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# Standing Committee on Industry and Technology

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Chair: Ben Carr





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Thursday, March 26, 2026

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone. I hope you've had a good week so far.

We're meeting once again to continue our study on electric vehicles.

[*English*]

We have two witnesses with us here in person in the first round. Then we'll have two witnesses with us in the second.

Just as a friendly reminder to witnesses, if you are using your earpiece and it's plugged in but not on your ear, please make sure it's placed on the sticker in front of you in order to ensure that we are protecting the health and well-being of our interpreters.

Mr. Bains is joining us online today. I can confirm that all the tests have been completed.

With that, today we have Julian Karaguesian, a visiting lecturer from the economics department at McGill University; and Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, a senior fellow from the University of Ottawa. They are appearing as individuals.

Witnesses, thank you for availing yourselves to the committee this morning. You'll have up to five minutes each for introductory remarks, followed by questions from the various political parties represented around the table today.

Madam McCuaig-Johnston, I'll turn the floor over to you to begin.

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston (Senior Fellow, University of Ottawa, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've been a supporter of EVs for many years. At Industry Canada, in 1995, my team and I introduced technology road maps to Canada jointly with industry leaders, and one of the first was in automotive technologies. In 2008, as ADM of energy technologies at NRCan, I initiated the technology road map for electric vehicles. I wanted Canadian companies and researchers to have a major role in the sector. This will be significantly aided by Canada's automotive strategy and Ontario government initiatives.

However, I have a major concern about the introduction of Chinese EVs into the sector.

First, our auto sector is under major stress with the imposition of U.S. tariffs in the heavily integrated North American market. This is not a good time for cheap imports to compete with cars our own

workers make. In Brazil and Hungary, Chinese cars assembled from kits, never from local suppliers, are made in heavily robotized factories, so they wouldn't support the same number of jobs that our own factories have.

Second, dozens of parts in each Chinese EV are made with aluminum from Uyghur forced labour. A 2024 report from Human Rights Watch says this includes Chinese brands, but also western vehicles including Tesla, Toyota, Volkswagen and GM cars made in China. Bauxite is shipped thousands of miles to Xinjiang to be processed into aluminum by free-cost Uyghur forced labour and then shipped from there to car and parts companies. It's illegal to import products into Canada made in whole or in part with forced labour, but the staff positions at ESDC and GAC related to forced labour are being wound up in the cuts, except for a comms function, and it is not a priority in GAC's departmental plan for 2026-27.

Also, a key customs notice on forced labour has disappeared from the government website, and the new notice regarding Chinese EV firms lists what companies must comply with but makes no mention of forced labour. New legislation and an agency promised just last year seem to no longer be proceeding. Does this government no longer care about forced labour? The U.S. trade representative recently launched a section 301 investigation of Canada's implementation of forced labour policies under CUSMA, with up to 25% tariffs resulting across the board if those efforts are inadequate. This is not the time to be dropping the ball on forced labour.

Third, there is a risk involving the Baidu software in Chinese EVs, including western vehicles made there. It sends data from the cameras, microphones and GPS back to China. Their national intelligence law requires companies to spy, if requested. Cars with this software are regularly updated remotely from China. A U.S. Department of Energy report released last year on the integration of EVs with the electricity grid says that a synchronized surge via charging vehicles could cause brownouts and market disruptions.

This Baidu software should be stripped out when the cars arrive and replaced with the BlackBerry QNX used in North American cars. If not, Beijing will have very detailed data on all the streets and buildings in Canada, as well as passengers' personal information. Of course, all military, CSIS, CSE, RCMP and even departmental locations should not permit Chinese vehicles.

Fourth, in Europe, they saw that Chinese vehicles were being priced 10% to 15% below local competition, just enough to make the sale. This year they are requiring Chinese companies to negotiate comparable prices, but here in Canada, we're going in the other direction, requiring 50% of the vehicles to be below \$35,000.

The government has said it wants Chinese auto joint ventures here. Already, BYD has said it won't do that. It wants to assemble independently. If we did have joint ventures, they should be more than 60% western-owned, with Canadian management, workers and suppliers, especially in aluminum and steel, QNX software and technology transfer to the western firm. We have to be prepared to walk away from the table if they do not agree.

Thank you.

• (1105)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. McCuaig-Johnston.

Mr. Karaguesian, the floor is yours for up to five minutes.

**Julian Karaguesian (Visiting Lecturer, Department of Economics, McGill University, As an Individual):** Thank you, Chair.

It's an honour to come and give testimony before this committee of Canada's House of Commons. It's a first for me. It's a pleasure and honour to be here. I'm not representing any institution, public or private or otherwise. I'm a former special adviser at the Canadian finance ministry. I currently teach economics at McGill University. I worked at Finance for over 25 years. I frequently provide commentary to Canadian and global media on economic issues. I am affiliated with no party. I have no official ideology.

My interest in accepting the invitation to come and speak to you today is with respect to Canada's long-term prosperity, the livelihood of everyday Canadians, and our children, who will inherit this fine country of ours. My comments are limited to the international aspects of the government's EV and other related policies, including the recent tariff agreement with China.

I'll start with the big picture. I don't think it's an overstatement to say that Canada is facing the biggest challenge to its economic model since the 1930s. The model we have is based on deep globalization and international trade, much of it particularly with the United States. This model is under attack from the Trump administration. The intentional weaponization of our integration with the United States has exposed what was once a good thing as now a far-reaching dependency. The auto and steel tariffs are the point of the spear of this weaponization of integration in trade. This comes at a time of converging crises in Canada and in some ways globally. We face severe housing and health care shortages and a cost of living crisis. There's geopolitical conflict in the world. There's climate change and more. We have our hands full. You have your hands full. The Government of Canada and its machinery of policy-making has its hands full.

This attack on our economic model should be seen in the longer and broader context of a U.S. border that has been thickening since the aftermath of the 9/11 attack in 2001. This and the U.S. withdrawal from the global system are longer-term trends, as is the decline of Canada's automobile sector. At the turn of the century, we produced three million vehicles a year. Twenty-five years later, we produce 1.2 million vehicles a year. We were the seventh-largest automobile producer in the world. We're not even in the top 10 now. Over this same time, much of this lost production has gone to Mexico. I have nothing against Mexico. That's where the production migrated. They've emerged as the world's fifth-largest automobile producer.

Much of the loss of our production has come from the Big Three, which now collectively produce only 300,000 vehicles in Canada. President Trump, with tariffs and other measures, aims to get the rest of this back to the United States, to get steel and automobiles back to the swing states, which are crucial for a permanent majority for MAGA. That's what they want. They're open about it.

Ontario and other parts of the country have felt the loss of this production in profound ways. The Czech Republic, or Czechia, with 11 million people, produces more vehicles than Canada.

With electric vehicles, Canada has an opportunity to start over and plug into global supply chains, not just North American ones, and to be a global player, not just a regional one. Canada has many of the key fundamentals to be part of global supply chains in a fundamental way, with critical minerals, mass electricity production and more. We have an emerging EV battery industry.

The federal government's new automobile strategy and the opening of our economy to Chinese EVs is a step in the right direction. The new tariff deal and the new strategic partnership agreed with China paves the way to diversifying our trade and investment, not just with the second-largest economy in the world—in purchasing power parity terms, the largest economy in the world—but also with the entire global south, where 75% of the world's population lives and over 55% of the global economy resides. Our future prosperity depends on trading with the entire planet and diversifying.

Some critics have made a big deal of the 49,000 Chinese EVs coming to Canada. Why? This is one and a half days of production in China and less than 3% of our market. They're a manufacturing superpower and we're a natural resource and energy superpower: We have a natural trading relationship. Surely, we could do much more both ways.

• (1110)

We need to have a quid pro quo. To build our export markets out and reduce our dependency, we have to trade with the entire planet, and there will be asks from the rest of the world. I believe this is in our vital national interest.

Why are we hesitant to do this as a nation? It's understandable. A big part of the reason is fear. We fear a reaction from certain powerful interests south of the border. The Trump administration, and previous administrations since about 2016, have created an anti-China narrative and a related fear, in some cases almost hysterical, of China. It's not a fact-based narrative, mostly. It's not a Canadian narrative. It was not made here. The point of this narrative, in my opinion, is to maintain leverage over Canada by preventing us from flexing our wings and trading with the rest of the world and reducing our excess—

**The Chair:** Mr. Karaguesian, I'm going to have to cut you off, as we're a little over the allocated amount of time, but there will be opportunities throughout the discourse to follow here.

I always like when we have diverging viewpoints. It makes for a good conversation.

With that, Mr. Guglielmin, the floor will be yours for six minutes to start us off.

**Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to both of the witnesses for their testimony.

Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, you appeared before the international trade committee on March 12, and you testified that Chinese EVs carry surveillance software, cameras, microphones, GPS tracking, and, more alarmingly, Chinese companies are legally required to co-operate with the Chinese government's intelligence services. Given all that, does the Liberal government's deal to import Chinese-made vehicles at nearly zero tariffs pose a national security threat to Canada?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I would say that there are significant risks. We would need to, before they arrive, set up guardrails. One guardrail is that the Baidu software should be stripped out. I understand some Chinese EVs have QNX, but we'd have to verify that the data is not stored in China. We should not have any Canadian data stored in China, and that means stripping out the Baidu software when the vehicles arrive, and there are other measures if we're going to have manufacturing of Chinese EVs here.

I would mention that, while the Chinese EVs would be 3% of the total number of cars sold in Canada—they'll get to 70,000, I'm sure, in the second year—70,000 is more than half of all of the EVs sold in Canada last year. It's a big number when you look at it in the market of EVs.

• (1115)

**Michael Guglielmin:** For the record, just per your knowledge, are there any provisions in the current agreement that would prohibit this surveillance technology from being installed in the Chinese vehicles when they're imported here into Canada?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** We haven't seen the details of the agreement. Canadian officials would have to inform the Chinese officials that we are going to do this. There's nothing, as far as I'm aware, that would prevent it from being done.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Would you say that, before signing this deal, the Canadian government would have been well aware of the potential security risks with this software?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** The deal was negotiated in a cone of silence. The Canadian manufacturers were not involved at all. Indeed, they were reassured that EVs were not on the table and that, if they were put on the table, there would be a conversation with them. That didn't happen, so the negotiators did not get the benefit of the manufacturers' knowledge. I don't know whether they got the benefit of CSIS and CSE, but CSIS and CSE are very well aware of the risks of the Baidu technology.

**Michael Guglielmin:** About a year ago, in March 2025, the former industry minister, now finance minister, François-Philippe Champagne, in a response to a question on whether or not the Liberals would get rid of the 100% tariff, said:

We're going to stand strong....We want to protect our industry. We want to protect our workers. We want to protect our communities.

He also affirmed that China doesn't respect the rules:

They're dumping products here, and cheap products, and therefore that would be hurting our Canadian economy and industry.

If that were true in 2025, has anything changed since then, to 2026, when that wouldn't be true? What does the policy reversal say to automakers and parts manufacturers that are already investing in Canada?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Nothing has changed from that time. I would say that around the cabinet table, Minister Champagne is probably the most knowledgeable about the risks of China. He dealt with the Michaels. He dealt with research security challenges and put in place Canada's current research security system, which is a model for the world. It's the best in the world. He's dealt with Chinese investment problems. He's dealt with all kinds of risks. So he is very knowledgeable about this.

I think our own manufacturers are at serious risk here.

**Michael Guglielmin:** In your opening testimony, you mentioned forced labour for EVs and other things manufactured in China. Specifically, you mentioned the Uyghurs, but also, on top of that, we have the surveillance issue and no binding investment conditions.

Now, the government calls this an affordability measure. Do you think vehicles built with forced labour, that transmit Canadian data and undercut our auto sector, could ever be considered good affordability tools for the Canadian public?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I would not trade off the torture and armed surveillance of Uyghurs in Xinjiang for a marginal added number of cheap cars in Canada. That's not an equal trade-off by any means. I was surprised that the government did it. I was very disappointed.

I think it's therefore up to the government now to reassure Canadians that there will be no EVs entering Canada from China unless they are entirely free of components produced by forced labour. The customs notice for Chinese EVs does not mention forced labour at all. It mentions things like plant legislation and motor vehicle safety rules and so on that the cars must comply with, but it doesn't say anything about forced labour. It should. That should be one of the measures Canada takes.

We can't just take their word for it. There has to be a commitment that there will be transparency in the supply chain, because the forced labour comes from the aluminum in dozens of parts of each EV. We have to have assurance. The Chinese vehicle manufacturers need to display for Canadian officials the exact supply chain—where their aluminum comes from, what happens with the bauxite as it's on its way from aluminum and where the bauxite is from—before we can be reassured.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, I'll have to end it there. Mr. Guglielmin is now 45 seconds over his allotted time. There will be an opportunity to provide more after that.

Mr. Ma, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Due to the time limit, I'll be asking for very sharp, precise answers to the following questions for Ms. McCuaig-Johnston.

Do you have an advanced degree in technology and cybersecurity, yes or no?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** No—

**Michael Ma:** Thank you.

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** —but I have spent 37 years in that business.

**Michael Ma:** I'm sorry. Like I said, I need to get short answers, please.

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Okay.

**Michael Ma:** You belong to the China Strategic Risks Institute. Does this institute specifically look for risks when there isn't one, yes or no?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** No.

**Michael Ma:** So why is it a risks institute?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Because it analyzes risks that are obviously there.

**Michael Ma:** Thank you.

My last question, then, is on your claim about forced labour in Xinjiang. Have you witnessed this yourself? Have you been there ever?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I've been to China many times—

**Michael Ma:** Have you witnessed forced labour—

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** —since 1979. No—

**Michael Ma:** I need just a short answer: Have you witnessed forced labour in Xinjiang, yes or no?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I work—

**Michael Ma:** So did you get that from hearsay?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** —closely with Human Rights Watch where researchers did witness it.

**Michael Ma:** Thank you.

Professor Karaguesian, many of those opposed to our government's EV deal with China have expressed various talking points centred around the idea that somehow China is using the deal as “an opportunity to create a foothold in the Canadian auto market and then blow our sector away.” This idea is especially important to consider in the context of the ongoing affordability crisis and our domestic auto industry, which employs thousands of Canadian workers, including in my own riding of Markham—Unionville.

Professor, what are your thoughts on this matter? How would you respond to these talking points?

**Julian Karaguesian:** In terms of China using Canada as a foothold, my approach to this question, like any question, particularly political and geopolitical ones, is to pretend that I'm an alien coming to Earth, and I'm looking at every side.

From China's point of view, this is a day-and-a-half's worth of production. That's number one.

Number two, we don't make many EVs in Canada. We hope to. We do have a cost of living crisis. Automobiles are extremely expensive. You could buy a Tesla and—I'm not sure about the details of how Tesla's corporate plan works—perhaps help pay the \$868-billion salary for Mr. Musk, or you could buy, or have at least the potential to buy, extremely efficient, very well-made electric vehicles from the rest of the world, including China, which makes 70% of the world's electric vehicles and accounts for 65% of the world's demand.

**Michael Ma:** Many of those opposed to our government's EV deal, as we said, have concerns about personal data and so forth, although today, our smart home devices have far more data than we would like to have, and in our cellphones and so forth, like our fingerprints and facial profiles. That is more dangerous than knowing where you've been with your car.

What is your response to these arguments? Do you believe that this will be a legitimate concern?

• (1125)

**Julian Karaguesian:** I don't.

To the point you made about smart devices, whoever has an iPhone in this room, we'd have to corroborate this, but I think 85% of iPhones have been assembled in China, along with other smart devices. If we're concerned about this, let's start with smart phones. If China wants to spy on us, as other big countries do spy on everybody, they could use their space station and all of the other technologies they have. I'm just wondering whether they're interested in my driving to my kid's hockey game and stopping at Tim Hortons, or wherever I stop. I just don't think that's a legitimate concern.

What I do think is a legitimate concern is the sheer size of China. They'd be the first ones to admit this. They have 1.425 billion people. At purchasing power parity, they're the largest economy in the world. They have heft, and dealing in any asymmetric relationship like this, one has to be careful, whether it's with the United States, India, China or even the EU, which has extensive protections on agriculture, which is one of our big comparative advantages in international trade.

Thank you.

**Michael Ma:** Thank you.

Further, you have written that “we have more to gain from this deal than we have to lose”, given that our relationship with our largest trading partner, as you said, has been upended. We need to upend our relationship, not hearken back to a past era.

What does the future of Canada's automotive industry look like with and without diversifying our trade?

**Julian Karaguesian:** Without diversifying our trade, our industry has been for the past 25 years in long-term, terminal decline. As I mentioned in my statement, we're down over 50% in production, which has been particularly brutal for Ontario and parts of Quebec. Our industry, without any kind of diversification with China, India and other countries, has taken a beating with a 60% decline in vehicle production.

With diversification, we're a natural resource superpower, and we can play to our advantage. We have critical minerals. We have inexpensive electricity production. The government of Prime Minister Mark Carney is expanding this electrification. We have critical minerals, electrification and a battery industry we could plug into the global industry. Mr. Trump's treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, and all of the other senior officials in that administration have made it clear to us that American automobiles will not be staying in Canada.

Japanese automakers have been very loyal to this country.

**The Chair:** Mr. Karaguesian, I'm sorry to interrupt, but to be fair, we're now 45 seconds over the allotted time for Mr. Ma.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to welcome the two witnesses. I'm very impressed with the level of information they bring. This is a very interesting panel. I'd like to ask them several questions. I'll have a second turn later, which will be shorter.

Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, I'll start with you.

Obviously, the issue of Uyghur forced labour in China is very concerning. The Canadian economy can't encourage that. The argument that we'll have cheaper goods, such as vehicles, should never be used to justify this kind of practice.

My colleague Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay, my party's international trade critic, has introduced a bill inspired by what's being done in the U.S. Based on this bill, once forced labour is identified in a particular region, the onus would be on the exporter to prove that forced labour wasn't used to build or design the product, whether it's a vehicle, vehicle components or anything else.

Do you think Parliament should adopt this kind of policy or legislation?

[*English*]

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I believe that law should be adopted. Last year, the government actually had two pieces of legislation in development. One was concerning the ban, and the other was concerning how you track any human rights infringements in the supply chain. Both of those pieces of legislation should go ahead, particularly given that we are now at a point where we have to demonstrate our commitment to forced labour prohibition enforcement under the section 301 investigation. This is a huge risk for Canada to get 25% tariffs across the board, so, yes, thank you for that.

There's also an agency that was promised a year ago. That should go forward as well.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you very much.

The issue of information gathering through Chinese vehicles is also very concerning. As Mr. Karaguesian previously said, other types of devices, such as phones, computers, space stations, and so on, are already being used to spy on us. I think we have to avoid opening the door to further espionage. We need a framework around that.

You also said that in China, and this is also very concerning, there's a law that requires Chinese companies to hand over data upon request. I'm not an expert in this field, but, to my knowledge, the U.S. government has the same kind of policy in place for American companies. So far, the U.S. is still a democracy, but that remains a concern as well.

Are you also worried about this situation?

[*English*]

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** This is something that I think we need to look at carefully. It's why I recommend QNX by BlackBerry, which is Canadian technology. I served for 37 years in the Canadian government in science and technology policy programs and funding, interpreting between the scientists and engineers and the ministers and senior officials what the policy should be. I have an international relations degree, with a master's degree focused on China. I have studied China inside out since 1979, and I helped them develop their R and D capacity as they were developing.

Under Xi Jinping we have a very different form of government. At the same time, the U.S. has been shown to have at least some negative, if not malign—kidnapping citizens and so on—components to its policies, so we need to be cautious of that as well.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you very much.

I'd like to turn to Mr. Karaguesian.

Your description of the current economic crisis is very interesting, as are your solutions.

The Canadian economy can thrive in the EV sector. The potential seems to be there. However, as you said, competition is fierce and China is by far the world leader in this area. In the U.S., the Biden administration made some progress, but it seems to have been completely stopped by the Trump administration. It seems Canada wants to compete directly with the American model. However, as you said, our comparative advantage is in the abundance of critical minerals and low-cost clean energy.

Shouldn't we maximize our processing and value-added efforts in critical minerals, where we have an abundance of energy, rather than in the final assembly line?

Would this be an opportunity to supply European companies with electric vehicles?

[*English*]

**Julian Karaguesian:** Thank you. I'll answer the questions, but maybe not in order.

My approach, just as a human, as a person, as an economist and as someone who was in a cadre at the Ministry of Finance, is this. It was beaten into us there to think of Canadian prosperity, and that's

what I think of. I think, from the point of view of workers in this country, skilled manufacturing workers or any other Canadian, what's important is to have the means to have an income, to live in dignity, whether it's actually assembling a car; or being part of global supply chains; or manufacturing the cars for our high-speed rail and building a high-speed rail right across this country, like the regular rail that linked our country in the second half of the 1800s.

I'll say this generally, but I have a very particular affection for manufacturing. From the worker's point of view, from a family's point of view, if you're earning a good salary, does it really matter if it's in a car plant, manufacturing trains or being part of global supply chains? We are unable to compete globally. We were able to compete with the North American auto pact between Canada and the United States, in which we had 20% of the North American market. That pact has been over since 2001.

Having said that, my first interest is to protect our skilled workers in this country, and we have templates. We could go with industrial policy for our EV sector, and with limited importation of Chinese EVs. We could follow the Australian model, which is to shift their manufacturing workers into the defence industry, which has very high multiplier effects on economic growth. We are going in this direction to meet our new NATO commitments, and we've already achieved the 2% of GDP. We have lots of options. I think that government involvement is going to be critical in every option.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

Ms. Borrelli, the floor is yours for five minutes.

**Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC):** Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, I want to apologize for the member on the other side of the table—

**Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Chair Carr.

**Kathy Borrelli:** —who was very rude to you.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, just one moment. I sense we have a little bit of tension brewing. I have a point of order that I'm going to address.

Ms. Borrelli, I've paused the clock so that you won't lose time on the matter.

Madam O'Rourke, you have a point of order.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you, Chair Carr.

We've frequently had the vice-chair use a similar line and tone in questioning, and so there's nothing untoward in terms of my colleague's interaction.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam O'Rourke. I didn't hear a point of order in that.

Madam Borrelli, you are, of course, free to use your time as—

Mr. Ma, go ahead on a point of order.

**Michael Ma:** Well, I obviously have been accused in public. I'd like an apology from the member from the other side.

**The Chair:** Thank you Mr. Ma. That would not be a point of order, and I don't—

**Michael Ma:** Well, give me any evidence that there's any violation that requires an apology from me or on my behalf.

**The Chair:** Mr. Ma, I think we're getting into a bit of debate at the moment.

Ms. Borrelli, I might ask, just for the sake of allowing us to get back to our line of questioning, that we focus, if possible, on the substantive content and nature of the discussion before us. With that, I'm going to return the floor to you, with four minutes and 52 seconds remaining of your five minutes.

**Kathy Borrelli:** Well, I'll continue with my apology for the behaviour of the member across the aisle. You're giving very good testimony.

**Michael Ma:** On a point of order, I did not ask you to represent me, to apologize, though. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, it's obvious that there is some disagreement about the language being used. I think we can move past this.

We have two witnesses before us who are offering some insight into an important study that we asked for. I would suggest that, instead of focusing on the internal dynamics among members, we direct our questions to the witnesses before us, in an attempt to gain some further insight into the matters before us.

Ms. Borrelli, I turn the floor back to you.

**Kathy Borrelli:** Thank you, Chair.

Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, my job as a parliamentarian is to protect Canada, not to protect a hostile foreign country. My questions are going to be in regard to the ramifications in Canada from this importation of Chinese electric vehicles.

When you combine the labour cost gaps—89% to 90% of the labour costs in China are paid off with subsidies—with state subsidies and the access to capital that the Chinese have, is it accurate to say that this is not traditional competition for Canada, but a state-backed industrial strategy that Canadian companies simply can't match?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Canadian companies could never match the labour costs of China, even if there weren't subsidies in China, which there are at many levels. We see that in where they choose to manufacture. When I say manufacture, I use that term loosely, because what they do is assemble. They bring the cars over to Brazil, Hungary or Spain, where wages are low and assemble in

a very highly roboticized factory. There aren't the same numbers of highly paid unionized jobs that we see in Canada.

When BYD went into Brazil, it said it was using Brazil as its wedge or entry into South America. Then it said it's going to use Canada as its entry into North America. It was asked if it would do a joint venture, and it said no. A week and a half ago, it announced it will not do a joint venture in Canada. They want to do their own assembly here in Canada.

• (1140)

**Kathy Borrelli:** The real issue is not about competitiveness but whether or not Canada is willing to allow its workforce to be displaced by a foreign one.

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** This is what we see in Europe, where the cars have been brought in and they're priced 10% to 15% below the competition, just enough to make the sale. They're displacing not just EVs in that market but also combustion engines and even used cars. This is what will face Canada.

It's suggested that 70,000 cars aren't very many. That's 70,000 a year, and we can be sure that within a year, the Chinese embassy is going to be pushing our officials to move that number higher.

**Kathy Borrelli:** Is it fair to say that without a change in policy direction, Canada risks losing its domestic and manufacturing workforce over time?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I think that could happen. It depends in the longer term on how many are allowed in and whether there are joint ventures. Joint ventures might work with a lot of guardrails, such as technology transfer, QNX software and the western company owning more than 60% of the joint venture.

I've done a six-year study in China of joint ventures and Canadian technology joint ventures, and every single one of them has had serious problems, so I'm not optimistic about joint ventures. If we do them in Canada, there might be hope if they're well negotiated, but if they're joint ventures in China, I just wouldn't do any more, because they've been so problematic up until now.

**Kathy Borrelli:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Ms. Borrelli.

Madam O'Rourke, the floor is yours for five minutes.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, I have a couple of yes-or-no questions.

First, I'm thrilled to hear that you're supportive of the Canadian government's automotive strategy and its investment in the EV supply chains.

I'm curious, given your having worked at Industry Canada, whether you also support the strategic response fund, the regional tariff relief initiative and the productivity superdeduction, all of which support Canadian manufacturing.

Could you give me a yes or no?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Yes, absolutely.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Wonderful.

The other piece I'm curious about is that the Minister of Industry said that, through the Investment Canada Act, we could require Canadian parts, technology and inputs, as well as labour constraints, and we could also reduce any sort of risk to software. Is it your understanding that all of these concerns could be addressed through the Investment Canada Act?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I don't think they could all be done through the Investment Canada Act. That would be one tool to use. One of the problems with technology transfer, which I know Minister Joly has talked about, is that in China there's a law that the government and governmental authorities are not permitted to request that Chinese companies share their intellectual property with foreign firms, ever. That would mean there could not be technology transfer to Canada or a western company.

• (1145)

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Okay, but we have some tools to meet some of the concerns that you've raised.

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** There are some, yes.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** That's perfect.

The other piece is that the current 3% of autos, the 49,000 that could be imported from China in the first year, would just set us back to where we were in 2023, when the vehicles coming in from China were primarily Teslas and Polestars.

Did you have the same concerns about those vehicles coming in to Canada in 2023, and were they expressed at the time?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** At that time, the answer is no.

One reason is that Teslas at that time did not have Baidu technology, and they do now. The other reason is that the Human Rights Watch report was written in 2024. It wasn't written in 2023—

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Okay, so we'll just use the tools. No, I appreciate that—

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** We know more now than we did in 2023.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** That's perfect, and we have some tools to address that. Thank you.

Dr. Karaguesian, I want to ask you something as well.

You were talking about Canada's long-term prosperity. I'm encouraged to hear you talk positively about Canada's EV strategy, from critical mineral extraction to energy to the entire supply chain. I'm thrilled with that.

I'm wondering if you want to talk about how the new tariff deal paves the way to diversifying our trade and investment more broadly.

**Julian Karaguesian:** The new tariff deal and the wider strategic partnership paves the way to diversifying our exports and our sources of investment, and also our imports, because we have to put something on the table as a nation.

China's trade with Canada represents 1% of its total trade. Our trade with China is less than 5% of our trade, so we're not talking about big numbers from the get-go. In absolute dollar terms, our two-way trade is \$130 billion. To be able to build out this relationship, which has been narrowly circumscribed over eight or 10 years of geopolitical tensions, we have to put things on the table.

The deal that the Carney government got from the People's Republic of China was quite a good one. We're talking about a small number of vehicles, and to open up access to Chinese markets for our food products again from our western farms and eastern fisheries, we do have to put something on the table. At the same time, it is obviously my concern, and I think it's the concern of this committee, the government and all people in Canada, that we need manufacturing in this country. No country can be prosperous without manufacturing of some sort, so we need to build our trades and our industrial sector back up after 30 years or 40 years of deindustrialization.

If we're actually assembling autos, we can, but we will need a government industrial strategy to do this, as we will if we're making armoured vehicles for the defence sector or building high-speed railcars and streetcars for our cities for clean public transportation. I think people working in those industries will be happy if they have security and well-paid jobs.

I don't know if I answered your question, but I can continue.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** You did. I just want to sneak in another really quick one.

Earlier this week, the Conservative Party introduced an alternative auto plan or proposal in the House, and it suggested aligning with North American partners on Chinese tariffs.

What would the impact of a flip-flop like that be, and how damaging would a response like that be at this time?

**Julian Karaguesian:** A flip-flop like that would destroy any credibility we've built up over the past year as the Prime Minister zigzagged the world making trade deals. If we flip-flop like that, why would any partner out there in the world, particularly in the global south, trust us to have negotiations? That's number one.

Number two, I just don't think going deeper in the North American platform path is the right way for Canada, because it increases our dependence on a country. I'm very fond of the United States, very fond of Americans, but it would increase our dependence on a country that is not behaving in the way that it used to behave, and it has been doing this for a long time. We don't know what comes after President Trump, but the long-term trend is not good for Canada and is not good for our integration.

We need to diversify. It's a question of resilience. It's a question of sovereignty. It's actually a question of national security. If you go into decline, what kind of national security do you have if you have a weakening economy? What kind of national security do we have when a president, a single person and his officials, can weaponize trade and force concessions out of us? What kind of national security do we have when a president can tell the United Kingdom not to bring wind turbines in from China because they are going to spy on northern England, where the sheep are, or tells them not to let them build an embassy? What kind of national security are we going to have if we increase our dependence on a single nation?

I'm sorry to go off on a tangent like that. I'll leave it at that.

• (1150)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Karaguesian. I appreciate the closing of the remark there.

Thank you, Madam O'Rourke.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to turn to Mr. Karaguesian.

First, you said in a previous answer programs related to the military defence strategy have a high multiplier effect.

Could you provide us with more details on that through the clerk? We're studying that very topic.

The Economist recently published an article saying we had to be careful, because there wouldn't be that many repercussions on the manufacturing sector as a whole. If you have readings you'd like to suggest on the subject, I invite you to let us know. We're interested.

Second, on to another topic, I don't know if you've read the Foreign Policy article written by historian Nils Gilman and published earlier this week. In it, the author compares electrostates to petrostates. His thesis is that, previously, there were two blocs: the capitalist bloc and the communist bloc. He says to forget about them because the next confrontation will pit electrostates, led by China and based on renewable energy, against petrostates, which include not only Donald Trump's United States, but also Russia and the Gulf countries.

Have you ever heard of this dichotomy? If so, what are your thoughts on that?

The author was referring to the Prime Minister's speech about middle power countries having to decide what role they could play in this context. The same applies for non-aligned countries. He says

the infrastructure needed to choose a side will make it difficult to change sides, given the fixed costs associated with such a decision.

What do you think of this new idea?

**The Chair:** You have about 30 seconds left.

[*English*]

**Julian Karaguesian:** On the impact of defence and multiplier effects, if you look at the impact of the Second World War on the Canadian economy, you will see that we entered the Second World War not as a manufacturing nation and we emerged from that war—I'm not asking for war—as a manufacturing country. The multiplier effects are high. Making weapons is an investment in non-productive assets, but the immediate multiplier effects are high.

With respect to your second point, I align myself with Prime Minister Mark Carney's bid to become part of a middle power group that protects the rules-based international order. We need to find a so-called coalition of the willing to be able to do this, because Canada thrives when there are rules in this world. We're less than 1% of the world's population and less than 2% of the world economy. We need rules more than anything to be able to deal in this world. Other countries in the global south are also asking for this, as well as in Europe, Australia, Oceania and the United Kingdom. There are a lot of potential allies out there for this.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

Colleagues, we lost a little bit of time earlier during the proceedings, so I'm going to reduce this final round from five minutes to three minutes.

Mr. Guglielmin, you'll have three.

Mr. Bardeesy, you'll have three, and that will conclude....

The floor is yours, Mr. Guglielmin.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In January 2021, Canada announced new measures to help address the risk of being complicit in human rights abuses in [*Inaudible—Editor*] China and specifically mentioned the Uyghurs. Personally, I find it alarming and offensive that a Canadian member of Parliament uses his time not to protect Canadians but to defend a foreign country that has been well-documented by Human Rights Watch and even our own government for human rights abuses, and also to attack the credibility of one of the witnesses sitting before us today.

Ms. McCuaig-Johnston, I'll allow you some time to defend your credibility on this issue and maybe highlight why it's such a problem if we allow vehicles to be imported into Canada that are being developed through the use of forced labour.

• (1155)

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** Thank you very much.

As I said, I made my career in government in science and technology policy and programs and funding, helping China develop its R and D capacity. When I retired, I started publishing on China's S and T governance, start-up companies, joint ventures and so on. I became more and more concerned as I saw things like China's role in the Arctic. I've briefed across government on that, and on China's use of surveillance technologies in Xinjiang and now across the country. It's through the technology lens that I came to work on the Uyghur issue, and that's what got me sanctioned by China. They don't like me talking about the Uyghurs and they send their people out to harass me in my vehicle.

At the same time, we will always trade with China. They want our resources and we want their manufactured goods. It's 3.6% of our trade. It's often said that they are our second-biggest trading partner, with the largest being the U.S. at 76%, but our second-biggest is actually the EU, through CETA, at 8% of our trade.

We do need to diversify. The Indo-Pacific strategy is excellent for diversifying trade. I've been thrilled with the Prime Minister's diversification policy—

**Michael Guglielmin:** I just want to get in one more question. I'm almost out of time here.

We've been hearing a lot, even in the last meeting on this subject, that we should be more concerned with the threat from the United States to our security than with the threat from a country like China. Do you agree with that assessment?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** No. I would say that we're at very serious risk with the section 301 investigation calling us out for our very weak enforcement of the Uyghur forced labour legislation. The U.S. legislation is very strong. The Bloc has made tremendous efforts to strengthen Canadian legislation, and others around this table have as well, and we should be doing that.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, I'm going to have to stop your time there, Mr. Guglielmin.

Mr. Bardeesy, you have three minutes. That will conclude round one.

**Karim Bardeesy (Taiiako'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'll start with Ms. McCuaig-Johnston.

You described QNX as a Canadian technology that is currently in some Chinese EVs. Would it be a positive or worthwhile trade objective of Canada to encourage the adoption of more technologies like QNX in Chinese EVs?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I would love to see that. We need to have Canadian technology wherever we can. We need to ensure that the data is kept, if not in Canada, at least in North America, but not in China. They've demonstrated much more malign intent towards us than the United States, I would say.

**Karim Bardeesy:** In the past, we've had experts in the auto sector in front of this committee. One of the things we've heard from them is that the earlier model that was founded in the 60-year-old

auto pact around assembly and manufacturing has now lent itself to a broader array of technologies, skills, talents and deployments in a vehicle.

When countries are doing trade negotiations, presumably the broad array of products in a sector like autos would then be discussed. Would you agree with that?

**Margaret McCuaig-Johnston:** I would, but that's not the way the Chinese EVs operate.

Their firms bring kits, and they're simply assembled. You wouldn't have the opportunity for Canadian aluminum and steel, for example, to be used. They would have to completely reconfigure their approach to autos in order for us to do that. If we're going to manufacture Chinese EVs here, we would have to try to do that. We'd have to insist on Canadian parts in the vehicles, not aluminum from forced labour—

**Karim Bardeesy:** Some of the tools that Ms. O'Rourke referred to and that I'm referring to here would be part of the policy tool kit.

Actually, we might hear from a witness later who has an interesting take on China-Canada integration in this regard.

Professor Karaguesian, you spoke about the Australian experience in the auto sector, but you also spoke about your hunger for Canadian prosperity. In general, do middle powers like Canada benefit from a diversity of investment sources versus relying too much on a single investment source?

• (1200)

**Julian Karaguesian:** They do, absolutely.

I'll just speak about diversity in economics. Diversity is always a good thing. Our dependence on the United States until two decades ago, or 15 years ago, was a great thing, and we all thought it was going to last forever, but the train kept moving. We're on a train now, and the train's not neutral. It's going in a certain direction.

We have the opportunity right now as a rich country. We have the richest inheritance in the world of natural resources, of energy, of water. We also have a great population, an educated population, a kind population, and we can use this wealth now, before we go into a decline, a downward spiral, to protect our prosperity and build out our trading partners.

I just want to make a point, if I can, on national security. I share people's concern about foreign governments having our data. I'm also gravely concerned about groups of individuals that have our data, whether they're down south or anywhere else in the world. We also have to think about the dissemination of our data to private interests.

Thank you.

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

Witnesses, thank you very much for being here today. Have a great rest of your day.

Colleagues, we are going to suspend for about five minutes to transition into the second panel.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1200) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We will now begin the second hour of the meeting.

[*English*]

We have two new witnesses joining us here in person. From Beachman Motor Company Ltd., we have Benjamin Robert Taylor, chief executive officer. From the Canadian Association of Mold-makers, we have Nicole Vlanich, executive director.

Witnesses, you'll each have up to five minutes for opening remarks, following which we will have questions from the members who are before you today.

With that, Mr. Taylor, we'll start with you for five minutes.

**Benjamin Taylor (Chief Executive Officer, Beachman Motor Company Ltd.):** Thank you very much.

First of all, I'd like to thank the committee and recognize you for inviting me to be here today. It's very exciting. It's also my first time engaging with the government. To be doing it at the highest level is an excellent honour for us.

To introduce myself, I'm the co-founder of Beachman. We are a Canadian start-up that produces e-bikes and electric motorcycles right in the heart of Toronto. We've been doing so for five years now, although it's a project I've been working on for over 11 years.

Mr. Bardeesy has had the pleasure of meeting us and seeing our factory in person. We encourage anyone who's interested to come pay us a visit and see the bikes being made.

We are the first company of our kind, at least in a very long time. Last year, we became the first recipient of a federal motorcycle manufacturing licence in over 80 years. The last company to receive one was Bombardier. It was the first company to ever receive one.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Benjamin Taylor:** Thank you very much. We're in a small group of two.

It was a long and arduous process to receive that. There's lots we could talk about around the barriers to new entrepreneurs in joining the EV market in Canada and the ways we can reduce those barriers.

We're very proud to be there. As of November, we've sold over 1,000 electric motorcycles since our founding.

Our company has a long history. We started as two men in a shed building electric bikes in a backyard. We now have an 8,000 square-foot warehouse and headquarters where we produce bikes and ship them internationally, selling into the United States and Costa Rica. This year, we're opening up sales in the European Union.

This week, we were featured on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* and in an excellent five-page story in the *Financial Post*, which I encourage you to read for the full story of Beachman.

What I'd love to talk about today is the fact that I stand as an entrepreneur trying to enter the EV industry in Canada, assembling vehicles in Canada.

I believe the world is at an inflection point. The transition to EVs will have casualties, and those casualties will be legacy industries. We're seeing this with the struggle of traditional gas companies to transition to EVs, as well as traditionally strong automotive countries struggling to compete with China, as has been seen today.

I believe that at any inflection point in history, the new niche players and pure players are the ones that rise and thrive in the changing market. I believe investment in that in Canada, in operations like Beachman, will allow us to thrive and transition.

Our business model at this time is pretty simple: We design all of our parts in Canada and we have them manufactured in China. We bring parts in, assemble the bikes here and then export them.

We tried to make a motorcycle in Canada. My partner, Steve, gave himself the leniency of 10 times the cost on a simple part like a frame, which is a piece of tube bent eight times, welded in 12 places and painted. We found that this was impossible. The lowest price that we could get in Canada to produce a good like that, a simple piece of painted metal, was over 20 times what we could produce it for in China, including shipping and tariffs.

I don't think that has to be the way. I think there are ways to encourage a smaller scale and more affordable production in Canada, but it is the reality right now. I think that should be clear about our business model.

Overall, in the EV market, we're facing a moment, as I mentioned, when a player is coming in with global power and global expertise, and we will need to lean on our strengths. I believe that in Canada, as in any western nation, our strengths lie in branding, quality and consumer trust. We saw giants like Honda and Kawasaki in the 1980s and 1990s decimate the North American and other western motorcycle industries. The only players that survived were Harley-Davidson, Triumph and Royal Enfield. They leaned on that same quality, trust and strength of branding.

I think it's similar in the British car industry with players like Land Rover and Aston Martin. They survived when a lot of other western companies failed after the Japanese came in and took over.

I think we're in a similar moment. I believe there are a lot of conversations to be had about how we can encourage new brands that come up, pure EV players that encourage growth in Canada.

• (1215)

I also want to point out that a project we're working on now at Beachman is to create an electric car, a small four-by-four produced in Ontario, Canadian-owned, Canadian-funded, Canadian-built, using our relationships with China to produce the basic components that we can't produce here at an affordable price in order to make a really affordable, competitive consumer good, built and sold domestically. Eventually we would scale that up to be able to export it and represent Canada on the national stage, becoming Canada's first-ever automaker.

With regard to transitioning Canada to being a strong EV producer, as you mentioned, Mr. Vice-Chair, and becoming an electrostate, I believe we're positioned in a very incredible way to become an electrostate. I think now is the time to invest in it and I believe that Canada will be stronger for it, both on the EV side and on things like increasing our power grid, increasing EV and clean energy generation and increasing expertise in manufacturing the hardware, as well as the massive industry that's going to be required for this transition to clean energy, not to mention the national security benefits. We're seeing that countries like Cuba have been completely cut off by the petrostates and are now suffering the consequences.

I think that's a great representation of where I stand.

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

Ms. Vlanich, the floor is yours for five minutes.

• (1220)

**Nicole Vlanich (Executive Director, Canadian Association of Moldmakers):** Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Our CAMM members play a critical and foundational role in Canada's manufacturing ecosystem. Mould-making is where production begins. Before a part is made, before a vehicle is assembled, the tooling must first be designed and built. Without mould-making, there is no manufacturing.

Manufacturing contributes over 10% of Canada's GDP and supports approximately 1.7 million jobs. Mould-making sits upstream of the entire system and is closely tied to where manufacturing takes place across Canada and North America. An estimated 70%

to 80% of mould-making supports automotive production. This makes our sector highly sensitive to EV policy and, more importantly, to where vehicles are built.

The transition to electrification presents real opportunity. Canada has made important investments in EV production, battery supply chains and advanced manufacturing. These are positive steps. However, to fully realize these investments, the supporting ecosystem must remain engaged.

From our perspective, the key issue is where production occurs. Where a product is built determines whether Canadian industry participates in that work. When vehicles are built outside of North America, the associated tooling, engineering and supply chain work are also located outside North America. In those cases, Canadian manufacturers are excluded before production begins.

Recent discussions regarding imported EVs highlight the importance of scale. The proposed volume represents a significant share, approximately one-third, of projected EV sales in Canada in 2026. At that level, market access becomes market influence. It can shape sourcing decisions, investment timing and supply chain participation, and it has the potential to impact future CUSMA discussions and broader North American competitiveness.

Our industry has already experienced the effects of recent shifts. EV programs that were expected to move forward have been delayed or cancelled after companies have already invested in tooling and engineering time.

This has created a spillover effect across the sector. More companies are now competing for fewer programs, placing pressure on pricing, margins and long-term investment decisions. In an industry where margins are typically 5% to 10%, this creates significant strain.

These impacts extend beyond the automotive sector. When automotive demand slows, it affects overall capacity, capital planning and workforce stability, limiting the ability of companies to invest and diversify.

Our members operate in a global environment and maintain strong international relationships. At the same time, Canada's relationship with the United States remains critical. Canada's economy is deeply integrated with that of the U.S. CUSMA enables tariff-free trade across most goods when rules of origin are met, and it supports highly integrated production across North America.

This is not about limiting trade. It is about aligning policy with domestic capability and ensuring that Canadian industry remains part of the value chain.

There are also environmental considerations. As EV adoption increases, so does the need to manage battery life cycles, including recycling, disposal and environmental compliance. Canada does not yet have a fully comprehensive, harmonized end-of-life framework for EV batteries and vehicles. Current approaches rely heavily on industry-led programs that are not mandatory across all jurisdictions. When vehicles are imported, questions arise around how end-of-life responsibility is assigned, how environmental standards are enforced and whether the burden ultimately falls on domestic systems, municipalities and taxpayers. Our members are looking for clarity and transparency in how these responsibilities will be defined as the EV market grows.

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to ensure that Canada's EV strategy supports domestic production, workforce development, environmental responsibility and long-term competitiveness. Our members are highly skilled, globally competitive and committed to the future of manufacturing in Canada. Many are small and mid-sized businesses, often family-owned, that provide high-quality, well-paying jobs. What they need is stability, predictability and the ability to participate in the opportunities being created.

A successful EV strategy is not measured only by vehicles on the road, but by whether Canadian industry has been part of making them.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Vlanich.

Witnesses, thank you for your opening testimony. We're now going to get into our lines of questioning.

Mr. Falk, the floor will be yours for six minutes.

**Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses. Both of your presentations were very interesting.

You have a very interesting business, Mr. Taylor, and I wish you all the best.

Ms. Vlanich, I'd like to begin by asking you some questions, but first I'd like to couch it by quoting a speech in the House of Commons from February 1, 2022, when debating the Speech from the Throne:

Madam Speaker, there is virtually no doubt from any source whatsoever that there is slavery, that the Uighur people are being enslaved, that products are being produced out of that part of China and that the Government of China, directly or indirectly, condones the production of those goods.

You probably don't know who said that, but those comments were made by Liberal member of Parliament John McKay. He served in Canadian Parliament for 27 years.

Today, in this committee, we saw Liberal members of Parliament—Michael Ma and Dominique O'Rourke—discrediting a witness to defend the human rights abuses of China against the Uyghur people, and also—

• (1225)

**Dominique O'Rourke:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Falk, I'm going to have to address this point of order. I'll pause the clock.

Go ahead, Madam O'Rourke.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** I in no way discredited the witness who was before us—

**Ted Falk:** No, you defended Michael Ma—

**The Chair:** Mr. Falk, one second.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** I did ask her to keep her answers short, but I in no way discredited the witness. I simply pointed out that this line of questioning, and that approach, has been used in this committee frequently.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Madam O'Rourke.

Mr. Ma.

**Michael Ma:** I object that my name is now being broadcast in this fashion. You could call me "a member of the other side", but you are naming people, and that is not in the rules of engagement we have here.

**An hon. member:** You are [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** Colleagues—

**Michael Ma:** Well then, Mr. Falk, I take exception to what you're saying—

**The Chair:** Mr. Ma, I'm going to take the floor back now.

Okay, I know where this is all going. We have a decision point before us.

We can all go back and look at the testimony from the previous hour to determine what we believe can be taken from that. We can use the time that we have remaining, which is about 30 minutes, to engage in a very interesting conversation with two experts about EV policy in this country, or we can use the time to litigate the previous hour.

Members certainly have the prerogative to determine what they want to do. I just want to encourage us to bring the temperature down, where possible. I hope that we will be able to utilize the expertise of the two people before us to contribute to the report that we will ultimately be presenting to the House of Commons on this important subject matter.

With that, Mr. Falk, I'm going to return the floor to you.

I will just make one note, colleagues, which is that engaging in points of order and other things that encourage discussion outside of the realm of soliciting answers from the experts here does take away from some of the time that we have allotted to us. I just want all members to be aware that if I do have to reduce time, I'll do so judiciously. It will be from all sides around the table. That's just a quick note to draw attention to that.

Mr. Falk, I paused the clock at 4:48. You had six minutes, so that time is remaining for you, sir.

**Ted Falk:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It was just something I had never experienced here in Parliament before, a Canadian politician defending China's human rights abuses.

Let me carry on with my questions.

Ms. Vlanich, your association has publicly said that the federal government's agreement for 49,000 Chinese EVs raises serious questions about industrial competitiveness and manufacturing employment.

Were the mould-makers and upstream suppliers properly consulted before this decision was made?

**Nicole Vlanich:** No, and I've been advocating, as the beginning of production, to be consulted in these types of conversations.

**Ted Falk:** In fact, the automobile industry was assured that the importing of Chinese EVs into Canada was not on the table.

The one other question that I want to ask before we move on is something that we haven't talked a lot about at this committee.

Have you, as an industry or an association, discussed end of use for EV vehicles? Could you elaborate a little bit on that?

**Nicole Vlanich:** Something that is top of mind for our members is the end of life for the vehicles. Currently in Canada, the manufacturers, for the most part, take the responsibility for end of life. What would that look like if we imported those vehicles from China and if those conversations have been had with them, to say that they have that financial responsibility and obligation to do what Canadian and North American manufacturers have agreed to do?

**Ted Falk:** Yes. Dealing with electric batteries is going to be very different from dealing with the shredding of automobiles today and recycling that metal.

That's a consideration that you don't feel has been adequately addressed.

• (1230)

**Nicole Vlanich:** Exactly.

**Ted Falk:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to turn my remaining time over to Mr. Guglielmin.

**The Chair:** There are about two minutes and 45 seconds remaining.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Thank you, Chair.

In light of what you said, I'm going to take this opportunity to move the following motion:

That the committee unequivocally condemn forced labour practices in China.

I would like to remind this committee that it was a Liberal government that first acknowledged the Uyghur forced labour camps and the human rights abuses. That's been widely recognized by the United Nations and other human rights groups. I'd also like to point out that it was Beijing that detained the two Michaels for over 1,000 days.

Also, it's not because of the Chinese people, of course, but because of the government in China, that Huawei was banned here in Canada and that TikTok has been removed from government devices.

These are serious threats and serious issues facing our country and we, as a collective here at this committee, need to come together and condemn this. I would also like to point out that there's a record of IP leakage and IP theft. There's a record of using their economy as geopolitical leverage.

I'd like to move this motion because it's unclear here if Mr. Ma has deviated from the Liberal Party's long-standing opposition to Chinese enslavement and human rights abuses or if he's soft launching the Liberal Party's new position on these issues.

**Karim Bardeesy:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin, I have to respond to a point of order. You'll maintain the floor after I deal with this.

Go ahead, Mr. Bardeesy.

**Karim Bardeesy:** A motion has been moved, but I'm not sure if we're moving directly into debate on the motion or what's happening exactly.

**The Chair:** My read of the situation is that Mr. Guglielmin has not concluded moving the motion and that these are his remarks in relation to moving the motion. Once he's made it clear that the motion is moved.... I haven't seen or heard the motion.

Mr. Guglielmin, I imagine you're getting there. I might encourage you to move on with the preamble as soon as you can and get to the substance of the motion itself so that I can, along with the committee members, first review it and determine its substance, and then we can decide where we go from here.

The floor is yours Mr. Guglielmin.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I'll go back to the conclusion of my little preamble, as you've said.

It's just unclear if MP Ma's remarks are at odds with the Liberal Party's position and the government's position or if he's soft launching the Prime Minister's new position on the Communist Party of China, their sort of permissive view on enslavement and the potential national security risk to our country.

I did state the motion up front and I'll state it again, and that is: That the committee unequivocally condemn forced labour practices in China.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I'm going to suspend briefly so that there's an opportunity for us to have that circulated. Sometimes it's helpful to have a couple of minutes for members to think about how they want to address a motion that's being table-dropped.

I'm going to suspend very briefly to make sure we get the proper wording. We will come back momentarily.

• (1230)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1235)

**The Chair:** We're going to continue.

Mr. Guglielmin, you've presented your motion. I don't think you had anything further to add.

I had some hands up prior to that. I had Ms. Kirkland and Monsieur Ste-Marie, and I now have Mr. Bardeesy.

Monsieur Ste-Marie, you're pointing to Mr. Bardeesy as if you want to give up your time, which you can do, but I have Ms. Kirkland first.

Ms. Kirkland, are you okay with us going to Mr. Bardeesy, or do you want the floor first?

• (1240)

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** I would like the floor first. Are we speaking to the motion?

**The Chair:** Okay. The floor is yours. We are on debate on the motion.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I feel this motion is really important. I lived in China for a couple of years, and as a Canadian parliamentarian, I was appalled and disturbed when it very much seemed like a parliamentarian across the way was defending China when it's our job to defend the national security of our country, Canada.

The motion is very short and very clear that we unequivocally condemn certain practices. I would expect this committee to find it easy to do that and unanimously vote to condemn those practices. It's as simple as that.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kirkland.

Mr. Bardeesy.

[*Translation*]

**Karim Bardeesy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The witnesses have expertise on the subject we're currently studying.

Our party will support the motion. We want to continue with the witnesses.

[*English*]

I want to note that we will be supporting this motion so that we can move on and return to the witnesses, and clear the record, if there was any doubt. I didn't see any doubt in the line of questioning in the first hour that would cast any doubt on this question.

We want to move on and also make sure that we focus on the things that are of concern to this committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that, Mr. Bardeesy.

Mr. Ma.

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Chair, since my name was mentioned in the background of the motion, I'd like to set the record straight that the question for the witness was whether she had witnessed the forced labour in Xinjiang that she claimed existed. I made no assertion of either support or denial. I just asked whether she had witnessed it, period. That was the line of questioning.

Many times, we have asked different witnesses whether they have seen certain things that they have claimed. Those are very legitimate questions. If the Conservatives want to turn this into a political situation, then shame on their side.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Guglielmin, you have the floor. I will note, for the sake of what happens next, that Mr. Bardeesy seems to have indicated support from the Liberal side. I presume the Conservatives are supportive of this as they are the movers of the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, from the Bloc Québécois, said he will support the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Guglielmin, I will turn the floor over to you. There's probably an appetite for one or two more pieces of commentary, but we've quite clearly and publicly established support for the motion, and I would encourage us to get to a vote quickly, given that we know the positions of the parties, as it will allow us to re-engage with our witnesses who are here today.

Mr. Guglielmin, the floor is yours.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I'm glad to see we have unanimous consent to support this motion, because, frankly, during the testimony, the line of questioning was set to discredit the witness's authority. The way you went after her in that line of questioning was in defence of the fact that... You asked her, "Hey, have you actually ever seen this?", meaning there is no slave labour in China.

**Michael Ma:** You are implying, sir.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I'm glad.... You implied—

**Michael Ma:** I was asking—

**The Chair:** Mr. Ma, the floor—

**Michael Guglielmin:** We're glad to hear, on this side—

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin, I'm going to pause you, too.

Mr. Ma, the floor is currently mine.

From my perspective, colleagues, the record has been set straight. There are differences of opinion, as per usual in this place, about the meaning and construction of the way something was articulated. Let's just agree to disagree.

Mr. Ma, I feel you've had the opportunity to set the record straight.

Mr. Guglielmin, I feel you've made your point. I'm going to afford you the opportunity to continue making that point, because the floor is yours, but I hope you'll do so very briefly because it's very clear to me, as the chair, right now that we have unanimous consent to support the motion. The debate we're having right now is on the motion. There is no more disagreement about whether or not there will be support for the motion. The disagreement is about whether or not the motion was necessary.

To me, this is now turning into a bit of a waste of our time, and I think we have to return to the testimony of the witnesses who have availed themselves to us today.

Mr. Guglielmin, the floor is yours, but I would ask that you please take the comments I've made into consideration. I'll return the floor to you.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Absolutely, and I'm glad that there's unanimous consent in supporting the condemnation of slave labour in China, because the number one responsibility and role of a member of the federal Canadian Parliament is to defend the interests of the Canadian people.

Thank you.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Ms. Kirkland.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I think I would like to add an amendment to the motion. The amendment would be this: “and that the committee condemn the comments made by the member for Markham—Unionville”.

**The Chair:** I'm just going to discuss this for a moment with the clerk to make sure that I understand the framing around this correctly, and then we'll come back to it.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Chair, I just want to raise a brief point of order.

There's 15 minutes left. Given what's going on, I don't think we're going to have time to come back to the witnesses, and that's unfortunate. It would therefore be wise to dismiss the witnesses before suspending the meeting.

We could ask them our questions by email, and they could answer by email.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

We've done this before in other meetings. We can listen to Ms. Kirkland's amendment and then take a very short break. We can then continue with the witnesses, with the assurance that we'll come back to the issue. That would be a win-win.

[*English*]

Colleagues, essentially—if I can just speak to this—we've done this before. Everything's on the record here, too. We're public, so I'm not concerned about disagreement. I might suggest, in order for us to leverage the expertise that we have here, that we use 10 or 15 minutes to re-engage with our witnesses, with a commitment from everybody around the table that we will return to this. It's a little bit—what's the word I'm looking for?—irregular, but to me it's a completely legitimate way for us to continue. We've done this before.

I'm going to look around the table to see how colleagues feel.

**Ted Falk:** I think we can deal with this very quickly. We have a motion, and we have a friendly amendment to the motion. Let's—

**The Chair:** Okay. Without unanimous consent to Mr. Ste-Marie's proposal, I'm not going to make that decision, because it is outside the scope of the rules. It's something I feel comfortable doing with unanimous consent. However, with Mr. Falk's position, it's difficult for me to move forward outside of that scope. We will continue within the frame of the Standing Orders.

Madam Kirkland, go ahead. Is there anything else you want to add? Perhaps, for the record, you can reread the amendment that you're proposing.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Absolutely.

This is it exactly: “and that the committee condemn the comments made by the member for Markham—Unionville”.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bardeesy.

[*Translation*]

**Karim Bardeesy:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this amendment.

[*English*]

It's unfortunate that it sounds like we won't get to hear the rest of the testimony from our witnesses today. I think it'll be helpful for us to get a written submission from them with some more details about some of the aspects that we were looking to talk about.

I don't know, Madam Clerk, if it's possible to send in some questions to the witnesses that they could then respond to.

I do want to speak to this amendment, which we will be opposing on this side.

You know, this is a very important study that was created and prompted with collaboration. It came from the other side, and we on this side, having already done in 2025, if you recall, a three-session study in a very collaborative fashion on the auto sector that, again, was prompted by the other side, agreed to an additional study, this time with more of a focus on the electric vehicle sector. We as members have been working collaboratively on now two studies.

I just want to recall that, when we have been working collaboratively, we have actually been in a frame, a mould or a situation where we've been able to get response from the government—not always the policy objectives that were achieved by the opposition. We had the minister in front of us. The minister has already been asked to return on autos once. The result of the earlier study.... All of this is in the context of what I think is.... I'm making these remarks about the earlier study and the work that we've done to date to express my disappointment about the direction that this amendment seems to be taking.

As a result of collaborative work, we were able to generate some very specific commitments from the minister on that first study. For instance, the Minister of Industry came and reported to us her intention to pursue legal options with respect to Stellantis after its decision around Brampton.

I think, if I'm looking at my colleagues around the table here—

• (1250)

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Just one second, Mr. Bardeesy. There's a point of order.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I don't believe the comments being made are relevant to the amendment.

**The Chair:** I've traditionally been pretty judicious and pretty gracious as well in how I've interpreted it. I'll make sure I'm listening a little bit more closely.

Mr. Bardeesy, I'll let you continue. I mean, there's truth to the fact that it has to be within the scope of the amendment. I'm not sure you're outside that line yet, but it's something to be mindful of.

**Karim Bardeesy:** The collaborative work of this committee has not, in my experience on this committee—or, frankly, yet in the House of Commons—ever involved the naming of a member who had asked a question earlier in a session and the condemning of that. That has never been part of the work of this committee.

Mr. Chair, we've done one kind of urgent study. We have looked at legislation. We have tabled two reports. We've done that work largely collaboratively in relation to both the content and the process of this committee. When the caucus leads on this committee have had concerns and disagreements over the process issues, we have worked with you, with the clerk, with others and with our own colleagues to make sure we could achieve agreement. In some cases, there were issues identified within our caucuses. We worked collaboratively on it. We said, look, we'll work with our members to see what collaborative space exists. I think we've been very successful at doing that.

We now have a new study here, which we are in the midst of doing, on a very important set of policy issues related to electric vehicles. The focus in this session, in the questioning and some of the expert witness testimony, and definitely the questioning on the Conservative side, has been on China, which is just one part of a larger set of issues related to electric vehicles and electric vehicle policy.

I would point out that on March 31, a result of this committee's work that was I think opposed by the other side...or at least half of it was opposed by the other side. The other side encouraged the elimination of the electric vehicle availability standard, which was done by the government. The government also brought forward new electric vehicle rebates, which the other side opposed. I will point out to the committee and to those Canadians watching that those electric vehicle rebates of up to \$5,000 on eligible vehicles are going to be available starting next week, March 31. We can have a policy debate about that. In fact, we have had that. This session today would be a good opportunity to do that. Who is eligible? What is eligible? What kinds of vehicles could be eligible in the future? All those are very legitimate points of concern for this committee.

We have, as the chair has pointed out, a record of the conversations of the last hour. In fact, we have a record of what's being said now.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I have a point of order.

**Karim Bardeesy:** In fact, this very motion has a record to it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bardeesy, you know that I have to address a point of order.

Mr. Guglielmin, you have a point of order.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Yes. The amendment was about comments made by Mr. Ma. Now we're listening to government talking points about EV rebates. Can we get to some relevance here?

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

I'll encourage Mr. Bardeesy to return to the basis. I did hear in his commentary some reference to prior discussions that have taken place at committee in relation to remarks made by members. I see some relevance in that. I also see a little bit of a skirting of that line.

Taking the point that Mr. Guglielmin has raised, Mr. Bardeesy, I'll ask you again to be mindful of relevance on the amendment. The floor is yours.

**Karim Bardeesy:** Absolutely.

As a parliamentarian here since May 2025, on the bar to condemn an individual member within a group of parliamentarians, to me, our common law and our parliamentary—

• (1255)

**Ted Falk:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bardeesy, I'll have to ask you to pause for a moment.

Mr. Falk, you have a point of order.

**Ted Falk:** Yes. I've been listening to Mr. Bardeesy here, and he's using language that is inaccurate. Nobody condemned anyone. We've pointed out what people have done and expressed our disappointment. I'd like him to retract that word.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Falk. I doubt there'll be a retraction. I think we're splitting hairs—

**Ted Falk:** Let him speak for himself.

**The Chair:** I think we're splitting hairs a little bit here.

Mr. Bardeesy, the point's been raised in terms of keeping on with the relevance.

I'm just keeping an eye on the clock. We do have additional resources that have been granted.

I'm about a minute away, witnesses, from letting you go. I've hoped that we would get to a resolution, but I'm getting the feeling that we might not, so we'll just wait.

Mr. Bardeesy, go ahead.

**Karim Bardeesy:** Mr. Chair, in parliamentary debate in the House of Commons, condemnation of what is said by the other side is a frequent—almost routine—occurrence. It is done in the spirit of debate. In my time as a member of the House of Commons where that practice is common, let alone at committee, where it is not common, I have yet to witness a successfully passed motion or even a credible motion in the House of Commons that has condemned the comments of another member.

In the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate, of course, we do that. That is the House of Commons and that is the place where those kinds of more partisan and more sharpened discussions around policy tend to take place.

In this committee, we have a record. The Hansard will produce a record, and people are free to interpret that record. It is not appropriate for this committee to reflect on its own conduct over the last hour and a half when we have witnesses in front of us and when there are radically different views of the interpretation of what happened in a very short exchange. We can leave it to other parliamentarians and to members of the public to pronounce on.

For a committee to pronounce on the comments of one member, which are clearly evident in the parliamentary record, and to lift that up in some regard and to have a motion and to ask the members on this side....

[*Translation*]

There's my colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

We're being asked to support such a motion.

[*English*]

Like I said earlier, the bar is extraordinarily high. We have no evidence that has been brought forward by anyone in this committee to date that suggests the work of my colleague over here, Mr. Ma, and what he said, has in any way violated standards, such that the extraordinarily high bar that it should take in any committee—that any deliberative body should take—to condemn one of its own applies here. We are nowhere near that bar.

I would invite my colleagues across to show precedent, past evidence and specific examples of where a committee has condemned one of its own members after comments were made that are available in Hansard. Again, we, as parliamentarians, also enjoy the benefit of parliamentary privilege, so I would invite them to show one example where a committee in this Parliament has done this and—

**An hon. member:** March 19 [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Karim Bardeesy:** —has passed a motion condemning one of its own members.

**An hon. member:** —[*Inaudible—Editor*] condemning comments made by Mr. Francis Drouin—

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we're losing a little of our procedural.... I'm trying to remember the word we use.

Mr. Vis, Mr. Falk and Mr. Bardeesy, there's a lot of crosstalk.

Colleagues, the witnesses were told they would be here today until one o'clock. It's now one o'clock.

Witnesses, thank you for availing yourselves. We very much look forward to any testimony that you want to provide to the committee through the clerk. We would certainly be keen to know what might have been said here today.

Members are always encouraged to reach out with sets of questions as well, if they'd like. Everything related to official committee business should go through the clerk and her office.

Having said that, Mr. Taylor and Madam Vlanich, thank you very much for being here with us today. I'm going to let you go on with your day, but I appreciate the fact that you stood through this with us for this last bit.

Mr. Bardeesy, the floor is yours.

● (1300)

**Karim Bardeesy:** You know that my usual interlocutor on these issues for the Conservative caucus, Ms. Dancho, was not here today. I cannot help but think that some of this behind this amendment is some concern around my colleague's presence on this side of the desk and not that side.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Ste-Marie, you have the floor.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Obviously, I sincerely apologize. The witnesses were here for an hour. They were able to make their presentation, but we weren't able to ask them questions. It will be done by email, but I'm very sorry this is happening.

As agreed, I support the motion, which the committee unanimously supports. Hoping to save time so we could ask the witnesses some questions, I didn't intervene. As they've now been dismissed, I'll speak to the proposed amendment.

I don't think it's the committee's role to condemn the comments of one of its members. The strength of a democracy lies in freedom of speech, the freedom to express opinions not everyone agrees on. Everyone brings their own perspective to the debate.

Mr. Bardeesy talked about his experience. He's been an MP and committee member for a year. I've been an MP for a little over 10 years. In a partisan way, we're here to represent our constituents and the values of our party. I could often condemn the things I hear in the House and in committee.

I understand there are levels where this is concerned, but I don't think it's the committee's role to condemn the comments of one of its members. I think democracy requires freedom of speech, freedom to express one's opinion, which is not always unanimous. For that reason, I will not be supporting this amendment.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

Colleagues, I'll do a bit of a status check for us.

Ms. Kirkland, I believe you raised your hand with a desire to speak to this amendment.

Prior to the amendment, we had a show of unanimous consent for the adoption of the motion put forward by Mr. Guglielmin. We then had an amendment put forward to that motion by Madam Kirkland, which is what we've been debating over the course of the past several minutes.

I suspect, based on what I'm hearing, that members from the Liberal side will oppose the amendment, although I'll look for some clarity from them. Monsieur Ste-Marie from the Bloc has indicated that he will oppose the amendment.

If a vote were to occur, we know what the result would be. However, as you know, colleagues, I can't call a vote until the debate has collapsed on the matter, so at this point I would encourage us to think about where we want to go from here. We know what the end result is going to be, unless there is some line of questioning that persuades members around the table to change their mind. Of course, it's the prerogative of members to try to do that.

After I give the floor to Madam Kirkland, I will encourage us to think about allowing this to go to a vote, given that we know what the outcome of that vote is going to be.

Madam Kirkland, the floor is yours.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate you giving me the floor.

Since it was in question why the amendment came forward, I wanted to clarify that before we go to a vote. I decided to add the amendment due to the opposition we seem to have from my colleague Mr. Ma across the way to the initial motion made by Mr. Guglielmin. That made me feel like the member across the way was again defending the fact that he had defended China's record. It seemed to be so in the way he was questioning our witness.

For clarity, that is why I added the amendment. We could have moved a lot quicker had we not had that added.

Thank you, sir.

• (1305)

**The Chair:** Mr. Ma.

**Michael Ma:** Thank you, Ms. Kirkland, for your comments. It seems like you are projecting a personal perspective and interpretation, in the same way as Mr. Falk and Ms. Borrelli. We are here to represent Canadians, and you are injecting your personal views and not allowing me to project my comments.

If you look back at the record, it was a question, and the witness answered it. There was no projected comment one way or another. If you want to spin this any way you want, I guess you will do it anyway, but I'm setting the record straight that that was the line of questioning.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Ma.

Seeing no further speakers, I'm going to call the amendment to a vote.

Madam Clerk, on this one, I think I'll get you to call the vote.

(Amendment negated: nays 5; yeas 4)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, the amendment has been defeated. We're now back to the main motion.

We have already indicated unanimous consent for that motion.

Mr. Guglielmin.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I would like to request a recorded vote on the main motion.

I would also like to add an amendment that says “and the committee report to the House”.

**The Chair:** Just give me a moment to chat with the clerk.

Colleagues, I'm going to suspend, because there are going to have to be some discussions amongst the parties here in order to create a bit of efficiency about where we want to go. We do have the extra resources, so I'm in no rush at this point.

I'm going to suspend to give everybody an opportunity to think about the amendment that's been proposed by Mr. Guglielmin. We'll come back to it.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1305)

(Pause)

• (1320)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we'll get back into things here.

Mr. Bardeesy, I see that you have your hand up. Give me one moment, please.

The parties have had plenty of time to discuss this. I think they have a sense of where they'd like to go with it.

I do have a procedural issue that I have to deal with.

Mr. Guglielmin, you made an amendment to your own motion, which you cannot do. That means I have to rule it out of order.

That brings us back to the main motion.

Madam Kirkland.

• (1325)

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Chair, can I make a—

**The Chair:** You can, but I'm going in the order that has been set. I'm going to Mr. Bardeesy, followed by you. Of course, at that point in time, you can propose an amendment if you so choose.

Colleagues, just as a reminder, the amendment was ruled out of order for the reasons I just specified. We're now back to debate on the main motion.

Mr. Bardeesy, the floor is yours.

**Karim Bardeesy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move a very simple, very brief amendment to the motion. It would be to strike the words “in China” and replace them with “globally”.

[*Translation*]

In French, we'd say “au niveau mondial”.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That one was pretty clear, colleagues. I don't know if we need translation on that.

An amendment has been moved. We now begin debate on the—

**Karim Bardeesy:** Can I—

**The Chair:** Yes. I'm not relieving you of the floor just yet. I'm just clarifying for the committee where we're at procedurally. Everybody's clear, I believe.

As a current speaking order, I have Bardeesy, Kirkland, O'Rourke, Guglielmin and Ste-Marie.

Mr. Bardeesy, the floor is yours.

**Karim Bardeesy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Obviously, where we started today with the work of this committee and where we've ended up has been a bit of a surprising journey for us, but here we are. On our side, we considered the opportunities in front of us, but we understand that the Conservatives, offering a number of amendments to their own motion, have been changing the goalposts with respect to what was put on the table a while ago.

I also do want to point out that I think this is an important larger policy question. I know that recent news articles, referred to earlier, have been written about the work of Mr. McKay and other former parliamentarians on human rights and forced labour policy issues generally. I think it's important, if indeed we want to look at this issue.... We're not really looking at this issue. We're focusing on just a statement of principle. The statement of principle that I have just outlined seems pretty incontrovertible. It doesn't seem like it would be something that would be hard to disagree with.

I would also note that there are more competent committees that have been looking at these issues or have been engaged in these issues. It might be worthwhile considering, if we are indeed interested in the substance of these issues, working with the competent and relevant committees that have the expertise in these areas to do that. Obviously, as a committee that's focused on industry and technology, we can have a piece of this issue, but I know that there are other committees with more of a background on and more of a connection to these issues, whereas I think we are in the midst of a very important study here that we want to continue to do.

**The Chair:** Madam Kirkland, the floor is yours.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Thank you, Chair.

I find this amendment surprising but not surprising. It sort of reveals to me an awful lot of where the Liberals are going with this. They seem to want to take the spotlight off the subject matter at hand, which is the unsafe and forced work conditions in China. Why they would want to do that we will leave up to the Canadian public. Perhaps my colleagues may wish to comment on it. I find it very revealing.

Perhaps what Mr. Guglielmin said earlier is more true than I thought when we started this meeting today, which is that perhaps these aren't just the feelings of my colleague Mr. Ma; perhaps it is a soft launch for what Mark Carney is trying to do in terms of softening his stance on China.

Those are my comments. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madam Kirkland.

I'll remind colleagues of the speaking order. I have Madam O'Rourke, followed by Mr. Guglielmin, Monsieur St-Marie and Mr.

Bardeesy. As well, just as a reminder, we are on the amendment, not the main motion.

Madam O'Rourke, the floor is yours.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The subject matter at hand today was electric vehicles. A subset of that was a concern around the allowing the importation of 49,000 electric vehicles from China. That was the subject matter at hand. That's what the witnesses were here to talk about.

In fact, because of this whole surprise motion, we didn't get to hear from two witnesses, some of whom were invited here by the members opposite.

The subject matter at hand was initially Canada's auto sector, which has 500,000 auto workers. It was about the potential impact of EVs—positive and negative. It was perhaps a reflection on the government's auto strategy that was warmly received on February 5 by all of the industry stakeholders. The subject matter at hand was all about Canadian manufacturing, Canadian jobs, the strength of our sector and potential impact.

Through a fair question to one of the witnesses, we seem to now have devolved into an examination of human rights in China, which is a fair question. However, the same question can be asked on a broad range of products and a broad range of countries. Do we not import clothes from all over the world, for example, from Bangladesh? Are there not potential human rights abuses in a number of places?

If we're going to have a legitimate conversation about human rights in China or elsewhere, then let's have that conversation.

I really think that if the question was legitimate, then the opposition, as it has done on many occasions in this committee, would have put an order on notice. We could have invited witnesses. We could hear from real experts on the real implications of this.

If this is a serious conversation, there are other committees that are better positioned, like the international trade committee and the global affairs committee, to really look into the matter around how human rights issues intersect with Canadian global policy and domestic policy.

What I struggle with is that we had unanimous consent around this table for the original motion, but that wasn't sufficient. The Conservative members of the committee wanted to have an ad hominem attack on one of the members of this committee—which is also not at the heart of our auto manufacturing and jobs in Windsor, Cambridge, Guelph, Alliston and all of these places that we're talking about. It was not about having a conversation about our EV supply chain or about the investments the government is making.

We've diverted into this brand new realm. If we want to address it legitimately, there is a way to do that more broadly and in a more robust way in a committee that specializes in that and that can bring in a minister and their staff and can call in experts for a study where there would be real benefits to Canadians, as we have done on productivity and the defence industrial strategy—quite cordially, in fact. We talked about some of the ethics around the defence industrial strategy. We are able to have these difficult conversations here.

• (1330)

**The Chair:** Madam O'Rourke, wait just a moment. I have to address a point of order from Mr. Falk.

**Ted Falk:** I allowed her quite a bit of latitude, but she's so far off base. She needs to talk to the issue.

The issue is that they want to change the word "China". We know this whole debate is revolving around China, around whether China is a human rights abuser and whether China is the country that's committing forced labour situations for the Uyghur people, forced organ harvesting for the Falun Gong and persecution of Christians. This is about China. This is about another country, and she needs to focus on that.

**Michael Guglielmin:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** On that particular point of order, I take your point, Mr. Falk. Because the amendment now speaks to changing it, that means that it expands the scope of what can be discussed. Discussion should be related to the scope, whether that's global or pertaining to one country. Because we are debating the amendment, not the main motion and not the previous amendment that was ruled out of order, it can expand beyond China specifically.

Mr. Guglielmin, I hope it's a real point of order here. I just want to say that if it's a point of order related to relevance, I just dealt with that in what Mr. Falk raised.

Go ahead.

• (1335)

**Michael Guglielmin:** It's on the changing of the motion. It diverts the original intent of the motion so substantially that the entire amendment should be ruled out of order.

**The Chair:** Are you challenging the ruling of the chair on that?

**Michael Guglielmin:** Right now, it's the ruling of the chair. Does the chair not agree?

**The Chair:** No, I don't agree, Mr. Guglielmin. Of course, you are allowed to challenge my decision, but no, I don't agree with your characterization. If I ruled this amendment out of scope, then I ought to be held accountable for allowing the previous one to be called within scope. I'm trying to be fair to both.

Is that the end of the point of order, or would you like to continue with a challenge of the chair?

**Michael Guglielmin:** I would like to continue with a challenge.

**The Chair:** Okay. We have a challenge of the chair.

Colleagues, we've been through this before. Mr. Guglielmin is challenging the chair's ruling in terms of the relevancy vis-à-vis the scope of the amendment proposed by Mr. Bardeesy to the main motion, which struck the word "China" and replaced it with "globally", in essence.

Are there any questions, or can I go to the clerk to call the vote?

Madam Clerk, I will ask you, because I know the terminology for this one can sometimes be confusing, to clarify for members what word they need to use in order to properly express their perspective.

Thank you.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Miriam Burke):** Shall the chair's ruling be sustained?

If you agree with the chair's ruling, you vote yes, and if you disagree with the chair's ruling, you vote against.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

**The Chair:** The ruling is sustained.

We will continue where we were with the debate on the amendment as it was presented.

Madam O'Rourke, the floor continues to be yours.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you, Chair Carr.

[*Translation*]

Let's bet back on topic.

[*English*]

The topic of the meeting is the federal government's electric vehicle policies. The topic is the federal government's auto plan, which was launched in February and is a comprehensive plan. There is a subpiece to the conversation today that is about allowing the importation of Chinese vehicles to get back to the level we had in 2023, when there was a different American administration, the policies were different, the 49,000-odd vehicles being imported were Teslas and Polestars, and there was no concern on the part of the industry or on the part of the opposition. In fact, the 49,000 vehicles, should they all be imported, would be fewer than the number of Kias sold in Canada right now. We don't seem to have a big concern about the current EVs that are being sold by a range of other manufacturers from other countries.

I'm just bringing us back to the whole point of this conversation, which is a legitimate and important conversation for the auto sector, Canadian manufacturing and Canadian workers. It is about the future of the Canadian auto sector, which includes electrification. We know that 20% of vehicles currently sold globally are electric vehicles. We know that, even in the United States, despite adversarial policies, 20% of luxury brands are EVs. We know there will be a technology transfer for that.

Issues were raised, and the witness who was speaking earlier also said that we have mechanisms to address those concerns. If we're going to be looking at any human rights concerns that we have with respect to the EV supply chain, then it makes a lot of sense to broaden that out to not look at only one country. We have to remind ourselves that there are a number of inputs in everything, from our iPhones, Google glasses and smart watches to the things in our homes that have critical minerals from all over the world, some of them with dubious human rights practices. If we're going to have a real conversation about that, let's not sneak it in at the last minute in a way that is completely disrespectful to our witnesses and detracts from the matter at hand.

Folks on this committee are experts at putting a motion together that is well thought out and discussed ahead of time so that people can prepare for it. Everyone came to this meeting today prepared for the witnesses, out of respect to them and their time. Everyone came to have the conversation that the Conservative Party asked to have here and that we supported. Why would we not have a proper, broad, robust discussion about that, one that includes more than China? Why would we not have that conversation take place in a committee where there's more expertise on that, such as global affairs or international trade? My colleague, Mr. Ste-Marie, has a colleague in the Bloc who has a private member's bill before the House regarding human rights violations in a number of different industries.

If we're going to have a real conversation that is of value and that is to the level that Canadians expect in a parliamentary committee and in our legislature, then it should be done properly. It should not have a narrow focus. It should not be done after we have voted down a personal attack on a member of this committee who asked a question in good faith and in a way that has been seen many times in the tactics used by Conservative members of this committee.

We were ready to vote on this motion 40 minutes ago. I'm not sure what the time is. We were ready to support this motion, but this is about politics. This is now about casting aspersions on our Prime Minister. We've heard a couple of times that the Prime Minister could be involved in this. If we're going to have a conversation that is legitimate, then we need to do that, and we need to not narrow it down to one trading partner.

● (1340)

We need to be looking broadly at what this means. We could broaden it out as well. We could broaden it out to look at what the environmental issues are. If we really want to have a robust conversation in service to this place, with a study that can be used by other people to advance their own reflections, then we should do that properly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, it's important we have a debate and a study worthy of this committee and the Canadian Parliament. That's what our fellow citizens expect, and they too believe it's important to respect human rights. We all agree on that. In fact, everyone agreed 45 years ago.

However, instead of saying we're taking action and we all denounce a human rights violation, we're using every possible means to attack the Prime Minister to avoid addressing the issue of the auto sector and electric vehicles, which, as we know, are the future. We don't want to look at how to save 500,000 Canadian jobs. We don't want to get into the legitimate issue of a supply chain for critical minerals, assembly, or auto parts.

We had a witness here to talk about moulding. I'm very interested in that because, as everyone knows, the auto parts industry is extremely important in Guelph. I wanted to ask this witness about the Canadian government's planned investments to support these businesses, but we would rather target a committee member who's here because his constituents elected him to sit on this committee. We'd rather do that than rely on the research prepared for this committee meeting.

Here's my proposal. For our part, we're proud of the work we do here, because we prepare for these meetings. We prepare questions. Library of Parliament does research, and prepares suggested questions for us. Why? To do valuable, useful work that allows us to make well-articulated decisions, because it's important for Canadians.

If we want to do a study on global human rights, it shouldn't just include China. We can talk about China, in this case, but also about the other issues regarding vehicles, semiconductors, chips, phones and everything technology-related.

Looking at all the countries that are going to provide us with things, particularly and especially critical minerals, is a much broader study. If we're going to have this conversation, let's do it properly. It should be referred to the right parliamentary committee, in this case the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development or the Standing Committee on International Trade.

Members of the opposition parties should also be talking to their colleagues on those committees to bring forward a motion, as they've often done here during our study on productivity. I don't know if it was us or the Conservatives who put forward a motion for the defence industrial strategy, but there were a number of...

**A voice:** It was us.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Was it us? Okay, great.

Regarding AI, this committee has well-established procedures to allow us to do appropriate and useful work for Canadians, the industries, and the workers in those industries. I imagine a lot of people wanted to hear what the witnesses had to say today.

Unfortunately, we won't be able to draw any useful recommendations from these witnesses because we couldn't easily pass a motion everyone agreed on. That was obviously not the ultimate goal of the Conservative members on this committee today.

I imagine even if we manage to resolve our differences on the amendment, whether to focus strictly on China or go wider, there'll be another motion. The Conservatives are fond of those today.

● (1345)

When it's not a substantive motion, it's a personal attack, which is really unacceptable.

As parliamentarians, we come here to represent our constituents. We use our personal and professional background to ask questions in a way that respects this committee, the witnesses, Parliament and the work we do here.

For our part, we're saying we want to talk about human rights. We're willing to do that, but it would have to be a broad, useful and informed conversation. Canadians don't want us to talk nonsense. They want us to sit down and have a two-hour conversation on a topic, with witnesses from out of town. Mr. Taylor came all the way from Toronto, and, unfortunately, we didn't ask him a single question.

Furthermore, Canadians expect us to do a thorough job. That's my proposal. I support my colleague in his efforts to ensure we can have a real, meaningful conversation. Yes, we can have that conversation, but it has to be done in a constructive way, at the appropriate committee, backed by research. That way, we don't have to quickly look for data on our computers. It can be done. It happens every day in parliamentary committees. That's what Canadians expect.

If we want to have a good conversation, with useful and conclusive data, then a motion needs to be tabled before the relevant committee. Members know very well how to do that. It could be the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Standing Committee on International Trade or, as my Bloc Québécois colleague said, it could be done through a—

How do we say private members' bill in French?

• (1350)

**Gabriel Ste-Marie:** It's "projet de loi émanant des députés".

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you.

That can be done through a private member's bill.

We have mechanisms in place to do that properly, by doing research beforehand. That's what Canadians expect.

[English]

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin, I think the interpreters might be happy. There was a transition from French to English there, and it gives them an opportunity to prepare.

Go ahead.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Is the member filibustering to avoid this committee condemning China on their human rights abuses?

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin, there are three things here. First, that's not a point of order. Second, I couldn't answer the question. Third, even if one chose to exercise their right within the purview of the Standing Orders to speak to a motion, as many members from all parties have done from time to time, they're entitled to do so.

I'll return the floor to Madam O'Rourke.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you Mr. Chair.

I am not filibustering at all. I think we are all concerned about human rights. We are all concerned about potentially unfair labour competition with Canadian workers, regardless of where it comes

from. Canadians are interested in this particular study because unfair, illegitimate American tariffs are attacking our auto industry.

In response to that, the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister, through consultation with all of the industry groups, presented on February 5 a robust auto strategy that provides supports from government, supports for workers and a comprehensive EV strategy. It was so well received that the opposition wanted to bring another study to try to find ways to challenge it. That's fair. That's their right. They can do that. We had witnesses today who were prepared to testify on various aspects of the EV strategy, including the Chinese piece.

All we're saying is that if we want to have a real conversation about human rights, then let's do it in a robust, comprehensive way, not as a subamendment in a different committee. When we meet as a committee, we have Library of Parliament researchers who do a background brief so that we are all working on a similar set of facts. We're not in the middle of an EV study, talking about harvesting organs. We start with a common set of facts about the topic at hand. We invite witnesses who are here to inform us. We have an opportunity to ask questions. There is a study that is drafted and we have a chance to review it, and that is appropriate and useful for Canadians.

They dropped an amendment in the middle of a committee meeting on something else that could have been dealt with 50 minutes ago, because we all agreed on it. Clearly, the goal is not ultimately to have this conversation, but about a diversion. If we want to have a conversation about human rights, there are places in Parliament to have those, fully informed with unbiased research, with an opportunity to bring in witnesses and question them, and an opportunity to do our own additional research so that we have a really honest, fair conversation about this.

Some of the members have said they've been at this for 10 years. They know full well they can have a well-thought-out motion. They can put that motion on notice. There's an opportunity to discuss it and debate it. Everybody agrees. We're on our third or fourth study now, so they know how that works. They have colleagues at the foreign affairs committee. They have colleagues in international trade. Wouldn't they rather do it properly in those places, have the opportunity to invite a minister and experts and, if there was conversation that could potentially damage international relationships, do it in camera? Wouldn't that be more reflective of a responsible Parliament?

I think what we want to be doing here, Mr. Speaker... I mean Mr. Chair. I apologize. We're getting close to question period.

• (1355)

**The Chair:** I'll take the promotion, thank you, and the driver and the cottage.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** My colleague's amendment is to say that if we care about human rights, then we are looking at human rights more broadly. Look, there's rubber in tires. There are all kinds of critical minerals in all kinds of things that we carry with us every day. We can have a conversation about whether there are security threats to vehicles. Then we should have the same conversation around iPhones or Google glasses, and how, if those are legitimate threats, we address those. To make good public policy, you have to start on the basis of fact, with solid committee work, research and conversation. We were ready to have that conversation 50 minutes ago. Rather than pursue that line in good faith, the members of the opposition wanted to attack a colleague here.

We know, Mr. Chair, that they're already sharing clips on social media, so it's not about a legitimate study for human rights. We'd be ready to have that conversation. Our colleagues in the appropriate committees would be ready to have that conversation. It's unfortunate that we are involved in some political theatre here that is not appropriate.

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Dominique O'Rourke:** There's lots of crosstalk here, Mr. Chair. It's clear that there's not a ton of respect for this committee process. Otherwise, we would have heard from our witnesses, frankly.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I see it's still going on on social media. This whole political theatre we had here wasn't to make serious statements. It was really to get clips from a member of this committee, who isn't available to be in committee, but who is obviously available to make clips and post answers on social media.

I was here, prepared and ready to speak with witnesses. I would ask all members of this committee to be here in good faith to give Canadians something useful.

I was here today for auto workers. As you can see, we're not the ones posting clips on social media. We're here to do serious and legitimate work.

[*English*]

**Ted Falk:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Madam O'Rourke, I'm going to pause on a point of order.

Mr. Falk.

**Ted Falk:** She's so far out in the bay, I don't know if she'll be able to swim back. She's talking about people's social media activity. She should actually zero in on and get back to the actual discussion on the amendment.

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

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Chair, this discussion is on the amendment—

**The Chair:** Sorry; one second.

Mr. Falk, as is often the case in drawn-out discourse around amendments and motions, there's an ebb and flow. I think you were probably right to intervene at that particular moment, but I think it was a moment in the context of a broader set of points. We'll allow Madam O'Rourke to use it as an opportunity to refocus and speak to the amendment, as is her prerogative.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Mr. Chair, the amendment is about whether we talk strictly about China or whether—

**Michael Guglielmin:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin.

**Michael Guglielmin:** Mr. Chair, I can't believe the Liberals have been filibustering a committee to avoid condemning China for their use of forced labour. Is that what's going on here at this committee right now?

**The Chair:** Mr. Guglielmin, I have listened to many points of order from you today. I appreciate your desire to raise them, but I think you know that this is not a legitimate point of order.

Madam O'Rourke, I return the floor to you.

**Dominique O'Rourke:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We were willing to do that an hour ago now. All I'm suggesting is that if we have that conversation on what my colleague's amendment is, that wasn't good enough when we were ready to have that conversation. Suddenly—

● (1400)

**The Chair:** Madam O'Rourke, I'm going to interrupt you. It's two o'clock. Resources have been exhausted.

The meeting is adjourned.







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