentrated trade agreements in politically influential sectors and risk ceding more leverage to Beijing unless offset by increased exports to more reliable partners.

On investment, first, in terms of attracting direct investment, even if Ottawa can incentivize Chinese manufacturers of electric vehicles and other technologies to produce in Canada, they're likely

to use highly automated final assembly plants with limited employment opportunities. While U.S. investment typically comes with market access, that's rarely going to be the case with Chinese firms. They're also hoping to access the U.S. market, so we should expect them to move slowly while awaiting greater clarity on American policies.

Second, the CCP will likely restrict Chinese companies from transferring sensitive technology and process knowledge. Other aspects of China's industrial model, such as low wages, clustering at scale and massive state support and incentives, can't be duplicated in Canada. Adopting Chinese technology would also embed these sectors in Chinese supply chains, technical standards, ideology and political economy pathologies that the CCP is already wielding for geopolitical influence.

Third, the hope that this will stimulate domestic firms to innovate and increase productivity is misplaced. Instead, Canadian firms and their suppliers would compete against much larger companies, backed by a one-party state that enables them to absorb huge losses, survive for years without profits and subsidize capturing market share until competitors are forced to exit. It could leave Canada further deindustrialized and dependent on exports.

• (1120)

Ultimately, China can offer some tactical, sector-specific opportunities, but these should be caveated by Canada's structural trade deficit with China, Beijing's record of weaponizing interdependence and the strategic risk of deepening concentrated reliance on aggressive big powers rather than true diversification with trusted partners.

In conclusion, I would advise Parliament and all Canadians to scrutinize the implementation and repercussions of these and any other new agreements with China. I would advise the government to move cautiously and transparently. Otherwise, Canada risks falling further into a trap of asymmetric dependence in which the CCP offers inducements, builds Canadian constituencies, expects political deference in return and readily resorts to coercion to ensure compliance. That's not a deal Canada should take. Ephemeral stability purchased through accommodation today invites more coercion tomorrow.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We appreciate your comments.

We will now open the floor for questions.

Mr. Chambers, go ahead for six minutes, please.

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Kovrig, it's my honour today to welcome you to the committee. I know the chair welcomed you, but I thank you for appearing.

I want to let you know that I was elected in 2021, and one of the first issues constituents brought to me during your detention was your case. They wanted to make sure it was publicized and that people knew what you were going through. I want to say thank you. I appreciate your sobering comments and the perspective you'll share with us here today.

I don't want to put words in your mouth, so I'll just ask you to comment. Do you believe the CCP has a global agenda?

**Michael Kovrig:** Yes. I've studied the Chinese Communist Party, Chinese politics and Chinese foreign policy for a couple of decades, including, of course, working as a diplomat, then with the International Crisis Group. There is no question that they have long-term strategies, some of which are published. We don't require access to classified government information to reach fairly clear conclusions.

To simplify, I would say that they have at least three broad objectives.

First of all, it's to make China the dominant power in East Asia—to achieve pre-eminence there and in the western Pacific.

The second is to eventually become the pre-eminent power in the international system. It's to acquire the power to reshape the international order and, ideally, purge it of liberal international norms and rules in order to make it more amenable to an authoritarian, one-party state and China's own interests.

That is an agenda it is then serving through a mercantilist economic strategy. The concern, particularly for this committee, is what China's objectives are vis-à-vis the Canadian economy and western economies, and what the geopolitical implications of this are. Ultimately, China wants to dominate global manufacturing and high technology and to relegate other countries—particularly Canada, Australia, Argentina and Brazil, for example—to supplying it with the raw materials it needs for its industrial might. The party sees manufacturing capacity and advanced technology as the keys to state power. It is seeking power as a means of preserving its rule and, ultimately, extending its influence across the world.

**Adam Chambers:** Thank you. That's very comprehensive.

As you describe this global agenda, many Canadians would consider some of those concepts to be adversarial or at least not within Canada's national interest. Is this a fair observation?

**Michael Kovrig:** Yes, that's correct.

I would say that there are, first of all, actions that China takes that are directly antithetical to Canadian interests. Many of those

have been catalogued in the media and in government reports over the last several years.

One needs to step back and ask why the party state is doing these things. Why the transnational repression? Why foreign interference? Why efforts to alter the effects of elections, even if they weren't ultimately successful? Why the extensive espionage? Why the repeated coercion through economic means, hostage taking and other things?

It's because the Chinese Communist Party is trying to condition Canada's behaviour to defer to Beijing's preferences and to establish a new hierarchy of power in which Canada is not simply a helper of the United States. It's because China views the United States in fundamentally adversarial terms.

It wants to break up western alliances. It wants to drive wedges between western countries and ultimately deal with us individually through a dynamic in which it is by far the larger and more powerful party. It ultimately wants to subvert and influence Canadian politics and society so that Canada doesn't do anything that is displeasing to the Chinese Communist Party.

More broadly, it wants to knock America off its position as the most powerful country in the world and supplant it as the central state in world affairs, not necessarily to take on all the burdens and responsibilities of hegemony but certainly to take a significant amount of the power. It does not want to be constrained by the United States or by any other coalition of countries. It wants to weaken the west.

This week, for example, the German Federal Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, is in Beijing. China wants to supplant Germany as the industrial powerhouse of the world. It wants to master all of those high technologies, and it wants to use those supply chains and access to its market to condition behaviour that serves its interests.

By weakening Europe, by breaking up Europe, by driving wedges between Europe and the United States and between other allies—for example, between Japan, Australia and others—it wants to divide and conquer. It's not necessarily territorial conquest as we're seeing with Russia, but it is certainly an increase in its own influence to reshape the world according to its own image and views.

• (1125)

**Adam Chambers:** Thank you very much.

I have only about 30 seconds left, so this will have to be a quick answer.

Do you think there's a risk that Parliament or the executive branch and the government is being naive about those ultimate objectives of China when they're making what seem to be nominal, small concessions or deals in the short term?

**Michael Kovrig:** It's less naïveté than the incentives of democratic politics, which drive the government to find quick wins—for example, to achieve relief for particular sectors such as canola—and ultimately to deliver quick economic benefits and let someone else in the future worry about the long-term strategic implications.

It requires changing incentives. I don't think it's a lack of understanding but rather the pressure to focus on short-term objectives and not worry about long-term outcomes. That is a great risk for Canada.

**Adam Chambers:** Thank you, sir.

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

Mr. Fonseca, go ahead for six minutes, please.

**Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, to Mr. Kovrig, we can see how this committee always brings in excellent expert witnesses. We've just heard some testimony from Mr. Kovrig, and we're hearing from Mr. Ahmadi.

To Mr. Kovrig, on behalf of this committee and Canadians, we thank you for your service, for your commitment and everything that you've done for our country of Canada. Like my colleague Adam Chambers, I received many calls and emails from my constituents when you were going through your ordeal. We saw so much courage and resilience in you that helped our nation. Thank you for that.

Mr. Ahmadi, I have a question.

There was a dinner at which, according to one report, “Prime Minister Carney emphasized that Canada and China are entering a ‘new era’ and a ‘new chapter’ in their bilateral relationship. He described this phase as one grounded in engagement that is realistic, respectful, and ambitious, underscoring the importance of building a partnership that reflects current global realities.”

Do you believe that this is an accurate statement?

What would you say to those people or countries who believe that we should not be dealing with China?

• (1130)

**Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Ahmadi, looking at the agri-food sector, how can Canada strengthen food security co-operation while protecting our domestic producers?

**Bijan Ahmadi:** The agreements that were reached during this trip, I believe, did a fair job. There is still a lot that needs to be done. However, these were good agreements, with the first positive steps toward resolving at least some of the challenges that were created by the tariffs and countertariffs, especially during the previous federal government.

Again, some tariffs have been reduced, but there is a time limit. For example, in the current agreements that we've reached, the tariffs that have been reduced or eliminated are only going until the

end of 2026. A good thing about what was achieved is that we've now established and restored some of those dialogue mechanisms.

JETC, the joint economic and trade commission, was established even before this visit. We also have the economic and financial strategic dialogue back on the table, as well as the joint agriculture committee, so that both governments can discuss and resolve existing challenges and talk about ways to expand collaboration, whether in the agri-food sector or other sectors that are important for our bilateral relationship. In this way, we can restore market access and expand opportunities for Canadian businesses and exporters.

**Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Kovrig, in your remarks, you mentioned “tactical, sector-specific opportunities”. How should Canada operationalize this strategic realism, and how can we do it tactically?

**Michael Kovrig:** There's a framework I would start with. For the Chinese Communist Party, economic outcomes are geopolitical outcomes on a path to revising the international power hierarchy and to gain political and strategic advantages over Canada.

Where individual firms are looking to profit, maximize and seek opportunities, the role the government and civil society need to play is to really impose a net benefit test on any kind of significant investment or new trade deal. This requires calculating asymmetric costs and benefits, because the benefits are going to be concentrated in a few companies, communities and shareholders, but if to manage those benefits Canada then has to spend more on national defence, on security agencies and on preventing foreign espionage and influence, that's diffused across all taxpayers. This, first of all, needs to be part of the calculation.

Second, there are a number of different mechanisms to assess it. I'm not suggesting that there should be total decoupling or no trade with China. Trade with China can continue in non-sensitive sectors that don't touch on, for example, military technology, dual-use technologies, national security and other things. The improvements that ISED has made over the last several years in the investment-screening processes, for example, are a critical part of that. Canada needs to make sure that it has adequate outbound investment screening, as well as inbound investment screening.

The other key litmus test is not so much whether there is trade but the proportion of trade at the sectoral level. The top-line number is, of course, not that large. Canada is not that dependent on trade or investment with China. It's the second largest, but it's only around 4%. What matters is that certain sectors are particularly dependent. As we've seen multiple times now, the Chinese Communist Party will weaponize that interdependence for coercive purposes to change Canadian policy. Canada then loses sovereignty, political decision-making and autonomy.

We need to establish a ceiling for a particular sector, let's say canola, pork or seafood: What's the most that we are willing to sell to one buyer, particularly a large buyer with hostile foreign policies? Then, how do we manage to offset that by seeking other trade partners?

The role of the government would be to look at that given sector and incentivize more balancing trade with other and more trusted partners so that, if the Chinese Communist Party chooses to use that and close its market, Canada can shrug it off, survive and move on. In that way, we can maximize the potential economic benefits of trade with the national security and sovereignty concerns that we have.

• (1135)

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

Mr. Savard-Tremblay, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses for their presentations and their presence.

Mr. Kovrig, I think your presentation is clear on the fact that an agreement is good, but there still have to be strict conditions. You actually said as much in a recent interview. On Pamela Wallin's podcast, you said that diplomatic dialogue was desirable, but that we still had to be careful not to let everything in.

In your answers to previous questions, you were able to expand on your thoughts about the areas and sectors. In your introduction, you talked about high technology. Then you said that critical minerals, energy infrastructure, artificial intelligence and defence supply chains were all things that involve a risk.

In that same interview, you also said that dialogue with China could not simply be treated as a neutral dialogue, a technocratic dialogue, and that silence on sensitive issues would often be interpreted as agreement, as if we were turning a blind eye to those issues. I'm thinking, for example, of the massive violation of human rights, including forced labour. I introduced Bill C-251 to counter this phenomenon and emulate the American model, which works. During the second hour, we'll hear from a representative of the Uyghurs, and we can talk about this again.

Is Canada too silent and lacking proactivity on these issues?

**Michael Kovrig:** Thank you very much for the question. I'll answer in English, as I'm more used to talking about these kinds of matters in English.

[*English*]

It's a very important question.

First of all, one key parameter is that Canada's foreign policy regarding human rights needs to focus on understanding that it's not simply an opportunity for political virtue signalling. It's not a nice-to-have.

The way the party state treats political prisoners—for example, Canadian citizens who are detained in China, ethnic minorities, citizens of Hong Kong and the Taiwanese—and the way it engages in exceedingly repressive tactics and, in many cases, human rights-violating policies against them is a preview of how that regime will treat any other country or population over which it acquires influence. We've seen that through its efforts to coerce, by fear and intimidation, Canadian citizens on our soil and, for example, people who have emigrated from Hong Kong.

We're not simply looking to speak out. The purpose of speaking out is to prevent the abuses and call attention to them. Ultimately, what our policies often need to focus on is specific cases and specific outcomes that we are looking to change. The volume is less important than how exactly it is achieved, and a crucial element is coordination with other like-minded governments, ideally as many governments as possible.

Continue to hold the line on norms in international fora on multilateral documents through the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Human Rights Council, for example, when China is continuing to try to erode those liberal norms. Also, focus on specific cases of detainees or particularly egregious cases in which it's actually possible to measure success. Otherwise, these often end up being just hortatory statements.

The Prime Minister and the current government are correct that quite often, the most can be accomplished not through public statements but through diplomatic channels. I would not underrate the role of quiet diplomacy, but the problem comes when the government trades silence for concessions and benefits from China, because the Chinese Communist Party will continually try to buy our silence. It will offer economic benefits in return for silence on what China does on Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan and, ultimately, a whole range of other issues, and that creates a slippery slope.

That is dangerous, but it's not so much the volume as it is the coordination and strategic use of statements to call out unacceptable behaviour and urge changes in that behaviour.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** For example, is the entry of several thousand Chinese electric vehicles safe, when we know that we could have another option, that of European electric vehicles, which does not pose any concerns related to human rights, industrial espionage or the collection of personal data?

We know that these are highly technological vehicles that can record conversations and that, often, many of the components used in their production are made using forced labour. All of that is provable.

Is it a good idea to let them in, when we know that we could have chosen another much more advantageous option?

[*English*]

**Michael Kovrig:** Yes, that's a very good point as well.

So far, Canada has started with a small volume, but it sends a big geopolitical signal that a G7 country is reopening its electric vehicle market to China, and this ultimately tests Canada's alignment with the United States and Mexico ahead of the CUSMA review. It has strategic implications.

For individual Canadians, it's obviously also significant from a privacy and security perspective. Electric vehicles are essentially two-tonne cellphones travelling around the country. The Israeli government, for example, has banned them from anywhere near its military sites, and that country has very sophisticated levels of cybersecurity concerns.

It is absolutely necessary, if Canada is going to allow these vehicles into the country in any quantity, to consult the appropriate security agencies—the CSE and CSIS—to establish what parameters are necessary to make it secure. This may include requiring them to have only indigenous Canadian software and other limitations. This needs to be screened very carefully.

So far, the United States, for example, has ruled that effective next year, such vehicles will not be allowed into the United States if they run Chinese software. This becomes a broader consideration in the same way that with Huawei, Canada had concerns for the United States security community as well.

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

We'll go to Mr. Groleau for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Good morning, Madam Chair, colleagues and guests.

Mr. Kovrig, thank you for being here. It's an honour to speak to you.

I'd like to acknowledge your great resilience. We know your story. You were detained in China for over 1,000 days as part of political retaliation.

You have extensive experience in diplomacy, international security and foreign affairs. I have a simple question. In your opinion, is China a reliable partner for Canada? If not, why?

**Michael Kovrig:** Thank you very much for the question.

[*English*]

I would take this moment to thank all of you for your very kind statements about me. The support of Parliament and of all Canadians was immensely helpful to me in going through that ordeal. I'm deeply grateful.

The short answer to your question is, no, the Chinese Communist Party is manifestly not a reliable partner for the fundamental reason that systemically—it's not about the individuals involved—it does not have checks and balances, transparency or democratic accountability. Its attitude toward the rule of law and its world view are fundamentally different from that of any country with a Westminster-style Parliament, whether common law or civil law.

The law in China and in the eyes of the Communist Party is simply another political tool. It's an instrument of power. International treaties, accords and consular agreements, for example, are just paper. They're adhered to only if it's seen as being within the political interests of the Communist Party to adhere to them. It is not a system that fundamentally respects contracts. I can use the example of my own case. In detaining me, China violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the Canada-China consular agreement and a number of human rights covenants to which it is a signatory. That's just one small example. The regime routinely violates accords. Another example, of course, is in the South China Sea, in which it ignored the ruling of the international tribunal in a dispute with the Philippines, and it has proceeded to do so.

It will follow laws and rules when it is convenient, but as we've seen, particularly with its role in the World Trade Organization, it often creates the useful semblance of being a guardian and supporter of globalization and the rules-based order while actively undermining and exploiting these things from within. This creates critical problems for it as a potential partner, trading or otherwise, for Canada.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

**Jason Groleau:** Mr. Kovrig, are you concerned about the arrival of these electric cars? In addition to harming the Canadian auto industry, do you think they carry any security risks?

[English]

**Michael Kovrig:** Yes. I would not be the only one to assess that electric vehicles pose a risk. If we don't allow Huawei to build our 5G or 6G telecommunications backbone, why would we allow BYD to sell cars in the Canadian market? They can gather up enormous amounts of information on both the drivers and everyone around them. There's ample documentation of this.

The key question is whether Canada has the technical capabilities to mitigate those risks through, for example, cybersecurity safeguards, binding local production requirements or snap-back mechanisms that would allow Canada to change or close a quota if it turns out that things are not going the way we want. That is one crucial thing that the government's automotive initiatives and strategies seem to be incorporating and need to incorporate: Treat this as an experiment with the capability of pulling it back and stopping it if it turns out it's going in a dangerous direction.

There are unquestionably cybersecurity risks. The issue is whether they can be mitigated. As well, from an economics and trade standpoint and an investment standpoint, is it worth going to the trouble of having to do all those mitigations? Does the benefit actually outweigh the cost to the taxpayer of all those additional cybersecurity provisions? One of my core arguments about trade with China is not that individual companies can't make some money by trading or that individual investments might not be worthwhile; it's that the cost of security and mitigation measures that Canada as a whole will have to take on in order to make those investments safe, from both a cybersecurity perspective and a political influence perspective, may end up outweighing the value of the investments in that trade.

[Translation]

**Jason Groleau:** Thank you very much.

[English]

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

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

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Ahmadi and Mr. Kovrig, thank you for being with us. I am very pleased to meet you. I think my colleagues have been full of praise for you concerning what you went through. I hear a lot of wisdom in what you're saying. What you experienced probably brought you that wisdom.

My question is for both of you, and I'll give you a chance to answer quickly, but before I do so, I would like to say that I worked in banks for 20 years, from 2000 to 2020. I was working in banks when they were telling companies to go to China, and also when they were telling them to start taking their business out of China. I've experienced that on the bankers' side.

Today, we find ourselves in a situation where I feel a great deal of caution. I hear what you're saying, Mr. Kovrig.

I am looking at it from the perspective of companies that think there is an opportunity to do business in China. They wonder

whether they should go back there or not. If they go back, how should they do it? Many don't want to go back to the movie in which they have already appeared. They don't want to have to withdraw from there like they have done in the past.

I would like you to quickly tell us what your recommendations are. I sense that there is interest in going back and doing business in China, but it has to be done carefully.

I invite Mr. Ahmadi to answer first, followed by Mr. Kovrig, for up to two minutes each.

• (1150)

[English]

**Bijan Ahmadi:** It's different for each sector. In each different sector, we also need to have guardrails, and companies, of course, are the first in line to understand and consider the challenges they face in the particular sectors they are operating in.

You mentioned the financial services sector. Our banks, investment firms, asset managers and major Canadian insurance companies have a long-term presence in the Chinese market. They, of course, understand the challenges the market presents. However, because of the significant opportunities the market presents to their companies, they are present in the Chinese market and continue their participation and presence in that market. Some want to expand their operations and their presence as well.

In each sector, we need to consider the challenges and have guardrails, some of them by government. Some are the guardrails that businesses themselves establish to protect their operations in China. When we look at our trade relationship as a whole, year after year, even during the past eight years of diplomatic and political strain and difficulties in our bilateral relationship, our bilateral trade and investment—when we look at the FDI stock—have relatively increased. It has been slow growth in terms of the rate of growth, but it has still increased.

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie:** Mr. Ahmadi, I see that my time is running out, so I'll stop you there to give Mr. Kovrig a chance to answer my question. Thank you very much, Mr. Ahmadi.

Mr. Kovrig, I'll let you take your turn.

**Michael Kovrig:** Thank you very much.

[English]

The key concern with Canadian companies in China is, first of all, that they can essentially be held hostage through political means and become weaponized as potential points of leverage that affect Canadian policy. However, as long as their investments are not proportionally too large, that's not necessarily a major concern.

At the strategic level, the government needs to be actively encouraging Canadian companies to invest and be involved in other markets across the Indo-Pacific, a large and dynamic region. The Prime Minister is travelling to Australia, Japan and India this week. That is exactly what he needs to be doing, increasing trade and investment opportunities with other countries in the region to balance the level of commitment in China.

I don't think that it's at the level of forbidding investment in China or putting up barriers to it, but I don't think there's a strategic benefit for Canada to actively encourage or incentivize more investment in China, because the costs of those risks are often socialized across all of Canada and the government and not just on the particular company. There is also the potential risk of a conflict with Taiwan, resulting in those companies having stranded assets in China.

The geopolitical risks in China are significant. The role of the government is to ensure that Canadian companies are fully aware of them, make prudent decisions accordingly and recognize that the government—the taxpayer—is not going to bail them out if they do something the government has not recommended that they do.

Of course, the government also needs to defend the interests of its companies there. I would just argue against incentivizing more investment in the Chinese market. Realistically, in most cases, that's not likely to end well, and there is a key concern of sectoral, business and elite capture through political influence. This is really the key danger: The Chinese Communist Party can turn companies that are invested in China into advocates for its own interests. It can create reciprocity traps for them. This risk also needs to be managed and mitigated.

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

Mr. Savard-Tremblay, you have two and a half minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Kovrig, let's pick up where we left off earlier, if you don't mind.

You answered the question about vehicles, but, in general, we know that a lot of materials produced by forced labour come from Xinjiang in particular. Even though the region's name means “new territory” and, therefore, Uyghurs don't particularly like it, let's use it for this exchange.

Do you believe that Canada should strengthen its legislative safety net regarding the control of its borders and goods entering the country?

● (1155)

**Michael Kovrig:** Thank you very much for that excellent question.

[English]

You raised an important issue of supply chains. The reality is that there are significant risks of environmental damage that would not be tolerable within Canada in the supply chains of a lot of these supposedly clean and green new energy technologies, like batteries and vehicles, as well as, for example, in the mining process that extracts a lot of the rare earths and other things. One cost advantage that China has is that it doesn't have many of the environmental standards that Canada has.

I would say that any strictures on trade or investment by those companies need to ensure for the Canadian consumer that, if I'm a Canadian buying an electric vehicle or making use of Chinese batteries, these things have acceptable supply chains, both from an environmental perspective and from a human rights perspective.

The United Nations and multiple independent civil society organizations have reported on severe problems of forced labour in China. I think Canadians need to be assured, if they are buying a Chinese electric vehicle or another product, that it was not made with slave labour and that it did not pollute and devastate a natural environment somewhere, in a way deemed unacceptable in Canada.

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** The act should therefore be strengthened in this area.

**Michael Kovrig:** Exactly, yes.

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you.

How much time do I have left, Madam Chair?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 25 seconds remaining.

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** We recently learned that there was an agreement with Taiwan, but that all that was missing was the signature. The agreement is said to be on the Prime Minister's desk. We won't assume anything, but we might suspect that this is to avoid displeasing China.

Would an agreement with Taiwan be desirable?

[English]

**Michael Kovrig:** Yes. I think it's quite important, in fact, to continue to move forward with agreements with Taiwan. We should be actively deepening Canada's support for and engagement with Taiwan, maintaining a polite diplomatic stance with China as we do so. As long as those things are within the parameters of Canadian foreign policy guidelines on the one China policy, there is no reason that Canada should not be able to do those things. Indeed, Canada should also be encouraging like-minded democracies and allies to strengthen ties with Taiwan. We should not accept a false dichotomy, which Beijing would want to force on Canada, that we must choose between relations with China and Taiwan when we are talking about commercial agreements on trade and investment, for example.

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

We'll be going slightly over.

Mr. McKenzie, go ahead.

**David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'll add my thanks to those of my colleagues on this committee, for both of these witnesses. Your knowledge and expertise are greatly appreciated.

Mr. Kovrig, in the circumstances that we've seen unfold in the last number of months, the fact that China closed its borders to canola exports from Canada inflicted very serious economic harm, primarily on western Canadian farmers. They utilized this economic hostage strategy to great effect: We've opened our borders to EVs. Can we expect more of that treatment in a broadening relationship with China?

**Michael Kovrig:** Very likely, yes.

**David McKenzie:** Thank you, sir.

I want to ask you about "China shocks", something you've written about—China shock 1.0 and China shock 2.0. The example of the EVs that are now going to be imported to Canada perhaps dovetails directly into these subject areas. Could you explain the China shocks?

**Michael Kovrig:** Sure. Some of these are natural processes. It's a growing Chinese economy, with Chinese producers moving up a value chain and gradually competing with industries in other countries. Some of that is a natural process that we also see in other developing countries. What's distinctive about the current China shock is that it's driven to a great extent by massive state subsidies and industrial policies that have deliberately, under banners including made in China 2025, dual circulation and others.... It's part of an explicit policy by China to dominate key sectors, such as biotechnology, robotics, advanced manufacturing and green technology, and to make China the dominant producer of those technologies, while at the same time making other countries dependent on China for those technologies and reducing China's dependence on others. It's leveraging productive capacity for geopolitical purposes.

This is ultimately driven by both ideological and domestic political economy dynamics. China heavily incentivizes production in

manufacturing because the Chinese Communist Party views this as a source of comprehensive state power. It's a massive wealth transfer from Chinese citizens through low interest rates in their bank accounts, for example, in taxation, funnelled into Chinese industry, which then makes those Chinese companies much more competitive on an international market than any western company, because those companies, in many cases, don't have to worry about turning a profit. They're getting cheap land, low taxation, and a lot of credit and other resources, and they're plugging into vast, industrial-scale clusters. There are economies of scale, and there are advantages of learning by doing; a whole host of things pile up to make this an industrial juggernaut.

For countries like Germany, for example, this has become existential. The first China shock was a deindustrialization of somewhat lower value-added manufacturing in the U.S., southern Europe and other countries about 10 to 20 years ago. The current China shock is now decimating the most advanced manufacturing in the world. It's affecting, for example, American automakers, drones and battery makers. It's affecting every German car maker. There are massive layoffs in Germany.

The risk is both economic and strategic. If you deindustrialize a country, you lose a lot of quality jobs. You lose the ecosystem. You lose the process knowledge and expertise that make you capable of producing the advanced technologies of the 21st century. What happens if there's a war? Are you going to have the capacity to build the necessary materials for tanks, for armoured cars, for weapons? Are you still going to have the skilled labour that can produce those things? You're also ultimately going to suffer in terms of lost productivity, because it's much harder to drive productivity in service and agricultural sectors than it is in manufacturing.

There are a whole host of negative externalities that come along with a loss of a manufacturing base and industry, and those in turn accrue to China a further benefit of that much industrial gravity. We are talking about China alone, potentially, in the next few years, producing 40% of all global manufacturing. That provides massive economies of scale; it provides geopolitical leverage, and it ultimately puts China in a position to disseminate its own standards, norms and ideologies through that technology. It's an immensely powerful tool of influence.

• (1200)

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

Madame Lapointe, please go ahead for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, witnesses. It's very interesting to hear your perspectives, particularly what you just said, Mr. Kovrig, about geopolitical risks.

In his speech at Davos, our Prime Minister called for unity among countries of similar size. A little earlier, you alluded to deindustrialization and the risk of losing our entire specialized workforce and our entire high-tech sector. That's true for Germany, but it's not just Germany; it's us as well. What I understand is that, for the last 20 years, China has no longer been producing the same goods. It's been more high tech. So we're going to become vulnerable.

Earlier, you mentioned that, yes, we need to do business with China, but we also need to partner with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region. What are you proposing? Which ones should we favour?

[English]

**Michael Kovrig:** It's worth recognizing that a key driver of the Trump administration's policies—and indeed, the Biden administration's policies before that—is to promote the reindustrialization of the United States. Some of that is because they are looking to restore quality jobs in manufacturing. Realistically, though, with automation, the effect on employment is limited.

What it's more about is strategic purpose: to identify the key industries that the United States, Canada or any country needs in order to source and produce things either by itself, domestically, or—in the case of Canada, which doesn't necessarily have the scale of the United States—through a reliable partner or multiple reliable partners, to ensure that it can have those goods. These may be protective equipment during a pandemic, for example, machine tools, critical technology or silicon chips. In the case of a Taiwan conflict, is Silicon Valley ready to suddenly lose access to that quantity of microprocessors? I don't think so.

Canada needs to ensure that it has multiple partnerships with other reliable countries. Certainly, for high technology, the Indo-Pacific is a key place to do this. Whether it's through South Korea, Japan or Australia for certain specialized things; Southeast Asia for the production of lower-cost items; or European countries for other specialized items, Canada needs to ensure that it has secure supply chains. This currently means diversifying away from the United States. It also means not newly becoming more dependent on China for the supply of those things.

The tragedy of this, of course, from an economic perspective, is that it's expensive. The reason China became so dominant and we had this China shock is that it was cheap and easy to make everything in China and ship it elsewhere. That's okay until you have geopolitical differences and discover that Beijing likes to weaponize interdependence. This, unfortunately, requires Canada and other countries to absorb certain costs by diversifying their supply chains for critical technologies and choosing which ones they want to cultivate at home.

It's about stepping back and thinking about what kind of economy Canada wants to have. Do we want to be the Argentina of the 21st century, primarily reliant on agricultural commodities and energy, or do we want to have the advanced manufacturing sector and technological capacity of a G7 country?

• (1205)

[Translation]

**Linda Lapointe:** Thank you. That's very interesting.

Earlier, you said that we could do business and sell our pork or canola, but that we should put a cap on the sale of our products, so that we don't become vulnerable by having only one buyer. Our market could be undermined if we only sent our products to China.

What do you think the cap should be?

[English]

**Michael Kovrig:** I think it would vary by product.

Ultimately, the question you have to ask a business is this: If you lost one-third of your business, could you survive? It's a bit like a stock market investor. If you have all your money in only three stocks and one of them goes to zero, are you going to be insolvent? Are you going to lose your house? That kind of calculation would need to be done at the individual firm level.

I think the government could help, in various ways, by developing frameworks, litmus tests and geopolitical guidance on how risky a market is and how to factor that kind of political risk into business decisions. To some extent, there may be ways of mitigating that through sectoral, regional or national insurance programs, for example, and so on. The agricultural sector already benefits from certain mechanisms to provide insurance against things like shifts in climate and weather or bad growing seasons. This is another risk that needs to be factored in with mechanisms, and by evaluating mechanisms.

As a ballpark, if I were running a company, I wouldn't want more than a third of my sales being dependent on China or any other market in a position to weaponize that geopolitically. You want to be able to survive, move on and diversify.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to the witnesses, Mr. Ahmadi and Mr. Kovrig. It's very valuable information you provided to the committee today.

We will now suspend for two minutes so that the witnesses for our next panel can come up.

• (1205)

(Pause)

• (1210)

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

We now have with us, as an individual, Charles Burton, senior fellow, Synopsis. From the Canadian Canola Growers Association, we have Dustin Pike, vice-president, government and industry relations, and Brittany Wood, senior manager, transportation and trade policy, by video conference. From the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, we have Mehmet Tohti, executive director.

Welcome to you all. We appreciate your being here.

Mr. Burton, I will turn the floor over to you for up to five minutes for an opening statement, if you like.

**Charles Burton (Senior Fellow, Synopsis, As an Individual):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Last year, this government announced a recalibration of our relations with China. In practice, this meant bowing to Beijing's pressure and adopting the Chinese Communist Party's own terminology by labelling our relationship a "strategic partnership".

What Canada has always wanted from China is straightforward: a greater share of its vast market for Canadian goods and services. Successive governments have chased this dream. Former prime minister Chrétien championed team Canada missions, prioritizing trade while downplaying serious concerns over human rights violations. Every leader up to Justin Trudeau has tied our economic future to increasing exports to China, yet we must face the reality of our failure in this endeavour.

In 2024, exports to China represented a mere 3.8% of our total global exports. That's \$29.9 billion. This is a fraction of the windfall that Canadians could have reasonably expected when China's policies of opening and reform began four decades ago. To put this into perspective, our exports to the European Union stand at 4.8%, or \$34.5 billion Canadian. We do better with Europe than we do with the much-touted economic miracle of China.

Now the government hopes that Mr. Carney can succeed where a generation of leaders has fallen short. He will not. The mercantilists in Beijing will never allow Canadian imports to compete fairly against Chinese domestic products, particularly now that China's economy is languishing under Xi Jinping's anti-market, statist policies.

We must stop treating China as a traditional nation-state. It is a conglomerate of state, industry and the military-security apparatus that is entirely unified under the Chinese Communist Party. At the 19th Party Congress last decade, Xi Jinping made this explicitly clear by stating: "Party, government, military, civilian, and academic; east, west, north, south, and centre, the Party leads everything."

When Beijing demands a strategic partnership, it is demanding our collaboration in enabling its overall geostrategic purposes. Nothing illustrates this danger more than the recent agreement signed in Beijing: a memorandum of understanding on co-operation in combatting crimes. This entails an exchange between the RCMP and China's Ministry of Public Security of data, intelligence and best practices.

Canada gains almost nothing from this agreement. However, the data the Chinese now expect us to hand over poses a severe threat to our national security and to the diaspora communities within our borders, particularly Canadians of Uyghur and Tibetan origin. Fur-

thermore, sharing our best practices simply hands Chinese security agencies the very information they need to understand the RCMP's techniques and exploit our vulnerabilities in countering foreign subversion from China.

What is the price of our compliance? It's a temporary canola tariff reduction that expires at the end of the year, vague MOUs on energy and clean tech and an upgraded bilateral joint economic and trade commission, with trade ministers meeting annually.

These are not diplomatic victories. They are economic leverage. The government is under immense pressure not to displease Beijing. This means turning a blind eye to espionage agents, permitting Chinese regime investment in our critical infrastructure and stalling effective measures like a robust foreign influence registry to expose Beijing's proxies operating on Canadian soil.

Handing over our security apparatus's data and remaining silent on foreign subversion in exchange for fleeting, fractional trade benefits is a profound miscalculation. I am deeply concerned that this government's recent memoranda and its so-called strategic relationship with China are not and will never be of net benefit to Canada.

• (1215)

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the excellent interpreters of this committee for their work.

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

Next is Mr. Pike and Ms. Wood for up to five minutes, please.

**Dustin Pike (Vice-President, Government and Industry Relations, Canadian Canola Growers Association):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for the invitation. It's great to see agriculture as a focus of the international trade committee.

My name is Dustin Pike. It's great to be here in person. I'm here with my colleague, Brittany Wood, who is attending virtually from Winnipeg.

The Canadian Canola Growers Association represents 40,000 canola farmers driving issues, policies and programs that impact their farms' success. Developed in Canada, canola is a Canadian success story of research and innovation.

Canola is a strong economic contributor to family farms and our rural communities. In 2024, canola continued to be the number one source of revenue for farmers, earning \$12.9 billion and accounting for 25% of the total crop receipts, with 90% of the crop being exported as seed, oil or meal. Annually, the canola sector contributes \$43.7 billion to the Canadian economy, and it provides over 200,000 jobs.

The United States and China are the number one and number two most important markets, representing 87% of total canola exports. However, in 2025, this number dropped to 61%, largely due to the tariffs put in place in March and August 2025. Japan, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates and the EU have made up much of the additional export opportunity in recent years, but there is no denying the buying power of the U.S.A. and China.

Canola farmers were very encouraged to receive news, on January 16, of the agreement reached between Canada and China to provide significant tariff relief for Canadian canola seed and meal. We greatly appreciate the efforts and results of PM Carney, his cabinet and government officials, as well as Premier Scott Moe, to re-establish trade with our second-largest export market.

Under the agreement reached, tariffs on Canadian canola seed imports are expected to be reduced to a combined rate of 15%, down from 75.8%, as of March 1, 2026. The current 100% tariffs on canola meal are expected to be completely removed until at least the end of the calendar year. While this is significant progress, there is still work to do. One hundred per cent tariffs on canola oil remain in place, and long-term, predictable tariff relief on all canola products is a must. In 2024, exports of canola to China were valued at \$4.9 billion, compared to only \$2 billion last year. With much of the 2025 crop stored on the farm and planting of the 2026 crop quickly approaching, canola farmers are looking for predictability and confidence in their ability to market their canola. Ultimately, the measure of success will be reliable resumption of canola movement to China this spring.

Beyond China, Canadian farmers continue to value the open trading relationship with a renewed CUSMA. This has allowed canola seed, oil and meal to continue to be exported tariff-free to the U.S. and Mexico while also allowing for the import of critical inputs to the industry.

While the U.S. and China are critical markets for canola, our best opportunity for market diversification and stability is right here at home in the advancement of a competitive, made-in-Canada biofuel industry, by supplying canola feedstock to an expanding biofuel sector. This is very important. Currently, canola makes up just over 20% of feedstock for the biofuels industry, but we can do better.

On September 5, the Prime Minister announced potential biofuel support measures related to tariff action to assist Canada's canola industry, and they need to be taken seriously at Environment and Climate Change Canada. At present, the proposed amendments fail to include concrete proposals that will help secure additional domestic demand for canola as biofuel feedstock. Additionally, concerns remain about potential compliance risks within the CFR related to having used cooking oil from Asia account for a significant portion of Canadian feedstock.

Biofuel is a marriage of energy and agriculture, and we do both well. All we need is a government that recognizes farmers as playing a vital role in strengthening our energy security, driving rural economic growth and building a more sustainable future for our country.

Again, thank you for the invitation to appear on this very important issue for farmers. I look forward to the committee's further recognizing canola as a vitally important commodity for farmers as we strengthen and expand our market access.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Pike.

We will go to Mr. Tohti for up to five minutes.

**Mehmet Tohti (Executive Director, Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project):** Madam Chair and honourable members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Mehmet Tohti. I am the executive director of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, which is based in Ottawa.

Canada stands at a critical moment in its trade policy. The choices we make are not only about exports or market access but about who we are as a democracy and how seriously we defend human rights. History shows that, when democracies set aside rights for short-term economic gain, there are long-term costs: vulnerability, lost credibility and weakened alliances.

Canada's trade diversification makes sense, but it must rest on evidence, enforceable standards and alliance realities—not political optimism. Expanding trade with China in particular carries substantial risk. Beijing continues to use commerce as leverage to divide allies and weaken unified positions on human rights. Without strong safeguards, deeper engagement could erode our alignment with the United States and other western alliances, and it could compromise our security.

Just a week ago, in February 2026, a Jamestown foundation report identified 575 Chinese Communist Party-linked United Front organizations in Canada, marking our country as a key hub for foreign interference. These networks influence policy-making, mobilize political support for Beijing's interests and target dissidents like me, Uyghur Canadians, Tibetans and Hong Kongers through transnational repression. Trade and policy decisions cannot be separated from this growing interference.

Canada's recent approval for BYD, a Chinese state-linked automaker, to expand operations illustrates the danger of narrow economic reasoning. Independent reports show BYD's involvement in high-risk regions, such as the east Turkestan Uyghur region and Tibet, where forced labour and state-imposed labour transfer programs operate under coercive conditions. Between 2017 and 2019, at least 80,000 Uyghurs were forcibly transferred to factories across China. This system now spans more than 17 global industries, including textiles, solar energy, electronics, mining and automotive supply chains. Engaging firms tied to those networks without strict due diligence risks complicity in forced labour, which is a practice the Canadian Parliament has recognized as a part of an ongoing genocide against Uyghurs.

Beyond human rights, this is a national security issue. Chinese electric vehicles and smart technologies integrate sensors and software connected to China-based infrastructure, creating real surveillance and data integrity concerns. Canada has already acted on similar risks, ordering Hikvision to end operations under the Investment Canada Act. The same logic must apply to BYD.

Enforcement remains a weak link. Since 2020, Canada has detained only 48 shipments suspected of using Uyghur forced labour, while U.S. enforcement blocked billions of dollars' worth of goods under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Without comparable action, Canada risks becoming a diversion market for banned products, undermining North American alignment.

Lastly, Canada cannot ignore hostage diplomacy. Huseyin Celil, a Canadian citizen and Uyghur activist, has been imprisoned in China since 2006—20 years. He's been denied consular access and denied the recognition of his citizenship. His ongoing detention exemplifies China's use of human beings as an instrument of state policy.

Madam Chair, engagement with China must not come at the cost of integrity or human dignity. Canada's trade policy must be guided by principles, accountability and security. To proceed otherwise would endanger our alliances, our values and Canadians, who expect their government to stand on the side of justice.

Thank you. I welcome your questions.

• (1225)

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

Mr. McKenzie, go ahead for six minutes.

**David McKenzie:** Thank you to our witnesses.

As all of you describe the risks in doing business with China, I must admit that I'm more frightened than I was when I arrived this morning. It strikes me that we all see the allure of a large China

market, but we must keep in mind what the risks are in dealing with China.

Mr. Burton, if I might start with you, you've talked about elite capture. When considering the new approach of our Prime Minister entering into a strategic relationship—a “strategic partnership”, as I believe he called it—and being mindful of the risks that you've described, are you concerned about a strategic partnership between Canada and China?

**Charles Burton:** Yes, I am very concerned that China understands the strategic partnership differently from the way it's been downplayed as simply “language” here in Canada. China sees our function as to support enabling their overall geostrategic purposes, which is, as Mr. Kovrig very articulately said this morning, the community of the common destiny of mankind. It's China's plan to achieve domination of the global order by 2050 in the context of China's assumption that the United States is a power in decline.

I'm concerned that our government would go along with this, that in the Great Hall of the People, facing Xi Jinping, our Prime Minister would make reference to the “new world order”, which—when you're saying it in the Great Hall of the People to Xi Jinping—clearly sends a signal to the Chinese that we are affirming their vision of the global future. That vision is a China-dominated global future, with enormous costs to our Canadian values and way of life, as Mr. Kovrig said earlier this morning.

**David McKenzie:** Sir, the deal that was mentioned a bit earlier today was on the reduction of punitive tariff measures that were put in place on Canadian exports of canola, affecting Mr. Pike's clients, members and farmers. In return for that, China was successful—through an economic hostage-taking move—in obtaining access to Canada for electric vehicles.

Picking up on something that Mr. Kovrig talked about, China shocks, I want to underline what I understand to be the Chinese practice. We're not talking about China working conjunctively within China to obtain some market advantage or economies of scale. Indeed, it employs state subsidies in a very specific and targeted manner.

Now, those kinds of subsidies at that level are not intended to gain a slight advantage. They're intended not just to dominate but to decimate the importing country's domestic market. Moreover, they're not just intended to dominate and decimate but also to eliminate and hollow out, to use the words of Mr. Kovrig. I wonder if we understand that, particularly when there have been suggestions that these importations might now lead to Chinese manufacture here in Canada.

I see that as a pipe dream, and I wonder, sir, if you could comment.

• (1230)

**Charles Burton:** I don't think that China has an idea of state-to-state fair and reciprocal trade. One suspects that the massive Chinese state subsidies to the EV sector have a similar motivation to the massive subsidies to the Huawei company, which is that the investment pays back in the espionage and infrastructure information that would accrue.

In addition to the idea that they can listen to what you're saying in your car and that they can know a lot about the driver and so on, information is also provided about where the car goes. In the next conflict with China, that will be critically important in the sense that the next war we have with China will not be about Canada sending bombs to blow up buildings in faraway countries. The concerns that the CSE and other agencies have raised about China's products in Canada, including the TP-Link routers, will mean that they will impact us directly here. The bank machines won't work. There was a warning by an agency here about China's possible control of water filtration systems.

On the idea that Mr. Kovrig raised about the possibility of our being able to control the software on the EVs, I'm not sure how feasible that is in the sense that all of these things, as you know from your computers, are being updated continually by the manufacturer. We have the example of subway cars in Boston from a Chinese manufacturer a few years ago; it was found out that the doors could be controlled from Nanjing in China.

I don't think that China would agree to our having control over those EVs, because of what I said. They're subsidizing them heavily because they provide a benefit.

The other one that you talk about, the devastation of our own auto industry by these heavily subsidized things—and as Kovrig pointed out, the Chinese can afford to lose money for a long time—is another way for them to gain more economic leverage over us for their other purposes. In other words, we're not going to be expelling Chinese agents of espionage, tightening up on grey-area activities for the transfer of dual-use military technologies or exposing the Chinese proxies through an effective registry, if that would then lead to Chinese retaliation in trade aspects.

**David McKenzie:** Sir, one thing—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. McKenzie. You've gone a bit over.

Mr. Naqvi, you have six minutes, please.

**Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here. I want to thank the earlier witnesses as well. This has been a very thoughtful discussion. I sincerely appreciate it.

I want to put one thing on the record. I'd like to clarify that the agreement with China does not talk about EVs from a particular manufacturer. It just talks about 49,000 EVs. They could be from any manufacturer. I just want to make sure that we don't leave with the understanding that we had an agreement with one particular manufacturer in China.

As I listen to the conversation, one thing that's clear to me is what I think Mr. Kovrig was trying to say. He wasn't saying don't engage with China. I think what I heard him saying, and what he's been writing, was that having a strategic relationship with China is important, but we should do so with eyes wide open and make sure there are appropriate guardrails in place.

Do you agree, Mr. Burton and Mr. Tohti, with that sentiment?

**Charles Burton:** I'm sure Mehmet has a lot to say about this. Both of us, as you may know, have been sanctioned by the Chinese regime for no good reason.

You know, if trade occurs just for trade purposes, that's great. Take the example of Australia and China. When Australia started to make noises that China should be more forthcoming about the origins of COVID-19, China then put a number of arbitrary restrictions on the import of Australian commodities into China. This went on for a while, until China recognized that they really do need Australian iron ore—iron ore is by far the largest commodity sent from Australia—and took it off.

I think if China needs a Canadian product and is prepared to accept it without these non-trade strings attached—which are very big in the joint statement between Canada and China with respect to Mr. Carney's recent visit—great. As for pet food, does China need Canadian pet food and can it not get pet food elsewhere? If that's the case and they're prepared to pay for our pet food, more power to them. I think that China is typically trying to weaponize these trade relationships to achieve other aims. If that is the case, then I think we simply have to say that we'll sell our pet food elsewhere.

• (1235)

**Yasir Naqvi:** Mr. Tohti...?

**Mehmet Tohti:** You might remember that when COVID started, China started to use PPE and weaponize PPE. We experienced that one as well. Any trade, when we become dependent on China, is dangerous. It can be used against our national interests.

Yes, we need to have trade. China is our trading partner. They're going to be our second-largest trading partner. In a lot of areas, we are a trading nation. We have commodities to sell. At the same time, we have to remember to have a basic humanitarian and compassionate basis. Twenty years have passed since the illegal detention of Huseyin Celil. The Chinese government that we are going to establish a security partnership with did not allow, a single time, consular access for Huseyin Celil. They did not allow a phone conversation between that gentleman under Chinese custody and Huseyin Celil's family members and children. We are talking about 20 years—just a single time. We still don't know if he's alive or dead. China did not recognize his Canadian citizenship.

China put a bounty on Canadians on Canadian soil. China expanded the transnational repression on Canadian soil. It expanded and installed police stations all across Canada. Just recently, the Jamestown foundation reported—this is important—that there are 575 direct links to the Chinese Communist Party's organizations operating in Canada. For that reason, we have to keep our eyes open. At the same time, we have to adopt measures to counter those direct attacks on Canada.

**Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate the caution. We also cannot have this discussion while pretending or thinking that the world hasn't changed around us. Everybody has been speaking about weaponizing commercial power. Well, we're seeing that our biggest friend and ally has weaponized our market access to them against us as well. We find ourselves in a very unique circumstance.

Mr. Pike, from the perspective of the farmers you represent, what is your advice to the Canadian government for creating market opportunities for canola farmers, whether these be in the United States or China—which you spoke of as the number one and number two markets—or other markets?

**Dustin Pike:** I would reiterate what the last panel said. We're no different from other organizations and commodity groups. China is the second-largest market; it's very important. I'm not going to get into the geopolitical dynamics of things, and I'm definitely not here to pit commodity against commodity, but I would say there's a lot of frustration amongst farmers and a lot of uncertainty still. This is the case with our 40,000 canola farmers across the country.

There are ways to diversify our markets and to look into other opportunities. We have relationships with Japan, Mexico, the U.A.E. and Europe, but there's a lot more work to be done. You might have seen recently that we had some success in Pakistan. Those on-the-ground relationships are very important.

As far as Canada is concerned, as I mentioned in my preamble, there's a lot we can do right here. Currently, only about 20% of the ingredients in our biofuel systems are canola. We can do a lot better in that respect to strengthen ourselves here at home to provide that market diversity.

• (1240)

**Yasir Naqvi:** Can I ask a very quick question as a follow-up?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but your time is up.

**Yasir Naqvi:** You looked at me as if to say, “You have two more minutes, Yasir.”

**The Chair:** No, I was very intent on listening to Mr. Pike's comments, and we would hope that his suggestions to expand the market here in Canada are explored.

Monsieur Savard-Tremblay, please, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being with us today.

First of all, Mr. Tohti, thank you for your testimony. You're speaking on behalf of a community that is facing a real genocide. It was also recognized as such by the House—

[*English*]

**Mehmet Tohti:** There's no interpretation.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Savard-Tremblay, would you like to start again, please?

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Tohti, you belong to a community that is the target of a veritable genocide. This has been unanimously recognized as such by the House of Commons.

Thank you for your testimony, which focused in particular on the importance of preventing the entry of products made with forced labour. Your community is the first in China to be affected by forced labour. You have outlined Canada's weaknesses in filtering these products at the border.

As you are no doubt aware, there are several laws on this in the United States, including one that even has “Uyghur” in its title, the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act, which is extremely effective.

For my part, I have introduced Bill C-251 so that Canada can harmonize its legislation with that of the United States. Theirs works; ours does not.

Are you calling for the adoption of the bill I introduced?

[*English*]

**Mehmet Tohti:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for your initiative. It is important legislative work that Canada has promised a number of times in Parliament to undertake. The last time, on December 16, 2024—during the fall economic statement—the previous government promised to pass that legislation. Unfortunately, it didn't happen.

This is going to be an important issue when we start the CUSMA negotiations, because as part of CUSMA, Canada not only promised but made it part of the agreement to ban any products made by the use of forced labour and child labour. Unfortunately, we didn't do that, so this is a gap we need to fill.

I hope all parliamentarians support your bill, and the government should support it. It would make our negotiations much easier with the United States. It is important for Canada's interests as well, and I truly support the bill.

Thank you.

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Please note that the committee unanimously passed a motion just this week, on Tuesday, to remind the government of its promise to introduce such legislation.

Mr. Burton, do you think it would be a good idea to have legislation that would be more effective in dealing with the importation of goods produced by forced labour?

[English]

**Charles Burton:** We should have absolutely no tolerance for products of forced labour. Mehmet has made the point before that it's incumbent on the importers to demonstrate that the products are not subject to forced labour, particularly coming from the Uyghur regions. In addition, when you look at lithium mining, it's not in addition to the Uyghur areas; there are also concerns about Tibet.

We have not been very effective in implementing the measures. There have been great difficulties in stopping products that we believe are from forced labour—textiles in particular. There have been legal challenges that have made the legislation not achieve its purpose, which is to protect children and the oppressed minorities in China from being compelled to engage in slave labour. I really feel that this is an area that all Canadians very strongly support, even if it means we suffer some economic consequences.

It really is a matter of... We may win the world, but what about our soul? Maintaining a Canadian identity is very important. Mehmet may have more to say on this topic.

• (1245)

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you for also mentioning Tibet, because it is not discussed often enough when addressing the issue of goods produced by forced labour.

I found your last sentence interesting. You said that we can win, but that we lose our humanity.

That said, beyond the purely humanitarian aspect, it seems to me that there is unfair competition in the fact that a product will compete with ours when it has been produced in absolutely deplorable conditions that cost the employer, if we can call them that, next to nothing. Even economically, it's not a winning situation.

[English]

**Charles Burton:** Yes, of course. Obviously, if they're not paying the workers, including children, to produce things, the cost of production goes down. That is an unfair competition.

It's similar to the provisions around not allowing the import of products of prison labour into Canada because the prisoners are not being properly compensated for their work. These are very important principles that we should stand up for. The opposition from economic elements would prefer that we allow these cheaper prod-

ucts produced through environmental violations and appalling violations of internationally recognized labour standards.

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Tohti, would you like to add anything?

[English]

**Mehmet Tohti:** Yes, I have a couple of points.

I said that it is important for our national interest because when we continue to purchase products made using forced labour, we undermine our own manufacturing industries. It affects the pockets of Canadians directly. It also undermines our principles and the trilateral agreements we put our signature on, such as CUSMA.

The previous government studied and drafted two bills. One was import legislation, and the other one was on human rights due diligence in the supply chain. Somehow they were not tabled, so your bill is important. It is compatible with the UFLPA, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

I urge our parliamentarians, especially our government MPs, to push this bill to be passed. It can strengthen the hand of the Canadian government when it has negotiations with the United States.

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

Mr. Groleau.

[Translation]

**Jason Groleau:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, distinguished guests.

Mr. Burton, you have extensive experience as a researcher and you have been an adviser to the Canadian Embassy in China. It is fair to say that you know China very well.

It is clear that China has other motivations than Canada's economic growth. I think the Chinese are thinking more about themselves than about us. In your opinion, does China have hidden intentions? If so, what are they?

[English]

**Charles Burton:** I was educated in China, and I had two postings as a Canadian diplomat. I've also had experience with the Communications Security Establishment in my career.

I go back 50 years in China to the Cultural Revolution period and have lived there for extensive lengths of time. Unfortunately, as I just mentioned, due to the sanctions, I'm not able to return. In any event, I had previously been detained in China and had left the country without permission.

Do they have an agenda? Yes, they have an agenda. The agenda is that China feels deep resentment over history. Mr. Xi Jinping talks a lot about history and the Opium War of 1840 and the idea that China should be the predominant civilization on the planet and other nations should be subordinate to China.

They have their belt and road initiative, which is to reorient the global economy towards China at the centre. Canada would be a part of this in providing natural resources to, as they say, feed the dragon and that kind of thing.

Politically, this corresponds to their program of the community of the common destiny of mankind, in which they debase the role of multilateral institutions designed to promote fairness and sovereignty between states, with a Chinese vision that great power makes right. That is their agenda. There's no question about it.

They don't believe in international law, as Mr. Kovrig pointed out. They see it as a means to be instrumental in furthering their overall goals. Their activities in Canada are oriented towards the long term for a future opportunity for China to further its dominance.

I would say that this is the policy of the Chinese Communist Party under Party General Secretary Xi. I don't think it necessarily represents the aspirations of the Chinese people. I hope that, in the future, there may be a change in China in which it will become a responsible stakeholder in global affairs and want to co-operate with the nations of the world, as opposed to undermining democracies and seeking dominance over foreign nations.

● (1250)

[Translation]

**Jason Groleau:** Thank you very much.

Earlier, I asked Mr. Kovrig a question, and I'm going to ask you the same question.

We are importing 50,000 Chinese cars. We are concerned about cybersecurity. Let's be honest. When we look at China's friends, such as Iran and Russia, we see that they are not necessarily our best friends.

Aren't you concerned that the arrival of these cars will create a significant security breach?

[English]

**Charles Burton:** We need to devote a terrific amount of effort to looking at all the millions of lines of code in software and monitoring what these EVs are sending back to a hostile power.

Is the government prepared to pay those costs to monitor those vehicles to ensure that they aren't undermining Canada's security and sovereignty interests? I'm completely thrown by this. Of course, the other thing is that Canadians apparently will not be allowed to drive them into the United States, so they'll only be useful for getting around our own country, not for driving down to a condo in Florida.

It's an enormous miscalculation on the part of the government and really makes me question what interests our leaders are serving. Are they Canadian national interests, or are they serving some limited business interests that have strong political connections?

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

We have Mr. Fonseca for five minutes, please.

**Peter Fonseca:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is the international trade committee. As you know, Canada is a trading nation. We're about 0.5% of the world's population, but we're 2.5% of the world's trade.

Mississauga is where my riding is. I can tell you that in my area, we don't have a lot of agriculture, although we do have a lot of agricultural manufacturing. At one of our previous meetings, I talked about Erie Meats, which employs 1,500 people.

Over the last number of years, many of those who have come and advocated at my office on the Hill have been agriculture producers. I've had the Canadian Canola Growers Association—I'm glad Mr. Pike is here—and I've had many others. For the most part, they're from provinces like Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, our heartland, where a lot of canola and other things are grown. The advocacy has always been about how we can get past this: How can we get an agreement? How can we lower those tariffs? Actually, most of the colleagues I spoke to were Conservative members. Conservative members kept saying we have to get something done with China to move forward.

Well, I believe that Prime Minister Carney has come in with a pragmatic approach to addressing this. In his speech at Davos, he talked about how we see the world as it is—I'm paraphrasing—not as we would hope it would be. I think the approach that has been taken is one that, as Mr. Kovrig was talking about, is quite tactical to address the tariffs on canola, seafood and some of our other products. As for the vehicles, the situation was brought back to where we were before these challenging times that we've had with China.

Mr. Pike, what do you think about the approach of the Prime Minister and this government in being able to address these tariffs?

● (1255)

**Dustin Pike:** I appreciate your taking meetings with our organization in the past. It's always good to have representatives outside of where the bulk of canola is grown. I can tell you that there is canola in Ontario, and we can show you exactly where.

It's interesting that you mentioned the Davos speech. The thing that stuck out the most for us—I'm definitely going to paraphrase here—is that a country that can't feed itself or fuel itself is going to have some challenges. That's exactly what we do. We do both of those things. We need to make our Canadian economy strong in that regard, and there's a lot more we can do. As I mentioned, bio-fuels are very indicative of this. As we look to international market diversification, something I forgot to mention is that South Korea is also a destination we're looking at. These are immediate things that we have control over.

To answer your question, we're very pleased with Prime Minister Carney's efforts and very supportive of them. In early September, he held a canola working group with a number of our representatives, along with his cabinet. As I mentioned in my preamble, Premier Scott Moe has played a very vital role in this whole process as well.

I would say we are encouraged, even given the level of uncertainty out there. We're very optimistic and hopeful that product will start to move. Ultimately, the measure of success is going to be when we start to see product move to China again, as well as here at home. I mentioned some of the challenges that we're facing with ECCC. That's an area of advancement that we're going to be looking to government to put a priority on to increase the amount of domestic feedstock, specifically canola, for our competitive biofuel industry.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I'm sorry. You're down to 20 seconds.

I'm going to give the last two minutes to Monsieur Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Burton, you have stated in the past that lifting tariffs on canola will not solve anything. I would like to hear your reasons for this.

If there is time afterwards, Mr. Pike, as you are at the heart of grain production, I would like to hear your response to Mr. Burton's comments.

[*English*]

**Charles Burton:** I have enormous sympathy for our canola partners, and I'm quite encouraged by Mr. Pike's suggestion that we need to move more into biofuels. Farmers have enough worry with the rain and the droughts, and now they have to worry about matters that have no relevance whatsoever to hard-working people on tractors or whatever, producing food for Canadians. My heart really goes out to them.

China has used this canola thing a lot. Previously they made—I think Mr. Pike would probably agree—completely spurious allegations that the dockage in our canola was full of mites and bugs or something. There was no basis for this whatsoever. They seem to target canola because it's a powerful constituency.

If China wants to engage in economic leverage, they can then start to go after our other agricultural commodities. They might suggest there's something wrong with our potash, meat or whatever. It is a dangerous thing. I think these agricultural commodities have a global market.

It's regrettable that after the Meng Wanzhou and the two Michaels matter was resolved, we went back to having a very high dependence on the Chinese market for our canola marketing. I really think that we need to be looking to partners that are more likely to maintain contracts in an honest way than depending on the hope that we can trust the Chinese to be fair in their dealings with us.

● (1300)

**Dustin Pike:** I would reiterate the amount of frustration that our farmers are facing. We get targeted because we're such a large in-

dustry, as I mentioned. There is over \$43 billion in economic contribution, representing over 200,000 workers. We're a major player when it comes to exports to China. This isn't the first time that it's happened.

Mr. Burton, I think, characterized it really well. Farmers already deal with the weather. There's a huge level of uncertainty. They don't want to deal with the uncertainty of global geopolitics. We want predictability in our international markets.

I keep going back to this, but I'm going to say it again for probably the third or fourth time—our domestic biofuel policy.... That can be increased so that we don't have to face some of this geopolitical uncertainty. Over the past few years, we've been able to weather, so to speak, some of the storms with these recent retaliatory tariffs.

The opportunities out there are domestic and international. We can do both well.

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

Ms. Wood has raised her hand, and she's been very patient all of this time. I would like to give her the floor for a minute or so.

**Brittany Wood (Senior Policy Manager, Trade and Transportation, Canadian Canola Growers Association):** Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here. I'll be quick.

Dustin has made many of the points that we want to ensure that you hear and repeated the topic of biofuels as our market diversification strategy.

I want to note that market diversification takes time. It is not something that we are reacting to or putting forward as what we want to see right now as a result of some of the tariffs we've just experienced. This is a strategy that our industry has been working on for years. I would say that's evidenced by the investments in canola processing that have been on the table and worked on here for perhaps about five years. We are starting to see that come to fruition.

We anticipate that by the end of 2026, we will have the processing capacity to process about 75% of our canola crop here in Canada. That's incredible.

I just want to reiterate that we are working hard to create new markets and new opportunities for canola farmers. Canola farmers need open and stable access to markets, and the canola industry has been very much committed to and focused on this. While China is important to us—we anticipate that it will be—we see this added opportunity, and there are details that are important to us to get right in order to increase the domestic market share.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to our witnesses for the wonderful information you have provided for the committee.

Thank you all very much.

To the members, on March 10 we will be doing Mercosur, and March 12 will be about the invitation that has gone out to the Minister of International Trade regarding the Taiwan motion.

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