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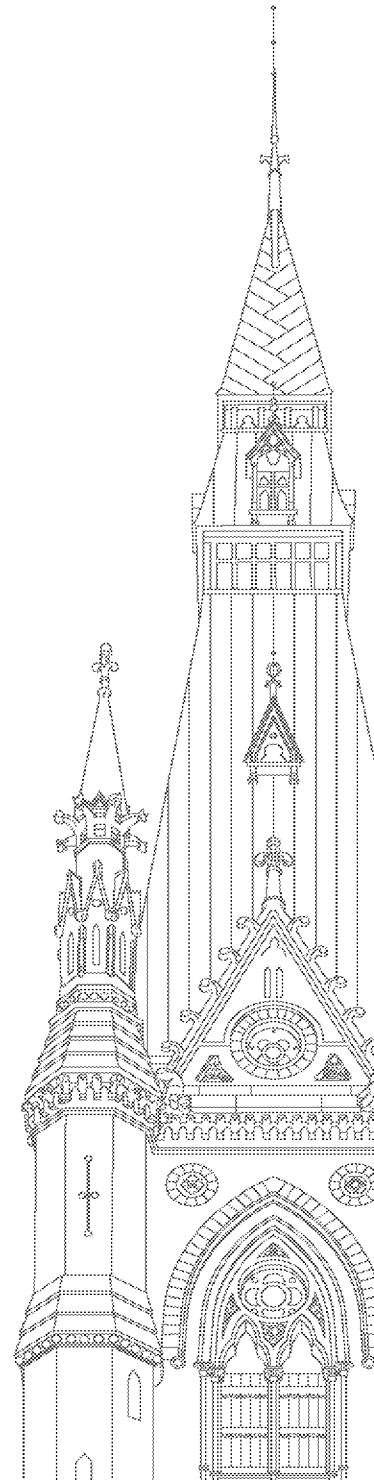
# Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 065**

Friday, April 21, 2023

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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



## Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Friday, April 21, 2023

• (0845)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)):**  
Good morning, everyone.

I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting No. 65 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022. Members can therefore attend in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. Should any technical challenges arise, please advise me immediately. Please note that we may need to suspend a few minutes as we need to ensure all members are able to participate fully.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, the committee resumed its study of foreign interference and threats to the integrity of democratic institutions, intellectual property and the Canadian state.

Madam Clerk, all the required connection tests have been completed.

I would now like to welcome our witness today, Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann.

[*English*]

He is the chair of the special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, and the strengthening of integrity, transparency and accountability in the European Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Glucksmann, welcome to the committee.

The floor is yours for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann (Chair, Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, and the strengthening of integrity, transparency and accountability in the European Parliament, European Parliament):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, all honourable members, for the invitation.

[*Translation*]

Thank you so much for your invitation.

The special committee I chair began its work in 2020, and since then, we have methodically analyzed foreign interference in all European democratic processes.

After hundreds of hours of hearings, interactions with European security services, whistleblowers, investigative journalists, experts and diplomats, but also after dissecting various confidential or public memos, various reports published by the different institutions in the countries of the European Union, and after conducting missions on the ground, our verdict against European leaders is quite dire.

For too many years, our leaders and governments have given free rein to the efforts of hostile countries within our own nations. These efforts can be categorized under two types of interference objectives.

On the one hand, there are countries, governments, regimes that interfere in our democratic life to promote their interests, to obtain agreements that are favourable to them, or to prevent emerging criticism against their attitude and behaviour.

On the other hand, some regimes may also attempt to discredit geopolitical opponents. In this category, we place Qatar, for example, which has used corruption within the European Parliament itself to promote its interests, obtain favourable agreements, or discredit the United Arab Emirates. That is classic interference.

There are also two other players whose goals are different. Their goal is not so much to advance their interests, but rather to destabilize and weaken our democracies as such. Their specific goal is to hinder our democratic functioning. Those players are Russia and China.

We have thoroughly analyzed Russian and Chinese actions in Europe. I will begin with Russia, knowing that I must be brief.

Russia's goal is to sow chaos in our democracies. It's a true hybrid war that was unleashed against the European Union. For a very long time, there was no reaction to this war. When I say "hybrid war", I mean cyber-attacks on our hospitals in the middle of a pandemic. Not far from my office is the Centre hospitalier Sud Francilien, in Corbeil-Essonnes, in the Paris region. It was attacked by Russian hackers and was unable to function for weeks.

This is about cyber-attacks against our institutions, but also the penetration of social networks, with Mr. Prigojine's armies of trolls and bots that, in all the European Union's languages, aim to promote the most extreme points of view and polarize our societies.

We have analyzed how, for example, in Spain, Russian actors favour both the Catalan independentists and the ultranationalists of the extreme right-wing party Vox, that is, completely opposite poles of the political debate, with the aim of polarizing debate and making it chaotic.

Interference also takes the form of corruption and the capturing of elites. We analyzed how the German energy system was reoriented to Russian interests by Schröder, the social democratic chancellor, and by people who worked with him, all of whom ended up working for Gazprom.

It is also the financing of extremist political movements.

Finally, it is also the use of non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, or ultra-reactionary think tanks, which question the existence of European institutions.

All this creates an ecosystem whose goal is the destabilization of democracies.

Other than Russia, the actor that has most occupied our work is China.

For a long time, China belonged to the first category, that is, its goal was to promote Chinese interests. In recent years, it has been inspired by the Russian authorities' modus operandi and the methods employed by the Russians.

We have seen that, since the pandemic, China's goal has also become destabilization. Chinese methods are quite similar to those of the Russians. The main difference is the importance attached to economic actors as opposed to political actors. We also realized that, for example, in the European Parliament and in the European institutions, the Chinese authorities had no need to hire lobbyists since the major European companies, which need the Chinese market for their sales and whose manufacturing needs the Chinese production apparatus—so they are completely linked to China—were doing the lobbying and penetration instead of the Chinese authorities on their behalf.

So we have—

● (0850)

**The Chair:** Mr. Glucksmann, thank you for your opening statement.

Committee members have many questions for you.

Each member has six minutes for questions and answers.

Mr. Gourde, from the Conservative Party, will begin the first round of questions.

Mr. Gourde, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witness for being with us.

Your presentation was really very interesting.

I have many questions about how the European Community is dealing with its dire need for energy. You talked about Russia and China's efforts to destabilize governments. You know that a government reacts slowly. The other countries are not democracies, but dictatorships that may have more or less hidden agendas, as you said. So they react more quickly.

Is there a way to be more effective? How should our democracies respond to these giants who want to destabilize Europe, and even the Americas?

● (0855)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you very much for your question.

What should our reactions be? They should already be much faster and much harsher. What has allowed these repeated assaults is, first of all, the absence of sanctions, the absence of consequences. In fact, as soon as there is an attack on a strategic infrastructure, as soon as there is evidence of corruption, there must be a sanction. In the European Union, there have been no sanctions.

And then the big issue for us, in particular, as you mentioned, Mr. Gourde, is our dependence on energy. Until now, we were totally dependent on Russian energy, and we realize how dependent we are today on Chinese production, including in the most strategic sectors.

If you want to assert European sovereignty, you must work to reduce your dependencies. This is what the European Commission calls risk mitigation. In my view, this is our great task in the coming years. In fact, we had very specific recommendations in that regard.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Perhaps Canada could contribute to supplying some of Europe's needs, which would, presumably, reduce dependence on the countries you mentioned.

On the other hand, there is a lot of resistance in our country from organizations that don't necessarily want to see energy development in Canada.

Do you believe that these organizations may be infiltrated by countries such as Russia and China, who may be funding them to prevent the development of our resources and our exports to Europe?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** You will understand that I obviously have no information on Russian or Chinese infiltration in Canada. On the other hand, I do know that in Europe there was an attempt to infiltrate all the actors who were promoting favourable interests.

On the energy issue, I would invite you to look at the German phenomenon, since that has been the key element. This is not limited to Gerhard Schröder. There was a kind of in-depth examination of the German government of the time. There were almost immediate reconversions right up to the top bureaucrats. Then they went to work for Gazprom International.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Is Europe's openness to other sources of supply serious, and can countries like ours be considered in the long term?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It is certain that we will never again be dependent on Russia for our energy. We have succeeded on a European scale in turning away from Russia, but it has taken too long and it has cost us dearly. Moreover, the course set by the European Commission is the diversification of suppliers and, above all, the Green Pact for Europe, which means that the development of renewable energies remains the major issue facing European countries. They don't all feel the same about the place of nuclear energy in this equation.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Will renewables be able to meet the entire energy demand or will you have to rely on imports anyway?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** For now, it is obvious that renewable energies cannot cover all countries. That is why there is the very important issue of nuclear power. On the other hand, it is also obvious that imports will allow us to meet this need and that they will be necessary. We will not become energy independent in the years to come. On the other hand, we must not repeat the same mistake, the same strategic failure as in previous years; we must no longer depend almost exclusively on an authoritarian regime.

Today, if we need even Azerbaijani gas, we must not make ourselves dependent on a regime that does not share the same principles and values as the European Union, that is certain.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** We understand that Europe wants to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels anyway, but the use of fossil fuels will continue for a few more years. How many years do you think Europe will need fossil fuels? Is it 10, 15, 20 or 30 years, or even longer?

• (0900)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Based on the needs, it would be more, but, what is certain is that these needs must be reduced. In fact, the reduction will be gradual and we will need less and less, but we still need it for now.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds left, Mr. Gourde.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Would an international commission on energy security to support the transition from fossil fuels to renewables be interesting? Countries need to talk to each other.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It would be very interesting to discuss this, given that the European Union's transpartisan priority, obviously, is ecological transformation and the transition to carbon neutral energy.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann. For your information, I will name the party of each person who asks you a question. The next one is Mr. Fergus from the Liberal Party.

[*English*]

Mr. Fergus, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Good morning, Mr. Glucksmann. Thank you very much for being here today. We are enormously grateful to you for sharing your insights and expertise in this area.

In your introduction, you said that some countries, such as China and, in particular, Russia, are trying to drive a wedge into democracies.

Several witnesses who appeared before the committee said that Russia and China have been conducting activities, especially on social media, for quite some time.

What are your observations on this, in hindsight and based on your investigations? When do you think Russia and China began their cyberpropaganda or cyberterrorism activities?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I thank you for the question, Mr. Fergus.

In our view, the tipping point was 2007, when massive cyberattacks were conducted against Estonia. Estonia was one of the first European countries to switch to all-digital for its government. In 2007, Russian hackers coordinated and attacked Estonian institutions, making the country almost ungovernable for a while. In our view, this date marked the beginning of hybrid warfare and massive virtual attacks.

Then, on social networks, there was a gradual evolution of Russian propaganda. In 2012 or 2013, with the creation of the Internet Research Agency, in St. Petersburg, it became massive and, above all, structured and thought out in a systematic way. These are the two dates that marked Russia's tipping point in the hybrid war against our democracies.

I insist on one thing: the analysis of these campaigns is fundamental to understanding the situation. When one is a European, Canadian or American democratic leader, it is difficult to understand that political leaders can have as their objective not to defend their interests to the maximum, but to sow chaos in other countries. One understands this by pragmatically studying different campaigns that have been conducted.

In France, for example, there were campaigns on the issue of police violence. Russian agents explained that the police were committing violence and railed against police violence, while the same troll farms in St. Petersburg encouraged the police to shoot into the crowd. The two poles are always fed simultaneously.

The contradiction in this kind of campaign is not a problem; it is the campaign itself.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Indeed, and we've seen this in the United States as well, where they've tried to polarize the issue of race.

So much for Russia. As for China, you say that they focus mostly on cyberterrorism, particularly on the economic side.

Can you tell us more about that? When did China begin its cybersecurity attacks against economic institutions?

• (0905)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** For us, China's action has gone through a progressive radicalization and the establishment of structures in China that we have been able to discover. It is really Xi Jinping who is developing this strategy and thinking. The shift, in terms of disinformation campaigns, manipulation of information and destabilization of social networks, occurred during the pandemic, a moment of radicalization whose goal was no longer so much to promote a narrative line, but to make ungovernable, especially on the health issue, the European countries in which we conducted the studies.

Targeting the economic side has been a strategy of the Chinese government from the beginning. Indeed, this government believes that globalization will eventually allow large European multinationals to become fundamentally Chinese companies, because their interests will be in China first, before they are in Germany.

When you take a company as large as Volkswagen and analyze their sales and production figures, you understand that, ultimately, Volkswagen has a much higher turnover in China than in Germany and that Volkswagen is dependent on the Chinese government. Moreover, even when there are scandals, such as the presence of Volkswagen factories in the Uyghur region, where the Chinese communist regime practises systematized slavery, the company is still present there. It would be in Volkswagen's economic interest to get out of this region. However, this car company is hostage to the Chinese government, because Volkswagen is hostage to the Chinese market and the Chinese production apparatus.

So the Chinese government can decide where Volkswagen will open or close a plant. It's no longer a choice made by a private actor, it's now a choice made by an economic hostage, if you will, a voluntary choice, obviously, because the goal is to make money. This is recurrent and this is what allows the penetration of the European debate.

There is also the issue of strategic infrastructure. This is really a strategy that involves Chinese investment first. In our opinion, the key date is 2008-09, at the time of the debt crisis in the European Union and, in Greece, the sale of the port of Piraeus to Chinese investors.

Since then, we have seen how this is a strategy to gradually take control of strategic infrastructure.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you very much.

I will have many more questions later. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fergus and Mr. Glucksmann.

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

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann, for being with us this morning.

In the report, you talked about different types of interference.

The purpose of our committee is to assess or observe China's interference in terms of state integrity. Your report included a section on political funding from foreign actors or donors.

I would appreciate it if you could shed some light on this.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you very much.

I am very happy to see you again.

The strategy is the same for Russia and China in this aspect. The first problematic element for the integrity of the state is the capture of the elites, and therefore the networks. One of the strategies of these two countries is to turn themselves, for example, into providers of golden pensions for our senior leaders and officials. This compromises the integrity of the decision-making process. When you are at the top of a state and you have to make a decision, if you have the retirement prospect of being paid by Huawei, you will not make decisions that are hostile to Huawei or to Chinese interests as a whole.

We have really pushed for legislation against the phenomenon of revolving doors or collusion, in other words, with authoritarian regimes hostile to our principles and interests. This assumes one very simple thing: a Canadian company is not the equivalent of a company in the Chinese communist system. Yet, on paper, they are both private companies. The only problem is that when a Chinese private enterprise reaches a certain size, it is no longer private, in reality. It is dependent on the Communist Party, it has to be subject to the National Intelligence Law and it has to have a representative of the Communist Party on its board of directors. So in fact, they are no longer private actors; they are actors in a hostile state system.

The second element that concerns the integrity of the state is the question of institutional ties. We have realized the extent to which institutional co-operations, including decentralized ones, enable espionage. There are many other situations of the same type. That said, the problem is even more acute for the Australians, for example, than for the Europeans.

• (0910)

**Mr. René Villemure:** When you talk about institutional co-operation, are you talking about universities and institutions like that?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I am talking about universities and scientific, research and development institutions. We have realized the extent to which technology has been looted, including the recruitment, quite simply, of people trained by our states who decide to leave with all their achievements and their work and put them to work for the Chinese regime.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Have you noticed that the Chinese regime is directly or indirectly funding political activities, that is, everything around the democratic process?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** In the case of China, there is not really any direct funding of political movements in Europe. However, this was the case with Russia, which financed the various European extreme right-wing parties and even admitted it publicly by receiving them officially and putting its oligarchs at the service of this project of union of the extreme right-wing parties in Europe and of all the movements that questioned European institutions.

In the case of China, there are no open political games. On the other hand, there are political figures who are in the Chinese orbit and think tanks or research institutes that participate in public life and receive direct or indirect funding from China. So the penetration of political life is more indirect than overt.

**Mr. René Villemure:** As we speak, would you say that foreign interference is a significant danger to Canadian democracy?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Once again, thank you for the question.

I am far from an expert on the issue of foreign interference in Canada. That said, what is certain is that in Europe, it is an extreme danger. It is an existential danger. I hope for your sake that your democracy is more stable than ours and that it is better protected. But what is certain is that it is a danger for all democracies. I can tell you that even without being an expert on Canada.

We have to understand one thing. For a very long time, we have not wanted to see that there are regimes, not whose interests are contradictory to ours—this is normal since, even between democracies, there can be contradictory interests—but which are philosophically, ideologically and viscerally hostile to liberal democracies and whose aim is to weaken us in order to establish what Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin have together called a new international order.

So I see no reason why a democracy as important as Canada's should be exempt from the threats that affect others.

**Mr. René Villemure:** In our frame of reference or our language habits, we are not necessarily equipped to think about this chaos. Our parliamentary habit makes us think first of the common good, not of chaos and destabilization.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** But that's the key to everything.

It's very complicated to get into their heads. That was our greatest effort. For me, it involved decentring. You have to read theorists of these regimes, like Vladislav Surkov in Russia, to understand that the goal is chaos and that we should not seek a replica of our own ways.

Westerners often mistakenly assume that everyone else reasons the same way they do. That is not the case.

● (0915)

**Mr. René Villemure:** If you have any suggested reading for us, it would be most helpful.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Glucksmann, Mr. Villemure is a Bloc Québécois Member. Thank you for your answers.

The next speaker is Mr. Green, of the New Democratic Party. I believe he will ask his questions in English.

[English]

Please make sure that you have the interpretation.

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** That's correct.

**The Chair:** It was a wild guess on my part, Matt.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** John, your French is coming along quite nicely. I had to comment on that.

**The Chair:** Thank you to my French teacher, Anick Robitaille, for that.

Matthew, you have six minutes. Go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Thank you.

Thank you very much for being with us today, Mr. Glucksmann. I'm keenly interested in your work in the European Union.

To put it on the record, you are the chair of the special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, and the strengthening of integrity, transparency and accountability in the European Parliament.

Is that correct?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** The resolution adopted on March 9, 2022, states that there's a need for an EU coordinated strategy against foreign interference, which among other things, should cover "Interference through global actors via elite capture".

Can you expand on why a strategy against foreign interference should address elite capture?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** What we have discovered is that an essential element of foreign interference is this transformation of our elites, political elites, of course, but also economic elites and cultural elites, into a kind of supermarket where you can come with your big companies and offer money to get them to work for you. They come and work for you, be it Gazprom or Huawei, with their networks, their relationships, their knowledge of internal affairs, and it allows incredible influence over your own political decisions.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** We haven't really discovered this in fact in the west. The west kind of created this through colonialism. This is a tactic that has been used by the west in other countries for quite some time. I think that we're seeing it now within our domestic landscapes, which is probably what's unsettling for us.

Would you not agree that the west has also been involved in these tactics for centuries?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** As I'm French, I can only confirm that colonialism was based on this kind of strategy. It's the—

**Mr. Matthew Green:** In the Canadian context, we heard a lot, for a very short period of time, about the Confucius Institutes.

Did that ever come up in your study, in terms of the way in which some of our academic institutions might have been co-opted or influenced through foreign-funded think tanks?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes, of course it came along.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** In your studies, did you ever contemplate countries outside of Russia and China, in fact some that may otherwise be considered allies, engaging in similar types of foreign interference? Was that also part of your accountability and transparency?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. We have worked on the U.S., for instance, if that was your question.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I'm curious to know what other countries you may have identified as being active within the context of foreign interference within the European Union.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Basically, we had the mandate to work on any form of interference coming from anywhere, so of course, we encountered also American interference, be it surveillance or through influence operations.

However, what we have done also is establish a difference between goals that are followed by diaspora to push for promoting their own interests—for instance, I quoted Qatar—or goals to destabilize our institutions, which is the case of Russia.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Sure. Were there instances of any other countries? For instance, there's been anecdotal information domestically in Canada about India. We talked about the U.S. From your perspective, what's the difference between foreign interference and foreign influence?

I hear this: When the west is doing it or when our allies are doing it, it's influence, but when non-aligned actors do it, it's interference. Do you share that analysis, or is your analysis of interference versus influence different?

• (0920)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I will give you two examples from American history so you understand what for me is the difference between influence and interference.

When the Americans worked hard to have a coup in Chile, this was interference—direct interference. The objective was to destabilize an elected government in Chile in 1973, I think. When Americans are financing various think tanks, whether in France or Germany, this is influence. The aim is not to destabilize the democratic process. It is not in any way in a covert form, and it does not put our laws at risk.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

Just out of curiosity, did Canada ever come up in any of your studies?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** No.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** That's good to know.

A briefing published by the European Parliamentary Research Service states that the EU's "Transparency Register is the only transparency scheme amongst OECD nations requiring registered think-tanks, research centres and academic institutions to disclose their funding."

Can you describe the purpose of ensuring that these organizations disclose their funding, and would you recommend that doing this be implemented in Canada as well?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** First of all, I must say our system is not perfect, because it's not always implemented well, but the idea behind it is clearly shown by... I don't know if you have heard about "Qatargate", but my committee is also mandated to do the follow-up on this. You have NGOs. For instance, we had an NGO called Fight Impunity, which looks good on paper. It's perfect. Everybody wants to fight against impunity. They came and were really hostile to the United Arab Emirates. Maybe they had good reasons to be hostile to the United Arab Emirates, but the fact is that their funding was coming from Qatar. If you don't disclose where your money comes from, then of course there is a lack of understanding as to why you are focusing so much on this or that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Matt.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann.

[*English*]

That completes the first round of questioning. We're going to go to our second round.

Mr. Kurek, you're to start the second round. For five minutes, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to our witness. I very much value the testimony you've provided.

I'd like to follow up with some of the questions that Monsieur Gourde asked about energy in particular, because it has certainly been a tumultuous couple of years in energy. Coming from an energy-producing part of our country, I follow it closely and I found it very interesting how you talked about Europe's experience and the interference specifically related to Russian energy. You mentioned Gazprom and whatnot. Certainly Canada's experience is different because we're not importing—at least not raw energy. There are refined products that do come to Canada.

I'm wondering if you could expand a little bit on that and specifically on the impact that sort of interference, that sort of nefarious influence, has on destabilizing regimes, especially at a time when you have not only the dynamics associated with the geopolitical sphere but also a conflict that is ongoing.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** You know, it's a common line to say that you can do wars for pipelines. Actually, Putin did war "through" pipelines. The pipes were a tool in his hybrid warfare against European democracies.

I'll explain the strategy on Nord Stream, for instance, which is connected to elite capture. Gerhard Schröder was the chancellor of democratic Germany. Five to 10 days before he was going to lose the election in 2005, he signed the Nord Stream project with Putin. A few weeks after his planned defeat, which everybody knew he would lose, he went to work for Gazprom. The result was that European dependence on Russian gas only grew until February 24, 2022.



When the war started, we discovered that not only had Germany built Nord Stream 1 and 2, but that they had also sold their stocks in Germany to Gazprom. Gazprom emptied these stocks, these reserves, and as a result, we could not have an embargo on fossil imports from Russia. The European Union, during the first six months of the war, financed the Russian regime 800 million euros per day because of these policies.

• (0925)

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you for that. It's certainly helpful in the larger context.

I want to bring it back to where Canada fits into this as an ally with Europe and as a democratic nation. I've certainly been frustrated with some of the activism that has taken place that has restricted Canada's ability to be a reliable partner in terms of supplying energy. I'm wondering if in your experience you've seen how the efforts of hostile foreign states have not only encouraged and manipulated the geopolitics around imports and exports but are also keeping that dependence from being removed with allies like Canada could be to Europe.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes, I see your point, but we didn't come across this. We looked for it, by the way, to check, and we didn't see any proof that you had Russian hands, for instance, behind movements or doubts about Canadian exports.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** At the beginning of my round, we talked about Russia. In my last 30 seconds or so, I'm wondering if you could maybe expand on and discuss China and whether there are parallels to the influence that China is exerting, specifically the Communist regime there.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. China really plays according to the Russian textbook. When people are doubting whether there's an alliance between China and Russia, they should just look at the facts. China is actually implementing the same strategies, except that it's not energy dependency; it's full-scale dependency. Even when we are doing the grain deal, which we are right to do in the European Union, where we have a lot of subventions, these are direct subventions to the Chinese production apparatus, because who is building our solar panels, for instance?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kurek and Mr. Glucksmann.

Mr. Bains, you have five minutes. Go ahead.

**Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Glucksmann, thank you for joining us today and sharing what's happening in the European Union and the complexities around influence and interference, and the differences.

We know that Russia has been for decades a major player when it comes to foreign interference. You've been an adviser to the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili. What can we learn from Georgia when it comes to Russia's foreign interference actions?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you for mentioning Saakashvili's name, because right now, as we speak, he is in prison, held by a Russian puppet, the Georgian oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. That's the first way Russia is interfering—with money. This is a direct way of interfering, and then you have others. Of course,

in the case of Georgia you had the military invasion and dismembering of the nation, with 20% occupied territories. You also had the manipulation of information and campaigns.

For instance, in Georgia LGBTI rights were never much of an issue in the political debate. Suddenly, you had movements against gay pride and movements all across the country saying that it was a direct threat to Georgian identity, and that when Saakashvili was in charge, he was a pro-western leader who was inserting decadence into the country. That was thousands and thousands of people. When we then analyzed where it came from, it was a Russian-financed operation.

• (0930)

**Mr. Parm Bains:** I'm going to go into how we've heard a lot about the misinformation and disinformation. I think it's the largest threat to democracy today in the way it's being used to attack.

You talked about how Russia had the Internet Research Agency. What did the EU do to counter that?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It's very hard, actually, to fight it without crossing the line of freedom of speech. If you think the earth is flat, it's not my problem as a legislator, but if a foreign government launches campaigns so that millions of my fellow citizens believe the earth is flat, then it becomes a problem for me. What we have to act upon is not the fact that people will share weird opinions, but to cut this from foreign actors using it and putting money in it.

What we have done is, first, impose regulations on platforms, and that's the key. I'm often critical about the European Union, but one piece of legislation that I'm very proud of is the Digital Services Act on platforms.

**Mr. Parm Bains:** Last year in Ottawa we had an illegal occupation of demonstrators. According to the National Observer, Russia's state-controlled broadcaster, RT, spread disinformation through proxy sites and on social media messaging apps like Telegram, which was widely used by the convoy's genuine grassroots supporters.

How, in your view, do we as democracies counter these efforts that warp the public's perceptions? I think in your answer you mentioned how it's just pouring money into a certain message to distract, in a way, and to create some type of movement. How can we counter that?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I'm sorry. I didn't hear the beginning of your question, but one thing is that... I don't know the statutes in Canada, but in Europe, Russia Today is under sanctions and, also, all their bank accounts are frozen and they cannot operate anymore, but what we have seen is that actually it doesn't prevent at all the Russian propaganda from being shared.

What we need to do is to identify the networks and sanction them, but very quickly and at the same time use existing examples of coherent and victorious fights against disinformation and the manipulation of information. I was very proud to chair the first-ever official delegation of the European Parliament to Taipei. I encourage you to work with Taiwanese authorities and to learn from them what they do to keep democracy growing while being under a permanent attack from the Chinese Communist Party.

**Mr. Parm Bains:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bains and Mr. Glucksmann.

Mr. Villemure, you have two and half minutes for your questions.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Thank you so much, Chair. I will do my best during the two and a half minutes that are allotted to me.

Mr. Glucksmann, I'd like to know if you've noticed whether the advent of artificial intelligence has had any impact on the type, manner, or scope of foreign interference.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Not yet to its full effect, but it will happen extremely quickly.

For example, I went to the NATO Centre of Excellence in Riga, where I could see the progress made in artificial intelligence. This will be tomorrow's massive problem.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Can you tell us what you saw there?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It's the ability to build campaigns of absolutely incredible complexity, in two minutes, without having to hire a single employee.

I saw what it could produce. To this day, I remain stunned by our unpreparedness for the destructive capacity of artificial intelligence.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Do you think a Committee visit to the NATO Centre of Excellence would be a good idea?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes indeed, I think it's an excellent idea for you to visit Riga.

• (0935)

**Mr. René Villemure:** Very well.

What would give us a better understanding of foreign interference? I mean the chaos, the reference that is not ours and the way of thinking that is different from ours.

What can my colleagues and I do to better grasp the overall picture and better understand this concept that is, after all, foreign to us?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Perhaps I'll answer with a flourish.

I would advise you to read Dostoevsky's *Demons*, especially when Stavroguin says, "We will light fires! We will spread legends..."

You must understand that that's the title of those interference operations. Between a discussion with artificial intelligence specialists and some serious reading of Dostoevsky, it will immediately become clear how these regimes think.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Thank you very much.

The intellectual in me is very happy to hear such comments.

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

[*English*]

Next we have Mr. Green for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Green.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Thank you.

I'm still very keenly interested in the transparency register, although I wasn't quite clear by the end of my last intervention.

Sir, do you recommend that Canada also look at implementing a transparency register?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It's not up to me to decide what you, as a sovereign country, should do.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** It's not foreign interference. We need recommendations from this committee on this.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I do believe that transparency registers are helpful for democracies, yes, and especially for parliamentary democracies.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Thank you.

The EU transparency register is also one of the few registers that require registrants to disclose information about indirect lobbying strategies. Can you describe what this looks like in practice?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Actually, I am now working on the fact that it is not very efficient. I will send you, if you want, the results of our discussion because it's going on right now. We are working on reshaping it and making it clearer and more efficient. I'm very happy to share the results of our discussion—

**Mr. Matthew Green:** That would be helpful. Thank you.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** —of course, not as a recommendation from us but just as information.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** No, we need recommendations to this committee in order to have it included in the findings. I could say what I'd like, but having it come from a witness is much better.

The resolution adopted on March 9, 2022, considers that "engagement-based and addictive ranking systems pose a systemic threat to our society" with regard to foreign influence's using online platforms. Can you expand on this?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I'm sorry. I could not hear.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** A resolution on March 9 from the EU considers that "engagement-based and addictive ranking systems pose a systemic threat to our society" with regard to foreign interference's using online platforms. Presumably, you're talking about algorithms. Can you expand on this?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. What we found out, in discussing this also with scientists, is that the way the algorithms are structured is actually helping the promotion of addictive opinions, which means those that are, for instance, most radical or extreme.

I'll explain myself. For instance, when you go to choose emoticons on Facebook and the "Anger" one has five times more importance in the algorithm than the "Like" one, then it's encouragement for this kind of polarization. The fact is that we have to think about one thing today. Our agora, our public agora, as we say, is private property. It should give all of us vertigo just to think about that.

That's why I wanted to mention before the Digital Services Act that the European Union had the courage to take—against lobbying, I must say, from some platforms. It's to say that you need public scrutiny because it has public impact.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** That's important.

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

Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann.

Mr. Glucksmann, I have to ask you a question. There's a desire on the part of the committee to keep you around a little bit longer, probably for about 20 minutes, because they are finding your testimony extremely compelling. Is it okay if we ask you to stay for an extra 20 minutes? Do you have the time, sir?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes, that's no problem.

**The Chair:** Okay. We're all good with that.

We're going to go to the next round. Mr. Barrett, from the Conservative Party, has five minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

• (0940)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Thanks, Chair.

Thank you, sir, for joining us today. I appreciate your perspectives.

I'm wondering if you can tell us about the events that led to the creation of the special committee. I am most interested in the whistle-blower protections that were part of the plan that was proposed.

I wonder if you could also speak to the non-partisan nature in which it was approached. My reading of English-language media reports of some of the events of late last year, in the context of Canadian politics, would have placed someone in a similar position in Canada in a difficult political position to propose and champion the types of reforms you're speaking about today. People who were, if I'm understanding correctly, ideologically more aligned with you were at the centre of some of these scandals. I read that led to the creation of these reforms. However, you persisted and in fact, maybe in spite of that or maybe because of that.... My reading is that you pushed quite hard for these reforms.

Could you speak to that?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. Thank you very much for your question. I think it's an important one.

The committee was set up much before Qatargate and the scandal. I pushed for the creation of the committee. It was especially after Brexit that I saw we needed to set up this kind of committee. We worked for three years and a half and we were supposed to finish our work, and then came the Qatargate. I pushed very hard, despite the fact that people—you're right—connected to social democrats were involved.

I believe that we worked in our committee in a tripartisan manner from the very start. The protection of democracy is above partisan differences. It is actually the protection of the framework that allows us to disagree with each other. Second, I think it's our duty to fight corruption, to fight foreign interference, including in our own respective political families or groups.

I was pushed to go on with the leadership on the committee because everybody, including those from other political groups, trusted that I would go after reforms and also truth, not having any consideration for what the flag was of the people who were actually betraying democracy.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** With respect to Qatargate, the charge is that the MEPs in question furthered the interests of a foreign state. Is that correct?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. Actually it goes even beyond that. The charges are also about criminal organization.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** What led to the suspicions of these individuals and their activities? Was it the existing framework? My review of some of the reporting on it was that some of their activities weren't particularly sophisticated. However, they remained undetected for some time. What led to their detection and the charges, arrests and prosecutions?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** First of all, it was the investigation by Belgian secret services. They followed the action of one man, Mr. Panzeri, who was a former MEP. Then it led to discovering the connection with existing MEPs, and also trade unions and NGO people. It was actually the secret service organization. This was not us discovering that.

• (0945)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Thanks very much for your response. I'm out of time.

I appreciate your sticking around for a few more questions. Thanks.

**The Chair:** We'll have another chance.

Ms. Hepfner, you have five minutes. Go ahead, please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to welcome and thank our witness in French. My French will improve, but, for the time being, as I'm still more comfortable in English, I'll continue in that language.

[English]

I'm a former journalist, I'll let you know, so it's been really frustrating for me to see the amount of misleading information out there in the world. At the same time, we see a decline in the number of newsrooms.

In particular, lately, something stood out for me on the American social media platform Twitter. We've seen news organizations like NPR in the U.S., the BBC and, here in Canada, the CBC/Radio-Canada labelled as state-funded or government-funded media. Coincidentally, this is happening at the same time Russian news outlets and government accounts are being allowed back onto that platform.

I have this article that was published this morning in the Kingston Whig Standard entitled "Russia uses Twitter to attack democracy". In it, there is quoted a former Conservative cabinet minister who was a Canadian diplomat and is an expert on Russia. He says that this labelling of public broadcasters is "outrageous...it implies that these outlets are under government editorial control" in the way that, say, Russian television is.

I'm wondering if you agree with this characterization. What do you think of this labelling of public broadcasters and media outlets?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you very much for your question, Madam Hefner.

I have to say that Twitter recently is becoming more and more worrying for us. Mr. Musk is somebody who plays with rules and who has an agenda. Our problem is not that Mr. Musk has an agenda, but that we should take care that this agenda doesn't conflict with our national security and the decency of our public debates.

To your question, this is a typical error made by European leadership for so long. There is a huge difference between your public radio and our public radio, and Russia Today. Not seeing that and finding the same characterization for all of these as state-sponsored media or whatever is actually erasing the truth about Russia Today. Russia Today is a propaganda tool. It's not the media. NPR, for instance, or BBC are media. You can disagree with their news, but they have a deontology. They have a board. They have independence. They are not on the same level.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** Thank you.

In Europe, in fact, I think you have decided that foreign interference tactics can take many forms, including disinformation, suppression of information, manipulation of social media platforms, and threats against and the harassment of journalists, researchers and politicians.

Would you say that this labelling of actual media could be considered foreign interference?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I'm not sure I would label it as foreign interference. I would label it as "useful idiocy", maybe, enabling foreign interference.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** That is fair.

If a Canadian politician actively requested that an American billionaire label a Canadian news organization as government-funded, what would you say about that?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I don't want to enter into the Canadian debate. I'm not aware about this. However, I would just repeat what I have said: Our public radios and TVs are media. Russia Today is a propaganda tool engaged in a war, so not seeing the difference between both is really problematic.

● (0950)

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** Thank you.

My ears perked up, I have to say, when you said that one of the best things your Parliament had done was to impose regulations on platforms. I have to tell you that we're doing similar things here in Canada with a couple of pieces of legislation I've been lucky enough to work on in my work on the heritage committee. Do you think there's a—

Am I out of time? Okay. I'll come back.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry about that.

That completes this round. We appreciate the fact, Mr. Glucksmann, that you are going to stick around.

We'll have two five-minute rounds, one each for the Conservatives and the Liberals, and then two and a half minutes for each of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP.

[Translation]

Mr. Gourde, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to acknowledge the expertise today's witness brings us. We are delighted.

Foreign interference in our democracies surely has a purpose, and it's very interesting to consider the geopolitical factors that explain why this influence is important to countries like Russia and China.

You talked about this a little at the beginning of your presentation. Is their initial goal to raise the price of energy resources or to sell more energy resources? Surely you know something that we should know.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** As part of our research, I read a Russian editorial on Gazprom which said that money was not the sole motive.

So the goal isn't simply to increase the price, consumption and exports of energy resources, it's to make other countries dependent on them. That's what's at stake. The goal is geopolitical, ideological and political. It's not just a business issue. That's what we discovered.

On multiple occasions, moreover, they were willing to sacrifice their interests to make other countries more dependent on their resources, even if it meant losing money.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Currently, with the war in Ukraine, Russians are losing much more than money. They are losing their young people. Do you think it's for the same purpose?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** From the beginning, Vladimir Putin's regime has seen itself at war with the West, not with Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, or Chechnya. From the outset, the designated enemy has been the West. To that end, he is prepared to suffer many losses.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** We can see that this has a very strong impact in Europe. Here in Canada, we see it mostly in energy prices, but it has less of a physical impact on us. If this gets out of hand, do you think Canada could be attacked on its northern border, since there are so many resources in the North?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** For the moment, the threat of a real military war is limited for a very simple reason: the Ukrainian resistance was a big surprise for the Russians, as it was for the Americans. If there was one point of agreement among the various security services, it was that Ukraine would fall quickly in case of an invasion. The divine surprise of the Ukrainian people's resistance is truly protecting us in Europe, and you as well, for now. It is Ukrainians who are dying. They are dying to defend Ukraine, obviously, but beyond that, they are dying to defend all liberal democracies.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Surely you've heard that the Chinese interfered in Canada's most recent election.

Do you have a message for Canadian lawmakers? Should we see this as a big concern for the future and expect more interference in the upcoming election?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** As legislators, our main mission is to ensure that the democracies we've inherited are passed on in the same safe conditions as we received them. We must therefore constantly adapt our legislation to protect our democracies against interference. Interference comes in various forms, and these forms change with the times.

Therefore, it's extremely important that you do your work. That's why your committee is a good thing for Canadian democracy, I imagine.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Do you believe that, as Canadian lawmakers, we have a duty to speak out loudly against Chinese interference and to be very transparent about what happened in the last two elections?

• (0955)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** There is no democracy without transparency. That said, far be it from me to recommend how you should go about defending your own democracy.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you very much. I'm very grateful for your testimony today. Of all the witnesses I've heard throughout my career, your speech reflected the most experience and was of the highest quality. I'm astounded.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you so much.

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

We will now go to Mr. Fergus for five minutes. Then I will give the floor to Mr. Villemure for two and a half more minutes, making it a total of five minutes for him, and then it will be Mr. Green's turn.

Mr. Glucksmann, is it okay if we keep you for another 15 minutes?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. I will be late for my next appointment, but you're more important.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Fergus, you have five minutes. I'm going to stick tight to the timeline. Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I'm grateful for your generosity, Mr. Glucksmann.

Mr. Glucksmann, when I did a little research into European Parliament procedures, I saw that Parliament reviews documents classified as secret and top secret.

Can you tell us about the protocols your committee has in place so that it can review secret and top-secret documents?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Actually, we hold various types of meetings: public meetings, in camera meetings and meetings that require security clearance. Each meeting type has its own access to information rules. So not all of our work is public. That's a given.

By the way, I must tell you that we also had to look into the European Parliament itself when we realized that suspected Russian agents were attending in camera meetings. It wasn't our committee, it was our defence committee. All those rules didn't prevent our work from being infiltrated.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** We have a National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians here. It's made up of parliamentarians whose backgrounds are carefully checked and who commit to reviewing any type of top-secret document. However, limits have been placed on what they can reveal about those documents afterwards; they produce a highly classified report and another one that is made public.

Do you feel this is a good way to go about it? Is it similar to your way, where you can review some documents you're free to disclose and others you cannot?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Of course, certain documents that some people have access to cannot be made public. The problem we have here is that, as you know, the European Union includes 27 countries. Authorizations are not generated by the European Union, but rather by the member state you come from. That can create issues over here.

If I were you, I wouldn't necessarily take my cues from our institutions, even though I have tremendous respect for them. In my opinion, you have attained a degree of consistency that must surely be better than ours. Our institutions are still young. This is both a strength, because they can evolve rapidly, but also a weakness in many other ways.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Oh, for once, we're ahead of you!

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I have a minute and a half left. I'd like to go back to what China, Russia, Iran and other countries that want to shake up democracies are really doing. Do you think your special committee could strike a committee that could go beyond closed doors? Would it be beneficial for it to have a committee of parliamentarians, like the one we have in Canada, to look at top-secret documents?

• (1000)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Quite frankly, yes. Moreover, I've often experienced the frustration of a European parliamentarian when I interact with colleagues in the U.S. Senate, for example, and discover the extent of their investigative powers.

We don't have that here. Our special committee includes a secretariat that I think is great, but we have neither the power to compel declassification nor the power to investigate.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you.

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

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

**Mr. René Villemure:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm delighted to get five minutes instead of two and a half.

Mr. Glucksmann, when you were doing your study, did you observe any attempts by foreign countries to destabilize intelligence agencies?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** We observed issues, but we didn't have access to sufficiently classified information to determine if they were attempts at destabilization.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Okay. So perhaps they were, perhaps they weren't.

Did you observe any journalists trying to destabilize or interfere? I'm not talking about the media in general, but specific journalists.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes, and there are many of them.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Without divulging any classified information, obviously, can you tell us more about the impact those actions had?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Some journalists are employed by the Russian regime or the Chinese regime, among others. We also have schemes that involve feeding journalists false information or fake scoops. The French television channel BFMTV recently went through a scandal of that kind.

Journalists are obviously a target.

**Mr. René Villemure:** To sum up your entire point, Parliament has a role to play. It should be possible for us to establish a registry through an independent entity that would track funding. It would also allow for registration and monitoring. We would need to ensure that this entity is independent of government.

Is that the direction you spoke of earlier?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes. We're in the middle of reforming our rules at this very moment. Our committee must very quickly orchestrate some compromises on the proposed reforms. We have the transparency registry, but also a conflict of interest registry. We see these as fundamental.

**Mr. René Villemure:** All right.

You stated in the report that certain political parties were backed by foreign financing. Are you talking about one of the 27 member states of the European Union being supported by another E.U. country or rather by countries that are outside the European Union altogether?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** When we say "foreign", we mean outside the European Union.

**Mr. René Villemure:** All right.

Has it happened often? What impact did it have?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** It's certainly happened a lot more often than we knew. However, what we do know is that it happened frequently and, in particular, that the main actor was Russia.

**Mr. René Villemure:** So it's always been Russia. All right.

I'll leave the last two minutes for you to tell us, in your own words, what steps you would suggest we take.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I feel that regulating platforms is crucial if you want to fight disinformation. Accountability just needs to be imposed. We can't live in a world with no accountability. When the newspaper publishes information that is questionable, it's accountable for that information. Why shouldn't the platforms that let this information go viral be accountable? That's the first thing. We're talking about content here.

In addition, I believe the fundamental point we need to understand is how significant the press and NGOs are in the democratic ecosystem. We need to go beyond simple market logic and let these organizations receive constant support.

Lastly, I feel that fundamentally, we also need to understand that we're up against enemies of democracy and that they will see any weakness as an invitation to attack. So we need sanction regimes. The European Union has a toolbox, but it still hasn't used any of the tools.

In the case of Qatargate, the scandal we've mentioned, sanctions will be imposed on those who let themselves be corrupted, but what sanctions will be imposed on the Qatar regime that's linked to that corruption? It will face no sanctions.

• (1005)

**Mr. René Villemure:** Whoa! That's incredible. It's fascinating what happened in Qatar.

Is it possible for you to share with the committee what kind of toolbox you were talking about?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Yes, of course. We'll also pass on the results of the ongoing negotiations and recommendations for change.

**Mr. René Villemure:** That would be wonderful.

Thank you so much for your testimony.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann and Mr. Villemure.

We will go to Mr. Green for the final questions.

[*English*]

Matt, you have five minutes. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Thank you.

Mr. Glucksmann, I think you can see that your popularity at this committee is warranted by our reflections on what we can do in an ongoing way. I note that, as the chair of the special committee, the European Union has endeavoured to keep up with the evolving nature of the threat.

I know you've been reluctant to make recommendations, but that is how our committee works. We've invited you here and we would ask for your candour.

What kinds of recommendations can your special committee make to the EU and the European Parliament?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I'm perfectly happy to make recommendations to the EU and the European Parliament, but I was just shy about making recommendations to you because I don't know the Canadian situation well enough.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Fair enough.

What kinds of recommendations can you make through your special committee to the EU?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** First, we have to protect general interests from foreign interference, but now we are also dealing with private interest interference in our committee. For instance, the hottest discussion now in our committee is about conflict of interest of elected members. This is a key debate that we are having. What we have to keep in mind is that the struggle against corruption is not only a question of morals or ethics. It's also a question of the strengths or weaknesses of our institutions.

I am not a moralist. I'm not even a novelist. I'm an elected politician. I don't care about anybody's private soul. I care about the fate of nations, of systems. Corruption is a danger for the survival of democracy. It's a tool used by foreign powers to weaken and make our nations subservient. That's the thing we in the European Parliament are working on as we speak.

The second thing is to reassert the notion of public scrutiny, both in terms of the question of platforms and in terms of the question of how value chains of the biggest European companies are being used by the Chinese regime, as we speak, to weaken us on strategic issues. This is something that's key, and that's why we also work with our friends from—

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I'm going to have to proceed through my line of questioning—my apologies.

I'll put it to you straight: Do you think a similar committee could be worthwhile here in Canada, yes or no? It's okay if you feel uncomfortable.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I feel uncomfortable.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I am worried about the fate of the nation.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I encourage every single democratic institution to have this kind of committee.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Thank you.

Do you believe that every democratic state should have a foreign agent registry?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I think it would be wise, but we don't have that in Europe yet.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Are you considering it?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** We are discussing it with the commission.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** How does your special committee plan to implement, within the European Union, a coordinated strategy against foreign interference as recommended by the resolution adopted on March 9, which calls for that?

• (1010)

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** We have worked with the European Commission on the package that will be out at the end of this spring, which is called the “defence of democracy” package. I think that will be the approach.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Out of the many resolutions or recommendations, which do you consider to be the most urgent?

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** All of them are. The main one would be.... I'm sorry but you got me on this one.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** That's okay. I will put this in my remaining 30 seconds to you for your consideration for future correspondence back to this committee.

I agree that our democracies are very fragile. I agree that they are under threat from hostile actors internationally, both those that are explicit and, quite frankly, some of our allies.

I would also agree that our Parliament needs to deeply consider, whether it's through this ethics committee.... I think in this moment, a special committee for this particular purpose would be warranted to keep up with the absolute velocity of tools used by foreign hostile actors against Canada, against our democracies and against our democratic institutions.

In your consideration of all of those things, when you report back to our committee, I'm going to ask you to be candid. I'm going to ask you to think in the framework of an elected official defending the fate of a nation and give us whatever candid recommendations you see fit.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** I have your response, because we need you on that. If you can work with us on the equivalent of a digital services act, that will be very helpful. It means responsibility for the platforms.

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

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Glucksmann.

That concludes our questions for today.

On behalf of the committee, and on behalf of Canadians across the country, I want to thank you for your testimony today.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I also want to say thank you for being gracious with your time. The interest of the committee in hearing what you had to say obviously extended the time that you were expected to be here. For that, I say thank you, sir.

**Mr. Raphaël Glucksmann:** Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** I'm going to suspend for about a minute or so, just to make sure that Mr. Glucksmann has gone, and then we're going to return in public. I don't really see the need to be in camera, because I have an update for the committee on some committee business.

Let's suspend for one minute, please.

• (1010) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1015)

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

I'll remind committee members that we're dealing with committee business. We're in public.

I wanted to bring the committee up to date on where we are in terms of the schedule. First and foremost, we have lost a couple of days, May 5 and May 19, as a result of the motion that was passed.

I see your hand. I have Mr. Barrett first and then you second, Mr. Villemure.

We lost a couple of days, based on the motion that was passed in the House of Commons yesterday by unanimous consent.

For Tuesday, we have the final two witnesses who are coming in on access to information, and then we have the departments for the second hour. We are going to leave time for drafting instructions on Tuesday. We have gone full circle on that study, and I think there's enough—not just based on the interim report that we have received, but also subsequent to having the minister in, etc.—for the analysts to finalize that report and make recommendations to Parliament and the government.

The second thing is on Friday. As you recall, the committee passed a motion on Tuesday on the appointment of the Ethics Commissioner. My plan is to call the witnesses for next Friday. This will push off the foreign interference study for a bit.

That's the update I have.

Mr. Barrett, I saw your hand. Go ahead, please, and then we'll hear Mr. Villemure.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Thanks, Chair.

I appreciate the update on the schedule. I'm not sure how much time we will have to get through all of that.

I'm going to put forward a motion here. I think some discussions between parties with respect to meetings beyond next Friday and with respect to Tuesday's motion.... If we don't have time on the

clock today, we can have some conversations about that. I think the schedule as proposed and the plan are good, but having lost a couple of upcoming meetings, we can discuss that among the parties.

**The Chair:** I see your hand, Mr. Fergus.

As a reminder for the committee, we have 14 meetings after this one, because of the two we've lost.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Okay.

With respect to the study on foreign interference, I move:

That, in relation to the committee's study of foreign interference and threats to the integrity of democratic institutions, intellectual property and the Canadian state, the committee:

a) Invite Alexandre Trudeau, Founder and Succession Member of the Trudeau Foundation; and

b) Summon Pascale Fournier and Morris Rosenberg, both former President and CEO of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, to appear at a date no later than May 5, 2023.

I believe my staff gave paper copies in both official languages for distribution.

If the motion is in order, I have a few comments to make about it, Chair.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, has this been distributed to the members?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl):** By email, I did.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The motion is in order.

Mr. Barrett, you have a few comments on it. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

With respect to item b), Pascale Fournier and Morris Rosenberg were included in the witness list submitted by Conservatives. I have not received an indication that there has been acceptance, but my understanding is that they haven't acknowledged receipt, which is an indication that there is not an intention to appear. That's the rationale for a summons.

**The Chair:** If I could intervene for a second.... The reason we had the gap in the second hour is that there were invitations sent out, but unfortunately, we couldn't fill the spots for various reasons. I just want to make that clear. However, that allowed us to have Mr. Glucksmann speak for a little bit extra.

For the benefit of the committee, I want to make that clear.

Go ahead.



• (1020)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** The final point is with respect to item a), Mr. Trudeau. The rationale for that invitation—not a summons but an invitation to Mr. Trudeau—is that it's widely reported that the gift of \$140,000 to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, which is the subject of reporting and reflects that this was an influence operation by the Communist regime in Beijing.... We have since seen the foundation rightly return that donation to the donor, but the individual in question, Mr. Trudeau, was the signatory as part of that transaction, so he's relevant to our study on foreign interference.

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

On the motion, I have Mr. Villemure, Mr. Fergus and Mr. Green.

Go ahead, Mr. Villemure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** What I have to say isn't about the motion, it's about the previous item.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Fergus.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Like Mr. Villemure, I want to comment on something you said at the beginning.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Green.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I'm certainly happy to consider all the impacts of foreign interference. I will note that, on this trend of bringing in the family members, you know, I get the political capital that's gained from it, but I feel that to use this committee in that way if we have other witnesses.... You know, the allegations that are being levied, if they're true, I think would warrant it and a full-scale investigation by the appropriate authorities, but as it relates to this committee, I'm not super comfortable with it, given where we're at and the work that we have to do. I'm uncomfortable with going down this line.

I will share this with my Conservatives colleagues: There's a growing trend of trying to shop these things around different committees to try to find some place where they stick. It's starting to feel like spaghetti against the wall. If you have a smoking gun, I encourage you to put it on the table and let people know exactly and specifically what it is you're talking about. However, the comments made by my friend, Mr. Barrett, don't suffice—at least in my opinion—for going down that path with the family members, given the kinds of precedents that have been set around the House. If that's what it's going to be, then I would need to have something more substantive to go on than that feeling.

That's where I'm at right now. I'm happy to hear more of the rationale from Conservative colleagues as to why they want to go in that direction, but until then, I'm just registering my uneasiness with it.

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

Now we have Mr. Fergus and then Ms. Hepfner after that.

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I agree with Mr. Green.

What we did for 90 minutes this morning was important. I feel we learned a number of things about what the Europeans are doing on an issue that's important.

I feel there's a bit of mudslinging going on right now. What do you want? Let's go to the vote and see what happens. Personally, I'm not in favour of this motion at all.

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

[*English*]

Ms. Hepfner, you're next.

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner:** Thank you, Chair.

I also want to say that I appreciate Mr. Green's comments, and I agree as well. I'm concerned by this constant coming back to these sorts of gotcha moments. I think this committee can do really good work, and I think we have studies coming up that we proposed and haven't been able to get to.

I am particularly interested in the TikTok study. I think we should get to that as soon as possible. We have seen states and whole jurisdictions that are taking immediate action against this platform, and we haven't even been able to get to a study of it.

I will leave it at that. It's just to say that I really wish we could get back to some of the really important work this committee does—like what we saw this morning.

• (1025)

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

Mr. Green, your hand is still up. Go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Yes, again, admittedly, I was caught a little off guard by the motion and didn't have the chance to consult with folks in advance of this, but I would say that I am certainly open to the former board members and non-family related people testifying. If there is in the course of that testimony evidence that implicates Mr. Trudeau in a deeper way that would require a second consideration of this, I would at that point be willing to support it.

Through you, Mr. Chair, to the mover of the motion, if he is still present, or to anybody who is willing to speak on his behalf, would they be willing to, in this moment, allow the motion to come with the first two that were listed and set aside Alexandre Trudeau until such time as the initial testimony would perhaps further involve him in the necessity of this study?

**The Chair:** I am going to ask. I don't see....

Mr. Green, just for your benefit, I know you're not here. You're on Zoom. Mr. Barrett left, presumably for question period.

There was a question directly to one of the members of the Conservative Party, so if anybody is able to answer that....

Just to reiterate, Mr. Green's question is related to Ms. Fournier and Mr. Rosenberg.

Is that correct, Mr. Green?

**Mr. Matthew Green:** That is correct, and I will state that if they are not prepared to answer that, then I would advise them that they may want to let this motion sit for the time being and revisit it at a later date, as it is unlikely it would pass today.

**The Chair:** I see that Mr. Kurek's hand is up.

Go ahead, Mr. Kurek.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thanks very much, Chair.

I would just note that the motion is very distinct. In terms of point a), it does “invite” Mr. Trudeau, but then, in part b) it does “summon”, so there is a pretty big difference in the approach. I think it would address an aspect of what Mr. Green's concerns are, because part b) is certainly a more direct and stronger push to ensure that those who were involved in this, who have not at this point responded to the committee's overture....

At this point, certainly, if Mr. Trudeau were interested in coming to the committee, he would be able to respond to an invite, but there's a pretty big difference in that, so I would just be curious to know if that addresses aspects of some of the concerns Mr. Green has.

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

I see that Mr. Green's hand is up, and then it will be Mr. Villemure.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** As I mentioned to my friends on the Conservative side, if they would set that aside and allow for part b) to happen, then I would suggest that, if in the course of the investigation on part b)—the study on part b) with Pascale Fournier and Mr. Rosenberg—it was deemed at that time appropriate to send that invitation to Mr. Trudeau, then I'm for that.

However, I would also recognize the nature in which being implicated in this type of thing has almost as much effect as being brought before the committee, and that is why I would like to give the presumption of innocence, given his relationship to the Prime Minister, until such time as we have real information that would implicate him in a more serious way.

Again, I would restate that, if the movers of the motion would be open to setting aside a) until after b) happens, I would be willing to revisit that. If that's not the case, then I am not really interested in getting into part a) in this particular case.

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

Mr. Villemure, I saw your hand up.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** I yield my time to the Conservative Party.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Green's comment is not intended to send another motion to Mr. Trudeau.

[*English*]

I think Mr. Green is proposing to eliminate part a) and proceed with part b).

I don't want to put any words in Mr. Green's mouth. I see his hand is up.

Mr. Green.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Green said something interesting. The Conservative Party might agree to keep only item (b) in the motion. We could withdraw item (a) today. If we decide to put item (a) back in, we could do that with another motion.

We could therefore agree to the arrangement suggested by the NDP.

• (1030)

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I am sharing with you that I am open to, with due cause—which I haven't had presented in the very short period of time that we've spoken—revisiting part a). However, I'm not interested in having this motion split up, and then not having evidence that, in my opinion, is substantive enough to support part a), but is used as some sort of gotcha.

I would suggest that, if the Conservative side would be willing to set a) aside until after we do b), then the testimony of the two people referenced in b) would give me adequate information to determine whether or not I would support bringing Alexandre Trudeau here or not. Just to be 100%.

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

The challenge we have right now is that the motion is on the floor. We would need an amendment to eliminate a). We would require either unanimous consent or a vote on the amendment, and then we'd go back to the main motion, with a) being eliminated.

Mr. Villemure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** I'd like to move an amendment to remove item (a) from the motion.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The amendment is on the floor. It is in order.

Is there any discussion on that? Do we have unanimous consent to remove part a)?

We don't. Let's go to a vote, please.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

I still have two speakers on other issues.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor.

**Mr. René Villemure:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to propose that the committee visit the NATO Centre of Excellence to which Mr. Glucksmann referred.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Is that a motion?

**Mr. René Villemure:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All right. Did you draft the motion in both official languages for the committee or not?

**Mr. René Villemure:** I will.

**The Chair:** The clerk says that this is a short motion.

Do we have unanimous consent for this motion?

[*English*]

Is there any discussion on that motion?

Mr. Green, I see your hand.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I was just going to suggest that it was an at-hand motion, given the testimony that we had and, therefore, maybe doesn't require some of the other stuff, given that we have interpretation.

I support it. I think that instances around artificial intelligence and cyberwarfare, in particular, are of deep interest to me, so I appreciate Mr. Villemure's bringing this forward.

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

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

Mr. Kurek, I see your hand up on the motion proposed by Mr. Villemure.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thanks, Chair.

It's just to note that, although distribution in both official languages is certainly important, being that it is a timely, relevant and straightforward motion, and it gives the clerk the ability to start putting together the details required for travel budgets and whatnot, I think it's entirely appropriate.

**The Chair:** If it does pass, we will try to propose that as quickly as possible at the Liaison Committee. There will be a time lag because it does have to be approved. For the justification rationale, I'll likely have to appear on behalf of the committee to justify this.

By the way, Mr. Fergus, it was very easy to justify the trip to Gatineau. This will take some time to prepare, just so that everybody is clear, but we'll make sure that we come back with a proposed budget that is fair and reasonable.

The motion is on the floor. I need either unanimous consent or a vote on this.

Is there unanimous consent for the motion proposed by Mr. Villemure? I see no objections.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Fergus, you have the floor next.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Regarding your comment on previous motions, given that the former interim ethics officer has resigned, I'm wondering if that motion or that study is pertinent at this point.

**The Chair:** That's the reason I mentioned it. I need direction from the committee on this because the motion was passed, as you know.

Our plan was to invite at least the two people that were named—the interim Ethics Commissioner and Minister LeBlanc—but I will have to receive direction from the committee and receive consent or a vote on whether you still want to go down that road.

You provide me with some indication and direction. We'll see what the will of the committee is and then we'll apply it.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I would propose, given our limited time for the additional studies that we want, and perhaps even the possibility of continuing the study on the motion of Mr. Villemure, that the events have passed us and we should not continue with that study. I hope that there would be a consensus around the table to do this.

**The Chair:** You're proposing that. I would need a motion.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** I would so move.

**The Chair:** Okay. The motion is to not even start the study. Is that correct?

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** It's to not even start the study.

**The Chair:** I have a couple of hands up on that.

Mr. Green, you were up first. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** I would say that it's a bit of a moot point now. I think we had a fulsome discussion around this in one of our previous meetings. I'm happy to see that the interim commissioner made that decision in stepping down. It's unfortunate that it took this long and got this far, quite frankly, but it did happen.

I am content with that and do not see the need to continue down that line with our very scarce resources and time at this committee.

• (1040)

**The Chair:** Mr. Kurek, you're next. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thanks, Chair.

It's troubling that we have an attitude, certainly from members of the Liberal government, that when a mistake is made they adjust course after they've received significant criticism and their misdeeds have been called out. If there's a growing opposition to the actions they've taken, then they rescind an order or backtrack on a contract. The list is getting too long to articulate in the limited time we have, Mr. Chair.

I find it concerning that the attitude, then, is that it is old news that is no longer relevant and, therefore, does not meet the threshold of being discussed.

My suggestion is this. The initial motion asked for three hours, which I think we have, if my understanding of the calendar is correct. Instead of dismissing the study altogether, we can acknowledge that mistakes were made—serious ones. The fact that we have a massive conflict of interest with the sister-in-law of a cabinet minister being appointed as the interim Ethics Commissioner is the stuff that.... I am not even sure Hollywood would be that bold.

My suggestion is that, instead of three hours, it would be reasonable to ask for that hour we have on Tuesday to try to get to the bottom of this, so that members of this committee can ask questions on behalf of the many Canadians who are flabbergasted with the lengths that the government would go to and the actions it takes, which are eroding trust in our institutions.

That would be my submission, Mr. Chair. Certainly, I will not be supporting ending the study, but I would be happy to see it amended and adjusted because of the changing circumstances. That would be where I'm coming from.

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

Suggestions and proposals don't work as it relates to the Standing Orders. We need formal motions. Mr. Fergus indicated that he has a motion to not continue with this study.

Based on what I heard from you, Mr. Kurek.... I'll remind the committee that we approved up to three meetings on this. If you're proposing an amendment to Mr. Fergus's motion, I would ask you to formalize that now so we can deal with a discussion on your amendment.

What would your amendment be, Mr. Kurek?

I'm sorry, Damien. I just received clarification from the clerk.

Mr. Fergus's motion is in order to not continue with the study. There's nothing to amend on that. It's clear what his motion is, so we would either agree with it or not. That would require unanimous consent, and if not, then a vote.

Greg, did you have one more thing to say?

**Mr. Greg Fergus:** No.

**The Chair:** You're done. Okay.

On Mr. Fergus's motion, I'll now ask for unanimous consent. If there's no unanimous consent, then I will ask for a vote. I see heads shaking.

Depending on what happens with that motion, Damien, I'll perhaps go to you next.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3)

**The Chair:** Mr. Fergus's motion carries. There will be no further study on this issue, which will open up a little more time. As I said to the committee earlier, we only have 14 meetings because we've lost two.

If there is no other committee business, I want to thank the analysts. Thank you to the clerk and all the technicians for today's meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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