



Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference in Federal
Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions

Enquête publique sur l'ingérence étrangère dans les
processus électoraux et les institutions démocratiques
fédéraux

Public Hearing

Audience publique

**Commissioner / Commissaire
The Honourable / L'honorable
Marie-Josée Hogue**

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IV Appearances / Comparutions

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The Chinese Communist Party's
Human Rights Violations

Neil Chantler

Erin O'Toole

Thomas W. Jarmyn
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Senator Yuen Pau Woo

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Ottawa, Ontario

--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 9:32 a.m.

--- L'audience débute le mercredi 10 avril 2024 à 9 h 32

THE REGISTRAR: Order, please. À l'ordre, s'il vous plait.

This sitting of the Foreign Interference Commission is now in session. Commissioner Hogue is presiding.

Cette séance de la Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est maintenant en cours. La commissaire Hogue préside.

The time is 9:32. Il est 9 h 32.

COMMISSAIRE HOGUE: Alors, bonjour.

HON. KARINA GOULD: Good morning

COMMISSIONER HOGUE: So good morning.

MS. LYNDIA MORGAN: Commissioner, it's Lynda Morgan, Commission counsel, and Minister Gould is the first witness today.

I'd ask that she be sworn or affirmed, please.

THE REGISTRAR: Do you prefer to be affirmed or sworn?

HON. KARINA GOULD: Affirmed.

THE REGISTRAR: May I please have your full name and state your last name for the record? Just spell it, please.

HON. KARINA GOULD: Yeah, Karina Gould. G-o-u-l-d.

1 --- HON. KARINA GOULD, Affirmed/Sous affirmation solennelle:

2 THE REGISTRAR: Thanks very much.

3 Counsel, you may proceed.

4 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: Thank you.

5 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN-CHEF PAR

6 MS. LYNDA MORGAN:

7 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: Minister Gould, you were
8 interviewed by Commission counsel on March 15th, 2024 in a
9 classified space. Is that correct?

10 HON. KARINA GOULD: Correct.

11 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: Can I have WIT 62, please?

12 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 62:

13 Minister Karina Gould Public Summary
14 of Classified Interview

15 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: And this is a copy of the
16 publicly disclosable contents of that interview. Have you
17 had an opportunity to review the summary?

18 HON. KARINA GOULD: I have, yes.

19 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: And do you have any
20 changes to make to the summary?

21 HON. KARINA GOULD: I do.

22 Paragraph 13, the second sentence. Shall I
23 read it?

24 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: Let's go down to paragraph
25 13 first. It is on page 5.

26 HON. KARINA GOULD: Okay.

27 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: Yes.

28 HON. KARINA GOULD: So to change it to:

1 "She recalls meeting with
2 representatives from many of the
3 agencies that became members of the
4 Security and Intelligence Threats to
5 Elections Task Force (SITE TF),
6 including CSE, CSIS and GAC RRM as well
7 as..."

8 And that's the extent of the change.

9 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** As well as right in here,
10 the last bit.

11 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No, that's it, "as well
12 as the Department of National Defence".

13 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** Okay. And PCO as well?
14 Does that remain in there?

15 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah, everything else
16 remains the same.

17 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** Okay. Thank you.

18 And with that change being made, are you
19 prepared to adopt the summary as part of your evidence before
20 the Commission today?

21 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I am.

22 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** Okay. So I understand
23 that you have held various Cabinet positions since 2018,
24 which include Minister of Democratic Institutions from
25 January 10th, 2017 until November 20th, 2019. Is that
26 correct?

27 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** That's correct.

28 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And you are the leader of

1 the government in the House of Commons, and you've been in
2 that role since July 26, 2023?

3 HON. KARINA GOULD: Correct.

4 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: And ---

5 HON. KARINA GOULD: I am on maternity leave
6 right now.

7 MS. LYNDA MORGAN: --- currently on parental
8 leave.

9 So I want to first start by asking you about
10 the development of the plan to protect Canada's democracy.
11 And so I just want to ground this in the context of the
12 events that were occurring at the time.

13 So in your witness statement, at paragraph 4,
14 you describe that:

15 "...the motivation for the creation
16 of the Plan [came]...in the context
17 of a series of high profile attempts
18 by Russia to interfere with
19 democratic elections around the
20 world, primarily through cyber-
21 activities and disinformation
22 campaigns..."

23 And you have also described that the plan is
24 created against the backdrop of what's described as the
25 "Obama dilemma", which is the -- effectively the fact that
26 President Obama could not alert the public about the
27 intelligence relating to electoral interference because he
28 was concerned about being:

1 "...viewed as a partisan actor
2 interfering in the electoral
3 process."

4 So does that kind of situate ---

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah. So I think it's
6 important to recall that in January 2017, it was about two
7 months following the U.S. Presidential Election, there was,
8 you know, considerable activity happening at the
9 international level, and particularly in the United States,
10 following what was seen as, you know, very high level, very
11 sophisticated Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential
12 election. There had also been other things going on in the
13 world, you know, kind of within the next six to eight months,
14 where we saw, you know, the Brexit vote, where we saw the
15 Macron leaks in France, the cyber attack against the German
16 Parliament and leaks from Bundesstaat.

17 So there were a series of very high profile
18 cyber attacks on fellow democracies around the world, and so
19 when the Prime Minister gave me that mandate it was very much
20 trying to protect Canadian democracy and Canadian elections
21 from those kinds of high profile, very sophisticated cyber
22 threats, which at the time were primarily coming from Russia.

23 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And so let's pull up that
24 mandate letter that you received from the Prime Minister.

25 Can I please have COM 18, please.

26 And so this is a letter that I understand you
27 received on February 1st, 2017 from the Prime Minister. I'll
28 just wait for that document to be brought up.

1 COM 18. Thank you.

2 --- EXHIBIT NO./PIÉCE NO. COM 18:

3 Letter from Prime Minister to Karina
4 Gould

5 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And the document you see
6 on the screen, is this the letter that you received?

7 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes.

8 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Okay.

9 And if we can go down to page 3, please. A
10 little bit further down. Thank you.

11 So we see the paragraph starting with:

12 "In particular, I will expect you to
13 work with your colleagues and through
14 established legislative, regulatory,
15 and Cabinet processes to deliver on
16 your top priorities:...

17 And the first bullet lists:

18 "In collaboration with the Minister
19 of National Defence and the Minister
20 of Public Safety and Emergency
21 Preparedness, lead the Government of
22 Canada's efforts to defend the
23 Canadian electoral process from cyber
24 threats. This should include asking
25 the Communications Security
26 Establishment (CSE) to analyze risks
27 to Canada's political and electoral
28 activities from hackers, and to

1 release this assessment publicly. As
2 well, ask CSE to offer advice to
3 Canada's political parties and
4 Elections Canada on best practices
5 when it comes to cyber security."

6 I appreciate there is other bullets on that
7 list, but I will focus on that one for today.

8 Did you -- in relation to this particular
9 aspect of your mandate, did you have any discussions with the
10 Prime Minister about expectations for what the plan should
11 cover and how it should operate?

12 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, no. It's pretty
13 clear in the mandate letter what my task was, and to work
14 across government to protect our elections from cyber
15 security threats.

16 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And so -- and the mandate
17 itself is focussed on cyber threats.

18 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** M'hm.

19 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Was the developing plan,
20 so the plan to protect Canada's democracy, was that plan
21 restricted to or focussed on cyber threats?

22 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No. It ended up being
23 broader than that, how this came about. So, you know, as --
24 when you are a minister, and you get a mandate letter, this
25 is the job that you're tasked with, it's a job description,
26 so to speak, in terms of what the Prime Minister expects you
27 to accomplish in your time in that portfolio. So I set about
28 gathering information, learning about what the threats were.

1 So I had various meetings with the different
2 heads of agencies to understand what the threats were to
3 Canada, focussed on our elections, and through that receipt
4 for process, you know, I was presented with other threats to
5 our democracy that included human intelligence. Which is
6 what led to the four pillars that were released publicly in
7 January 2019, and Canada's broad plan to protect our
8 democracy that ended up bringing in not just the Departments
9 of National Defence and Public Safety, but also, Global
10 Affairs, as well as Heritage, so that we had as comprehensive
11 of a plan at the time to deal with the threats as we
12 understood them. But really, it was a process of learning,
13 understanding, engaging, and trying to come up with the plan
14 that could most robustly protect Canada's national federal
15 democracy.

16 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** So let me talk to you a
17 bit about that information gathering exercise that you've
18 described.

19 What did you identify or learn were the
20 biggest threats or concerns to which the plan needed to
21 respond?

22 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Sure. So I mean, I think
23 one of the important parts throughout all of this was the
24 understanding that foreign interference or attempts at
25 foreign interference, because foreign -- I think it's the
26 attempting that has gone on for a long time. Probably in
27 every election that Canada has ever had there have been
28 attempts at foreign interference, just like in probably every

1 election in a democracy around the world, since probably
2 ancient Greece, there have been attempts at foreign
3 interference. Whether they're successful or not is another
4 question. And so I think that was one of the most important
5 things.

6 The nature of the threats have evolved over
7 time, and in the, you know, period from 2017 to 2019, this
8 was when threats online were becoming more of an issue that
9 people weren't really aware of, and the security agencies
10 themselves were also learning more about.

11 Because if we go back to, you know, the
12 Russian example in the United States, they were using social
13 media platforms to try and either elicit a specific outcome
14 in the American election, or even just creating chaos, right,
15 so that it -- people have less trust in democracy, which
16 feeds their interest of a national interest to say that
17 democracy is not something that Russians, for example, should
18 be interested in because look at the chaos that's happening
19 over there, we want stability. So there is many different
20 interests at play here.

21 The other thing that I learned was of, you
22 know, other countries, for example, that also had an
23 interest. Sometimes, perhaps, in getting a specific
24 candidate elected or not, whether they were successful,
25 again, is always a question.

26 And the other part of it is, you know, they
27 may have specific policy objectives as well, or they may have
28 specific objectives with regards to influence operations.

1 And it's really important to note that, you know, foreign
2 countries and actors are engaging in influence operations all
3 the time, but they're overt. You know, that's diplomacy,
4 that's, you know, trying to, you know, you know, have overt
5 conversations in the public, perhaps through the media, and
6 then there's the interference part, which is the stuff that
7 is covert that they are trying to do in a sneaky way so that
8 Canadians or politicians aren't aware of. So really learned
9 quite a bit about what is going on.

10 I would also say I think learned that our
11 security agencies are quite sophisticated in Canada and have
12 pretty good knowledge about what is happening, but also
13 recall that, you know, foreign actors are trying to do this
14 in a way so that we don't know about it. And one of the
15 other things that I think is really important that I learned
16 through this process is that we have to be very mindful, and
17 security agencies are, about what information is disclosed
18 publicly because if they make a decision to disclose
19 something publicly they're effectively letting the foreign
20 actor know that they know what they're doing. And so they
21 could lose a source, that foreign actor could change what
22 they're doing, they could go further underground.

23 And so need to be really thoughtful and
24 mindful about how and when and what is released publicly,
25 which also played a really big part in the development of the
26 plan.

27 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And just to ask you
28 specifically about the sources of intelligence or information

1 you relied on, I understand that in your role as Minister,
2 you did not receive daily packages of intelligence products?

3 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

4 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And I understand that you
5 had various briefings and received information from various
6 agencies as well; is that correct?

7 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

8 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Can we pull up CAN 13303,
9 please, and go to page 3?

10 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIECE No. CAN 13303:**

11 Letter to Miriam Burke from Jody
12 Thomas

13 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** So you can see here under
14 the heading, "Briefings to Ministers" a series of briefings
15 between August 15th, 2018 and...

16 Can you scroll down a little bit, please?
17 Stopping there is good. Thank you.

18 This shows briefings to Minister of
19 Democratic Institutions, as I said, from August 15th, 2018
20 down through August 23rd, 2019, and we see briefings
21 "Director CSIS, Chief CSE". Are those all meetings that you
22 attended?

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, I'm going to assume
24 that I did but I wouldn't be able to confirm the exact dates
25 because I don't recall, but I would meet kind of on a
26 monthly-by-monthly basis with them.

27 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And was the focus of the
28 intelligence that you received focused on cyberthreats, or

1 was it broader than that?

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** The primary focus would
3 be on cyberthreats, both in Canada but also from what we were
4 seeing around the world. And the purpose of including around
5 the world is important so that we could learn from other
6 experiences so that we would be able to protect Canada's
7 democracies and elections against those. And there would be
8 if -- you know, if relevant, high-level descriptions of other
9 potential threats that could include human interference but
10 that they would never be specific; it would be a very general
11 overview, very high level of what the agency was seeing at
12 the time.

13 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Okay. And so in terms of
14 high level, did you ever receive the names of potential
15 threat actors?

16 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Could you clarify that,
17 like, in terms of, like ---

18 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Did you ever receive names
19 of individuals, for instance?

20 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

21 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And did you receive
22 intelligence relating to -- like, specific intelligence
23 relating to alleged incidents of foreign interference?

24 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Not in specific detail;
25 it would be quite high level.

26 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** So in addition to
27 briefings from CSIS and CSE, I understand you also received
28 information from other agencies or entities. From -- who

1 else did you receive information from?

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** So CSIS and CSE would be
3 the two primary sources, but the Rapid Response Mechanism at
4 Global Affairs Canada would also generally provide
5 information, and what the RRM does is -- well, they worked
6 with G7 and NATO allies to look more broadly around the world
7 to try to identify trends and perhaps identify a threat
8 before it would occur. And so they would kind of tell me
9 what they were seeing around the world and new trends or
10 threats that they were identifying in the online space, and
11 from publicly-sourced content.

12 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And in addition to RRM,
13 any other sources?

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** PCO would also provide
15 intelligence, although I guess this was likely gathered by
16 CSE and CSIS at the time.

17 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** In addition to PCO, do you
18 know who was responsible for compiling the intelligence or
19 information that was shared with you?

20 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I do not. I would have
21 received it through my Deputy Minister. I'm not familiar
22 with the chain of command beyond that.

23 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** So I want to move now to
24 the kind of building of the plan, who you collaborated with,
25 and then I'll get into some specific questions about the
26 plan.

27 But I understand from the mandate letter and
28 your witness summary that the Minister of Public Safety and

1 Emergency Preparedness and National Defence also had some
2 involvement in the development of the plan. Are you able to
3 describe what their involvement was?

4 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, what I set out to
5 do as Minister of Democratic Institutions was to come up with
6 a whole of government plan, recognizing that as I learned
7 more about what the threats were that, you know, we needed to
8 ensure that we had a variety of different departments part of
9 this.

10 So the Ministers of National Defence and the
11 Ministers of Public Safety were much more in a supportive
12 role, but identifying what their departments could do to
13 support the broader plan. So for example, you know, under
14 the Minister of Public Safety, obviously, you know, with
15 regards to intelligence priorities, ensuring that
16 cybersecurity in our elections, in our democracy was a
17 priority; the RCMP created a specific unit to look at
18 cybersecurity threats in our democracy; updating their other
19 initiatives within public safety to make sure that they had a
20 robust plan. Under Defence, the Communications Security
21 Establishment rests, and so they provided opportunities to
22 political parties, Parliamentarians, Parliament of Canada,
23 Elections Canada, the Commissioner, even provincial electoral
24 bodies to say, you know, "We can help do an assessment, if
25 you like, of your cybersecurity." They stood up the
26 Cybersecurity Centre, that part of its mandate was to provide
27 those services to have a call-in number if individuals or
28 parties had questions with regard to a potential issue; they

1 provided a list of, you know, security-approved vendors.

2 So there was a whole wide range of different
3 things that they ended up doing to make sure that we were
4 doing everything that we could, that we could kind of imagine
5 at the time, to safeguard our elections from cyberthreats.

6 And then the other thing is that as we
7 learned more, I pulled in Global Affairs Canada through the
8 Rapid Response Mechanism, as well as Heritage Canada because
9 one of the things that, you know, I learned, and I believe
10 very firmly, is that one of the best methods to protect our
11 democracy was a well-informed citizenry.

12 And so as part of that, Heritage Canada had a
13 public education program for citizen engagement and public
14 awareness when it comes to cybersecurity to really ensure
15 that we were trying to tick all of the boxes.

16 And maybe one other thing that I'll add is
17 through that and through Defence, we were put in touch with
18 the NATO Strategic Communications Centre, who I then invited
19 to Ottawa to brief the Parliamentary Press Gallery to talk
20 about how they may be able to identify cybersecurity threats,
21 particularly with regards to mis and disinformation. And
22 through that they brought, for example, a reporter from
23 Finland, who was very familiar with Russian interference
24 attempts, to be able to brief the Press Gallery.

25 So we really tried to do this as whole of
26 government as possible, to identify where the different
27 vulnerabilities were in the system and provide information
28 and support to each of those different actors.

1 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And I understand from your
2 witness statement that you wanted to consult with all of the
3 political parties for their input and feedback in the
4 process. When you say kind of input and feedback, what
5 feedback were you eliciting from the political parties?

6 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** So from the get-go, I was
7 engaged with opposition members as well as political parties.
8 I believe in the fall -- as early as the fall of 2017, I had
9 meetings with each of my opposition critics, the critics from
10 Public Safety and Democratic Institutions, to talk about the
11 fact that we were building this plan, to get their input as
12 to what they were concerned about, and to let them know that
13 I thought this was something that we needed to have an
14 ongoing dialogue with regards to.

15 Following those initial meetings, my staff
16 met with either staff from the political parties themselves,
17 or some of the staff of the critics to keep them informed and
18 engaged throughout the process.

19 And, you know, even in my public comments
20 when I announced the plan in 2019, I referenced the fact that
21 I had been engaging with the opposition political parties
22 throughout because I felt it was extremely important that
23 this be non-partisan and that we have a consensus and build
24 trust, in terms of the plan and the process, because one of
25 the things that you'll note in the protocol, and you may be
26 getting to this, but is that democracy is very fragile and it
27 rests on trust. It rests on trust of citizens in the process
28 and in the outcome. And so it was vitally important that all

1 political parties be involved in understanding what the plan
2 was going to be and having a sense of comfort of it going
3 into the election so that if something should arise, we would
4 have a consensus and we would have a comfort to know that
5 this was being monitored and reviewed, and if there was
6 something that needed to be said, it was coming from a
7 trusted voice and a trusted source, because what we didn't
8 want to have, you referenced this earlier, in terms of the
9 Obama dilemma, is the very fact of making a public comment
10 can be seen as interference, whether that's from a partisan
11 or from a non-partisan body. And so we needed to have a way
12 to engage and to share information by which all of the
13 parties would be confident. And of course what we saw in the
14 U.S. election was that there were very partisan comments on
15 both sides with regards to whether the information should or
16 should not have been released, or even whether a foreign
17 actor should have been named.

18 And so there -- this is a very sensitive and
19 complex issue for which I felt it was really important that
20 it be as non-partisan as possible, or completely non-
21 partisan, and that everybody had comfort in where we were
22 going with it. And of course it was the very first time we
23 had ever done something like this as well.

24 And so for me, it was really important that
25 all of the political parties, all of the opposition parties,
26 had comfort in where we were going.

27 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And in terms of the input
28 in consultation with the political parties, did you receive

1 specific feedback on the particulars of the plan? Like in
2 the composition of Panel of Five, for instance, did you
3 specifically elicit feedback or input?

4 **HON. KARINE GOULD:** We certainly presented it
5 to them. I wasn't part of those conversations because that
6 was happening at the staff level, but I think, you know, what
7 you could see from the various reports is that going into the
8 2019 election, there was generally comfort with where we
9 were.

10 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** So I want to ask you about
11 the Panel of Five. I won't get into the mechanics of it, but
12 the Panel is composed of five senior public servants. And I
13 understand from your witness statement that for the
14 composition of the Panel, you took inspiration from France,
15 who had used their electoral authority, which was an
16 impartial body of legal advisors, to address the Macron
17 leaks.

18 And so I understand in terms of the concept
19 stage of the plan, you had considered forming a panel of
20 judges or other eminent Canadians, but ultimately settled on
21 selecting senior public servants. Is that correct?

22 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

23 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And on what basis did you
24 decide the composition of the Panel of Five?

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Sure. So the very first
26 point is I felt it was really important that partisans be
27 removed from the process. And so even though I was a
28 Minister, still am a Minister of the Crown, but was the

1 Minister responsible, I was also running in the election.

2 And so any involvement of a partisan,
3 Minister, Prime Minister, during the writ period during the
4 Caretaker Convention for something this sensitive, even if
5 everything, you know, was fine, could be seen as having a
6 partisan interest in whether or not information would be
7 released publicly. And so I wanted to remove -- that was one
8 of my primary objectives, was to remove any notion that there
9 could be a partisan interest in the decision as to whether or
10 not to release information if something should occur.

11 So I was very interested in what France had
12 in terms of their council of legal advisors. I think
13 colloquially they referred to them as the conseil d'éminence
14 grise; right? It's folks who are very well respected in
15 France. But it wasn't something new that they had done for
16 that election. This was an institution that they have in
17 place generally.

18 We don't have something like that in Canada.
19 We have Elections Canada. I did consult with Elections
20 Canada. That's not really their role, to, you know,
21 determine if there has been foreign interference in an
22 election. They don't necessarily have the capacity to do
23 that.

24 I also consulted with the Commissioner of
25 Canada Elections at the time. Again, not really the right
26 space for them either.

27 And so trying to figure out who would be best
28 placed here. And one of the reasons why I settled on senior

1 public servants who are independent, non-partisan,
2 professional, is that they would have access to information
3 and understanding of the threat landscape to determine
4 whether something was irregular and whether or not it would
5 have an impact on a free and fair election.

6 And the other part of it, in terms of the
7 composition, was that the Government of Canada can be quite
8 siloed sometimes, and so it was important that we brought
9 together those that had access to the information, so the
10 head of CSE, the head of CSIS, who are seeing what's
11 happening and can bring that up to this group quickly,
12 because if something happens, there needs to be a quick
13 decision as to whether it's going to be released publicly or
14 not. So they had access to that information and a very good
15 understanding of the intelligence world and what intelligence
16 could perhaps be linked to evidence, because that's another
17 important piece. Intelligence is not evidence. They need to
18 be certain if they're going to suggest something, because
19 again, the very act of suggesting or making a public
20 declaration will have an impact on the outcome of the
21 election.

22 And then the Deputy Minister for Global
23 Affairs Canada as well, again, because perhaps there are
24 steps that might need to be taken with regards to
25 intelligence that don't merit a public intervention, but
26 maybe there are previous things that could be done, such as,
27 like, a démarche to an embassy or something of those lines.
28 And they would have an understanding of the global context.

1 And then the NSAI -- sorry, the Clerk of the Privy Council,
2 again, as the most senior public servant, and the Deputy for
3 Justice.

4 And the reason why I felt it was important to
5 have the Deputy for Justice there was specifically to have
6 that legal perspective and to have knowledge and
7 understanding of, you know, the corpus of judicial history
8 and precedent in this country, and to ensure that the
9 democratic rights of Canadian citizens, of candidates, of
10 political parties, were front and center, and understood in
11 making such a profound decision that would have such an
12 important impact on an election process and outcome.

13 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And so with a focus of
14 trying to include non-partisan individuals on the Panel, as I
15 understand it, Deputy Ministers are appointed by the Prime
16 Minister on the advice of the Clerk of the Privy Council? Is
17 that correct?

18 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** My understanding.

19 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And that appointment is
20 for an indefinite period?

21 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** To my knowledge. I'm not
22 involved in that. So, yeah.

23 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Well the real point being,
24 the Prime Minister technically has the power to dismiss a
25 Deputy Minister? Is that right?

26 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Again, I think so, but
27 that's a bit beyond.

28 But what I would say is that certainly I'd

1 say every deputy that I have had has served, I think, well
2 under successive governments of different political stripes.
3 And I have, you know, tremendous confidence in their ability
4 to be non-partisan, independent, and professional. And, you
5 know, many of the deputies that I have had had served under
6 Conservative governments, and I'm sure many of the deputies
7 that serve under Liberal governments will also serve under a
8 future government of a different stripe.

9 That's the role of the public service, is to
10 be professional, to be independent, and to be non-partisan.
11 And particularly during a writ period where the Government is
12 under the Caretaker Convention. And so part of where this
13 Panel of Five fits in is also under the Caretaker Convention,
14 which is something that has existed in Canada since
15 Confederation, where the public service takes on their
16 responsibilities of the Government because the Government is
17 a political actor at that moment in time seeking election or
18 re-election.

19 And so I think it fit very neatly within the
20 existing institutions that we have and, you know, I would say
21 that, you know, Canadians tend to have confidence in the
22 public service to act in a non-partisan way.

23 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And so you've indicated
24 that the Panel's operational only during the Caretaker
25 period. In terms, again, of the concept of the plan, did you
26 consider the creation of a permanent body?

27 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I did not at the time.
28 Remember, again, this is the very first time we're doing

1 something like that and so I felt it was important that, you
2 know, we establish it, but then there also be a review of the
3 process as it happened to learn any lessons and provide any
4 recommendations which ended up being the first Judd Report in
5 terms of whether this should be something that we continue
6 with or whether there should be more of a permanence.

7 It was also one of the first times that we
8 had -- well, the second time we had a fixed date election in
9 Canada as well, so there were many kind of different factors.

10 I think in some respects it's almost a bit
11 harder for foreign actors to interfere when you have, you
12 know, more spontaneous elections. When you know there's a
13 fixed date, you have a runway to lead up to.

14 And so we were very much learning as we were
15 going, and those lessons, you know, from that should then be
16 applied for future and subsequent elections.

17 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And in terms of a
18 permanent body, my question is also focused on did you
19 consider it a creation of a body that existed outside of the
20 caretaker period, so that would sit for longer than a six-
21 week period.

22 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No. I mean, in the
23 sense, all of those individuals who sit on the panel continue
24 to exercise, you know, their responsibilities as respective
25 deputies and heads of agencies and one would expect that they
26 would continue to talk to each other. However, in the formal
27 capacity, it should only exist during the writ period because
28 that is the time when people are making decisions about who

1 they are voting for and either before or after the government
2 is in place. And my focus in terms of protecting our
3 democracy was specifically with regards to the election event
4 and election events as opposed to, you know, broader foreign
5 interference that happens by attacking government systems or,
6 you know, going through other things outside of a writ
7 period.

8 And we have already in the Government of
9 Canada apparatus roles and responsibilities for those
10 activities. What we didn't have was something concrete for
11 the writ period itself. creation of a permanent body.

12 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And so we've heard that
13 the panel's role effectively is to notify the public of an
14 event during the election that threatened Canada's ability to
15 have a free and fair election. And we've also heard evidence
16 that the panel interpreted the threshold for an announcement
17 as being high or very high.

18 In the concept stage, was the threshold
19 intended to be at a high level?

20 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes. And it was very
21 important that it's at a high level because, again, remember,
22 the very act of making a decision to announce something
23 publicly could be seen as interference itself.

24 And this is a point that was actually very
25 important for all of the political parties because for those
26 of us that have run in an election or been in an election,
27 either as a candidate or working on it, it's a very intense
28 time. There's a lot of information going around. It is

1 chaotic, so to speak. And so if there's going to be a high -
2 - you know, the -- if there's going to be a decision to say,
3 "You Canadian citizens, you need to know that a foreign actor
4 has interfered in our election", the threshold needs to be
5 high because there's a -- it's resting on the trust of
6 Canadians in the process being -- on the integrity of the
7 process.

8 And if someone is saying that the integrity
9 of the process is being questioned or has been compromised,
10 they need to be certain of that fact and they need to be
11 certain that this is something of significant enough value to
12 the national interest that it be made public.

13 And the political parties were very clear
14 that that was something that was important to them as well.

15 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And when you speak about
16 the integrity of the process and the high threshold, was it
17 contemplated the focus on integrity of the process would be
18 examined at a riding-by-riding level or a national level?

19 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Both. It could be either
20 because it's -- Canada doesn't have one national election.
21 We have 338 individual elections that make up an electoral
22 event. And so everything is context specific.

23 You know, it could be something that happens
24 at the national level that everybody is aware of or is being
25 impacted by. It could be something that's happening in one
26 singular riding. But that's where the importance for the
27 panel to have an understanding of the landscape, of the
28 activities and the potential impact was so important to make

1 that decision.

2 And it was specific in the Cabinet directive
3 to give the panel the authority and the responsibility to
4 make that judgment call.

5 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And did you anticipate
6 that the panel could take actions in relation to intelligence
7 or information that fell below the threshold?

8 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, that wouldn't be
9 the panel's decision there. That would be up to the
10 individual agencies who have those responsibilities.

11 The panel's primary focus was on whether
12 there was something of such significance that it would have -
13 - that it would compromise the free and fair election by
14 Canadians and be in the national interest. And so that was
15 really where the panel's responsibilities lay.

16 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** I want to ask you one more
17 briefings-related question.

18 Can I have CAN 15506, please?

19 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 15506:**

20 Memo for the NSIA to the PM -
21 Elections Security Briefings for the
22 Hon. Dominic LeBlanc

23 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Scroll down, staying on
24 the first page, but scroll down a bit, please.

25 And if we look at the third bullet, it says:

26 "Prior to and during GE 2019, Deputy
27 Ministers provided regular briefings on
28 election security to the then Minister

1 of Democratic Institutions, Karina
2 Gould."

3 Were you briefed regularly by Deputy
4 Ministers prior to and during GE 2019?

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Not during. I didn't
6 receive a single briefing during the election.

7 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** Did you expect to receive
8 briefings during the election?

9 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I expected not to receive
10 any briefings during the election. I explicitly designed the
11 process so that I would not receive any briefings during the
12 process because, as I mentioned, I had a vested interest in
13 the outcome of the election and so I felt it would be
14 completely inappropriate to receive those briefings. And
15 that's why it was so important to create this independent
16 non-partisan body that would be responsible during the writ
17 period.

18 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And so you've indicated
19 already you were receiving intelligence. It's high level.
20 And no briefings during the writ period.

21 I understand from your witness summary that
22 you did not receive any intelligence during the writ period
23 relating to allegations in Don Valley North. Is that
24 correct?

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

26 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** And I understand as well
27 that you were not aware that secret cleared Liberal Party
28 representatives were briefed in relation to allegations of

1 interference in the Don Valley North nomination contest?

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** That is correct. I --
3 again, as I created this system and policy, it was very
4 important that each of the political parties had their own
5 doors into the security agencies that the government, myself
6 as Minister of Democratic Institution, would not be aware of
7 so that they would have trust to have that engagement with
8 the security agencies.

9 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And I understand, finally,
10 that you were not briefed on intelligence assessments
11 suggesting that there were likely at least two transfers of
12 funds approximating \$250,000 from PRC officials in Canada
13 possibly for FI-related purposes that were transferred via an
14 influential community leader to the staff member of a 2019
15 federal election and then to an Ontario MPP.

16 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** That is correct.

17 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** So you did not receive
18 that intelligence.

19 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No. I would have
20 received something at a much higher level.

21 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** And were you briefed on a
22 TRM conducted in advance of GE 43 to reduce the FI threat
23 posted by the Government of Pakistan?

24 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** At a very high level, but
25 I wouldn't have received information as to what or with whom.

26 **MS. LYNDIA MORGAN:** Thank you.

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

28 Cross-examination by counsel for Jenny Kwan.

1 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

2 MS. MANI KAKKAR:

3 MS. MANI KAKKAR: Thank you, Commissioner.

4 Good morning, Ms. Gould.

5 HON. KARINA GOULD: Good morning.

6 MS. MANI KAKKAR: I'm just going to take a
7 minute here to -- so Ms. Gould, this morning I wanted to ask
8 questions specifically related to the kind of information
9 that you considered when you were developing the threshold
10 and to considering the plan for protecting Canada's
11 democracy. In your witness statement, and you've said this
12 in your testimony as well, that your briefings were quite
13 high level, that you actually looked outside of Canada to see
14 the ways in which foreign interference had affected
15 elections. Do you think it would have been helpful to know
16 the specific details though of foreign interference in
17 Canada, so that you could better address what was happening
18 here because perhaps the dynamics would have been different
19 than perhaps our U.S. partners or other countries in the
20 world?

21 HON. KARINA GOULD: Okay. Well, I want to
22 take you back to 2017 for a moment because it was the first
23 time that we were thinking about foreign interference in
24 terms of cyber security, and it was the first time that we
25 were seeing these widescale attacks around the world in real
26 time. Typically, foreign interference before was very, very
27 covert, right, and human to human; right? We weren't seeing
28 this kind of hacking of systems, divulging of information,

1 trying to pollute the information ecosystem as we were at the
2 time. And so it was incredibly important to learn from real-
3 world examples that we were seeing happening to figure out
4 what we needed to do here at home to avoid something like
5 that in the future. Of course, I was briefed at a high level
6 as to what foreign interference activities -- attempts at
7 foreign interference, I should say, were seen here in Canada,
8 so I would correct a little bit the premise of your question
9 and say that, yes, both of those were happening, and that was
10 incredibly important to figure out how we protect ourselves.

11 Also, the understanding is that threat actors
12 don't often act the same way twice, because once they've been
13 found out to do one thing, they don't necessarily continue to
14 do that activity, and so you're constantly trying to keep up
15 and understand what potential new things are happening. No
16 one, before the U.S. presidential election thought that
17 Russia was using Facebook and Twitter and posing as Americans
18 through their bought farms at the Internet Research Agency in
19 Saint Petersburg. All of that was learned after the fact.
20 So it was really important to have that understanding in
21 order to develop a plan to protect ourselves as best as we
22 can.

23 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** I appreciate the helpful
24 answer. And so just to disentangle that a bit so that we
25 have an understanding, when you say you were being briefed at
26 a high level of what was happening in Canada, is it fair to
27 say that you were being briefed on the way in which foreign
28 interference happens, the modes, who the players might be in

1 the Canadian landscape, but not necessarily on specific
2 events, just so ---

3 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah, so it would be high
4 level in the sense of which are the foreign actors that try
5 to engage the most in foreign interference activities, and
6 some of the ways in which the agencies would have seen them
7 try to do that. So there was an understanding of what the
8 threats are in Canada. I would say that, generally speaking,
9 and as I mentioned in my previous answer, it is known that
10 there have been attempts to interfere in Canadian democracy
11 since the beginning of Confederation, but I would say that
12 our intelligence agencies are, you know, I think quite adept
13 at trying to monitor that, and if they are able to then share
14 that information with the RCMP, whose job it would be then if
15 they have the evidence to act upon it.

16 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. So if I'm -- I think
17 I understand your testimony to be that you did have some
18 understanding of the ways in which FI operated here, who the
19 risk -- or, sorry, who the threat actors might be. And so
20 over the course of the last few weeks in this Commission,
21 we've learned that foreign interference can be very discreet
22 events that perhaps on their own don't add up to very much,
23 but in the aggregate do. Did you have a similar
24 understanding of foreign interference at the time that you
25 developed this particular threshold and plan?

26 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes, could be. However,
27 I would say that the emphasis on this plan was certainly with
28 regards to cyber security, but also understanding the

1 entirety of how foreign actors could interfere in an
2 electoral event and ensuring that the respective agencies
3 have the tools that they needed to be able to act upon it
4 when they had the evidence to act upon it.

5 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. So it does sound
6 like you had a similar understanding that perhaps, you know,
7 one WeChat post doesn't much, but you add them all up
8 together and there's a collective impact of that.

9 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Could be or could not be.

10 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Right.

11 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Right? Everything is
12 context specific, and every -- you know, it's very hard to
13 say that this one particular thing might have an impact or --
14 as I was saying in my testimony earlier, the threshold, for
15 example, for the panel was very high, but it could have been
16 something that happened in one riding, or it could have been
17 something that happened at a national level. It would be
18 completely context specific.

19 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** That's fair. So then given
20 how context specific everything is, and you have that same
21 understanding, did you consider a sliding scale approach that
22 could adapt to that context, so that the threshold wasn't so
23 high, but perhaps if it were triggered at different levels, a
24 different level of response could ---

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** So I'll just push back
26 gently a bit because ---

27 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Sure.

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** --- again, you can't

1 really have a sliding scale because, again, you can't really
2 imagine exactly what's going to happen during the election,
3 because as I said, threat actors are going to change. For
4 example, they're watching these proceedings right now, and
5 are likely going to be changing how they're acting in Canada
6 as they're seeing how we are responding in this very setting.

7 So the panel did a series of tabletop
8 exercises to imagine different scenarios, right, the SITE
9 Task Force imagined different scenarios and how they might
10 react, but again, it will all depend on that exact moment,
11 what is happening, and the context in which it is happening.
12 So it's -- you can't really have a rubric to say if X, then Y
13 and Z, because if you did, you might end up interfering in an
14 election that you maybe didn't need to in terms of saying
15 something publicly because the context will depend on what is
16 happening in that moment. So I know that you would like to
17 have a rubric and a box that says this is what you need to
18 act when, but it's really important that there's that
19 discretion and that judgment in place before something is
20 made public.

21 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Actually, I will agree with
22 you that a rubric in a box is probably not possible given the
23 amount of ways in which you could interfere, but what I mean
24 more is sort of a sliding scale in the way that the national
25 terrorism threat levels exist. There's different threat
26 levels and there are different responses as a result. And so
27 not only would you have a sliding scale with respect to when
28 to respond, but how to respond, so that you're not

1 necessarily interfering -- and, again, not at the minutia of,
2 you know, if X happens, you do Y, leaving, of course, a great
3 degree of discretion, but that way there's no under or
4 overreaction to a particular ---

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I don't think you would
6 ever be able to determine if there's an under and
7 overreaction because of the nature of an election, when
8 emotions are so high, when the outcome is so personal to so
9 many people, and it has such a great impact on the country
10 that you're going to be able to be in a place where everyone
11 says, oh, because you followed the sliding scale, we're okay
12 with it. That's kind of the crux of the Obama dilemma. He
13 saw what was happening, understood what was happening, didn't
14 feel that he could say something because he was worried that
15 by the very fact of saying something publicly, he would have
16 an outcome on -- he would have an impact on the outcome. And
17 so what I would say to you is that those rubrics, those
18 responses, on a more granular level already exist within the
19 agencies, and they already have ways to deal with things that
20 happen on a more minor level, and they make those decisions
21 as to how and when to respond and react in a way that
22 hopefully doesn't further compromise the national security of
23 Canada and of Canadians, but also, the integrity of the
24 electoral process.

25 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** I really do appreciate your
26 answer, and despite the follow up, I doubt I can ask a
27 question in eight seconds, so thank you so much for your
28 testimony.

1 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

3 Counsel for Michael Chong?

4 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

5 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:**

6 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Good morning,
7 Commissioner. Good morning, Ms. Gould.

8 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Good morning.

9 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Ms. Morgan asked you
10 about consultation with political parties regarding the
11 Critical Election Incident Public Protocol. You remember
12 that?

13 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I do.

14 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** And I believe your
15 evidence is, and you correct me if I'm wrong, but your
16 evidence on that was we presented it to them. And I had -- I
17 want to ask you if you'd agree that presenting a plan is
18 quite different from meaningful consultation on a plan.

19 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** So we had conversations
20 first before the plan was presented. And I'll take you back
21 to my testimony earlier with Ms. Morgan where I said the
22 first conversations we had were likely in the fall of 2017,
23 and the plan was made public in January of 2019.

24 So throughout that period of time, there were
25 ongoing conversations with the political parties. First to
26 understand what some of their issues and challenges were to
27 get their level of comfort. So for example, one of the
28 pieces was CSE offered to do technical audits of their

1 systems. I don't think a single political party agreed to
2 that, because they didn't want the Government to go in there.
3 But they did say one thing that would be helpful would be to
4 have a list of trusted vendors.

5 So there was a continuous dialogue and
6 engagement as we were building the plan, and then it was
7 presented in its final stage when it was public in the winter
8 of 2019.

9 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** That's helpful. And I
10 just want to make sure that we have your evidence, because my
11 specific concern is not on the plan as a whole, but is on the
12 Panel of Five, the Critical Election Incident Public
13 Protocol. And so I believe that's what, in response to Ms.
14 Morgan's question, you said we presented it to them. And I'm
15 wondering on that, on the Panel of Five, was there meaningful
16 consultation with the political parties? Or was the plan
17 just presented to them as you had created it?

18 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I couldn't tell you the
19 exact conversations, because the conversation that I had
20 specifically was in the fall of 2017, and then after that, it
21 would have been at the staff level.

22 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Okay. And so can you
23 point to any specific suggestions made by opposition parties
24 that made their way into the Cabinet Directive on the Panel?

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** There was a general
26 acceptance, and I didn't receive any pushback at the time
27 that public servants were -- there was no push back that
28 these public servants be on that panel.

1 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Okay. And I have a
2 question about the public servants on the Panel. You say
3 that -- so the Panel is the Clerk, the NSIA, and three Deputy
4 Ministers; correct? You say that they're all non-partisan.
5 And we certainly would expect them to be. But you also
6 referred to them as independent. So I want to ask a question
7 about that. Would you agree there's an important difference
8 between a non-partisan at-pleasure appointee and a public
9 office with true institutional independence from government?

10 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I would say that as your
11 client was Minister of Democratic Reform who served under --
12 who served alongside and was served by the professional non-
13 partisan public service, that they are independent in the
14 advice that they provide to government, they are loyal in the
15 implementation of it, but I have very, very strong confidence
16 in our public service that they serve the government of the
17 time, but they serve equally well, regardless of what the
18 partisan colour of that government is.

19 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** And I appreciate that,
20 but that's not quite my question, which is just there's a key
21 difference between an at-pleasure appointee who can be
22 removed and an office with institutional independence. I can
23 give you a couple examples. Judges would be an example.
24 They cannot be removed. The Office of the Chief Electoral
25 Officer of Elections Canada, who serves a ten-year non-
26 renewable term, has institutional independence. You'd agree
27 there's a difference between that kind of institutional
28 independence and at-pleasure Deputy Minister appointees?

1 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I think that what you're
2 getting at is not quite appropriate, in the sense of public
3 servants are non-partisan. And while, yes, they -- the very
4 heads of them could be removed, it is not something that I
5 think is the right way to frame this, because they are
6 responsible, first and foremost, to protecting Canada. That
7 is their job. And protecting the institution of government.
8 And that is something that they take very seriously. And
9 they are not partisan in nature.

10 And particularly during the Caretaker period,
11 which is a longstanding convention in Canadian governance,
12 they take on the role of a government at that time. And
13 particularly in this Cabinet Directive, they are given that
14 authority. If you look at the Cabinet Directive, yes, they
15 inform the Prime Minister, but they also have to inform the
16 other political parties as well to make sure that this is
17 something that is fair and information that is being received
18 by everyone ahead of it being made public.

19 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** So I appreciate all
20 that. I just want to try one more time, because I have your
21 evidence on the non-partisanship, and I'm not asking
22 questions about that. I'm wanting to ask questions on the
23 independence.

24 So perhaps I can put it this way. There's a
25 difference between an at pleasure appointee who can be
26 removed at pleasure and the institutional independence that
27 say a judge or the Chief Electoral Officer of Elections
28 Canada has? You'd acknowledge ---

1 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** There -- yes, there is a
2 difference. However, in this instance, these are very
3 professional individuals who take their job of being non-
4 partisan professional public servants very seriously and
5 whose primary responsibility is protecting Canadians, Canada,
6 and their governing institution.

7 **MR. FRASER HARLAND:** Thank you, Minister
8 Gould. That's very helpful.

9 Thank you, Commissioner.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

11 Counsel for Erin O'Toole.

12 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

13 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:**

14 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Good morning, Minister
15 Gould. My name is Tom Jarmyn. I'm counsel for Erin O'Toole.

16 So let's go back to the Panel of Five and the
17 threshold, which I'm sure everybody will regret me getting
18 into.

19 You said -- and the Panel of Five, as said,
20 it was a high threshold, they said need reliable information,
21 your words this morning, they needed to be certain. Is that
22 correct?

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

24 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So it's by design you've
25 got that particular way.

26 I would submit to you that in fact what
27 you've done is you've institutionalized the Obama dilemma.
28 On October 7th, 2016, the Obama Administration actually told

1 the American public that Russia was interfering in the
2 election. And the subsequent criticism of him and his
3 Administration was that he took so long to do it while they
4 were looking for certainty. Are you aware of that?

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I've read all of the
6 public information about it.

7 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay. But you're aware
8 that in fact the Obama Administration did alert the U.S.
9 citizenry about intervention in the 2016 election prior to
10 the election?

11 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I don't recall exactly
12 that comment.

13 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay.

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah.

15 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay. Can we go to your
16 witness statement, WIT 62 at paragraph 7?

17 Now, the second paragraph, this is the
18 discussion about the -- your initiatives with Facebook,
19 Microsoft, and Twitter in order to come to a voluntary, I
20 guess, regime to address information manipulation.

21 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** M'hm.

22 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And those were -- did you
23 negotiate with any other platforms? Or did you approach any
24 other platforms?

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Facebook, Microsoft,
26 Twitter, and Google were the main interlocutors. I know that
27 PCO approached other social media platforms, but it was
28 harder to engage with them because they didn't have

1 representatives in Canada.

2 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay. So no one
3 approached Tencent about WeChat?

4 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I don't think they had an
5 office in Canada at the time. And I would say at the time in
6 2019, the primary focus was really on Russia.

7 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay. I'll put those
8 other questions to other individuals then.

9 I'd like to look at paragraph 11 of the
10 witness summary.

11 And you speak there about interference in the
12 nomination process. And I see the statement that:

13 "...alleged interference in a
14 nomination process would not be
15 significant enough to question the
16 integrity of an election in its
17 entirety."

18 But it would be sufficient enough to question
19 the integrity of the election in the particular riding;
20 wouldn't it?

21 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well there are agencies
22 that already have responsibility for that specific instance.
23 So political parties are responsible for nominations.
24 Elections Canada has rules and laws already and the ---

25 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** How -- sorry, excuse me.
26 How is Elections Canada responsible in nominations process?

27 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well ---

28 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** Just a reminder, my

1 friend is not entitled to cross-examine on a witness
2 statement, pursuant to your rules in this matter. He can ask
3 for clarification. He can use the statement as a basis to
4 form a set of questions. But he's not entitled to cross-
5 examine on a particular statement in the witness summary.

6 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Well so the ---

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So rephrase your
8 question, I think.

9 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** I was going to say, in
10 that statement, it's said that Elections Canada --

11 "...the remits of the affected
12 political party, Elections Canada [...]
13 and/or the [RCMP]..."

14 How is Elections Canada -- just within the
15 remit of Elections Canada, the ---

16 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, for a nomination
17 process, it would be the political party itself that is
18 responsible and, of course, if they were breaking the law by
19 having, let's say, foreign money involved, which would be
20 illegal under the *Canada Elections Act*, then the RCMP or the
21 police of jurisdiction would have the authority to act on
22 that.

23 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So I was going to say,
24 Elections Canada is the financial operation of the campaign
25 and the RCMP, it's acts of fraud or things like that.

26 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, as you know, we
27 have a separation of government and law enforcement in this
28 country, so yes, the RCMP would respond if it was known a law

1 was broken or suspected a law was broken.

2 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And just going to the
3 threshold for another second, with respect to the balancing
4 of these things, we see the effect on discourse at the
5 general level on the election, at the riding level, but what
6 about the effect on political discourse?

7 If foreign interference affects the political
8 discourse, is that an impact on our election?

9 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Context specific, again,
10 so it could be. Certainly what we saw in the U.S.
11 Presidential election, it was.

12 Again, though, as anyone who has run in an
13 election, the information ecosystem is quite chaotic during a
14 writ period and so to be able to determine if it was foreign
15 interference that caused a change in the discourse or it was
16 something else, a statement by a politician, a policy from a
17 political party, a platform from a political party, you know,
18 there needs -- it's hard to determine which one of those
19 things might be the most affected. However, that's where the
20 involvement of the intelligence agencies and intelligence
21 that they see impacting something would then be submitted to
22 the panel to make that judgment call.

23 But again, it's very context specific and
24 it's one of the biggest challenges and one of the reasons why
25 I believe, you know, Russia, particularly in the lead-up to
26 the 2016 election, used social media so effectively, but you
27 can't necessarily say that Russia was responsible or their
28 information caused the outcome of the 2016 election because,

1 remember, at the end of the day, I believe this very
2 strongly, we need to protect Canadian citizens to give them
3 the tools and the information to make informed decisions.
4 And at the end of the day, if they go into that ballot box
5 and no one has told them how to vote or is holding them to
6 vote a certain way or bribing them a certain -- or bribing
7 them, but rather, they are going and making a decision based
8 on the information that they have. That vote is valid and
9 the outcome of that vote is valid because that is a decision
10 a Canadian has made.

11 And so to be able to determine specifically
12 that they got there because of one specific element in the
13 election is quite challenging, which is why the threshold was
14 set so high and why the intervention of the panel needed to
15 be taken with the seriousness with which I think it was
16 taken.

17 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

19 Counsel for the Conservative Party, Me De
20 Luca.

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

22 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:**

23 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Thank you. Good morning.

24 I'm going to quote from your 2017 mandate
25 letter from the Prime Minister, which says:

26 "As Minister of Democratic
27 Institutions, your overarching goal is
28 [or was] to strengthen the openness and

1 fairness of Canada's public
2 institutions and also to restore
3 Canadians' trust and participation in
4 our democratic processes." (As read)
5 Do you recall that or do you recall those
6 words?

7 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Would you be able to show
8 them to me?

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** I would, but I don't have
10 a note right now of the document. It was part of it.

11 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** If you could show it to
12 me, that would be helpful.

13 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sure.

14 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** It's COM 18.

15 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** And do you know which
16 paragraph?

17 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Scroll up.

18 Well, why don't we do it this way? Do you
19 believe that the prospect of foreign interference, to the
20 extent -- and to the extent that it actually took place in
21 our elections, is contrary to the mandate that the Prime
22 Minister charged you with?

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Sorry. Could you repeat
24 that?

25 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sure.

26 To the extent that foreign interference
27 actually took place in the 2019, that would have been
28 contrary to what you were charged with safeguarding against

1 in your mandate.

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, my job was to come
3 up with a plan and a policy to try as best as possible to
4 prevent foreign interference. It doesn't mean that there
5 weren't ongoing attempts, as I mentioned at the outset, of
6 foreign interference throughout all elections.

7 But perhaps I can just get to your first
8 point because one of the reasons why I was mandated to
9 restore trust in democracy was because at the time, we were -
10 - when we were elected, it was after the *Fair Elections Act*
11 that the current Leader of the Opposition had put in place
12 which actually reduced citizens' ability to cast their
13 ballots, and that was the primary overarching objective, was
14 to make sure that every Canadian citizen would be able to
15 cast their ballot, be able to participate in our democracy
16 and have confidence in the process.

17 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Can I ask that MMC0020 be
18 pulled up?

19 And do you have it in front of you?

20 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. MMC 20:**

21 CSIS Briefings and Intelligence
22 Products on PRC Foreign Interference
23 in the 2019 and 2021 General
24 Elections

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I think so.

26 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And this appears to be a
27 summary of the CSIS briefings in the possession of the Privy
28 Council Officer relating to PRC foreign interference in the

1 2019 and 2021 General Elections and a general description of
2 those documents.

3 And can -- by my count, between June 2018 and
4 August 2019, you received seven briefings on foreign election
5 interference. Does that sound right?

6 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes. And I would just
7 gently correct you in the sense that I'm not sure this is
8 specifically related to the PRC. It would have been an
9 overall look at foreign interference generally from a variety
10 of actors.

11 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Well, the heading
12 actually says PRC. Do you dispute that?

13 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I don't see that.

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** At the top, "CSIS
15 Briefings and Intelligence Products on PRC Foreign
16 Interference". This is the heading of the document.

17 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Okay, sorry. I didn't
18 see that.

19 But I would just say that those briefings
20 that I would have received would have been general with
21 regards to a variety of actors.

22 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And safe to say
23 that, at least as a result of those briefings, you were well
24 aware of the issue of foreign interference in Canadian
25 elections?

26 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I would say that to make
27 the statement that there is foreign interference in Canadian
28 elections is not entirely accurate. I would say that what

1 these briefings suggested to me or provided to me was an
2 overview of attempted foreign interference broadly around the
3 world as well as activities that potentially could be
4 observed here in Canada.

5 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** So you received -- let me
6 get this straight. You received seven briefings on foreign
7 interference. Are you suggesting that as a result of those
8 seven briefings, you weren't convinced that any foreign
9 interference in the ---

10 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I did not say that.

11 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Let me finish the
12 question, please.

13 Are you suggesting that you weren't convinced
14 that any foreign interference had taken place in connection
15 with the Canadian elections process?

16 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** What I said was they
17 would show me -- they would share information with me of what
18 potential interference could be of activities that they had
19 seen as attempts and things that we needed to be aware of in
20 terms of what could possibly happen during an election.

21 Certainly I was the Minister of Democratic
22 Institutions before the 2021 election and for a very brief
23 period of time after the 2019 election.

24 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** You're not suggesting
25 that attempts at foreign interference have to be successful
26 and have to actually materially impact the result before
27 they're taken seriously, or they're dealt with?

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I'm not. And, in fact,

1 we are here right now today because we took attempts at
2 foreign interference very seriously. It's why I was mandated
3 to do it in 2017, and it's why I came up with that plan to
4 protect Canadian democracy, and we did take it extremely
5 seriously. It's why we're here today. It's why we're
6 actually looking at documents that were prepared with regards
7 to foreign interference, something I will note that previous
8 Conservative governments didn't do.

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Can I ask you to turn up
10 CAN 004252?

11 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 4252:**

12 Security Brief for Minister Gould

13 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And this indicates that
14 it's a briefing or a -- it's a briefing or a security brief
15 that you would have received in or about October 29, 2019
16 from CSIS. Did you, in fact receive this briefing?

17 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I did receive a briefing
18 following the 2019 election. I couldn't confirm the date
19 with you, and I have only seen this particular document in
20 preparation for today's proceedings.

21 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** If we could perhaps
22 scroll to page 3 of this document? October 29, 2019 would
23 have been after the 2019 election; correct?

24 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Correct.

25 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And at the bottom
26 of page 3, there's a discussion of a China threat update; you
27 see that? And part of it has been redacted?

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** M'hm.

1 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Do you recall being
2 updated with respect to the China threat on or about October
3 29, 2019 after the general election?

4 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I would have been briefed
5 at a very high level that they were monitoring the
6 activities.

7 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And within or just
8 I guess it's after the third redacted box, there's the tail
9 end of an explanation regarding what it says,

10 "...limited specific incidents
11 suggestive of FI which were briefed
12 to relevant clients (GC and political
13 parties) during the writ period
14 (e.g., Don Valley)."

15 Do you recall receiving that briefing or that
16 information as part of this October 29, 2019 ---

17 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** It would have been ---

18 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** --- brief?

19 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** --- a high level. I
20 wouldn't have received the specifics about Don Valley and
21 would have said something to the effect of limited activity
22 viewed, action taken, but it wouldn't have been to that
23 specific level.

24 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. So I just want to
25 be clear though, what you just described as what you would
26 have received would have been only at this briefing, or are
27 you saying ---

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** It would have been all of

1 the briefings. It would have -- it was high level. I was
2 never given specifics about candidates, parties, locations or
3 individuals.

4 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Were you given specifics
5 as part of this briefing?

6 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

7 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Were you given
8 generalities relating to voting irregularities for Don Valley
9 North ---

10 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

11 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** --- prior to this
12 briefing?

13 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** You have to let me
15 finish.

16 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Oh, well, okay, no.

17 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Those are my
18 questions. Thank you very much.

19 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

20 Me Sirois for RCDA?

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

22 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Good morning.

24 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Minister Gould, you
25 mentioned during your examination-in-Chief that a primary
26 national interest of Russia imposed inciting chaos within
27 democratic nations; right?

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** One of them, yes.

1 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Including the 43rd and
2 44 general election?

3 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I wouldn't know that
4 specific for those elections because I was not the Minister
5 of Democratic Institutions at the time, but what I can say is
6 it doesn't necessarily mean that that was their objective in
7 Canada, but that has been one of their objectives in terms of
8 why they engage in cyber activities during election periods
9 and democracies.

10 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So, sorry, your
11 evidence is that Russia has an objective and to -- in
12 interfering -- on the national interest in interfering in
13 democratic nations, but perhaps not Canada?

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Could -- Canada is a
15 democratic nation. It's a member of NATO, and so, therefore,
16 we need to be alert and aware. It doesn't mean that Canada
17 is necessarily the main focus, but certainly what we see in
18 democratic countries around the world, one of the objectives
19 that Russia has is creating chaos.

20 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Maybe that Canada is
21 not the main focus, but it's certainly one of, therefore, the
22 focus?

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I couldn't necessarily
24 say that. I mean, it would -- we would have to have evidence
25 of that, and I'm not sure that that's something that I'm
26 allowed to talk about.

27 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Yes, that's the thing.
28 My question's not about whether we have evidence or not. My

1 question is more on Russia's intent in interfering ---

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** M'hm.

3 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** --- in democratic
4 nations as you testified about this morning. And so I'll
5 just ask the question again, just to be sure I understand.
6 Are you saying that Russia does not interfere in Canada, or
7 does not have the intent of interfering in Canada, but has
8 the intent of interfering in other democratic nations?

9 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I think Russia has the
10 intent of interfering in most democratic nations,
11 particularly, those that are members of NATO.

12 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** But not the 43rd and
13 44 general election in Canada?

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I wouldn't be able to
15 say. I wasn't -- I was Minister of Democratic Institutions
16 before those events took place.

17 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Understand.

18 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** But certainly, Russia was
19 something that we were concerned about, which is why we
20 created this whole infrastructure to protect our elections.

21 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** You suspecting that
22 Russia may have an intention ---

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Be prepared.

24 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Yeah.

25 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah.

26 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. And I wanted to
27 move now to the threshold just with the little time I have
28 left. There's a degree of subjectivity when determining

1 whether the high threshold has been met; right? That's why
2 you have five different panel members.

3 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah.

4 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Yes?

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes.

6 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Is it possible that
7 for different members of the Canadian public also there's
8 different conceptions of what a high threshold is? I'm
9 thinking in particular with respect to diaspora members. For
10 instance, maybe a pro-democracy diaspora member may think
11 that the high threshold has been met by a certain situation,
12 but that may -- same conclusion may not be reached by the
13 Panel of Five?

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Certainly. I think for
15 different actors, there would be different expectations as to
16 when that is met, but that's why we created a Panel of Five,
17 so that they could have that conversation and determine when
18 to make a public announcement.

19 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So ---

20 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Because it is a very
21 complicated, emotional, high-energy moment that has a huge
22 impact, so that's why it was important to be able to have a
23 group that could make that determination.

24 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** But it's possible that
25 the group concludes that there's a -- the high threshold
26 hasn't been met, although with the same information, so one
27 from a diaspora group may conclude that the high threshold
28 has been met?

1 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I guess what I would say
2 to that is that those -- the panel is put in place
3 specifically to determine if that threshold meets the fact
4 that a free and fair election has been compromised, the
5 ability to have one, and that it's in the national interest
6 to release this information publicly.

7 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, I know why the
8 Panel of Five has been created. That's clear and thanks to
9 you. I just want to understand whether it's possible for the
10 panel to reach one conclusion with respect to a threshold and
11 a member of the diaspora community to reach a different
12 conclusion with respect to ---

13 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, in ---

14 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** --- a threshold.

15 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** --- with all due respect,
16 I'm -- the member of the diaspora community is not
17 necessarily charged with protecting Canada's democracy, and
18 so their understanding of when and what to say publicly may
19 be different. I will certainly grant you that, but I think
20 what's important here is that we have a group of the highest-
21 ranking public servants in the country who determine when
22 that needs to be released publicly.

23 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Well, I'm out of time,
24 but I thank you ---

25 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes. Counsel for the --
26 for UCC?

27 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

28 **MR. JON DOODY :**

1 **MR. JON DOODY:** Good morning, Minister Gould.

2 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Good morning.

3 **MR. JON DOODY:** It's Jon Doody. I'm counsel
4 for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. We've heard from you
5 and others that the motivation to create the plan to protect
6 Canada's democracy was due to Russia's interference in the
7 U.S. and around the world. From when you got that mandate in
8 2017 and leading up to the 2019 election, did you see that
9 concern decrease or increase from Russia specifically?

10 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, I'm not sure I can
11 comment on specific intelligence.

12 **MR. JON DOODY:** No, but what I mean is Russia
13 as a country.

14 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** But what I can say is --
15 well, I think that would maybe be classified information, but
16 what I can say is that I remained very concerned as I
17 continued to learn, that this is something that Canada needed
18 to do, and we needed to make sure that we had a plan and a
19 process in place.

20 **MR. JON DOODY:** Right. And you stated in
21 your testimony this morning that in every election there's
22 been attempts at foreign interference, but whether they're
23 successful or not is another issue.

24 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** M'hm.

25 **MR. JON DOODY:** So do you believe that there
26 are attempts by Russia to interfere in the 2019 and '21
27 election in Canada?

28 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I don't think I can

1 comment on that.

2 **MR. JON DOODY:** So you believe that every
3 election there's attempts, but you don't know about these two
4 with Russia?

5 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Well, yeah, I don't think
6 I can comment.

7 **MR. JON DOODY:** And you said in response to a
8 question for counsel for Mr. O'Toole that as long as a
9 Canadian voter -- make sure I understand this -- goes to the
10 voter box with their own understanding of the issues without
11 direct foreign interference, that that was a valid vote.

12 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yes. I mean, if you
13 consider an election -- a writ period, there's a lot of
14 information that is spread even by domestic actors that is
15 not necessarily true. But the fact of the matter is, is, you
16 know, unless you can tie it specifically to a foreign actor
17 it's hard to determine that that is what made them cast that
18 ballot.

19 So one of the reasons why one of the pillars
20 in the plan to protect democracy was about informing citizens
21 is so that citizens can have the tools to be able to identify
22 information, see valid sources. And that's also the reason
23 why we invited the NATO StratCom to come talk to Canadian
24 journalists as well, so that they, as arbiters of
25 information, can hopefully provide the best sources to
26 Canadian citizens.

27 **MR. JON DOODY:** In that scenario, if the
28 understanding of that voter is incorrect due to

1 misinformation or disinformation being spread by a foreign
2 state, would that vote still be valid?

3 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Is that citizen casts
4 that ballot, yes, and they were not forced to cast that
5 ballot. I mean, at the end of the day, Canadian citizens
6 make decisions on their votes based on a wide range of
7 issues, a wide range of access to information. There's
8 plenty of stuff out there now that's false that's informing
9 people that's spread by domestic actors, right?

10 So at the end of the day, if a Canadian has
11 made that decision, that their vote is valid. What we are
12 trying to do, or what I was trying to do was to set up an
13 infrastructure to enable Canadians to make informed choices
14 and have an understanding of where that information was
15 coming from.

16 **MR. JON DOODY:** Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Counsel for Human Rights
18 Coalition.

19 **(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

20 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

21 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:**

22 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Good morning.

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Good morning.

24 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** If the Court Operator
25 could please pull up HRC 31? This is the Liberal Party of
26 Canada Bylaw governing procedure for the Permanent Appeals
27 Committee.

28 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. HRC 31:**

1 LPC Procedure for the Permanent
2 Appeals Committee, Bylaw 9

3 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And if we could jump to
4 3.1 at the bottom of page 1?

5 It states that:

6 "two (2) Co-Chairs, [are] appointed
7 by the National Board, with the
8 consent of the Leader..."

9 Minister, would that be the Leader of the
10 Liberal Party of Canada?

11 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** So I will just say that
12 before appearing here, I have never read this bylaw before.
13 I would assume it's the Leader of the Liberal Party of
14 Canada, but this was, I think, more a question for the Party
15 apparatus as opposed to a Minister.

16 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Okay, we can move on.

17 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Yeah.

18 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Could we please pull up
19 next CAN 4079_R01? And if we could go to the top of page 2,
20 please? Thank you.

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 4079 R01:**

22 CAN004079_R01

23 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** It reads:

24 "The PRC is known to target and/or
25 leverage family as part of its FI
26 [meaning foreign interference] and
27 other threat activity, through
28 Operations FOXHUNT and SKYNET, for

1 example. The PRC could potentially
2 threaten or intimidate [redacted]."

3 What are your thoughts on this, Minister?

4 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Sorry; could you go to
5 the top of this briefing note for me? I'm not sure I ---

6 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And my apologies; the
7 document, it doesn't have identification in the database as
8 to what intelligence body prepared it, so I'm not able to
9 tell you.

10 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Okay. Yeah, I'm not sure
11 I've seen this document before. If that's the correct date,
12 then that's after the time that I was Minister of Democratic
13 Institutions.

14 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Would you be able to
15 speak from -- you know, my understanding is that you have
16 received high-level briefings about actors involved in
17 potential foreign interference and the ways that they engage
18 in that foreign interference. Would you be able to speak to
19 the issue of the PRC targeting and/or leveraging families as
20 part of the foreign interference -- that's foreign
21 interference in your role before that? Are you able to speak
22 about it more generally?

23 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I can speak more
24 generally about my time as Minister of Democratic
25 Institutions. This is something that I have not seen before
26 or been presented with.

27 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Have you been presented
28 with information that speaks to the PRC leveraging or

1 threatening family?

2 HON. KARINA GOULD: No.

3 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: Okay. So your answer is
4 simply you aren't in a position to discuss or answer
5 questions ---

6 HON. KARINA GOULD: Correct.

7 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: --- because you have not
8 received information about this issue?

9 HON. KARINA GOULD: Correct.

10 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: Okay, thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you.

12 AG?

13 MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS: Good morning,
14 Commissioner.

15 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

16 MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:

17 MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS: Good morning,
18 Minister. I just have two clarification questions.

19 You were taken to -- and we can pull this up
20 if we need to; you were taken to CAN 004252, which is a
21 security briefing dated October 29, 2019, which you -- I
22 believe your testimony was you weren't sure if you remembered
23 that the security briefing took place on that date.

24 HON. KARINA GOULD: Correct.

25 MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS: And you were asked
26 about -- you recall being asked about your state of knowledge
27 regarding Don Valley North?

28 HON. KARINA GOULD: (Nods "Yes").

1 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** Can you just confirm
2 for the record, as Minister of Democratic Institutions, did
3 you have responsibility and/or accountability to address any
4 alleged incidents of foreign interference that would have
5 flowed ---

6 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

7 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** --- in respect of
8 Don Valley North?

9 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** No.

10 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** And can you tell us
11 which Minister or which portfolio might have been
12 responsible?

13 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** I would think it would be
14 the Minister of Public Safety; however, I believe that that
15 would -- if there was something that happened, that that
16 would be the purview of the RCMP because they would be the
17 ones that would respond in such instance because of a ---

18 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** Thank you, Minister.

19 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** --- yeah.

20 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

21 Re-examination?

22 **MS. LYNDA MORGAN:** None.

23 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So it's -- we'll break
24 for 20 -- we are starting with another witness, so I think it
25 will be 11:30. Thank you very much.

26 **HON. KARINA GOULD:** Thank you.

27 **(WITNESS WITHDRAWS/LE TÉMOIN SE RETIRE)**

28 **THE REGISTRAR:** This sitting of the Foreign

1 Interference Commission is now in recess until 11:20. Cette
2 séance est en pause jusqu'à 11 h 20.

3 Oh, correction; 11:30. Correction; 11 h 30.

4 --- Upon recessing at 11:20 a.m./

5 --- La séance est suspendue à 11 h 20

6 --- Upon resuming at 11:30 a.m./

7 --- La séance est reprise à 11 h 30

8 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il
9 vous plaît.

10 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
11 Commission is now back in session. Cette séance de la
12 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère a repris.

13 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Good morning, Madam
14 Justice.

15 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Good morning.
16 Mr. Cameron, you will conduct the
17 examination?

18 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Good morning, Madam
19 Commissioner. We have Minister William Blair.

20 Can I have the witness sworn or affirmed,
21 please.

22 **THE REGISTRAR:** Do you wish to be sworn? You
23 may sit.

24 Could you please state your name and spell
25 your last name for the record, please?

26 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** My name is William
27 Sterling Blair. My surname is spelled B-l-a-i-r.

28 **THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

1 --- HON. WILLIAM BLAIR, Sworn/Assermenté:

2 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you very much, sir.

3 You may proceed.

4 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN CHEF PAR

5 MR. GORDON CAMERON:

6 MR. GORDON CAMERON: Good morning,
7 Minister Blair.

8 I wonder if the court operator could pull up
9 WIT 64.

10 --- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO. WIT 64:

11 Public Interview Summary: the
12 Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of
13 National Defence

14 MR. GORDON CAMERON: And while he is doing
15 that, Minister Blair, I'll ask you if you remember that you
16 were interviewed by Commission Counsel on February 21st, and
17 then examined *in-camera* by Commission Counsel. And that we
18 have on the screen now the public interview summary that was
19 prepared in respect of your interview.

20 And can you tell me, did you have a chance to
21 review that document, the public version of it?

22 HON. WILLIAM BLAIR: Yes. Thank you,
23 Mr. Cameron. I do, of course, recall that I attended both
24 meetings. I have had the opportunity to review the interview
25 summaries, both the public interview and the *in-camera*
26 interview.

27 MR. GORDON CAMERON: Thank you. And were
28 they accurate?

1 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir.

2 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Do you have any
3 corrections you'd like to make now?

4 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, sir. I believe
5 they're an accurate reflection of the conversations that we
6 had.

7 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Okay. And do you adopt
8 them as your evidence in this proceeding?

9 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I do, sir.

10 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you.

11 If you could begin, Minister Blair, mindful
12 that we are a little bit constrained by time this morning,
13 but begin by giving us your role in public life and how you
14 arrived at the position of Minister of Public Safety.

15 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir. I'll try to
16 be brief. I became a Toronto police officer in 1976, and I
17 performed a number of wide variety of functions within
18 policing, including in criminal intelligence and organised
19 crime. I, in 2005, was appointed the Chief of the Toronto
20 Police Service, and I held that position as the Chief of, I
21 believe, the largest police service in Canada, for
22 approximately 10 years until April of 2026 (sic). During
23 that period of time, I also served as the President of the
24 Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario
25 Association of Chiefs of Police, and many other national and
26 international organisations.

27 I retired from my policing career in -- on
28 April 26th, 2015. I then sought the nomination to run for

1 federal politics in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. I
2 was elected on April 19th, or excuse me, October 19th of
3 2015, and became a Member of Parliament.

4 In July of 2018, I was appointed to Privy
5 Council and the Cabinet of Canada as the Minister of Border
6 Security and Organised Crime Reduction. I then, following
7 the election of 2019, I was appointed in November of 2019 as
8 the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.
9 Following the 2023 election, I was -- excuse me, the 2021
10 election, we didn't have one in '23, in 2021 election, I was
11 appointed the Minister of Emergency Preparedness for Canada,
12 and in July of last year, the Prime Minister appointed me as
13 Canada's Minister of National Defence, the position that I
14 currently hold.

15 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you. And if I can
16 just capture from within that chronology, if I understand
17 correctly you were Minister of Public Safety from about
18 November of 2019, so shortly after the 2019 election, until
19 about October of 2021. Is that correct?

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yeah. Yes, sir. I held
21 that position until I was appointed to a new position, and
22 another individual was appointed in -- after -- following the
23 election of 2021 to the position of Public Safety.

24 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you. Now, we had
25 the benefit of hearing yesterday from senior personnel from
26 the Department of Public Security. So what I'd like to ask
27 you about is your perspective from the Minister's chair,
28 being the Minister of that department and the responsible

1 person for the various agencies who report to the Minister,
2 could you describe that for the Commissioner, please?

3 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Again, I'll attempt to
4 do it briefly. As the Minister of Public Safety, I had a
5 number of responsibilities. Primarily, I was the Minister of
6 the Department of Public Safety, which is headed by a deputy
7 minister, but there are also five agencies for which I had
8 ministerial oversight and responsibility. That included the
9 RCMP, the Canadian Border Services, CSIS, Corrections Canada
10 and the Parole Board. In addition, there are a number of
11 other review bodies pertaining to those organisations for
12 which I also had ministerial responsibility.

13 There is legislation with respect to the
14 position of Minister of Public Safety, defining some of those
15 responsibilities, and in addition, each of the five agencies
16 has foundational legislation that prescribes their
17 authorities but also defines the role of the Minister in
18 relation to those organisations.

19 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you for that. And
20 if you could just describe, then, in general terms how you
21 would relate or interact with, for example, the Director of
22 the Service or the Commissioner of the RCMP, how you as
23 Minister would relate to the heads of the various agencies
24 for which you were responsible?

25 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yeah, I had a very close
26 relationship with the heads of each of the agencies. My
27 primary point of contact in the Ministry was the Deputy
28 Minister of Public Safety, Mr. Rob Stewart, throughout my

1 entire -- or through the majority of my tenure in that
2 position. That primarily pertains to issues around policy
3 and other related matters to the Department.

4 I also interacted with the Commissioner of
5 the RCMP, the Director of CSIS, the President of CBSA, the
6 Commissioner responsible for Corrections Canada and the Chair
7 of Parole Board, fairly regularly and routinely meeting with
8 them. And they had opportunities to brief me on matters
9 related to their portfolios, and there were also for each of
10 those departments certain authorities that I held over
11 approvals for certain activities within their departments
12 that they would come to me for and seek those approvals.

13 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And I'm just going to
14 note that we are trying to keep things at a pace the
15 interpreters, the simultaneous ---

16 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I apologise.

17 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** --- translators can keep
18 up with, so I'll just ask you to keep that in mind.

19 In the context that you were just describing,
20 the way that you managed your responsibility for the various
21 agencies, can you tell me what the role was of the
22 ministerial directives that you might have occasion to issue
23 with respect to any of the agencies?

24 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** One of my
25 responsibilities as Minister was to provide direction to the
26 agencies that were under my portfolio, and the mechanism by
27 which we'd do that was with the issuance of a written
28 ministerial directive that established priorities, for

1 example. And I think pertinent to this discussion, I did
2 have the opportunity to issue ministerial directions to both
3 the RCMP and CSIS outlining what I perceived to be the
4 priorities of those agencies. And the intention of that was
5 to give appropriate direction to the areas that I felt they
6 should prioritise in their work.

7 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And did you issue such a
8 ministerial directive with respect to CSIS during your term?

9 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir, I did.

10 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And did that ministerial
11 directive make reference of the Service's responsibility to
12 investigate foreign interference?

13 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** It specifically
14 identified foreign interference as a priority for CSIS. As a
15 matter of fact, in the list of priorities that were
16 identified, foreign interference was the second on the list.
17 And although it was not a prioritised list, I think its
18 position there reflects the importance of which I placed upon
19 it.

20 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you. Now, noting
21 that you became the Minister of Public Safety after the 2019
22 election, what was your perspective on foreign interference
23 at the start of your term as Minister of Public Safety?

24 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I had had the
25 opportunity -- first of all, and as I've already mentioned, I
26 had a very long police career, and I was aware of the --
27 historically hostile activities of certain state actors with
28 respect to Canada, and the threat that that could represent

1 to Canada's national interest, to Canadian citizens, to our
2 critical infrastructure.

3 As -- in my previous role, prior to becoming
4 the Minister of Public Safety, as the Minister of Border
5 Security and Organised Crime Reduction, I also had the
6 benefit of some briefings under the authority of then
7 Minister Goodall, who was the previous Minister of Public
8 Safety, with respect to information that was provided. And
9 when I was appointed, when I became the Minister of Public
10 Safety, I had the benefit of very extensive briefings with
11 respect to the intelligence and the law enforcement
12 situation, the public safety situation in the country, which
13 included briefings with respect to issues around the hostile
14 activities of state actors and the wide variety of risks that
15 that represented.

16 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Well, since you've
17 mentioned that, let me ask the court operator to pull up
18 WIT 64.

19 And if you can scroll to paragraph 13 of the
20 interview summary of Minister Blair.

21 Minister, the -- you can see it in
22 paragraph 13 of your interview summary there's a description
23 of your account of a briefing you received by CSIS after the
24 2019 election. Is this one of those briefings of the type
25 you were just describing?

26 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, it is.

27 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And can you be more
28 particular about this one as its discussed in your interview

1 summary, the one about the 2019 Don Valley North Liberal
2 Party of Canada nomination?

3 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** As part of a number of
4 briefings that was provided to me by the Director of CSIS,
5 there was a discussion about concerns that they had
6 identified through their intelligence reporting about the
7 nomination process in 2019 that occurred in Don Valley North.
8 And they provided me with information with respect to the
9 intelligence that they had received that called into question
10 that nomination process, suggesting that there may have been
11 irregularities in the number -- the people who participated
12 in that and the possibility that it had been influenced in
13 some way by the activities of the People's Republic of China,
14 or representatives of that country.

15 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And in your -- in
16 paragraph 13 of your interview summary, you describe your
17 reaction to that briefing. If you look at the sort of second
18 half of the paragraph, you have some numbered points about
19 your reaction.

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir. As I've
21 indicated, in previous roles in both policing and in my
22 previous roles in government, I have a fairly good
23 understanding of the nature of intelligence. Intelligence
24 isn't necessarily factual evidence of what took place, if
25 someone perceives that this has happened.

26 And so I made some inquiries during that
27 briefing with respect to the source of that intelligence,
28 that information, on -- to determine if I -- from CSIS'

1 perspective, the reliability of that individual, if there was
2 corroborating evidence to support the intelligence that had
3 been received, if there was other corroboration or manner --
4 effort to substantiate that allegation, it -- they indicated
5 to me that they did not at that time have other corroborating
6 evidence in any way to substantiate that.

7 I also made inquiries if there was any
8 evidence beyond the nomination process itself of interference
9 in the electoral process that we had just gone through in the
10 2019 Election, and they did not indicate at that time to me
11 that there had been any impact during -- in that riding and
12 any evidence of interference following. Their concerns were
13 limited only to the nomination process.

14 And my perception of that was -- and my last
15 question, was there any suggestion that the candidate was
16 knowledgeable and aware of that? And they had no information
17 to corroborate that.

18 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you.

19 Perhaps if the Court Operator could call up
20 CAN 3326?

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 3326 :**

22 Letter from Public Safety Minister

23 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Minister Blair, as you
24 discussed in your *in-camera* evidence, you -- not long after
25 your appointment as Minister, you had an initiative, and this
26 was mentioned by your department in their evidence yesterday,
27 so I'll just ask you again, from your perspective as the
28 Minister, if you can start by describing the motion on

1 November 18th, 2020 to which the document we now have on the
2 screen was a response, and why you responded to it with this
3 report and letter to the MPs?

4 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, there had been a
5 motion on November 18th, 2020 in the House of Commons, when
6 the House sought information on what the Government was doing
7 to address threats to the security, prosperity, and
8 democratic institutions right across the country. And in
9 response to that, I worked very closely with my department,
10 and some excellent policy work that was done by Deputy
11 Minister and his team, along with my Ministry Office, we
12 crafted a response to that motion.

13 We also had discussion about, you know,
14 frankly tabling a response to a motion. In my experience,
15 those don't always receive the full attention of every Member
16 of Parliament, or the attention of Canadians. And I felt
17 that it was very important.

18 This information -- I think in order for
19 Canada to defend its institutions, or in order for us to take
20 the steps necessary to respond to the threat of foreign
21 interference, it was necessary to inform my Parliamentary
22 colleagues, but also to inform Canadians of the nature of
23 that threat, give them information on what risk it
24 represented, and also information on how they could then
25 respond. I wanted to tell my colleagues what the Government
26 was doing, but also to tell Canadians, if they saw evidence
27 of foreign interference.

28 The response that is provided in this

1 document did not limit itself, quite frankly, to just
2 political interference. There was a great deal of concern,
3 which frankly I still hold, with respect to the hostile
4 activities of state actors in interfering with a number of
5 our critical infrastructure, our life sciences and health
6 sciences institutions, our research capabilities. There are
7 a number of cyber threats that are also quite significant and
8 deeply concerning to our national interest.

9 And the purpose of this letter was to inform
10 my Parliamentary Colleagues, and through my Parliamentary
11 colleagues, by publishing this document and making it -- and
12 tabling it in Parliament, to inform Canadians about the full
13 nature of this threat, and to inform Canadians about what
14 their government was doing in response to it.

15 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you. And with
16 respect to a particular topic, this is a report of some 12
17 pages long, but I just -- if I could take you to one little
18 section of it and ask for your comments?

19 If the Court Operator could scroll down to
20 page 11 of this report?

21 And if you look down under the heading
22 "Protecting our citizens and [...] communities", there's a
23 paragraph that begins:

24 "Canada does not tolerate harassment
25 or intimidation of its citizens."

26 And you might recollect that in both your
27 interview and in your *in-camera* evidence, we explored this
28 issue of your concern as Minister for diaspora communities in

1 Canada, and just noting that this is a part of your report,
2 could you comment on that for the Commissioner, please?

3 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir. There was and
4 remains a fairly significant concern about the activities of
5 certain hostile states in harassing or intimidating our
6 citizens. I made reference in this document, for example, to
7 Operation Foxtrot, in which the Government of China was
8 attempting to gather information and to intimidate people in
9 Canada with respect to certain economic investigations that
10 they were conducting.

11 I've spent most of my life trying to keep
12 Canadians safe, and it's been my job, and I believe the best
13 way to keep Canadians safe is to give them information on how
14 to protect themselves, but also to tell them what steps to
15 take when they perceive that there is intimidation and
16 threats taking place, that they're not alone, and that we're
17 going to be there for them. And I was hoping to make that
18 clear in this document, that we would not tolerate it and if
19 they perceived that they were subject to intimidation or
20 threat through the course of action of a hostile government,
21 such as the People's Republic of China, that the Government
22 would take it seriously and that we would respond.

23 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you. I'm going to
24 switch gears now and talk to you just in a general sense
25 about the flow of information and intelligence to you as
26 Minister. Not about any specific document or incident, but
27 just generally speaking.

28 And let me begin by asking you, did you have

1 a security clearance to see classified intelligence?

2 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir. I hold -- as
3 member of the Privy Council, but also by virtue of the
4 various positions that I've held, I have clearance for
5 essentially the highest levels of intelligence.

6 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Including ---

7 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Some internationally
8 shared Five Eyes intelligence.

9 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Right. So there would
10 be no intelligence that you wouldn't be able to see if the
11 appropriate agencies thought it was appropriate that you be
12 briefed on it?

13 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I don't think there's
14 any restriction on what I am able to ---

15 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you.

16 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** --- be made aware of.

17 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** And generally speaking,
18 in your tenure as Minister, how did classified intelligence
19 come to your attention?

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** There were certain --
21 there's various levels of classification of material. And
22 frankly, I've always tried to be very careful with the
23 handling of all classified information, and I frankly never
24 take it from the room or make notes with respect to it
25 because that would, in my opinion, compromise its security.

26 In my role as the Minister of Public Safety,
27 I generally have access, periodically, to some classified
28 material, but virtually everything of a top-secret nature was

1 only shared with me in the confines of a secure environment,
2 a SCIF. Generally throughout my tenure as Public Safety
3 Minister, either in the SCIF at -- [phone ringing]. I
4 apologize. I may be subject to some form of interference.

5 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

6 HON. WILLIAM BLAIR: All top-secret material
7 was shared to me in the confines of a SCIF, either at 269
8 Laurier here in Ottawa where there is a secure room where
9 briefings could take place, in the same building as my
10 Ministerial Office was located.

11 I also attended on a number of -- quite a
12 frequent number of occasions at the CSIS Headquarters, which
13 is located in Toronto, where there is secure facilities where
14 information would be shared with me in a secure room. I
15 would enter that room. Occasionally there would be secure
16 communications. Either the Director and his team would be
17 present, the Director of CSIS and his team would be present
18 at briefings. Sometimes that was done virtually,
19 particularly during the pandemic, where we were able to use
20 secure communications for that purpose. And occasionally I
21 would just be in the room and they would present a binder of
22 documents that I would read through.

23 MR. GORDON CAMERON: Okay. Could you just
24 expand a little bit on that experience again and describe for
25 me who would be briefing you? Maybe not the same group every
26 time, but typically, who are the personnel briefing you and
27 who are the personnel with you on the Ministerial side or the
28 departmental side of those briefings?

1 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** In every case, the
2 briefing was done by the Director with his team and so the
3 Deputy Director and sometimes their Associate Director would
4 be present in the room.

5 In addition, not in every case, but in some
6 cases, the Deputy Minister and others of his team. His ADM,
7 Mr. Rochon, would also be present in the room. And
8 generally, my Chief of Staff would be present certainly in
9 the meetings that took place in Ottawa.

10 And when I attended to CSIS Headquarters, I
11 will tell you frequently I was in the room by myself. I was
12 sometimes connected virtually by screens and sometimes CSIS
13 personnel would simply come in, present a binder of documents
14 and I would read through them.

15 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you.

16 I'm just going to ask if I can clarify a
17 detail in your evidence there.

18 When you talk about attending at CSIS in
19 Toronto, I think you're talking about attending at the CSIS
20 regional -- Toronto regional office, right, not CSIS
21 Headquarters?

22 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir. I'm not sure
23 whether you want me to give the address, but ---

24 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** No, no. I don't want
25 you to do that. But it was the Toronto regional office and
26 not Headquarters; right?

27 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, it's the Toronto
28 regional office.

1 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Thank you.

2 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** And its place -- because
3 of all the work I did in Toronto and I was also a member of
4 the INSET team dealing with national security investigations.
5 I've attended there very frequently.

6 But I will -- just in the past few weeks,
7 I've attended secret intel briefings there.

8 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** That's been helpful.
9 Thank you.

10 Madam Commissioner, those are my questions.

11 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

12 Cross-examination. First one is counsel for
13 RCDA.

14 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY / CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

15 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

16 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Good morning, Minister
17 Blair. Guillaume Sirois, for the Russia Canadian Democratic
18 Alliance.

19 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir.

20 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** In your witness
21 summary, you mentioned the evolution over time of
22 misinformation and disinformation; correct?

23 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir.

24 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Can you tell me a
25 little bit more about this evolution?

26 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** There are a number of
27 ways in which foreign interference can take place. Some of
28 it is, you know, directed towards the intimidation or

1 coercion of individual Canadians or institutions. It can
2 also take the form of espionage in capturing information.

3 But one of the challenges that we face is in
4 the way in which Canadians now receive most of their
5 information through social media. There is a concern, I
6 think a legitimate concern, of misinformation and
7 disinformation. And I would differentiate between them.

8 One is just simply providing false
9 information. Another is -- frankly, has a more nefarious
10 intent, to not just misinform, but to create a public
11 perception which is not based on fact.

12 And we have seen the activities of a number
13 of hostile states, and again, I would -- if I may, I would
14 differentiate between a number of -- all foreign states
15 attempt to influence other countries and other citizens in
16 their best interest. But through the application of
17 misinformation and disinformation, it meets the threshold of
18 foreign interference if it is deceptive, if it is clandestine
19 and clearly intended to create chaos and mischief and
20 disagreement.

21 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Thank you.

22 I'm wondering, why is this a concern for
23 public safety? Is there a chance that this misinformation or
24 disinformation becomes a real threat to the security of
25 Canadians, like threats to violence and so on?

26 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Well, if I may, let me
27 sort of reflect during the period in which I was the Public
28 Safety Minister.

1 There were a number of efforts among our
2 public health officials in order to take steps that were
3 necessary in order to keep Canadians safe, but unfortunately,
4 there was a great deal of misinformation and some
5 disinformation that was being widely circulated among the
6 Canadian population which interfered with public health's
7 efforts to keep Canadians healthy and safe. And so that can
8 represent a threat to the public safety of the country.

9 It also -- what we seen is one of the intents
10 of disinformation is to create significant social division
11 within the country and, you know, I think it is a well-
12 protected right of Canadians to hold an opinion and to
13 express that opinion under our *Charter* but, at the same time,
14 if those opinions are being negatively influenced by
15 misinformation with a nefarious intent to cause that social
16 division, it can represent a concern for public safety.

17 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And is what you just
18 mentioned -- did you witness what you just mentioned
19 specifically during the 43rd and 44th General Elections?

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** The misinformation that
21 we saw, there ---

22 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Just to clarify, I'm
23 talking not necessarily about the misinformation,
24 disinformation online, but perhaps the transfer of this issue
25 to real threats to public safety, for instance, blocking
26 polling stations, refusing to wear a mask at polling stations
27 so that there was ---

28 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Frankly, we saw those as

1 that disinformation and the reaction that it created was a
2 challenge, but in my opinion, it did not rise the threshold
3 as interfering with our ability to hold a free and fair
4 election in Canada.

5 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Oh, okay. I was not
6 questioning whether it was -- it met the threshold. I was
7 just questioning as whether -- is it something that the
8 Public Safety witnessed or was aware of during the -- at
9 least the 2021 election.

10 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Well, I can't tell you -
11 - my officials did not brief me specifically on the impact of
12 mis or disinformation on the 2021 election, but I think all
13 Canadians observed and recognized, you know, the wide
14 diversity of information that was being put forward. And it
15 was a concern, but it did not rise to the level that our
16 officials came forward and said this is something that we
17 need to respond to.

18 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay.

19 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** At least not to me.

20 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And you mentioned in -
21 - just my last question. You mentioned numerous hostile
22 states in one of your previous answers about mis and
23 disinformation.

24 Would one of those be Russia?

25 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes.

26 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And with Russia in
27 Canada specifically, or generally?

28 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Both Canada specifically

1 and generally.

2 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And in our elections
3 specifically or generally in ---

4 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I did not see
5 substantial evidence of Russian efforts to influence our
6 elections through disinformation. I think and we have
7 observed a fairly concerted effort among a number of hostile
8 actors, including Russia, to engage in disinformation within
9 our society, but not specifically directed at our electoral
10 processes in the 2021 election.

11 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So in 2021 and 2019.

12 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** In either election. I'm
13 not aware of any activity by Russia through their
14 disinformation campaigns to influence the outcome of that
15 election. They were influencing other types of public
16 opinion, but I did not see evidence of it directed towards
17 the outcome of our 2019 or 2021 elections.

18 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Okay. I'm out of
19 time, but I think you, Mr. Blair.

20 **COMMISSOINER HOGUE:** Next is counsel for
21 Human Rights Coalition.

22 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

23 **MS. HANNA TAYLOR:**

24 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Hello, Minister.

25 If I could ask the court reporter to please
26 pull up CAN 3326. My colleague for the Commission has
27 already brought this document up this morning.

28 I understand it's a letter that you wrote

1 dated December 18, 2020.

2 If we could turn to page 3 to the last
3 paragraph on the page.

4 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** If I may just offer some
5 clarification, I had a great deal of help among my officials,
6 the Deputy Minister and his team and my officials in
7 composing this letter and -- but I adopt it all and added my
8 signature to it, so I am the sender of the letter, but it was
9 very much a team effort.

10 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Okay. So prepared by a
11 number of actors, but you adopt what's said in the letter --
12 or you agree with what is said in the letter.

13 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, ma'am.

14 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Okay. Thank you.

15 So that paragraph, it reads:

16 "When foreign states target
17 Canadians, persons residing in Canada
18 or their families, they are seeking
19 to deprive members of Canadian
20 communities of their fundamental
21 rights and freedoms. Such actions
22 are unacceptable. If anyone feels
23 intimidated or threatened, it is of
24 the most importance to contact your
25 local police and I can assure you
26 that your concerns will be dealt with
27 in a serious and appropriate manner."

28 Do you remember this sentiment being prepared

1 or your ---

2 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, ma'am. This is
3 something that I believe very strongly in and I want -- if
4 people feel that they are being subject to threats or
5 intimidation, it's really important that they reach out for
6 the help that's available to them.

7 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** If we could please pull
8 up COM 155 and turn to paragraph 289 on page 106 of the
9 document.

10 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 155:**

11 Annual Report 2019

12 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** This is NSICOP's 2019
13 annual report, and I'll just wait for this. It might take a
14 moment for it to load. Maybe in the meantime, in the
15 interest of time, I can read it out and we'll just make sure
16 that it's up there.

17 So in paragraph 289, at page 106, it notes:

18 "...in a spring 2019 presentation to
19 the Standing Senate Committee on
20 Foreign Affairs and International
21 Trade, the Secretary General of
22 Amnesty International Canada noted
23 that those who are targeted do not
24 know whether to turn to CSIS, the
25 RCMP or municipal police, and that
26 they rarely receive a coherent
27 response from officials."

28 Likewise, and if you'd like we can ---

1 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I think ---

2 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** --- wait to see it.

3 Yeah.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes. I think it will be
5 better to have the document.

6 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Certainly.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** At least the paragraph.
8 The document is there, but....

9 Can you repeat the paragraph number?

10 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Sure. So it's at
11 paragraph 289. You'd like me to read it out loud again,
12 Madam Commissioner?

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No, paragraph 29.

14 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Two-eighty-nine.

15 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Oh, 289. Sorry.
16 There you are.

17 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Oh, I'm sorry. Now, I've
18 got -- it'll be on -- are we on page 106 of the document?
19 Perhaps the PDF, I -- or the document. Okay.

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, ma'am, it was --
21 the paragraph in question, 289, is open before me.

22 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Okay. I think I'm just
23 making sure that it matches.

24 Could we try the PDF page 106? My apologies.
25 I should have taken note of which one it was.

26 Okay. Perhaps we can move on. I apologise.

27 At the start of these hearings, we heard from
28 a panel of representatives from diaspora community

1 organisations, who explained that members of targeted
2 diaspora communities often think it's a waste of time to even
3 try to contact the police because in their experience nothing
4 comes of it, or they get bounced around to different
5 agencies.

6 Are you aware that community members are
7 experiencing these difficulties when they attempt to contact
8 law enforcement for help?

9 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yeah, I've been a police
10 officer in one of the most diverse cities in the world for a
11 very, very many years, and worked very hard in those diverse
12 communities to make sure that they can know and trust that
13 the police will respond appropriately. One of the things I
14 attempted to do in the letter that I published to
15 parliamentarians and tabled in Parliament, was to actually
16 provide for Canadians the direct contacts with both CSIS and
17 the RCMP, it's articulated in that letter. But one of the
18 reasons I made reference to local police is because if there
19 is a immediate threat to someone's safety and they're
20 concerned for their safety that's a 9-1-1 call. And it's
21 really important that Canadians know that if they make that
22 call that someone will come there and help them to be safe.
23 And that's the information.

24 And I would also acknowledge too that many
25 diaspora communities, you know, often come from cultural
26 experiences which makes them untrustful of the police. And
27 it really is incumbent upon all police services, the RCMP and
28 CSIS, to make a very sincere effort to build trust in those

1 communities so that people know that if they need help
2 they'll get help.

3 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And speaking specifically
4 to reports of foreign interference through perhaps tip lines,
5 web forums for public reporting, are you aware that diaspora
6 communities are having difficulties accessing those
7 mechanisms?

8 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I'm not, but that would
9 be a concern to me because those are established in order to
10 help people report their concerns and to be safe. And I
11 think it -- your question highlights the need for us to do
12 more to make sure we reach out to those communities, make it
13 available to them in ways which are both language and
14 culturally appropriate so that people can trust that if they
15 need help they'll get it.

16 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And so by virtue of the
17 fact that you've recognised that there's a lot more work to
18 do to make sure that law enforcement can properly address the
19 concerns of diaspora communities or they can properly engage
20 in that reporting, access help, does that change your opinion
21 as to whether or not you can assure Canadians that they're
22 concerns will be dealt with in a serious and appropriate
23 manner by law enforcement as you -- as it was stated in that
24 letter?

25 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, ma'am. I can tell
26 you that I have represented Canadian Police Services across
27 this country as president of the national association, and I
28 work very closely with my colleagues in policing at all

1 levels of policing in this country. I believe there is a
2 very sincere effort to reach out to diaspora communities and
3 to ensure that we are there for them in a way that is both
4 language and culturally appropriate.

5 Building trust is a -- requires a constant
6 effort. Part of that is providing those citizens with a
7 reassurance that we will answer their call and that we will
8 respond in an appropriate way. And I've tried to provide
9 that reassurance in this document.

10 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Thank you very much,
11 Minister.

12 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Thank you.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

14 Counsel for Michael Chong.

15 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you, Commissioner.

16 No questions.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No questions.

18 Conservative Party.

19 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

20 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:**

21 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Good morning,
22 Minister Blair.

23 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Good morning, sir.

24 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Just bear with me. I've
25 had to change equipment here.

26 Minister Blair, in your witness statement at
27 WIT 63.

28 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 63:**

1 In Camera Examination Summary: the
2 Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of
3 Defence

4 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Perhaps we can get that
5 called up.

6 Paragraph 12, sir. You discuss approving
7 judicial warrants under the *CSIS Act*?

8 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** That's correct.

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** As Minister of Public
10 Safety. And am I correct that your evidence, as indicated
11 there, that it usually takes you two-and-a-half hours to
12 three hours to review and sign off on such warrants?

13 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** It's approximately. It
14 depends on the complexity of the application, but that's
15 usually the amount that it takes.

16 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And in your
17 experience, including as a police officer and former chief of
18 police, would you agree that warrants and applications for
19 warrants are often very time sensitive?

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes, sir.

21 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And you'd agree that
22 delay in approving a warrant or applying for a warrant could
23 jeopardise an investigation and the evidence that you're
24 actually seeking to obtain under the warrant?

25 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, I think there always
26 has to be a balance of -- there's an appropriate due
27 diligence of officials in preparing -- preparation of those
28 documents. There are also issues around candor and other

1 matters that need to be addressed. But certainly any undue
2 delay is -- can be problematic.

3 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Right. It could
4 jeopardise the investigation.

5 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Depending on the
6 investigation, but yes.

7 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Can I get MCC000053
8 called up.

9 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. MCC 53:**

10 Bill Blair took months to approve
11 CSIS surveillance of Liberal
12 powerbroker, national-security source
13 says

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And Minister Blair, this
15 is an article from the Globe and Mail, dated May 19, 2023,
16 which generally deals with foreign interference from China,
17 and it also includes an assertion at the top of page 2.

18 Perhaps we can scroll to that.

19 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Commissioner, I'm sorry to
20 interrupt Mr. De Luca. I just wanted to raise a potential
21 concern as to the -- whether or not this line of questioning
22 may be -- go beyond the scope of these first set of hearings
23 which are directed, as you mentioned in your opening remarks,
24 to the allegations of foreign interference in the 2019 and
25 2021 general elections, information flow relating to those,
26 and two decisionmakers.

27 As noted, other related issues in respect of
28 foreign interference may be addressed at later proceedings.

1 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I'll see what is the
2 line of questioning.

3 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sorry.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Just go on with your
5 question ---

6 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- and I see whether --
8 -

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Sure.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- you're outside the
11 scope of this space ---

12 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sure.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- or not.

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** So there's a passage
15 that's highlighted in the document itself in purple. Perhaps
16 you could read that to yourself to save me from reading it
17 into the record. But generally, it suggests that there was
18 undue delay in your signing off on a warrant or -- to surveil
19 Michael Chan in the lead up to the 2021 federal election.

20 Can you comment on why it took so long for
21 you to sign off on the warrant?

22 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yeah, let me comment.
23 This paragraph is false.

24 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** What aspects of it are
25 false, sir?

26 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** There was no delay of
27 several months. The document in question ---

28 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Right.

1 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** --- was put in front of
2 me on May the 11th. I signed it off the same day, about
3 three hours later.

4 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Thank you. Those
5 are my questions, sir.

6 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

8 Next one is Jenny Kwan, counsel for Jenny
9 Kwan.

10 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

11 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:**

12 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Good morning, Commissioner,
13 and Mr. Blair.

14 Mr. Blair, I would like to ask you some
15 questions about CSIS' threat reduction measure power and your
16 oversight of that. My understanding is that you, as the
17 Minister, have over any TRMs that CSIS may want to pursue?

18 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** That's correct.

19 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** And just to understand,
20 what does oversight mean in this case? Are you required to
21 approve any such TRMs?

22 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** CSIS -- when a TRM would
23 be sought by CSIS, they would come and brief me, seek my
24 concurrence. My understanding of legislation doesn't
25 necessarily require my approval, per say, but it does require
26 that CSIS make me aware of it, and that I concur with the
27 actions taken.

28 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Were there -- so just to

1 take a step back then, could you approach CSIS about a
2 potential situation in which you felt a TRM was appropriate?

3 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** There would be nothing
4 to limit my ability to do that.

5 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. And in the context
6 of foreign interference and during your tenure, did CSIS
7 approach you of any TRMs that were related to or targeted to
8 foreign interference?

9 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, not specifically.
10 There were things that did not meet the threshold of CSIS
11 seeking authority for a TRM, but there were a number of I
12 think really important and relevant discussions with respect
13 to various serious concerns that CSIS had with respect to,
14 for example, foreign interference in some of our health
15 sciences institutions and research institutions. And we
16 discussed measures that could be taken in response to that.

17 And as a result, CSIS took the steps of very
18 proactively going to those institutions, briefing those
19 institutions, alerting them to the nature of the risk, and
20 helping them take steps to mitigate that risk.

21 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. So that's an example
22 of a TRM during your tenure that was brought to you by CSIS,
23 and that you concurred with, and then was taken and actually
24 implemented?

25 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yes.

26 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Okay. Were there any
27 examples where you brought to CSIS the possibility of using a
28 TRM to address a foreign interference issue?

1 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No.

2 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** No. And were you briefed
3 or made aware of CSIS' TRM undertaking just before you became
4 Minister to brief candidates of foreign interference related
5 issues during the election?

6 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I did have discussion,
7 and I had some awareness that CSIS intended to proactively
8 speak to -- frankly, I had a concern that I discussed with
9 the Director about Members of Parliament or candidates who
10 might be unconsciously influenced or interfered with as a
11 result of the action of a hostile government. And I felt it
12 was important to give those individuals enough information so
13 that they would recognize the interference and to alert them
14 to how they might take steps in order to protect themselves,
15 and to make sure that they knew that CSIS was there to help
16 them and support them. And so we did have discussions.

17 CSIS did not tell me specifically who they
18 wanted to talk to, or the information that they would share
19 with them, but we did talk about the importance of what is
20 sometimes called defensive briefings or proactive briefings
21 of -- that CSIS would undertake with an individual, sometimes
22 Parliamentarians, or candidates.

23 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** And so based on the
24 evidence you're giving now, would you have known not
25 necessarily who was briefed or what they were told, but that
26 the briefing actually occurred?

27 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** No, there was no
28 reporting mechanism whereby CSIS would tell me who they were

1 going to talk to, or if they had in fact talked to anybody.
2 At no time did CSIS come back and say to me, while I was the
3 Minister of Public Safety, that they had actually conducted a
4 defensive briefing, or that they were intending to do so.

5 We talked about the process, but CSIS did not
6 share with me the information of anyone that they felt that
7 it was necessary to talk to or what information they wanted
8 to share with that individual.

9 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** So in the oversight
10 function that you had, it was to sort of concur on these
11 TRMs, but did you have any sort of oversight function to
12 determine if the TRMs were an effective means of producing a
13 particular result? Or is that left entirely to CSIS to do?

14 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Well it's an operational
15 matter for CSIS, and so the information that they had --
16 Ministerial oversight, if I may, it did not mean that I was
17 sort of overseeing and actively engaged in managing their
18 inquiries, their intelligence gathering, or their -- even
19 their operations in order to mitigate threat. It was to
20 provide Ministerial direction on priorities and where it was
21 necessary for them to seek authority, to provide that
22 authority.

23 But decisions with respect to the operational
24 response, the gathering of intelligence, the sharing of
25 intelligence, and information that they would take to
26 mitigate the nature of threat, was the responsibility of
27 CSIS.

28 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** Thank you for your

1 testimony. It's very ---

2 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** You're very welcome.

3 **MS. MANI KAKKAR:** --- helpful clarification.

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

5 Counsel for Han Dong.

6 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

7 **MS. EMILY YOUNG:**

8 **MS. EMILY YOUNG:** Good morning, Minister.

9 Good morning, Madam Commissioner.

10 If I could ask the Court Reporter, please, to
11 pull up WIT 64 again? Page 5, paragraph 13.

12 So Minister Blair, you have already had some
13 discussions about the briefing that's addressed in this
14 paragraph with Mr. Cameron this morning. I'd just like to
15 clarify a particular aspect of your evidence.

16 So looking at paragraph 13 here on the
17 screen, you said that you were not concerned about the
18 intelligence regarding Don Valley North at the time you were
19 briefed. Is that right?

20 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** I think it was important
21 to be briefed on this by CSIS, but it did not raise concerns
22 for me based on the information that CSIS provided, that with
23 respect to this process, or any compromise of the election,
24 or there was no indication in the briefing that Mr. Dong was
25 a willing, or even an aware participant in this.

26 **MS. EMILY YOUNG:** Okay. Thank you. And I
27 just want to put a point on what we see here is that you
28 actually gave three specific reasons that you weren't

1 concerned about the intelligence at the time, and I was just
2 hoping that to the extent you've not already spoke about
3 them, you could just do so now? Those three reasons.

4 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Yeah, if I may, just
5 going through the three reasons that I shared in my earlier
6 testimony, I did make inquiries about the source of this
7 information, whether or not it was single source or multiple,
8 whether or not this individual had previously provided
9 information which was found reliable or not, whether there
10 was any corroborative evidence or other elements of the CSIS
11 investigation that would substantiate the intelligence in
12 this thing.

13 I think it's important to recognize that
14 intelligence isn't necessarily truth. It is the beginning of
15 other inquiries and it has to be assessed in a broad context
16 of reliability in order to make a determination of next
17 steps.

18 The second thing that I specifically inquired
19 about was whether or not that there was any intelligence or
20 suggestion that Mr. Dong was aware of this potential
21 interference, or in any way a willing participant, and the
22 indication that CSIS provided me at that time was that they
23 had no evidence that suggested that.

24 And finally, my concern, because we -- it had
25 been a longstanding concern about the integrity of our
26 elections, whether or not the -- because this briefing was
27 given to me after the 2019 Election, whether or not there had
28 been any other interference or influence that could have

1 influenced the outcome of the 2019 Election in Don Valley
2 North. And they indicated that they had no information that
3 indicated that.

4 **MS. EMILY YOUNG:** Okay. Thank you. Those
5 are our questions.

6 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.
7 Attorney General?

8 **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** No questions.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No questions.
10 Re-examination?

11 So you're free to leave ---

12 **MR. GORDON CAMERON:** Excuse me, Madam
13 Commissioner. I don't have any re-examination, but I just
14 wanted to make an observation that we called Minister Blair
15 to speak to his term as Minister generally and that the
16 timing of any specific incident or warrant is not an issue in
17 this part of the proceedings.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

19 **HON. WILLIAM BLAIR:** Thank you.

20 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll take five
21 minutes break to -- just the time to switch witnesses.

22 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,
23 s'il vous plaît.

24 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
25 Commission is currently in pause. Cette séance de la
26 Commission d'ingérence est en pause.

27 --- Upon recessing at 12:20 p.m./

28 --- La séance est suspendue à 12 h 20

1 --- Upon resuming at 12:43 p.m./

2 --- La séance est reprise à 12 h 43

3 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il
4 vous plait.

5 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
6 Commission is back in session. Cette séance de la Commission
7 sur l'ingérence étrangère a repris.

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So my apologies for the
9 delay, but we are now ready.

10 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you very much,
11 Commissioner. It's Erin Dann, Commission counsel, and our
12 next witness is Minister LeBlanc.

13 If he could be sworn -- if the witness could
14 be sworn, please.

15 **LE GREFFIER:** Veuillez indiquer votre nom et
16 épeler votre prénom pour le dossier.

17 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Dominic LeBlanc.

18 **LE GREFFIER:** Et épelez votre prénom, s'il
19 vous plait?

20 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** D-O-M-I-N-I-C.

21 **LE GREFFIER:** OK. Et votre dernier nom?

22 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** C'est L-E-B majuscule
23 - les Acadiens, c'est un B majuscule - L-A-N-C. La
24 Commissaire est québécoise, elle va comprendre ça.

25 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Oui. Je réalise surtout
26 qu'on a fait une erreur.

27 **LE GREFFIER:** Jurez-vous que le témoi...

28 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Ah oui?

1 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** C'est écrit petit « b »
2 sur votre...

3 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Ah, OK, j'ai pas
4 remarqué.

5 **LE GREFFIER:** Jurez-vous que le témoignage
6 que vous allez rendre sera la vérité, toute la vérité, et
7 rien que la vérité?

8 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Je le jure.

9 **--- HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC, Sworn/Assermenté:**

10 **LE GREFFIER:** Merci beaucoup.

11 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Merci à vous.

12 **LE GREFFIER:** Procédez.

13 **--- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN-CHEF PAR**

14 **MS. ERIN DANN:**

15 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Good afternoon. Minister
16 LeBlanc, do you recall being interviewed by the Commission
17 counsel on February 22nd, 2024?

18 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I do.

19 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Right. And if I could ask
20 that WIT 65 be called up.

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 65:**

22 Public Interview Summary: the

23 Honourable Dominic LeBlanc

24 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Minister, this is a summary
25 of the publicly disclosable information from that interview.
26 Have you had a chance to review the summary?

27 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, I have.

28 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And is it accurate?

1 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** It is.

2 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And will you adopt it as part
3 of your evidence before the Commission?

4 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I will.

5 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you.

6 And next, if we could go to WIT 52.

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 52:**

8 Public Summary of In Camera

9 Examination: Minister Dominic LeBlanc

10 **MS. ERIN DANN:** This is a summary, Minister,
11 of your *in camera* examination. Have you had an opportunity
12 to review this summary?

13 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, I have.

14 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And is it accurate?

15 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it is.

16 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And will you adopt it as part
17 of your evidence before the Commission?

18 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I will.

19 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you.

20 You've had a number of roles in government, a
21 number of roles in Cabinet. I will try and take you through
22 what I understand your various positions have been since
23 approximately August of 2018 and please correct me if I get
24 any of this wrong.

25 I understand that in August of 2018, you were
26 appointed Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and you held
27 that position until 2019. Is that right?

28 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes.

1 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And after the election in
2 2019, you were appointed President of what was then the
3 Queen's Privy Council for Canada, which included
4 responsibilities for Democratic Institutions.

5 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** That's correct.

6 **MS. ERIN DANN:** In the summer of 2020, you
7 were appointed Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and you
8 served in those offices as Minister of Intergovernmental
9 Affairs and with responsibility for Democratic Institutions
10 until the 2021 election.

11 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** That's right.

12 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Right. And after the 2021
13 election, you were appointed Minister of Intergovernmental
14 Affairs and retained responsibility for Democratic
15 Institutions.

16 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** That's right. And I
17 had the Infrastructure and Communities portfolio attached as
18 well.

19 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you for that addition.
20 And in 2023, you were appointed Minister of
21 Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental
22 Affairs.

23 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** That's right.

24 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. Glad I didn't
25 leave any -- you have the record for longest title, I think.

26 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I have a hard time
27 keeping a job, you see.

28 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Given the scope of this stage

1 of the proceedings, I'll focus my questions today primarily
2 on your responsibilities in relation to Democratic
3 Institutions.

4 Can you describe your role or mandate in
5 relation to that portfolio?

6 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Les institutions
7 démocratiques, c'est surtout un secrétariat à l'intérieur du
8 Bureau du Conseil privé pour développer des politiques,
9 considérer des changements législatifs, par exemple, pour
10 appuyer la capacité des Canadiens d'avoir des élections
11 libres et bien sécurées. C'est une fonction de politiques
12 publiques, évidemment, l'Agence d'élections Canada est
13 indépendante, gère la mécanique de nos élections, mais c'est
14 la façon que le gouvernement et l'Exécutif, le Conseil des
15 ministres interagit avec l'appareil électoral.

16 **Me ERIN DANN:** Merci.

17 Et je poserai mes questions en anglais, mais,
18 of course, feel free to answer in the language of your
19 choice.

20 We heard this morning from your colleague,
21 Minister Gould, about her work in developing the plan to
22 protect democracy. Did your responsibilities in relation to
23 Democratic Institutions include reviewing or updating that
24 plan?

25 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, they did. She
26 was the Minister in the lead-up to the 2019 General Election.
27 I remember as a Minister her coming to Cabinet with that
28 plan. I remember conversations with her as a colleague

1 around that work.

2 And after the 2019 election, when I took over
3 that responsibility, one of the mandates that I got was to
4 review how the plan had worked in the 2019 election and come
5 back to Cabinet with any suggested changes or adjustments for
6 the upcoming election.

7 We were then in a minority Parliament, so we
8 wanted to have those measures in place.

9 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And did part of that include
10 reviewing what we've heard referred to as the Judd Report,
11 the May 2020 assessment on the Critical Election Incident
12 Public Protocol?

13 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it did. That was
14 a deliberate decision made by the government to have an
15 independent review by a very senior public servant, former
16 Deputy Minister, Director of CSIS. So once we got Mr. Judd's
17 report, I worked with the senior officials at the Privy
18 Council Office to make any adjustments that Mr. Judd
19 recommended.

20 We also had the benefit of a National
21 Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians
22 report, so that work went into the sort of second version or
23 2.0 version of what Karina Gould had taken to Cabinet two
24 years previously.

25 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you.

26 And just for the benefit of the participants,
27 the Judd Report can be found at CAN 900. We don't need to
28 bring it up.

1 I would ask the court operator to bring up
2 COM 48.

3 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 48:

4 Countering an Evolving Threat: Update
5 on Recommendations to Counter Foreign
6 Interference in Canada's Democratic
7 Institutions

8 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And this is a report entitled
9 "Countering An Evolving Threat" that I think, Minister,
10 you'll be quite familiar with. I realize it was produced
11 some time later.

12 But if we could just go to page 20 of that
13 document, it contains a review of different recommendations
14 that have been made by some of the entities that we've listed
15 this morning, including the Judd Report.

16 You mentioned, Minister, that you adopted or
17 recommended adopting a number of the recommendations made by
18 -- made in that report. One recommendation I understand that
19 was not implemented, if we just scroll down a bit on this
20 page, what's listed as number 2, that the protocol would
21 cover the pre-writ period. Can you explain why that
22 particular recommendation was not implemented?

23 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** So that would have
24 been based on advice that I would have received from senior
25 officials at the Privy Council Office. In a context where
26 we're not in an election period, where a writ hasn't been
27 issued, there's a basic principle of ministerial
28 responsibility. Ministers are in office and have

1 responsibility, including around foreign interference. The
2 national security agencies are empowered to work with the
3 Minister who's in office.

4 This was very much and deliberately designed
5 to be something that would be in effect during a caretaker
6 period. It's a convention of British Parliamentary democracy
7 where the government is, in itself, a candidate to succeed
8 itself.

9 So in a -- governments act with a great deal
10 of restraint during a writ period, as is absolutely
11 appropriate. That's why the Panel and the protocol was
12 deliberately designed to exist at a period where the elected
13 government perhaps shouldn't be the best arbiter of public
14 pronouncements on the conduct of an election.

15 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right.

16 Let me turn to a next topic, which is to ask
17 you about whether and when you received classified
18 intelligence in your capacity as Minister of
19 Intergovernmental Affairs and with responsibilities for
20 Democratic Institutions? Do I understand that it would be
21 rare for you to receive classified intelligence or classified
22 briefings?

23 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, the Minister of
24 Democratic Institutions is not a regular consumer of
25 intelligence products or intelligence documents or briefings
26 from intelligence officials.

27 And I've had a perspective on that since I
28 became the Minister of Public Safety last summer. I now see

1 the difference between the operational responsibility of a
2 Minister responsible for CSIS or the RCMP and a Minister
3 responsible for Democratic Institutions.

4 The Democratic Institutions portfolio, I did
5 receive eye-level briefings from officials on a number of
6 occasions. I think the first one was in March of 2020, I
7 think literally on the eve of the declaration of the
8 pandemic; one tends to remember those moments. But it was a
9 high-level situational awareness of the threat landscape. It
10 was my first opportunity to hear from them how -- what they
11 had seen, in terms of threat actors and potential attempts to
12 interfere in the election of 2019, but it didn't-- it was to
13 situate my understanding of the threat landscape of the
14 particular state or non-state actors that are active in this
15 space, but it didn't go into granularity around specific
16 constituencies or specific events. It was a higher level
17 briefing. Probably so, as in your reference to the Judd
18 Report and other work that we do, as we were thinking through
19 how we wanted to adjust the protocol and the Protecting
20 Democracy Plan for the subsequent election. This was a sort
21 of an introduction for me to the threat landscape. That was
22 an intelligence briefing but it was at a much higher level
23 than, for example, the Public Safety Minister would typically
24 receive.

25 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. We'll go through
26 that briefing in just a moment, but we heard from Minister
27 Gould this morning that in developing the Plan to Protect
28 Democracy, she had sort of monthly meetings, she estimated,

1 with CSIS, CSE; the Privy Council Office received information
2 from RRM. I understand you did not receive -- and those
3 were, to be clear, sort of high-level, as you've described,
4 briefings, not sort of specific incidents or specific
5 geographical areas or things of that sort. I understand you
6 did not have sort of these regular monthly briefing sessions.
7 Can you explain the difference in approach?

8 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** It's probably three
9 explanations. The first one is in September of 2019 I had a
10 stem cell transplant to deal with a very aggressive and rare
11 form of blood cancer. So when I became Minister, I was
12 literally -- I came from Montreal and went back to Montreal
13 the same day. So I was recovering, in terms of my own
14 health.

15 The assessment was that the plan that Karina
16 had put in place had worked. The initial information was
17 that it had been successful. We recognized that we needed to
18 adjust or tweak or take into account recommendations from the
19 National Security and Intelligence Committee of
20 Parliamentarians or Mr. Judd. So that was less of an
21 undertaking than building a plan from scratch.

22 Before Karina Gould had put together the
23 Protecting Democracy Plan, nothing of this sort had existed.
24 So she built the infrastructure from scratch. It was the
25 first time the federal government had set up these mechanisms
26 to detect and disrupt foreign interference, the public
27 protocol. So these were all new elements. We were satisfied
28 generally with how they had worked. We recognized that we

1 had committed to reviewing and adjusting them, which is what
2 I did. And then along came COVID as well.

3 COVID literally happened, I think, the day --
4 the pandemic was the day after my first briefing. Like many
5 Canadians I returned to New Brunswick. My health was still
6 fragile, recovering from the transplant. And we were
7 building the communications infrastructure as a government to
8 allow Ministers to receive classified information from
9 residences.

10 So that quickly changed, and by the fall
11 everybody was in a much different routine. But the need for
12 the monthly briefings or to travel to California to meet the
13 social media companies was much different after she had, in
14 our view, successfully done that work.

15 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. Let's turn to
16 that March 2020 briefing. If the Court Operator could pull
17 up CAN 15506.

18 This is a memo. The memo is dated March 9th,
19 2020. It is a memorandum to the National Security and
20 Intelligence Advisor, and I understand represents the notes
21 for the NSIA for a security briefing to you in your capacity
22 as President of the Queen's Privy Council Office. And we
23 heard some evidence yesterday that briefing notes are not
24 always strictly applied to. So I just want to go through
25 this document and understand what topics were or were not
26 covered in that briefing.

27 If we look at the summary on the first page,
28 it indicates that the purpose of the meeting is to provide

1 you:

2 "...with a summary of elections
3 security related activities
4 undertaken to help safeguard the
5 2019...election...as well as an
6 overview of the threat environment,
7 particularly as it pertains to
8 foreign interference."

9 Does that accord with your memory of the
10 purpose of the briefing?

11 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it does.

12 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Okay. And then the summary
13 also indicates in the third bullet point that the December
14 mandate letter that you had received specified that you were:
15 "...to lead a review of the measures
16 put in place to protect the electoral
17 process, and bring forward
18 recommendations..."

19 And does that accord with your memory of the
20 December mandate letter that you had received?

21 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it does.

22 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And then in the bullet point
23 below that, indicates that Ms. Bruce, who I understood was
24 then the head of the CSE, and Mr. Vigneault, the Director of
25 the CSIS, would expand upon potential threats observed in GE
26 2019.

27 Do you remember whether Ms. Bruce and -- Ms.
28 Bruce and Mr. Vigneault were at that briefing and provided

1 you -- and did they provide you with some information on the
2 potential threats observed during the 2019 election?

3 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, they did.

4 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Okay. If we go to page 3 of
5 that document, just scrolling to the bottom of the page,
6 there's a text box there indicating there is some discussion
7 of a threat reduction measure that the Government of Canada
8 had conducted in advance of the 2019 election. Do you recall
9 receiving information about that -- about that TRM in this
10 meeting?

11 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I don't recall details
12 of that discussion around threat reduction measures or -- I
13 see that it references the Government of Pakistan. I don't
14 have a specific recollection of a conversation about CSIS
15 threat reduction measures.

16 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. And then if we go
17 to page 8 of the document? If we scroll just a little bit
18 further down, there's a title indicating "What we saw".

19 And the bullets indicate that:

20 "...we did not observe any activities..."

21 And I presume -- sorry, I should -- just to
22 put this in context, there's a discussion above about the
23 SITE Taskforce and the Panel of Five's work. So I am
24 assuming, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, that this --
25 the "we" addressed here is the Panel:

26 "...we did not observe any activities
27 that met the threshold for a public
28 announcement or affected Canada's

1 ability to have a free and fair
2 election, including in the online
3 space.”

4 Is that something that you recall being
5 briefed on in this meeting?

6 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes, I do. And as I -
7 - that was one of the most significant takeaways for me from
8 that sort of first high level briefing, is that some of the
9 most senior intelligence and security officials in the
10 country confirmed to me their view that the 2019 Election was
11 free and fair and that any attempts at foreign interference
12 would not have affected the outcome of the election,
13 including in specific and individual ridings.

14 So I remember being reassured that the plan
15 that we had put in place, in their view, in their independent
16 senior official view, had been successful.

17 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And the next bullet point
18 down, do you recall that being said as well?

19 “That is not the same as saying we
20 saw nothing at all.”

21 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes. That’s why I
22 said the idea that there have been attempts is not new. This
23 had existed for over a decade. And they would talk about
24 that sort of overall threat landscape, but the takeaway for
25 me, I thought was significant, your first bullet, that the
26 election had been free and fair and decided by Canadians in
27 Canada.

28 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Turning to page 10 of this

1 document?

2 We see a heading labeled "China threat
3 update" and there are a number of largely redacted bullets.
4 The third down, third bullet down, is bolded and says:

5 "...specific incidents suggestive of
6 [foreign interference] which were
7 briefed to relevant clients
8 ([Government of Canada] and political
9 parties) during the writ period
10 (e.g., Don Valley)."

11 Do you recall being briefed on anything
12 specifically related to Don Valley?

13 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Comme j'ai dit... pis
14 d'ailleurs, la première fois que j'ai vu ce document ici,
15 c'est quand je me préparais pour ces audiences. Alors, moi,
16 comme ministre qui reçoit un briefing des hauts
17 fonctionnaires, je ne vois pas leurs notes qui ont été
18 préparées par leurs collègues pour la réunion. Alors, la
19 première fois que je savais qu'ils avaient des notes comme
20 ça, honnêtement, c'est quand j'ai vu et quand je me préparais
21 pour l'audience et j'ai vu vos documents.

22 Je crois comprendre aussi que cette section
23 ici, c'était comme si vous avez besoin de d'autres
24 renseignements, c'est même supplémentaire à la section
25 principale ou primaire du document. Et, comme j'ai dit, ma...
26 mon impression, c'était qu'ils voulaient me donner une
27 perspective plus globale à un haut niveau en termes du
28 contexte des menaces.

1 Mais moi, je ne rappelle... je ne me rappelle
2 pas du tout qu'on a rentré dans les détails aussi précis
3 qu'une circonscription et qu'un pays en particulier avait
4 fait quelque chose, supposément, dans une circonscription.
5 Je ne... j'ai aucun... la première fois que j'ai appris les
6 allégations de ce comté-là, c'était quand c'était public
7 suite à des fuites, et c'était rendu public l'année passée.

8 **MS. ERIN DANN:** I understand. Thank you.
9 And so my next questions you may be able to answer quite
10 quickly, given that you've indicated it was really more high
11 level or global type briefings.

12 I'm turning away specifically from this
13 document.

14 Can I ask you whether -- I'll ask the Court
15 Operator to pull up SUM 3.

16 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.SUM 3:**

17 People's Republic of China Officials
18 - Foreign Interference Activities in
19 Greater Vancouver in the 2019 General
20 Election

21 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Minister, there was a number
22 of summaries produced for the purposes of this Commission on
23 various issues relating to the 2019 and 2021 Elections, and
24 I'll just ask you very briefly to indicate whether or not you
25 were aware of intelligence relating to these various issues
26 at the time of the 2019 and then 2021 Election?

27 So this first one relates to potential
28 interference in the Vancouver area, and specifically the use

1 of, at paragraph 3, the use of proxy agents to exclude
2 candidates from community events.

3 Was this the type of intelligence that you
4 would have been briefed on in 2020 or after the -- sometime
5 after the 2019 Election?

6 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yeah. And in your
7 introduction, you said, like, before the 2019 Election. So I
8 would not have had even this level of detail before the 2019
9 Election when I became Minister Responsible for Democratic
10 Institutions. So after the 2019 Election.

11 The officials that would provide the
12 briefings, it was -- certainly they were focusing on China as
13 one of the most frequent countries in terms of attempting to
14 interfere. I don't remember details of local community
15 events in the City of Vancouver.

16 Again, I -- the first time I saw these
17 summaries was prepared for this hearing, and there are a long
18 list of caveats that you can't figure out from this summary,
19 we don't know at what particular moment this intelligence
20 information was gathered, we don't have the context of other
21 pieces of information, we're not sure if it's a single
22 source, if it was corroborated. So I want to be careful not
23 to comment on these specific things, other than having looked
24 at the summaries before my appearance today.

25 **MS. ERIN DANN:** I understand. And I don't
26 want to ask you about the substance of any of the
27 intelligence. I'm really just looking -- or seeking to
28 understand whether these are -- you would have been briefed

1 on these issues in your capacity as having Responsibilities
2 for Democratic Institutions?

3 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** So they would have,
4 for example, talked about proxy agents. And that is one of
5 the ways that different hostile actors attempt to interfere.
6 I would have understood that China was very present in that
7 kind of activity, but I -- was it in the City of Vancouver
8 and was somebody kept out of a community event? That, I
9 would not have known.

10 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Understood.

11 And if we could bring up SUM.10, please?

12 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.SUM 10:**

13 People's Republic of China Threat
14 Actors, Contact with Candidates and
15 Staff, and Funding of Threat Actors

16 **MS. ERIN DANN:** This is a summary, Minister,
17 in relation to PRC threat actors, contact with candidates,
18 and funding of threat actors. It mentions 11 candidates, 13
19 political staff, and a transfer of \$250,000. Were you
20 briefed in relation -- or had you been briefed in relation to
21 these -- to this body of intelligence in your capacity as
22 Responsible for Democratic Institutions?

23 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** So again, I wouldn't
24 comment on specific allegations. In this case, I learned
25 about this when it became public following some leaks. So I
26 would not have been briefed in this level of granularity.

27 But as I say, I also think it's important
28 that people not think we are confirming stuff that appeared

1 in particular leaks of intelligence information. I think it
2 just merits saying that I took note of the public discussion
3 of these issues.

4 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Right. And turning to 2021
5 now, I'll ask the Court Operator to bring up SUM 4.

6 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.SUM 4:**

7 Possible People's Republic of China
8 Foreign Interference-Related Mis or
9 Disinformation

10 **MS. ERIN DANN:** And this is a summary,
11 Minister, that describes some of the allegations of
12 misinformation, or a disinformation campaign targeted Erin
13 O'Toole, Kenny Chiu, and the Conservative Party of Canada.

14 And I want to ask whether in the months or
15 weeks after the 2021 Election, were you aware of -- were you
16 aware of the intelligence summarized in this summary?

17 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Again, I knew that
18 China used social media platforms, and particularly, WeChat,
19 to propagate campaigns of disinformation and misinformation.
20 But the first time I learned about the specific allegations,
21 either with respect to Mr. O'Toole or Mr. Chiu, was
22 following, again, the public release of this information, and
23 then there were subsequent meetings in the fall of 2022, I
24 think, and certainly in the spring of 2023, where we were
25 taken into some more detail a small group of ministers.

26 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Right. And so turning, then,
27 to those -- we'll jump ahead, then, to those briefings, and
28 I'll take you specifically to one that was held in May of

1 2023. And that's CAN 17676.

2 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 17676:

3 Handwritten Notes of B. Clow &
4 Meeting Invitation"

5 **MS. ERIN DANN:** If we can scroll to the
6 second page, please.

7 These -- I realise these are not your notes,
8 Minister, but we heard ---

9 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** But Brian Clow has
10 pretty good handwriting.

11 **MS. ERIN DANN:** He does indeed. So we heard
12 some evidence from Mr. Clow yesterday that these were notes
13 that he made during a briefing on May 18th. And I understand
14 that you were -- your name is listed at the top, and I
15 understand you were at this briefing?

16 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** I was.

17 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. And the document
18 or the notes refer to some expressions of -- or partisan
19 preferences, shifting, or wanting to punish -- I'm looking at
20 the first, sorry, in the middle of the page, under discussion
21 of media leaks. There is:

22 "PRC - no threats of physical harm to
23 MPs or families..."

24 The next line down:

25 "PRC wanted to punish LPC shift to
26 CPC..."

27 And some further discussion of shifting back
28 to LPC.

1 Was this the first time you had been briefed
2 on intelligence relating to shifting partisan preferences
3 expressed by the PRC?

4 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it was. That was
5 the first time I would have heard that level of granularity.
6 I remember being quite skeptical that an intelligence
7 briefing would be able to discern the shifting preferences of
8 a country in another country's election. I've been in enough
9 elections where a lot of people claim to have influence or to
10 be involved in either a successful or unsuccessful election,
11 and having played a critical role where, in some cases, it's
12 exaggerated. So that's part of a free and open democratic
13 discussion. I -- but I do remember the officials offering up
14 that piece of intelligence at that meeting.

15 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. And there's also,
16 I see a note towards the bottom of the screen right now, "FI
17 in DVN 2019 nomination." Is this the first time you would
18 have heard at that sort of granular level about a particular
19 intelligence relating to the nomination process in 2019 in
20 DVN?

21 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes, I think it was.

22 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Okay. And at the bottom of
23 the screen now, there is reference to the 11 candidates, and
24 a reference to \$250,000. Is -- again, this is the first time
25 you would have heard with that level of granularity about
26 that ---

27 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes.

28 **MS. ERIN DANN:** --- that allegation?

1 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it was.

2 **MS. ERIN DANN:** All right. And scrolling to
3 the next page. Sorry. The second unredacted line there:
4 "Disinformation campaigns did exist.
5 Can't include direct impact on
6 certain results."

7 And above that, there is a list of various
8 media outlets.

9 Is this the first time you would have heard
10 about intelligence relating to a disinformation campaign in
11 2021?

12 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** I don't disagree with
13 Brian's notes. I think there was a meeting in February in
14 the winter of that same year, but I don't have those notes in
15 front of me, and I just want to make sure I don't say yeah,
16 that was the first time, and then there's a note
17 referencing....

18 This was the first time that I remember
19 hearing about ridings, allegations around money exchanging.
20 Disinformation campaigns and China using social media
21 platforms was something that we'd heard a lot about for a
22 considerable amount of time, but this may have been the first
23 time when they went into detail of the targets, the
24 particular elements of the disinformation that was used.

25 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you. And I don't mean
26 to suggest it was -- you may well have heard about this at an
27 earlier briefing, but it was well after 2021. It would have
28 only been after various media leaks. Is that fair to say?

1 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes. Yes.

2 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Okay.

3 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** This level of
4 granularity started after some of these allegations were in
5 the public domain.

6 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Thank you. And would -- just
7 to conclude, would having knowledge of this type of
8 information, this level of granularity, had -- would it have
9 benefitted your review of the implementation of the plan to
10 protect democracy in 2019, and your efforts to update that
11 plan that you spoke about earlier for 2021? Would having
12 this level of information about the nature and extent of
13 threats of foreign interference have benefitted your efforts
14 in reviewing and developing the Plan 2.0, as you put it?

15 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** I'm not sure that this
16 level of granularity would have made a significant
17 difference. The senior officials at the Privy Council Office
18 who worked with me talked to their colleagues in the
19 intelligence secretariat of Privy Council Office, and I
20 assume with the national security agencies.

21 I certainly believed in the discussions I had
22 with them, they gave me a sufficiently precise picture of the
23 threat landscape of the countries that were active in the
24 particular foreign interference space. And the measures that
25 we wanted to be put in -- to be adjusted or tweaked following
26 Mr. Judd's report or the National Security Intelligence
27 Committee of Parliamentarians were validated by the fact that
28 we had Mr. Judd, and the members of the Panel themselves,

1 confirming that in their views the measures that had been in
2 place had worked, had been successful. So I had every
3 confidence that I had all of the information I needed, and my
4 colleagues at Privy Council Office, the senior officials that
5 helped me go to Cabinet with the adjusted version of the
6 plan, were well aware of what we needed to ask Cabinet to
7 make the changes, largely based on Mr. Judd's review.

8 And Mr. Judd would have had all of this
9 granularity. So I had very much confidence in his experience
10 in this area. He had a long and distinguished experience in
11 this area, and I was told that he had been taken through all
12 of this detail. I was satisfied to rely on his advice, and
13 the advice of the deputy ministers at the Privy Council
14 Office, when we went to Cabinet for the amended or the
15 adjusted plan.

16 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Those are all my questions,
17 Commissioner.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you. We'll break
19 for lunch, and we'll come back at 2:20.

20 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,
21 s'il vous plaît.

22 This hearing is in recess until 2:20. La
23 séance est en pause jusqu'à 14h20.

24 --- Upon recessing at 1:19 p.m./

25 --- La séance est suspendue à 13h19

26 --- Upon resuming at 2:21 p.m./

27 --- La séance est reprise à 14 h 21

28 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il

1 vous plait.

2 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
3 Commission is back in session. Cette séance de la Commission
4 sur l'ingérence étrangère a repris.

5 **--- HON. DOMINIC Le BLANC, Resumed/Sous le même serment:**

6 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** La séance a repris,
7 mais j'ai oublié mon cahier de notes. Je vais prendre une
8 minute pour le...

9 (SHORT PAUSE)

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** At least it's a
11 confirmation that I'm taking notes. Before we start the
12 cross-examination, I just want to specify one thing. The
13 question that I've been asked oft and the answer that I've
14 been given by Minister Blair regarding the media report
15 concerning the CSIS warrant were outside the scope of this
16 stage of the Commission work, and no findings will be made on
17 these matters in the initial report.

18 Cross-examination. First one is Jenny --
19 counsel for Jenny Kwan.

20 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:**

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** My name is Sujit
23 Choudhry. I'm counsel for Jenny Kwan, MP for Vancouver East.

24 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Good afternoon.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good afternoon. I just
26 have five minutes, so a couple of quick questions. The first
27 is you've probably seen reports about the CSIS Director's
28 talking points that we examined yesterday with the PMO panel.

1 I just have a question about those, a quick one. Were you --
2 did you ever receive -- so there's particular talking points
3 regarding a -- that are dated February 21st, 2023, and I'll
4 refer to the CAN doc number from my friends. It's CAN 4495.

5 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 4495:**

6 Briefing to the Prime Minister's
7 Office on Foreign Interference
8 Threats to Canada's Democratic
9 Institutions

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And just a quick
11 question is whether you ever received a briefing from the
12 director that covered the points in those talking points?
13 And maybe, if it would help, Minister, we could put up the
14 document. And in particular, it's on pages 5 and 6. There's
15 some conclusions. You can scroll down. Yeah, so there's 3
16 conclusions listed on page 5. And then there's 2 conclusions
17 on page 6. And we're just wondering if you ever received a
18 briefing from the director that covered those five points.

19 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Well, then if you want
20 me to speak to all five of them, let's go back to the first -

21 --

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure.

23 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** --- three?

24 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Of course, sir.

25 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** If I could go back up

26 ---

27 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah.

28 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** --- to the first

1 three?

2 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah.

3 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Because this -- you'll
4 appreciate the first time I saw this document was when I was
5 preparing for these.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Of course, sir. Yes.

7 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** And I was not in that
8 briefing that the Prime Minister would have had.

9 Okay. Can I see the last two again?

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure, of course. Thank
11 you.

12 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** And your question
13 again?

14 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** I said I -- question is,
15 did you ever receive a briefing from the CSIS Director that
16 addressed any of those five points or communicated those five
17 points?

18 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Not in that context at
19 all. My first briefing with the CSIS Director as Minister of
20 Democratic Institutions was, as I said earlier today, a
21 higher level sort of analysis of the threat landscape. Since
22 I became Minister of Public Safety, I talk to the Director of
23 CSIS about these issues with more precision than the Minister
24 of Democratic Institutions at the time. And we're always
25 looking at, and he talks to me about things the service is
26 doing to detect and disrupt foreign interference. We've
27 always said that the threat evolves, that the kind of -- the
28 nature of the threat and the particular ways that hostile

1 state or non-state actors attempt to interfere evolve, and he
2 talks to me about what CSIS is doing to keep up with the
3 evolving threat. So that would be the context of my
4 conversations with him.

5 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Thank you. Well,
6 that's actually a good segway to my next question, which is
7 so, Me Drouin was here testifying in her capacity, her most
8 recent role as NSIA, and she offered an observation at the
9 end of her cross-examination with me. She said that, "You
10 know, it's been two years or two-and-a-half years since 2021.
11 There's -- and our understanding of foreign interference
12 continues to evolve to the kind of threat it might pose today
13 as to what it might have posed in 2021, let alone in 2019."
14 And so the -- and I know that you've been working on a --
15 you've issued a report with Mme Charette about steps forward.
16 And so I'm hoping I can ask you a couple of questions on that
17 theme, of what our current understanding of foreign
18 interference is and what -- how we might respond today
19 relative to our current understanding. And so the first is a
20 question that's been put to other members of the government,
21 but we'll put to you as well, and if we could call up now,
22 it's in the document database, JKW 161.

23 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. JKW 161:**

24 National Terrorism Threat Level

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good. And is -- if we
26 could scroll down, there should be a chart here. Yes, that's
27 it. Thank you. So, Minister, you're familiar with this
28 obviously. This is a national terrorism threat levels chart.

1 And so the question is, as an alternative to the threshold
2 and the protocol, which is a high threshold and a single
3 threshold, this in the counterterrorism context, we use a
4 spectrum, and with kind of a graduated set of responses. And
5 so is this type of framework an alternative to the high
6 single threshold model that we use for foreign interference,
7 is it something we should consider or look at carefully?

8 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** So -- and I -- my
9 colleague, Karina Gould, would have talked about that this
10 morning when she was the Minister of Democratic Institutions
11 and brought forward the first Protecting Democracy Plan,
12 which had the public protocol, the threshold is deliberately
13 set at a high-level. It's an extraordinary moment in the
14 middle of an election campaign where a group of five senior
15 public servants chaired by the Secretary to the Cabinet, the
16 most senior non partisan public servant in the country, would
17 intervene in an election context to alert Canadians to a
18 potential threat of foreign interference that in their
19 independent judgement would impact the ability of Canadians
20 to have a free and fair election, including at the riding
21 level or obviously at the national level.

22 So the threshold has to be high. In a -- an
23 election campaign, you deliberately want a robust public
24 discourse. They are often not gentle moments in a country's
25 democratic evolution, and that's positive. You want to
26 encourage robust debate, and having a weekly comment from a
27 panel of the most senior public servants, or a regular
28 commentary, would be an extraordinary moment, and done at

1 anything less than a high threshold in our view might
2 undermine confidence in the election.

3 So that's why it's deliberately set that
4 high, and that's why I don't think a comparison to a
5 terrorism threat level is a valid comparison.

6 During an election campaign, the national
7 security agencies are still very much, according to law,
8 doing their job at detecting and disrupting foreign
9 interference. You're going to the ultimate instrument of a
10 public declaration by the Panel of Five. I think it's
11 important to know that the work is being done on a regular
12 and effective basis throughout the election period, and
13 obviously before the election as well.

14 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So one follow up
15 question, Minister, because -- sorry.

16 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** It's going to be the
17 last question ---

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah. So just to put
19 this back to you, it could be that at the critical level
20 there is a public announcement by the Panel of Five, but
21 beneath that, there is different types of communications that
22 might not be of that character to parties, to candidates, to
23 different entities. So there is a -- there's a more
24 complicated, a more complex set of tools available to the
25 government than the one that its chosen in this version of
26 the Protocol that might evolve in response to the
27 recommendations that you're, or the review that you're
28 undertaking right now.

1 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And the question is?

2 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And so -- isn't that --
3 isn't -- can't we think about something other than it could
4 be all or nothing approach where it's a public announcement
5 from the Panel of Five, where there is communications to
6 parties, to candidates, to affected communities that maybe
7 don't have the same -- doesn't have the same level of
8 seriousness?

9 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Well, I think you -- as
10 I said, you want to be careful in an electoral context,
11 before intelligence information is shared in a public
12 context, you know that there's a security cleared
13 representatives of each political party that can meet with
14 representatives of the intelligence and security community.
15 Elections Canada has access to these officials as well.

16 I don't think that you can -- I don't think
17 that you can have a spectrum of public comment. It either
18 reaches the threshold where in the independent professional
19 judgement of these five senior officials they are required to
20 inform the public because in their judgement our ability to
21 conduct a free and fair election in a riding or nationally is
22 affected. I don't think you take steps along that road.

23 It's a -- candidates respond to allegations,
24 candidates disagree with other candidates, candidates comment
25 on social media posts. That's part of a normal robust
26 democratic discussion, and having intelligence services or
27 senior public officials commenting in a public way in an
28 election, in our view, has to be because in their independent

1 judgement during the caretaker period they think that
2 something has happened that impedes the ability of Canadians
3 to have a free and fair election. And it's important to note
4 that in 2019 and 2021, in their judgement, they did not think
5 that was the case.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Thank you, sir.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

8 Counsel for UCC?

9 **MR. JON DOODY:** No questions, Commissioner.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No questions?

11 Counsel for Erin O'Toole?

12 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you, Commissioner.

13 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

14 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:**

15 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Good afternoon, Minister.

16 My name is Tom Jarmyn, here on behalf ---

17 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Good afternoon.

18 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** --- of Erin O'Toole.

19 I've just got a couple of questions. During
20 the period from 2019 to 2021, when you were serving your
21 duties as Minister of Democratic Institutions, is it fair to
22 say that your -- the intelligence briefings you received were
23 high level as opposed to directed at significant incidents?

24 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yeah, they were high
25 level threat analysis of the threat environment. There were
26 -- there was discussions of different state -- hostile state
27 and non state actors that were active in this space. But it
28 didn't go down into details around specific ridings or

1 specific geographical regions.

2 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay, thank you. And
3 this morning, when Minister Gould testified, she talked about
4 the relationship she developed with Facebook, Twitter, and
5 Microsoft, and I guess Google as well, in order to come to
6 this voluntary protocol with respect to the 2019 election.
7 Was that reviewed after the 2019 election?

8 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Yes, it was reviewed by
9 the National Security and Intelligence Committee of
10 Parliamentarians and by Mr. Judd in his review. The
11 voluntary undertaking that Ms. Gould got from the major
12 social media platforms was reviewed, and in fact, in 2021, we
13 also added others to that space.

14 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Yes. And what steps were
15 taken to add foreign enterprises like Tencent and ByteDance,
16 who are legal owners of WeChat and TikTok, respectively?

17 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** So again, we were
18 governed by the analysis that Mr. Judd did and the National
19 Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. We
20 always recognised that there was a threat of disinformation
21 and misinformation in this space and that some foreign state
22 and non state actors were particularly active. That is one
23 of the challenges of a democratic process in a moment where
24 social media has taken on such significant importance and has
25 such a significant impact.

26 But we believe that the officials at Privy
27 Council Office, the members of the SITE Task Force, and
28 others, had developed ongoing relationships with these social

1 media platforms, and during the context of an election,
2 during the caretaker period where the government is itself a
3 candidate in the election, they were the ones that would have
4 those conversations and those relationships.

5 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And have ByteDance or
6 Tencent been asked to enter into the same relationships with
7 -- as Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, and Google?

8 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** I want to be careful
9 before getting in. I'd want to -- I don't want to talk about
10 specific discussions that may have happened with intelligence
11 officials who are the ones that are best placed to give this
12 advice to the government. But we have participated, for
13 example, in a G7 effort, the Rapid Response Mechanism Canada
14 was a global leader in this space, there was the Paris call
15 for trust in democracy where I participated quickly or soon
16 after becoming Democratic Institutions Minister, with other
17 countries. It's a live conversation with our Five Eyes
18 partners about what we can do in terms of sharing information
19 around different platforms, but also which hostile state
20 actors or non state actors are active in this space.

21 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** But if their -- wouldn't
22 their refusal to participate in such an arrangement be a
23 signal to the government, particularly after the 2019
24 election, where we began to observe these activities, that
25 other measures might be necessary?

26 **HON. DOMNIC LeBLANC:** Again, regulating
27 global social media platforms is obviously a complicated
28 space. You'll appreciate that it's not easy for one country

1 to regulate or legislate in this area. That's why the most
2 effective ways, in our view, are to work with likeminded
3 countries. And there's increasingly an effort from Five Eyes
4 partners, from G7 partners to work in this space together.

5 We took our responsibility to do everything
6 that we could. And I would think that certainly the work
7 that Ms. Gould did told us that the major social media
8 platforms want to ensure that they're not participating in
9 activities or being used in a way that disinformation or
10 misinformation campaigns could affect, negatively, the
11 outcome of an election. But it's a constant challenge for
12 democratic governments around the world, and it's an active
13 conversation that I've had with counterparts in other
14 countries as well.

15 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay. That's my time.
16 Thank you, Minister.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

18 Next one is counsel for RCDA, Me Sirois.

19 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

20 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

21 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Bonjour.

22 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Bonjour.

23 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ministre LeBlanc, vous
24 avez été impliqué dans le développement du mandat de la
25 présente Commission, n'est-ce pas?

26 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Oui.

27 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Chaque mot mentionné
28 dans le décret de la Commission a été choisi avec soin?

1 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Posez la question
2 une autre fois, pardon?

3 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Chaque mot qui a été
4 choisi dans le mandat de la Commission...

5 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Les termes de
6 référence? Absolument. C'est sûr.

7 Et ont été négociés, d'ailleurs, avec tous
8 les partis reconnus à la Chambre des communes, le NPD, les
9 Conservateurs et le Bloc québécois. On était tous d'accord
10 avec chaque mot dans les termes de référence ou le mandat que
11 vous avez référé.

12 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** OK. Je vais citer le
13 mandat. Le mandat ordonne à la Commissaire d'examiner et
14 d'évaluer l'ingérence de la Chine, de la Russie et d'autres
15 acteurs étatiques et non-étatiques étrangers.

16 On comprend tous que la Chine est mentionnée
17 expressément dans le mandat parce que certaines allégations,
18 je dis bien allégations, d'ingérence chinoise sont sorties
19 dans les médias. Est-ce que le gouvernement est au courant
20 d'allégations semblables voulant que la Russie s'est ingérée
21 dans les 43^e et 44^e élections?

22 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Vous comprendrez que
23 je ne vais pas commenter sur des allégations dans le domaine
24 public sur les détails ou les implications de renseignements
25 précis.

26 C'est connu, je pense, dans le domaine public
27 que la Russie est particulièrement présente dans les
28 campagnes de désinformation, de mésinformation, dans d'autres

1 contextes, dans des cyberattaques, que moi je fais référence
2 à qu'est-ce qui est dans le domaine public.

3 Et d'ailleurs plus tôt dans d'autres pays, on
4 a vu dans d'autres pays des allégations de l'implication de
5 la Russie dans ce genre de menace, mais je vais pas commenter
6 sur les détails de l'implication de la Russie. Sauf dire,
7 comme on a dit publiquement, que la Russie a été dans
8 d'autres circonstances assez actif et on voulait s'assurer
9 que toutes les protections appropriées soient en place au
10 Canada.

11 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Mais il y a d'autres
12 pays qui sont aussi actifs. C'est pour ça que les termes de
13 référence disent, justement, d'enquêter sur la Chine, la
14 Russie, et d'autres acteurs étatiques. Alors, je me demande
15 pourquoi on mentionne pas simplement la Chine et d'autres
16 acteurs étatiques ou non étatiques étrangers? S'il y a pas
17 de preuve apparente ou pas d'intention apparente que la
18 Russie s'est ingérée dans les 43^e ou 44^e élections?

19 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** J'ai pas dit qu'il y
20 a pas de preuve ou pas... que la Russie s'est ingérée. J'ai
21 dit c'est une menace continue que la Russie s'ingère avec
22 des campagnes de désinformation, de désinformation. Dans
23 d'autres pays, il y a eu dans le domaine public des
24 allégations quant à la Russie par exemple...

25 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Je parle pas des
26 autres...

27 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** ... dans le contexte
28 des cyberattaques. Alors...

1 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** ... des autres pays.

2 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** ... quand j'ai parlé
3 avec mes homologues, leaders parlementaires des trois autres
4 partis politiques, mes confrères, la discussion -- c'était
5 assez public au printemps, il y un an -- les gens parlaient
6 de la Russie et la Chine. Il y a d'autres pays. On a vu des
7 allégations quant à l'Inde.

8 Alors, un moment donné, je me rappelle bien,
9 dans la conversation, au lieu de... c'était au mois d'aout, je
10 crois, quand on finalisait ces termes de référence, on s'est
11 conclus entre nous autres que on voulait donner à la
12 Commission la capacité de suivre la preuve. On a utilisé
13 deux pays comme exemples, mais on a utilisé les mots que vous
14 avez prononcé, « d'autres acteurs étatiques ou non
15 étatiques » parce qu'on veut que la Commission soit capable
16 dans son jugement de poursuivre la preuve et d'arriver à des
17 conclusions qui s'imposent.

18 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Donc, est-ce que je
19 comprends bien qu'il était important pour vous qu'une
20 Commission d'enquête indépendante soit créée pour s'assurer
21 que rien n'avait été manqué par le gouvernement quant à
22 l'ingérence de la Russie dans les deux dernières élections?

23 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** On est toujours
24 intéressé à avoir des recommandations quant à comment
25 renforcer les mesures robustes qui sont déjà en place, que
26 nous croyons ont été appropriées lors des deux dernières
27 élections générales. Mais on a hâte à voir les
28 recommandations de la Commission et de d'autres experts,

1 parce que nous reconnaissons que le niveau ou la façon que la
2 menace évolue nécessite des mesures pour contrer... détecter et
3 contrer l'ingérence qui soient capables d'évoluer aussi.

4 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Et votre affirmation
5 que vous venez de faire s'applique particulièrement à la
6 Russie et c'est pour ça qu'elle est intégrée dans le mandat
7 de la Commission, n'est-ce pas?

8 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Non, moi je l'aurais
9 pas décrit comme ça. Je dirais pas particulièrement à la
10 Russie.

11 Comme j'ai dit, on a hâte de voir l'analyse
12 et les recommandations de la Commission sur plusieurs pays
13 dans son jugement qui méritent d'être enquêtés et reconnus.
14 Moi, je ne passe pas beaucoup de temps à imaginer où la
15 Commission va aller quand la Commission va suivre la preuve.
16 Mais nous avons décidé, les quatre formations politiques, que
17 la Russie et la Chine sont présents dans le domaine public
18 dans ces questions-là, mais ce sont pas du tout les deux
19 seuls pays.

20 Et comme j'ai dit, on va pas commenter sur
21 des incidents précis de tel ou tel pays. La Commission a
22 accès évidemment à tous les renseignements et toutes les
23 preuves dans ce domaine-là, mais je veux être un peu plus
24 prudent dans le contexte public.

25 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ça va être ma dernière
26 question. Je veux dire, on a quand même mentionné la Russie
27 pour s'assurer que la Russie soit enquêtée par la Commission?
28 Sinon, on l'aurait pas mentionnée?

1 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** On a reconnu que la
2 Russie, comme je l'ai dit, a été active dans... surtout le
3 domaine des cyberattaques potentielles, la désinformation et
4 la mésinformation. Et on a décidé, les quatre formations
5 politiques, d'utiliser deux exemples de pays qui étaient
6 beaucoup discutés dans le domaine public, mais on voulait que
7 la Commission, ayant accès à tous les renseignements
8 classifiés et tous les documents et les hauts fonctionnaires
9 qui sont capables de donner des briefings à la Commission, on
10 voulait que la Commission puisse, dans son jugement, suivre
11 la preuve.

12 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci.

13 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Merci.

14 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Parti conservateur.

15 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

16 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:**

17 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Good afternoon.

18 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Good afternoon.

19 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Can I have COM 346 pulled
20 up, please?

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 346:**

22 CTV News - "Process underway for Han
23 Dong's possible return to the Liberal
24 caucus" - June 1, 2023

25 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Minister -- do you have
26 it in front of you, Minister LeBlanc? This is a news report
27 from CTV News published June 2, 2023.

28 And at the top -- if you could scroll down,

1 please? Page 2? The top of page 2.

2 It says:

3 "A senior government official says
4 Intergovernmental Affairs Minister
5 Dominic LeBlanc is leading a process
6 to determine Independent MP Han
7 Dong's possible return to the Liberal
8 caucus."

9 Do you see that?

10 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yes.

11 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Is it correct that as of
12 June 2, 2023, you were leading a process to determine if Mr.
13 Dong could rejoin the Liberal caucus?

14 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** Apologies,
15 Commissioner. If my friend could explain how this is
16 relevant to Parts A and B of your mandate?

17 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Well we've been ---

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Can you, please?

19 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sure. We've been through
20 this before there's considerable controversy about Mr. Dong's
21 participation, willing or not, in foreign interference, and
22 there's conflicting reports as to what he did or didn't do,
23 and what he said or didn't say, and whether that gave rise
24 to, for lack of a better term, discipline or him being forced
25 from Liberal caucus.

26 So I'm asking this witness whether that in
27 fact happened, and whether, in light of -- I'll come to the
28 questions, in light of the Special Rapporteur's conclusions,

1 that decision to be excluded from caucus has been
2 reconsidered at all.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** And tell me, what is the
4 relationship with A and B of the Terms of Reference? Because
5 I can follow you if we look at the broad ---

6 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Sure.

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- mandate of the
8 Commission, ---

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Well if we ---

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- but we are just in
11 Phase 1 ---

12 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Well part of Phase 1 ---

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- and I fail to see --
14 -

15 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Part of Phase 1 is to
16 understand the extent of foreign interference, who it
17 involved, and what the government officials knew. I put it
18 to -- or I submit to you, Madam Commissioner, that the extent
19 to which Mr. Dong was disciplined, and remains disciplined,
20 is relevant to that inquiry.

21 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I'm going to allow the
22 question as to whether he was disciplined, but I think after
23 that, you know, what happened in 2023 or 2024 is outside the
24 scope of the Commission for the time being.

25 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** So Mr. Dong said
26 publicly in the House of Commons that he voluntarily decided
27 to withdraw from the Liberal Caucus when the allegations
28 became public. He stood up one evening in the House of

1 Commons and voluntarily withdrew from the Liberal Caucus and
2 asked the speaker to sit as an independent. That was the
3 decision that Mr. Dong made when these allegations became
4 public, and that is on the public record. Those were his
5 words.

6 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Mr. Dong has also
7 said since that he would like to rejoin caucus and that he's
8 had discussions with you about the possibility of rejoining
9 the caucus; is that correct?

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I think that's crossing
11 the line. It goes beyond the ---

12 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- the scope of the --
14 this phase.

15 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. So I'll just put
16 the questions on the record. I appreciate your ruling.

17 And if it's correct that Mr. Dong has
18 requested to rejoin caucus, and that has not yet been
19 exceeded to that request, I'd like to know why, and so that's
20 the next question. I accept your ruling, Madam Commissioner.
21 And I'd just like to put on the record the documents that
22 speak to these questions that I've intended to ask Minister
23 LeBlanc. It's COM 3044, 30 -- sorry, COM 344, 345, 346 and
24 347.

25 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 344:**

26 CBC - "MP Han Dong says he wants to
27 rejoin Liberal caucus after being
28 'vindicated' by Johnston's report" -

1 May 24, 2023

2 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 345:**

3 CBC - "Han Dong says he's met with
4 government, is waiting to learn if he
5 can rejoin caucus" - Sep 21, 2023

6 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 347:**

7 Global News - "Trudeau not saying if
8 Han Dong will return to Liberal
9 caucus after testimony" - April 3,
10 2024

11 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So ---

12 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Those are my ---

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** --- it's noted. Thank
14 you.

15 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Those are my questions.
16 Thank you.

17 **HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Thank you.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Counsel for Michael
19 Chong?

20 **MR GIB van ERT:** Madame, nous n'avons aucune
21 question pour ce témoin. Merci.

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Merci.

23 Counsel for Han Dong?

24 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** No questions. Thank you.

25 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Human Rights Coalition?

26 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

27 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:**

28 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Good afternoon.

1 L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC: Bonjour.

2 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: Could we please pull up
3 CAN.DOC 15 and turn to page 4?

4 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.DOC 15:

5 Public Safety (PS) Institutional
6 Report - UNCLASSIFIED

7 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: This is going to be the
8 institutional report prepared by Public Safety Canada. And
9 the final bullet point on page 4 reads,

10 "The Public Safety Minister is
11 responsible for most of the federal
12 agencies operating in the areas of
13 national security, policing and law
14 enforcement, border services and
15 corrections, and conditional release,
16 namely, the RCMP, CSIS, CBSA, CSE and
17 PBC. The Minister's role is to
18 coordinate their activities and
19 establish strategic priorities
20 relating to public safety and
21 emergency preparedness." (As read)

22 Is this correct?

23 HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC: Yes.

24 MS. HANNAH TAYLOR: Is it a strategic
25 priority to protect diaspora communities?

26 HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC: It's always been a
27 priority not just of the Public Safety Department, but of the
28 whole government. As I learned about the prevalence of

1 foreign interference, we were always struck that diaspora
2 communities are, in many cases, the targets and the victims
3 of these foreign interference attempts. So it's -- the
4 Public Safety Department is absolutely seized with that, as
5 would be, for example, of CSIS and other agencies, but the
6 whole government is concerned about this. My colleague, the
7 Minister of Diversity and Inclusion talks to me about this.
8 So it's not just my department, but the Public Safety
9 Department is absolutely concerned about this, but it goes
10 beyond one department.

11 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Thank you. And if I
12 could ask the Court Operator to please pull up CAN 2096?

13 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 2096:**

14 Elections Security Brief for Minister
15 LeBlanc

16 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And as it's being pulled
17 up, Minister, I understand this was an election security
18 brief provided to you. Looking to the first page at the
19 third bullet point, it's under the heading ---

20 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Sorry, do you know the
21 date of that?

22 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Unfortunately, that document
23 was produced without a date.

24 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Okay.

25 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** So just under slide two,
26 it reads,

27 "A [2016] public threat report from
28 the Communications Security

1 Establishment (CSE) identified
2 political parties and politicians,
3 electoral activities, and the media
4 as vulnerable to threats, but also
5 noted that our system has inherent
6 strengths built-in. For example,
7 paper-based ballots cannot be
8 "hacked".

9 Would you agree with this statement?

10 And for ---

11 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** I think our system has
12 a lot of inherent strengths. One of them is paper-based
13 ballots. That's probably in the context of cyber attacks.
14 That -- my discussions with Elections Canada or the security
15 agencies have always been around the risk, obviously, of a
16 cyber attack. In the case of paper ballots, it's a lot
17 easier to maintain public confidence in the election
18 machinery and in the outcome, but it's -- it would be one
19 example. I don't remember the details. I accept the
20 document you put before me. If it was my then Deputy
21 Minister Ian McCowan, who was the Deputy Secretary at Privy
22 Council Office, these were ongoing conversations that I would
23 have had with him over a number of meetings or briefings.

24 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** And so you've said that
25 it would be one of many tools in an arsenal to address the
26 issue. And with that in mind, you would agree that a paper-
27 based ballot doesn't make an elector any less vulnerable to
28 intimidation or harassment, which is why there needs to be

1 other mechanisms to protect them?

2 **HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Yeah, that's a fair
3 statement.

4 **MS. HANNAH TAYLOR:** Okay. Thank you,
5 Minister.

6 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.
7 AG?

8 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** I have no questions.
9 Thank you.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Re-examination?

11 **MS. ERIN DANN:** No, thank you.

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** J'ai une question pour
13 vous, Monsieur LeBlanc.

14 Vous avez indiqué lors de votre témoignage en
15 chef – je pense c'est à ce moment-là – avoir appris
16 l'existence d'allégations concernant monsieur Chiu et
17 monsieur O'Toole seulement une fois que l'information a été
18 rendue publique en 2022. Vous avez également en réponse à une
19 autre question qui vous a été posée, indiqué que ça ne vous
20 aurait pas vraiment été utile lorsque vous avez entrepris
21 d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les mesures qui avaient été
22 mises en place avaient été suffisantes ou avaient été
23 efficaces.

24 Est-ce que vous pouvez par ailleurs
25 m'indiquer si, dans votre rôle de ministre, ce type
26 d'informations là ou d'allégations là vous aurait été utile
27 en tant... de façon concomitante au moment où elles ont été...
28 ces éléments-là ont été identifiés?

1 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Et vous parlez,
2 Madame la commissaire, à ce moment-là comme ministre des
3 Institutions démocratiques, par exemple?

4 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Comme ministre des
5 Institutions démocratiques, puis ensuite vous me direz comme
6 ministre de la Sécurité publique.

7 **L'HON. DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Alors, parfait. Si
8 moi je suis tout à fait confortable dans mes discussions avec
9 les responsables au Conseil privé, les quelques discussions
10 que j'ai eues avec les chefs des services de renseignement ou
11 de sécurité nationale m'ont donné suffisamment d'informations
12 pour comprendre qu'est-ce qu'il fallait faire pour évoluer
13 nos mesures entre l'élection de 2019 et l'élection de 2021,
14 j'aurais compris par exemple qu'il y a des acteurs hostiles
15 qui utilisent des plateformes des médias sociaux, qu'ils
16 utilisent des agents pour essayer d'influencer ou intimider,
17 moi, pour moi, je n'avais aucune... à ce moment-là, aucune
18 responsabilité opérationnelle pour le suivi dans le cas de
19 monsieur X ou madame Y ou X en termes de... le Service de
20 renseignement était parfaitement, selon la loi, capable de
21 prendre des mesures appropriées, ça aurait été dans les mains
22 de mon collègue à ce moment-là, le ministre de la Sécurité
23 publique.

24 Alors, moi, je suis tout à fait convaincu que
25 j'avais suffisamment d'exemples dans mes conversations
26 d'ordre général des hauts fonctionnaires pour évoluer le plan
27 pour la protection de la démocratie. J'avais pas besoin
28 nécessairement de savoir que c'était candidat X ou la ville Y

1 ou telle ou telle chose se sont produites. Il s'agit de
2 demander et d'être rassuré que le Service de renseignement,
3 la GRC, Élections Canada, le Conseil privé avaient les outils
4 nécessaires, le mandat nécessaire pour détecter et contrer ce
5 genre d'ingérence.

6 Alors, c'est un accident de parcours de
7 remaniement ministériel que j'avais ces fonctions-là comme
8 ministre des Institutions démocratiques.

9 Et là, l'été passé, j'ai assumé les
10 responsabilités comme ministre de la Sécurité publique, et
11 là, j'ai compris d'une façon que je n'avais pas réalisé
12 avant, le rôle du ministre de la Sécurité publique quant à
13 l'approbation de certaines opérations de les Services de
14 renseignement par exemple, toute la question des mandats du
15 Service de renseignement, des fois ils vont informer le
16 ministre pour les mesures de réduire des menaces. Ça, c'est
17 une fonction qui existe comme ministre de la Sécurité
18 publique, mais j'avais pas besoin ou ça n'aurait pas été
19 approprié, je pense, d'être dans ces détails-là comme
20 ministre des Institutions démocratiques. Là, j'ai la bonne
21 chance d'avoir les deux.

22 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et comme ministre de la
23 Sécurité publique, est-ce que vous vous attendriez à ce que
24 ce type d'allégation là soit porté à votre connaissance?

25 **L'HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Absolument.
26 Absolument. Et d'ailleurs, je peux vous rassurer que dans mes
27 discussions avec monsieur Vigneault ou ses collègues, c'est
28 le genre de discussions qu'ils ont librement avec moi. Je me

1 sens tout à fait renseigné sur ces questions-là dans la
2 mesure qu'eux autres jugent que c'est approprié ou quand ils
3 ont besoin soit d'une approbation ou ils ont l'obligation de
4 m'informer. Des fois, ils ont l'obligation de m'informer sans
5 nécessairement avoir besoin d'une autorisation de ma part,
6 mais je vois ce genre d'échanges là confortablement
7 maintenant.

8 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci.

9 **L'HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Merci à vous.

10 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So no re-examination
11 after my questions?

12 **MS. ERIN DANN:** No.

13 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Votre Seigneurie?

14 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Oup! Pardon.

15 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Oui. Alain Manseau du Bloc
16 québécois. Vu que Han Dong et le gouvernement du Canada ont
17 passé leur tour pour les questions, je vous demanderais
18 l'autorisation pour poser quelques questions à l'Honorable
19 LeBlanc.

20 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Bien, écoutez, je vais
21 vous donner quelques minutes. On va convenir de 5 minutes,
22 Maitres Manseau.

23 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

24 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:**

25 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Bonjour, Monsieur LeBlanc.

26 **L'HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Bonjour.

27 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Alain Manseau pour le Bloc
28 québécois.

1 Nous avons appris et par les médias ainsi que
2 par différents témoignages ici que le Groupe de défense des
3 droits de la personne – en espagnol, c’est Rights Defender –,
4 avait... en septembre 2022, avait attirer l’attention de
5 résistance de (inintelligible) postes de police chinois
6 dispersés à travers le monde, donc trois à Toronto.

7 Par la suite, la GRC est venue nous dire
8 qu’il y a eu une enquête qui a été faite également sur deux
9 postes de police, dont un à Montréal et un autre à Brossard,
10 et ces deux postes de police semblaient receler tout au moins
11 de l’ingérence politique à partir de leurs locaux.

12 Vous ou le ministre de l’époque avez
13 mentionné que ces...

14 **L’HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Pardon, c’est quel
15 ministre?

16 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** De la Sécurité publique.

17 **L’HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Mon prédécesseur?

18 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Voilà.

19 **L’HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** OK.

20 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Avait mentionné, et ce qui
21 a été rapporté par les journaux que les deux postes en
22 question avaient été fermés définitivement. Et on a appris
23 également qu’il y avait des actes illégaux qui avaient été
24 commis, et c’est la raison pour laquelle ces postes auraient
25 été fermés.

26 Est-ce que vous êtes en mesure de nous dire
27 si effectivement ces actes illégaux étaient des actes
28 criminels?

1 **MS. ERIN DANN:** Excuse me, Commissioner.
2 Sorry to interrupt. I'm concerned that the question goes
3 beyond the scope of this portion of the hearings -- of this
4 portion of the Commission's work, which is focussed on the
5 2019 and 2021 general elections.

6 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Pouvez-vous, Maitre
7 Manseau, indiquer quel est le lien que vous faites avec
8 effectivement le...

9 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Oui.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** On est assez limités au
11 niveau de ce qu'on regarde dans cette phase-ci, il y en aura
12 évidemment une seconde...

13 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Vous avez raison et ma
14 collègue a raison de le souligner, toutefois, le lien que je
15 fais, c'est que ces postes de police ne sont pas... n'ont pas
16 pris naissance après, mais ont dû prendre naissance avant
17 2022 où ça nous a été rapporté par la suite par les médias.
18 Donc, ce sont des postes de police qui existaient en 2019 ou
19 encore en 2021, à moins que ça soit contredit.

20 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Alors, je veux juste
21 comprendre parce que je ne veux pas ouvrir tout un pan là sur
22 quelque chose qui ne sera pas utile à ce stade-ci. Ce que
23 vous dites, c'est... parce que ce qu'on regarde, c'est
24 l'existence d'ingérence étrangère dans le cadre d'un... juste
25 précédemment ou dans le cadre de la campagne électorale de
26 2019 et 2021, et ce que vous dites, c'est les postes de
27 police auxquels vous faites référence auraient été en
28 existence à ce moment-là?

1 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Absolument.

2 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et quel lien faites-vous
3 avec les élections de 2019 et de 2021? Le simple fait qu'ils
4 existaient?

5 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Ils existaient et on peut
6 présumer qu'il y avait de l'ingérence puisqu'effectivement,
7 la GRC a dit qu'on avait fermé ces deux postes de police à
8 cause d'actes illégaux sans nous dire quels étaient les actes
9 illégaux qui avaient été commis à l'époque.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et votre question, c'est?

11 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** C'est effectivement quels
12 sont ces actes illégaux parce qu'on a dit qu'on intervenait,
13 la GRC, en matière d'ingérence seulement s'il y avait des
14 actes illégaux qui avaient été commis. Alors, jamais on nous
15 a dit quels étaient ces actes illégaux.

16 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Je pense la question est
17 trop large. Si votre question... si vous reformuliez pour
18 demander s'il y a eu des... à la connaissance évidemment du
19 ministre LeBlanc, s'il y a lieu des actes illégaux commis en
20 lien avec les élections de 2019 ou de 2021, cette question-là
21 je la permettrais. Mais de façon large là, ça, je pense qu'on
22 sort nettement du cadre qu'on a fixé ici.

23 **MR. GREGORY TZEMENAKIS:** Pardon, Madame la
24 Commissaire, according to your terms of reference, if there
25 were ongoing investigations related to this matter, and there
26 is ongoing litigation in relation to this matter, it would
27 not be appropriate. And then my second point is my friend
28 has not provided any information to found the statements that

1 he is making, that these police stations were in existence
2 early, that they were in 2019. And it's somewhat unfair for
3 the witness to be asked questions on the basis of a
4 hypothetical set of circumstances that he may know nothing
5 about.

6 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** But this is the reason
7 why I made clear that it's as far as Minister LeBlanc knows.
8 He doesn't have to speculate, but if knows whether some of
9 the ---

10 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** À sa connaissance.

11 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** --- alleged activities
12 would have been in relation with the elections, then this
13 question is permitted.

14 But I will not permit that you go very far
15 with this line of questions.

16 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Alors, est-ce que... alors,
17 est-ce qu'effectivement vous avez eu connaissance tout au
18 moins qu'il y aurait eu des actes illégaux qui auraient été
19 commis dans ces deux centres à Brossard et à Montréal au
20 moment des élections de 2019 et 2021?

21 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et en lien avec les
22 élections.

23 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Et en lien avec les
24 élections.

25 **L'HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** C'est ça. Alors,
26 j'hésite de... c'est pas un ministre qui détermine qu'est-ce
27 qui est illégal et qu'est-ce qui n'est pas illégal. Je ne
28 suis pas procureur, policier, ni juge. Je vous crois quand

1 vous citez les commentaires de la GRC supposément, il
2 faudrait que je vérifie qu'est-ce que la GRC avait dit. Je
3 suis connaissant des discussions publiques dans le domaine
4 public sur ces supposés postes de police – je pense c'est
5 important d'utiliser ce mot-là –, mais j'ai pas des détails
6 opérationnels de la GRC, et comme l'avocat pour le
7 gouvernement a dit, je ne suis pas suffisamment confiant
8 qu'il y a pas possiblement des enquêtes en cours
9 présentement. Ça, je ne sais pas. Alors, je suis un peu
10 hésitant à m'aventurer dans ce domaine-là.

11 **Me ALAIN MANSEAU:** Je vous remercie.

12 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Je pense que vous avez...
13 Merci.

14 Alors, on va prendre la pause. Je sais que
15 l'horaire prévoit que c'est une pause de 5 minutes, en fait,
16 ça sera probablement plus une pause d'à peu près 20 minutes
17 parce qu'il y a des... compte tenu du changement de témoins, il
18 y a aussi certaines mesures de sécurité qui doivent être
19 mises en place, alors je m'attends à une vingtaine de minutes
20 de délai.

21 Merci beaucoup.

22 **L'HON DOMINIC LeBLANC:** Merci à vous.

23 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il
24 vous plait.

25 This hearing is in recess until 3:25?

26 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** 3:30.

27 **THE REGISTRAR:** 3:30. La séance est en pause
28 jusqu'à 3 heures 30.

1 --- Upon recessing at 3:08 p.m./

2 --- La séance est suspendue à 15 h 08

3 --- Upon resuming at 3:34 p.m./

4 --- La séance est reprise à 15 h 34

5 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il
6 vous plait.

7 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
8 Commission is back in session. Cette séance de la Commission
9 sur l'ingérence étrangère a repris.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Alors, Maitre Chaudhury,
11 c'est vous qui menez l'interrogatoire.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Good afternoon.

13 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Good afternoon.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Shantona Chaudhury.
15 Lead counsel for the Commission. Our witness this afternoon
16 is Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

17 Can I ask that the witness be sworn or
18 affirmed?

19 **THE REGISTRAR:** Would you like to be sworn or
20 affirmed for the record?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sworn, please.

22 **THE REGISTRAR:** Could you please state your
23 name for the record?

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Justin Trudeau.

25 **--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Sworn/Assermenté:**

26 **THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you very much.

27 Counsel, you may proceed.

28 **--- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY/INTERROGATOIRE EN CHEF PAR**

1 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:**

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. So,
3 Prime Minister, we'll start with the typical routine
4 housekeeping.

5 Mr. Clerk, can I ask you to pull up WIT 66,
6 please?

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 66:**

8 Interview Summary: Rt. Hon. Justin
9 Trudeau (Prime Minister)

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Prime Minister,
11 you'll recall being interviewed by Commission counsel on
12 February 27th, 2024?

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Can you confirm that
15 you've reviewed the summary of that interview, that the
16 summary is accurate, and that you adopt it as part of your
17 evidence before the Commission?

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you.

20 The next is WIT 67, please, Mr. Clerk.

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. WIT 67:**

22 In-Camera Examination Summary: The
23 Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
24 Prime Minister

25 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So, Mr. Prime
26 Minister, this is the summary of your *in-camera* examination.
27 You'll recall having been examined *in-camera* by Commission
28 counsel earlier this year?

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, I do.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And once
3 again, can you confirm that you've reviewed the summary, that
4 the summary is accurate, and that you adopt it as part of
5 your evidence before the Commission?

6 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can.

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Perfect.

8 We can take that down now, Mr. Clerk.

9 So I'm going to ask you to start today, Prime
10 Minister, by asking a pretty general question, but
11 nevertheless a fundamental one, which is, having been Prime
12 Minister now since 2015, can you paint for the Commission a
13 picture of the foreign interference landscape over your
14 tenure as Prime Minister?

15 And before you answer, I'll just put two sort
16 of precisions on that. One is that we know foreign
17 interference comes in all shapes and sizes, but the kind of
18 foreign interference that interests us most today at this
19 Commission is, obviously, foreign interference in democratic
20 processes and electoral processes and institutions.

21 Second, it goes without saying, but in
22 answering this question and all questions I pose to you,
23 please stick to information that can be safely publicly
24 disclosed.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Indeed. One of the
26 things that we had grown concerned about as a party when we
27 were in opposition before the 2015 election was the lack of
28 oversight by Parliamentarians into what was going on in our

1 national security universe in this country.

2 An example of the Afghan detainee documents,
3 where there wasn't a process whereby Parliamentarians of
4 different parties, of opposition parties, could examine top-
5 secret material was seen as a lacking that Canada had,
6 certainly compared to our other Five Eyes partners, which is
7 why in our 2015 campaign platform we committed to creating a
8 National Security and Intelligence Committee of
9 Parliamentarians whereby parliamentarians of all different
10 parties would be sworn into the highest levels of clearance
11 to be able to oversee, verify, and ascertain that everything
12 that our national security agencies were doing was on the one
13 hand compliant with Canadian values, rules, and the *Charter*,
14 and on the other hand, doing everything necessary to keep
15 Canadians safe.

16 So we started in 2015 with a commitment to
17 strengthen our national security institutions. We did that
18 by the creation of National Security and Intelligence
19 Committee of Parliamentarians. We also combined a number of
20 oversight organisations into NSIRA, which is a more judicial
21 or academic or high level oversight of our national security
22 agencies, as well as, you know, as we began to govern,
23 strengthened our various national security and intelligence
24 agencies and tools.

25 One of the things I did is I changed our
26 national security advisor to a national security and
27 intelligence advisor because it's not just about security.
28 And obviously the work around intelligence was getting more

1 and more complex and important and part of keeping Canadians
2 safe.

3 Over the course of that first mandate, we
4 witnessed the significant foreign interference allegations or
5 threats during the 2016 Presidential Election in the United
6 States, where Russia, certainly through misinformation and
7 disinformation online, attempted to interfere. But also,
8 more interestingly as a key example, in 2017, during the
9 French Presidential Election, there was actually a moment in
10 which officials within the French governmental apparatus
11 actually had to come out and tell the citizens of France that
12 a particular piece of information or news that was about to
13 break was in fact Russian disinformation and should not be
14 given any weight or heed.

15 That got us to reflecting on whether or not
16 Canada had a potential to intercede in an election campaign
17 if there was a significant threat of foreign interference
18 impacting the ability of our elections to actually unfold in
19 a free in and fair way. So we got to work on developing such
20 a mechanism here in Canada, which ended up being two
21 mechanisms, both the SITE panel -- the SITE Task Force that
22 allows our security agencies to monitor very closely the
23 going's on in an election, and the Panel of Five, which is
24 top civil servants who would have the ability, if they deemed
25 it necessary, to actually go public or take other actions to
26 ensure the protection of our democratic institutions and
27 electoral processes from foreign interference.

28 One of the other examples of things that

1 we've -- we did during that time, in 2018, when Canada hosted
2 the G7 leaders meeting in Charlevoix, Quebec, we actually
3 brought forward and created the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism,
4 which was designed to monitor and respond to threats of
5 misinformation and disinformation in our democracies. A tool
6 that has been successfully used over the past year since in a
7 number of different occasions, and indeed was more recently
8 actually strengthened to weigh in a little more on the
9 democracies in Eastern Europe where we're seeing significant
10 interference by Russians, given the conflict in Ukraine.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thank you for
12 that summary. What I'm going to try and get at now is the
13 threats, really, to which all of this responds. So we heard
14 from Minister Gould this morning about the plan to protect
15 Canada's democracy and what it was really designed to do,
16 that process.

17 Mr. Clerk, I'm going to ask you to pull up a
18 document, CAN 019496.

19 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 19496:**

20 People's Republic of China Political
21 Interference in Canada

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Mr. Prime
23 Minister, this is a document actually from 2017, so before
24 this Commission's mandate per se, but it gives an idea, I
25 think, of the kind of information or at least that was
26 available to you at that time, and that's what I'm going to
27 bring out here. So if we -- this is the memo that was
28 written to you by David Morrison, your NSIA at the time. You

1 received it in June 2017.

2 So the top of that document there talks about
3 the Chinese foreign interference threat, and it says CSIS
4 describes the PRC, essentially, as sophisticated, pervasive,
5 persistent. There are other countries around, but the PRC is
6 the big one.

7 Mr. Clerk, if you can just scroll down a
8 little bit more. Okay. Scroll down, scroll down. I'll tell
9 you when to stop. Keep going. Okay, there we go.

10 So on the third page here, you'll see, Prime
11 Minister, it talks about allies who are facing similar
12 challenges, and refers specifically to Australia in which --
13 I believe what's explained there is they -- in Australia it
14 was found that agents of the Chinese Government were donating
15 millions of dollars across the political spectrum. So your
16 NSIA is informing you of this.

17 And keep scrolling down, please, Mr. Clerk,
18 to the next page.

19 And then brings it back to Canada.

20 Oh, sorry. Scroll down a little bit more,
21 Mr. Clerk, to the next page. PCO comments. There we go.
22 Okay, last page:

23 "Politicians, and elected officials,
24 in particular...provincial,
25 territorial, and municipal levels,
26 are largely unaware of the PRC's (and
27 others) efforts to influence Canada's
28 political landscape, making them more

1 vulnerable to these attempts, either
2 in Canada or when travelling abroad."

3 So there's that.

4 And then scroll down just a little bit more,
5 Mr. Clerk, so we can see the last part of this.

6 So this is -- I'm sorry, I said it was David
7 Morrison. It's actually Daniel Jean:

8 "This is a very sensitive issue, and
9 public efforts to raise awareness
10 should remain general and not single
11 out specific countries to avoid
12 potential bilateral incidents.
13 However, countries that cross the
14 line should be reminded of
15 appropriate conduct and risk of
16 consequences."

17 So Mr. Prime Minister, I'd like you to speak
18 to those points if you can. First of all, the level of
19 knowledge about foreign interference, the level of threat,
20 here we see it coming from the PRC, and also that tension
21 between sort of exposing something about foreign
22 interference, while at the same time having to balance
23 international relations, bilateral incidents, and the like.

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, first of all,
25 it's a good example, as I spoke about the experiences in the
26 United States and in France, the experience that Australia
27 had, not with Russia but with China, is another excellent
28 example that we were very aware of at the time, and

1 highlighted the fact that there are foreign state actors who
2 are interested in playing a role in our democracies or in
3 disrupting our democracies.

4 The difference between Russia and China is a
5 significant one in that China has a very large diaspora of
6 Chinese Canadians who are often the first targets of
7 interference efforts by a foreign state, by that foreign
8 state. So we were very aware of it.

9 As a politician in Canada for eight years,
10 when I became Prime Minister, I was certainly aware of the
11 various ways officials and different countries, particularly
12 through diasporas, can take an interest in Canadian political
13 processes. But to understand it better, one of the first
14 things we did in 2015, maybe into 2016, was request a
15 briefing from our national security officials that would go
16 at some of the things we had heard, some of the things we
17 knew, or understood as opposition politicians now in a
18 position of being in government. That we wanted to
19 understand more about the role of foreign interference in
20 particular communities, in -- you know, we wanted to know
21 about particular individuals that we had heard things about,
22 and understand what landscape we were actually walking into
23 because we suddenly had access to a very sophisticated and
24 excellent national security apparatus that when one is a
25 simple opposition politician you don't have access to.

26 So from the very beginning, we knew there
27 were things we needed to know about, and we got briefings on
28 that. And this 2017 memo is certainly a continuation of that

1 level of awareness. The issue of it being a sensitive issue
2 is quite germane, and it evolves over time. Back in the
3 early days of our government, we were very much looking to
4 deepen the trade and commercial ties with China, seeing it as
5 an opportunity for exports. One of my biggest files of the
6 day on that was trying to restore the canola shipments that
7 many western grain farmers were relying on that were seeing
8 irregular blockages from the Chinese authorities. So that
9 was part of our work.

10 But even as we were doing that, we were very
11 aware of the areas in which we needed to challenge or contest
12 China, whether it was on issues of human rights, or democracy
13 of Uyghurs, of protection of the rights of our diaspora
14 communities from influence or intimidation. There has always
15 been a complex approach that every government has had to take
16 with China. Over the years, however, this has shifted
17 significantly, as I'm sure we'll get into. The relations
18 with China took a significant turn when they chose to
19 arbitrarily detain two Canadian citizens. And for close to
20 three years, we were not just pushing back hard against China
21 on the arbitrary nature of those detentions and the fact that
22 they needed to release those to Canadians. But we were
23 extremely active around the world in mobilizing other
24 countries to bring up Canada and the plight of the two
25 Michaels during their bilateral conversations, which was
26 something I can say ended up putting a significant amount of
27 strain on our relationship because it was a massive irritant
28 to China that everyone kept talking about these two Michaels,

1 even when they didn't have anything to do with Canada. We
2 heard it regularly. But that was what we continue to do.

3 It perhaps came to the greatest sort of head
4 in terms of being reminded of appropriate contact and risk of
5 consequences in November of 2022 when I was in Indonesia for
6 a G20 meeting where when I saw the President of China, Xi
7 Jinping, at the opening ceremonies. I mentioned to him that
8 I needed China to stop interfering in Canadian democratic
9 processes because that was very much something that people
10 were very concerned about back home at that particular
11 moment.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We'll move
13 then to the -- from the general landscape, which we now I
14 think have a decent picture of, to some more precise
15 questions having to do with the Commission's Terms of
16 Reference.

17 Et je vais commencer en français, Monsieur,
18 maintenant.

19 Et on a parlé d'un sujet qui est couvert dans
20 votre résumé d'entrevue et votre témoignage, et c'est la
21 manière dont vous recevez de l'information et du
22 renseignement.

23 Un point clé qui ressort de votre entrevue et
24 de votre témoignage auparavant, c'est que les documents
25 écrits sont peut-être pas la même manière principale dont
26 vous recevez ces informations-là et c'est plutôt les
27 breffages verbaux que vous recevez la plupart de votre
28 information.

1 Alors, est-ce que vous pouvez nous expliquer
2 ça et nous expliciter de façon générale la manière dont on
3 vous fournit les informations dont vous avez besoin.

4 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Bien, tout
5 d'abord, tout premier ministre reçoit énormément de breffages
6 et d'informations, pas seulement sur l'ingérence étrangère ou
7 des situations de sécurité nationale, mais sur comment
8 fonctionne l'économie, quels sont les enjeux au niveau de la
9 sécurité publique, quelles sont les préoccupations qu'on a
10 avec nos alliés. Je suis constamment en mode de recevoir de
11 l'information ou d'énormément de différents départements et
12 conseillers à travers le gouvernement.

13 Je suis aussi les nouvelles principales pour
14 être à l'affut de ce que les Canadiens voient dans leur jour
15 à jour, quelles sont les préoccupations des Canadiens dans
16 leur vie quotidienne.

17 Tout ça est présenté de différentes façons,
18 mais malgré le fait que je reçois de l'information écrite des
19 sommaires de la semaine, des documents en matière de sécurité
20 et de renseignement qui sont souvent très « FYI », très
21 « Pour votre information ». La façon... la seule façon sûre de
22 s'assurer que je suis informé d'un enjeu prioritaire, c'est
23 jamais juste de me glisser une note que peut-être je lirai,
24 que peut-être je n'aurai pas le temps de lire si je suis en
25 déplacement, si j'ai un horaire très chargé, c'est d'assurer
26 d'avoir un moment de breffage direct avec ma conseillère en
27 sécurité et renseignement, c'est la NSIA, qui vient me donner
28 des mises à jour sécuritaires, d'habitude sur plusieurs

1 sujets pendant une même séance, de façon assez régulière, des
2 fois une ou deux fois par semaine, plus si nécessaire, des
3 fois juste trois ou quatre fois par mois, ça dépend.

4 Mais la seule façon de garantir ou de
5 s'assurer que je reçois les informations nécessaires, c'est
6 de me donner un briefing en personne ou au téléphone
7 sécurisé, si nécessaire, sur un enjeu quelconque ou
8 prioritaire.

9 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** OK. Et vous avez
10 mentionné, bien sûr, la conseillère principale NSIA, la
11 (inintelligible) m'échappe quand même, mais la NSIA, est-ce
12 que c'est vraiment la NSIA dont vous dépendez le plus pour
13 vous fournir les informations dont vous avez besoin dans ce
14 domaine ou c'est la greffière ou c'est un peu les deux?

15 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Dans ce domaine-
16 là, c'est la responsabilité de la NSIA de me garder à l'affut
17 de tout ce que j'ai de besoin, et quand j'ai des questions en
18 lien avec la sécurité ou le renseignement, c'est directement
19 vers elle que je me tourne pour avoir des réponses à mes
20 questions.

21 Le greffier ou la greffière a souvent un rôle
22 à jouer pour me souligner des enjeux très importants qui
23 peuvent être des rensei... des enjeux de sécurité ou de
24 renseignement, mais c'est principalement la NSIA qui est
25 chargée de me garder à l'affut sur les enjeux de sécurité et
26 de renseignement.

27 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** OK. Et lorsqu'on vous
28 fournit ces informations-là, je vais vous demander de nous

1 expliquer un peu votre réaction et de façon assez précise,
2 parce que nous avons entendu votre Chief of Staff, Madame
3 Telford, hier, votre cheffe de cabinet, elle a témoigné que..
4 elle a mentionné qu'elle lit les produits de renseignement ou
5 qu'elle reçoit ces informations-là parfois avec certaines
6 réserves, sans les prendre nécessairement au pied de la
7 lettre parce que ça contient parfois des erreurs, c'est pas
8 tout à fait juste, et j'aimerais savoir votre perspective ou
9 votre expérience à ce sujet-là.

10 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Il y a un principe
11 en politique, surtout pour ceux qui sont en train de donner
12 des notes d'information ou des breffages aux ministres ou au
13 premier ministre, que si vous n'êtes pas certain de ce que
14 vous dites, vous ne devrez peut-être pas le dire. De mettre
15 des faits erronés dans la tête d'un ministre ou d'un premier
16 ministre avant qu'il sorte parler aux médias ou se lever dans
17 la Chambre, ça peut être extrêmement problématique.

18 Alors, quand on me donne des informations sur
19 un incident qui s'est produit, ou une préoccupation
20 quelconque, ou un désastre naturel, ou une situation à
21 laquelle font face les Canadiens, c'est sûr que la véracité
22 de l'information est... que ce soit l'information la plus
23 complète possible, est extrêmement importante.

24 Mais je ferais un peu une exception par
25 rapport à l'intelligence parce que quand on a des
26 renseignements ou de l'intelligence, c'est pas toujours
27 certain, c'est pas toujours corroboré. Dans les milieux
28 juridiques, c'est bien connu que la différence entre ce qui

1 est intelligence et ce qu'on peut montrer en évidence est une
2 grosse distinction.

3 Alors, pour moi, quand je me fais briefed,
4 par écrit ou plus souvent de façon verbale, par les agents de
5 renseignement, la conversation sur la fiabilité de
6 l'information fait partie intégrale de ce qu'on est en train
7 de dire. Par exemple, quand on est... j'ai été briefé sur le
8 fait que l'Iran avait tiré sur l'avion ukrainien contenant
9 une centaine de Canadiens, les premiers rapports étaient un
10 peu plus flous, mais ils ont dit « on a des indications que
11 ceci, cela », et rendu au troisième breffage que j'ai eu là-
12 dessus, ils ont pu être très, très précis que, oui, on sait
13 que c'est les forces armées iraniennes qui ont abattu l'avion
14 ukrainien.

15 Mais ce que je dis, c'est qu'on doit toujours
16 prendre les renseignements et l'intelligence, les documents
17 d'intelligence avec un certain... une certaine conscience que
18 c'est à confirmer ou c'est peut-être pas cent pour cent
19 exact, mais parce que c'est de l'information extrêmement
20 sensible, ça peut être très, très utile pour nous indiquer,
21 par exemple, que la Russie est peut-être à la veille
22 d'envahir l'Ukraine. On agit ou on prend les informations au
23 niveau du renseignement différemment que la façon que je
24 prends un rapport sur le taux de chômage au Canada ou le
25 niveau d'inflation.

26 Donc, il y a toujours un certain niveau pas
27 de scepticisme, mais de pensée critique qui doit s'appliquer
28 à toute information recueillie par nos services de

1 renseignement et d'informations.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We'll probably come
3 back to some of that as we go along.

4 I'm going to take you to the 2019 election
5 now specifically.

6 Mr. Clerk, can you pull up CAN 005461,
7 please?

8 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 5461:**

9 FI Efforts against Dong Han

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Prime Minister,
11 this is, while it's getting pulled up -- yeah, there it is.

12 We know at this point in the evidence before
13 the Commission that on September 28th, 2019 the SITE Task
14 Force and CSIS gave a briefing to the security cleared
15 representative of the Liberal Party about foreign
16 interference in the Don Valley North riding. We also know
17 from Mr. Broadhurst that he then received that information.

18 How did this play out from your perspective?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Late in September,
20 as I was coming through Ottawa, I believe I was on my way out
21 across the country for another stretch of campaigning -- I
22 believe it was on a Sunday, as I was heading out after a
23 Saturday with my family.

24 Mr. Broadhurst met me at the airport in a
25 holding room in a lounge on the government side of the
26 airport, government terminal in the airport to let me know of
27 concerns that he had received from the SITE Task Force and
28 CSIS about the nomination campaign -- the nomination election

1 -- the nomination race contest in Don Valley North.

2 He shared with me that intelligence services
3 had shared with him concerns that Chinese officials in Canada
4 had been developing plans to possibly engage in interference
5 in the nomination contest, specifically by mobilizing buses
6 filled with -- the challenge in this is always trying to pick
7 out what I heard exactly then from what I knew later, but I
8 believe it was either buses full of students or buses filled
9 with Chinese speakers or Chinese diaspora members who would
10 be mobilized to support Han Dong -- who would have been
11 mobilized to support Han Dong in that nomination contest of a
12 few weeks previous.

13 In what ended being probably a 20-minute to
14 half-hour conversation with Mr. Broadhurst, I asked him more
15 specifically about, okay, so they had plans or an intent or
16 capacity to do this. "Do we know that they did? Did you
17 hear from CSIS and the security agencies that this was
18 actually done?"

19 They weren't entirely certain. There was
20 reasons to believe that perhaps it has and perhaps there were
21 -- the indication was that there were buses filled with
22 Chinese speakers at that nomination contest.

23 I asked if -- and as a matter of course,
24 those who are in politics and certainly on the ground riding
25 politics know that it is regular for buses to be mobilized in
26 -- particularly in contested nominations of community
27 organizations, student groups. You know, a particular
28 seniors' residence could bring a minibus full of seniors to

1 participate in a nomination contest. So just the existence
2 of buses wasn't enough -- buses with Chinese speakers or
3 Mandarin speakers in them wasn't enough to be itself alarming
4 or a condemnation, but it was -- there were clear indications
5 that there were concerns by CSIS that China might have been
6 behind this and that those students or those individuals on
7 the bus might have been motivated or mobilized to vote in
8 that way and they were concerns that CSIS had.

9 I asked the extent to which they were certain
10 that it happened, the extent to which they were certain that
11 China was, indeed, behind the mobilizing of the bus or buses,
12 and I also asked whether or not CSIS had information that Han
13 Dong knew about this, whether he was a witting and aware that
14 China had mobilized or Chinese officials had mobilized buses
15 for him or not. And the answers were not clear from CSIS at
16 that point, according to what Mr. Broadhurst told me.

17 I then asked -- I also asked if it was a
18 close nomination, if there was a sense that the actual result
19 of the nomination could have been affected by this bus or
20 buses or what was there, and that wasn't clear at all. CSIS
21 didn't have any conclusions to share at that point.

22 I asked Mr. Broadhurst whether CSIS was
23 making any recommendations or suggestions as to what we
24 should do with this information and it was clear to Mr.
25 Broadhurst that this was very much about just letting us know
26 so that we know and could perhaps take any actions that we
27 deemed appropriate, but they weren't going to be recommending
28 for us to take action one way or another. But they also

1 specified that this was secret information that we could not
2 share with the candidate in question, Mr. Dong, or the public
3 at large in terms of what they were telling us about these
4 concerns and these allegations.

5 I then asked Mr. Broadhurst what the Liberal
6 Party processes that are in place to oversee nominations,
7 particularly contested nominations, had flagged around that
8 nomination contest of a few weeks before.

9 There are Party officials that oversee the
10 voting, the registrations, the voting, the processes, the
11 counting. There are lawyers in place overseeing the count.
12 There are possibilities for the losing contestant or
13 contestants to challenge the result if they feel it was
14 unfair. There are many processes because political parties
15 often have some very complex fights around nomination parties
16 -- nomination contests. All political parties are like that.

17 And Mr. Broadhurst assured me that they had
18 looked into when they heard these allegations or this
19 information from CSIS and SITE, and had no flags on the
20 nomination process.

21 So then I had what was a brief conversation
22 with Mr. Broadhurst after we had established all that to sort
23 of agree that the threshold for overturning a democratic
24 event like an official party nomination to find out who would
25 be the candidate for a general election, particularly during
26 an election -- general election, must have a fairly high
27 threshold for removal of that candidate. And that was really
28 sort of the binary choice we were placed with in that

1 situation.

2 Acting would be removing Han Dong as our
3 official candidate. The other choice would be not to remove
4 that candidate. But even not having removed that candidate,
5 it would be something, given this information, that we would
6 have to revisit. Certainly in the case that that candidate
7 got elected, there would be questions we would have to follow
8 up on after the election to properly understand what happened
9 and what the issues or the risks were in this situation.

10 But understanding that the decision to remove
11 someone needed a high threshold. A threshold that,
12 incidentally, I have met and seen many other cases. As
13 Liberal Party leader, I have, on many, many different
14 occasions, had to ask people to step down, step away, or
15 desist as candidates for the Liberal Party, most recently as
16 the last election, where we did that in the case of a
17 downtown Toronto riding.

18 But in this case, I didn't feel that there
19 was sufficient or sufficiently credible information that
20 would justify this very significant step as to remove a
21 candidate in these circumstances.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So where does that
23 leave you? So you don't exercise that option, and you put it
24 as a pretty binary choice, but you have this information, you
25 receive this information, it's, as you say, classified
26 information that you can't share. What are you able to do?
27 Where does this leave a political party receiving this
28 information?

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well it meant that
2 after the election, when we were out of Caretaker period,
3 where I went back to being primarily Prime Minister and not
4 simply leader of a political party with 338 candidates across
5 the country, I was able to turn to our intelligence agencies
6 and say, "We need to know more about this. We need to
7 understand what the context is," because the answers that we
8 get on that will have a bearing on choices we could make in
9 the future about different roles or responsibilities for an
10 individual in such a situation.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Going to move
12 on to some other things now because we have a lot to cover in
13 75 minutes et je vois le temps qui coule.

14 Okay. So the next topic then. Mr. Clerk,
15 you can pull this up, CAN003116.

16 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 3116:**

17 SITE TF SITREP: 22 October 2019

18 But Prime Minister, I think I can ask you
19 this question without reference to a document.

20 An incident that was reported by the RRM in
21 the 2019 Election had to do with an article published in the
22 Buffalo Chronicle, some misinformation, false information
23 about you specifically. Is that something that came to your
24 attention in the 2019 Election?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, it did not.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** No, it did not.

27 Okay.

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sorry, the

1 engagement of the SITE Taskforce, or the Panel, or anyone
2 into that issue was not something that I was aware of at the
3 time. I was, of course, aware of the quite disgusting false
4 conspiracies or allegations being shared by both the Buffalo
5 Chronicle and a significant number of Conservative
6 politicians.

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So you were
8 aware of the article, but not how, let's say, the apparatus
9 was dealing with it?

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I may have been
11 aware of the article. I was certainly aware of the
12 allegations and the accusations that were heinous and untrue
13 in that.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. I think
15 that's probably what we'll cover for 2019, although I do want
16 to pull up CAN015487, please.

17 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 15487:**

18 Safeguarding the 2019 General
19 Election

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So, Prime Minister,
21 this is the memo from David Morrison. I misspoke earlier.
22 This is January 14th, 2020, I think when you received this.
23 And it's essentially a report on the 2019 Election. Not on
24 the outcome of the election, but on the operation of the SITE
25 Taskforce and the Panel.

26 Mr. Clerk, can you scroll down to the third
27 bullet, please?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Actually, could I

1 just quickly look at the box?

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Sorry.

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah, sorry. The
4 third bullet, yes. That's fine.

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So what they
6 say here is:

7 "Pre-election intelligence briefings
8 and monitoring provided a baseline
9 assessment [...] suggesting [that]
10 foreign interference would be
11 commensurate to overall interference
12 [campaigns]. While some instances
13 [...] were [noted], and some TRMs [TRM
14 is a threat reduction measure] were
15 [taken], [...] none of these activities
16 met the threshold..."

17 And then, Mr. Clerk, can you keep scrolling
18 down? Next page. Keep going. I'll tell you when to stop.
19 I think we may -- oh, no. There we go. Okay.

20 It says:

21 "As it pertains to [FI] and as
22 reference above, despite concerns
23 that Canada would be targeted..."

24 And then I'm going to go through this quite
25 quickly, but the assessment is:

26 "...there was no foreign cyber threat
27 activity targeting Elections Canada,
28 no [...] instances of foreign

1 interference in the HUMINT space, [...]
2 no significant indications of [FI] in
3 the digital information ecosystem..."

4 And then what Mr. Morrison says is:

5 "Arguably, this [...] places the level
6 of [FI] [...] in GE 2019 below the
7 anticipated baseline..."

8 Is that consistent with the information that
9 was being provided to you about what happened in GE 2019?

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. This was a
11 report in January of 2020. So three months after the
12 election. I would have already have been briefed multiple
13 times by the Clerk and by others that their conclusion was
14 that the elections in 2019 were indeed free and fair and the
15 outcome was not affected by foreign interference either
16 overall or in the specific riding contests.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So now let's
18 leave 2019 and move to the 2021 Election. I'm going to ask
19 you about a series of some incidents or events that -- about
20 which the Commission has received information. And I'll do
21 the first one with reference to one of the topical summaries
22 that's been produced to the Commission by the Government.

23 So, Mr. Clerk, that's CAN.SUM4.

24 The title of this one is a bit of a tongue
25 twister, but *Possible People's Republic of China Foreign*
26 *Interference-Related Mis or Disinformation.*

27 So what we have here, if you can scroll down
28 past the caveat page, Mr. Clerk, is a summary of essentially

1 allegations of misinformation about the Conservative Party,
2 its leader Erin O'Toole, and I think Kenny Chiu is in there
3 as well, that were circulating during the 2021 Election.

4 So my question to you, Prime Minister, is, is
5 this something that you were aware of as it was occurring in
6 2021?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** During the 2021
8 Election, no. Shortly after the 2021 Election when the
9 Conservative Party went public with its concerns in sort of
10 the week that followed, I learned about it through media
11 reports.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And were you
13 aware that the Conservative Party had raised those concerns
14 with the Government as well?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Not at the time,
16 but later I would learn that through briefings.

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Months later.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** The next one then is
20 CAN.SUM13, please, Mr. Clerk.

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.SUM 13:**

22 Comments by Individual People's
23 Republic of China Officials on
24 Expressed Partisan Preferences in the
25 2019 and 2021 General Election

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So this is actually
27 a summary about both 2019 and 2021, a more germane one,
28 maybe, 2021.

1 Can you scroll down to the information page?

2 Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

3 So what this summarizes, you'll see, is
4 expressions of partisan preferences by certain PRC officials
5 in Canada. And what it says about 2019 is that there was
6 reporting that some PRC officials expressed political
7 preferences which were party agnostic and opportunist at
8 riding levels.

9 So and scrolling down, please, again, Mr.
10 Clerk. In 2021, there was reporting that some individual PRC
11 officials in Canada made comments expressing a preference for
12 a Liberal Party minority government. The rationale was they
13 don't perceive any of the political parties as being
14 particularly pro-China, but perceived minority governments of
15 being more limited in terms of acting -- enacting anti-China
16 policies.

17 So this reporting of an expressed preference
18 by certain PRC officials for a Liberal minority, was that
19 something of which you were aware at the time?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I said, both the
21 2019 and 2021 elections happen in the context of significant
22 tensions between our government and the government of the
23 People's Republic of China, particularly over the illegal and
24 arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens, the two
25 Michaels. We were extremely active both in pushing back at
26 Chinese officials on this issue, but also, as I said, active
27 around the world in drumming up support for people for the
28 two -- for different countries, for the two Michaels, but

1 also support for an initiative we were taking around
2 arbitrary detention and how it shouldn't be used as a tool of
3 political pressure or achieving political goals. So, yeah, I
4 can certainly say that while individual officials may well
5 have expressed a preference or another, the impression we got
6 and consistently would get is that the actual People's
7 Republic of China would have no -- it just would seem very
8 improbable that the Chinese government itself would have a
9 preference in the election.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So I take it from
11 this that whatever intelligence reporting there was on that,
12 it did not reach your ears?

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Thanks. You
15 can take that down now, Mr. Clerk.

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And there's also
17 the issue of the difference between foreign interference and
18 attempts by different countries to influence behaviour.
19 Diplomats around the world are in their roles to try and
20 influence favourable behaviours by the countries in which
21 they're serving towards the country they represent. That is
22 a big part of the role of a diplomat, of a foreign official,
23 of all types. Canadians certainly take an active role in
24 furthering our interests, including, from time to time,
25 having certain preferences around what might happen or what
26 might be an outcome of an election or a particular domestic
27 debate in a foreign country.

28 However, foreign interference happens when

1 there is -- and there's a full proper definition of it
2 somewhere, but my understanding is where it's covert, where
3 it's coercive, where it is using pressure, or a particularly
4 untoward means other than having a diplomat express, "I
5 really hope you should sign this trade deal, it'd be good for
6 both our countries," as opposed to trying to strongarm people
7 behind the scenes to get them to sign said trade deal, or
8 whatever one might examine.

9 So for a diplomat to express a preference,
10 whether it would be personal, or tactical, or what have you,
11 is not in itself foreign interference. It may be attempts at
12 influence. It may not be anything other than the regular
13 conduct of diplomacy.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So it would be the
15 actions they take to further their preference that would
16 constitute potentially foreign interference?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And certainly, in
18 the case of China, we have seen regularly that many examples
19 to this Commission that there are clear actions that would
20 amount to or indicate a willingness to engage in foreign
21 interference.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** The next incident I
23 want to bring you to is CAN 001082, Mr. Clerk.

24 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 1082:**

25 Liberal Party Representatives SITE
26 Briefing

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** This is another
28 briefing, Prime Minister, that was given to the cleared

1 representative of the Liberal Party at the time. It's the
2 2021 election this time. You probably, judging from that
3 document, can't say very much about this, but what I'm
4 interested in knowing here is the timing of how this one
5 played out, again, from your perspective. So we know that
6 the briefing it was actually on the 12th of September, I
7 believe, not the 11th as this document indicates, but it was
8 given, again, to the Liberal Party representative and then to
9 Mr. Broadhurst. And we've heard Mr. Broadhurst's evidence on
10 it, so now we'd like yours.

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** My understanding is
12 -- which I learned after the election was over, was that Mr.
13 Broadhurst made the determination that it wasn't something
14 that he needed to bring to my attention as leader of the
15 Liberal Party, and he did not.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** He did not bring it
17 to your attention?

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** He did not bring it
19 to my attention.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** During the election?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** During the
22 election, yes.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** After the election?

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** He did not -- or he
25 probably did, but I actually got more official briefings on
26 this matter after the election.

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. I understand.
28 Okay.

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** He was the vehicle
2 for briefing me theoretically during the election, not
3 officials, because that's the way it would flow through as
4 party leader -- in my party leader role. But afterwards,
5 once I was once again fully Prime Minister, it was officials
6 who would be able to brief me on this.

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Speaking of
8 briefings, we're going to turn to that topic now. So I'm
9 going to go through a few briefings that we know you -- or we
10 think you received. We do know you received in many
11 instances on foreign interference over the relevant time
12 period. I'll start with February 9th, 2021. This one I
13 don't really have a document to point you to, so I'm just
14 going to ask you for your recollection of it. So this would
15 be, again, February 20 -- February 9th, I'm sorry, 2021. Do
16 you recall receiving a briefing on that date?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. That was a
18 briefing that I got on the phone. I was not in person for
19 that briefing. I was there via teleconference on a secure
20 phone, and, yes, I got a briefing.

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Do you recall
22 the content of that briefing at all?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It was a, as I
24 recall, a general briefing on a number of issues, including
25 foreign interference.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. The next one
27 then in time skips to the fall of 2022. Mr. Clerk, can you
28 pull up CAN 015842, please?

1 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 15842:

2 Briefing to the PM on Foreign
3 Interference Threats to Canada's
4 Democratic Institutions

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. This document
6 which has been talked about quite a bit in these proceedings
7 is "Briefing Notes to the Director of CSIS." And, Mr. Clerk,
8 again, can you scroll down just so the Prime Minister can see
9 a bit of the document and its content?

10 So, Prime Minister, my first question is you
11 -- do you remember getting this briefing in the fall of 2022,
12 October 27th?

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, my memory's
14 always better when I'm -- when I was physically in the place
15 where I got the briefing, so I remember very clearly this
16 briefing. This briefing was actually an overview of a number
17 of different cases and situations, none of which had to do
18 with federal elections.

19 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So would you
20 say that the content of this particular -- these notes, these
21 briefing notes accurately conveys what you were told during
22 that briefing?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Not particularly.
24 Obviously, there are elements in this that are consistent
25 with the briefing that was on different elements of foreign
26 interference, but when it comes to briefings, and others can
27 speak to this and how they make decisions about what to read
28 from their prepared notes during an actual briefing with

1 Ministers or Prime Minister, but it is much more of a
2 conversation than someone reading a prepared text to the
3 Minister that they're briefing.

4 Yeah, there are elements in here that say,
5 for example, having read the briefing notes in preparation
6 for this Inquiry, that talk about how serious foreign
7 interference is and how we need to do more.

8 That wouldn't have been something that the
9 CSIS Director or the National Security Advisors or whoever
10 would have had to spend much time on because they would have
11 known that we did understand how serious foreign interference
12 is and how much we take it seriously and, actually, that was
13 why we would spend more time on specific cases or concerns
14 that were really the meat of the briefing.

15 So while notes are prepared for the briefers,
16 what actually becomes the most important thing that I
17 certainly recall about those briefings was the various and
18 specific cases we went through and how they are examples of
19 concern or not concern that we then have to behave in certain
20 ways or have follow-ups on this or that.

21 I mean, it is much less a large theoretical
22 briefing and much more concrete, this is the situation. And
23 then the discussion about how we deal with this particular
24 situation or example or another would be where the larger
25 theoretical discussion and implications would come in, but
26 they would be concentrated around specific individuals or
27 cases.

28 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So maybe

1 we'll pull up now Ms. Telford's notes from that meeting, so
2 that's CAN 009803.

3 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 9803:

4 Handwritten Notes of Katie Telford

5 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** They're a little more
6 sparse than Brian Clow's would be, but at least we have a few
7 points here.

8 Do these notes help shed any light on what
9 was dealt with in that briefing for you, Prime Minister? Do
10 they seem familiar?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, I think the 1,
12 2, 3 indicates the different examples that we were -- or
13 situations -- actually, they're cases that we were talking
14 about or individuals we were talking about.

15 And the bragging is not doing, definitely,
16 definitely helps me recall a part of the conversation where
17 there was -- and let me be careful how I say this so it's not
18 identifiable.

19 There was a foreign government official based
20 in Canada who was taking credit for a certain thing having
21 happened in Canada in their reporting to a superior or to
22 their home country and just the fact that a foreign official
23 was taking credit for having delivered a particular outcome
24 in no way meant that anything that particular official did
25 actually created the outcome.

26 Bragging is not doing. So you know, one can
27 imagine a diplomat in a far-off land wanting to write back
28 home to say, "See, look, look what I did. Aren't I good? We

1 got the outcome we wanted", perhaps, when that individual may
2 not have had any actually bearing on the outcome of the
3 particular event.

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I don't know if
6 that's sufficiently clear for what it was.

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** It is, and thank
8 you.

9 The last document, maybe, on this point,
10 4097.

11 794079, sorry. So 4079. My bad.

12 There we go. Okay.

13 So again, these are notes from that day, so
14 if you can have a quick look at these, Prime Minister, the
15 non-redacted parts of these.

16 And what you'll see there is a text box over
17 information that's been redacted but summarized by the
18 Commission.

19 Does this seem familiar as information that
20 was discussed at that meeting?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** During that same
22 October meeting?

23 Sorry. Was that the ---

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Yes, yes.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- October ---

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** That's the October
27 meeting.

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I couldn't really

1 speak to it. There's too many redactions on a document that
2 I would never have seen.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fair enough. Okay.

4 Next one, then, is November 30th, 2022.

5 Can we pull up, please, Mr. Clerk, CAN
6 014285?

7 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 14285:**

8 Foreign Interference

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So this is a memo to
10 you, Prime Minister, of November 30th, 2022.

11 And Mr. Clerk, again, if you can scroll down
12 so the Prime Minister can see the document past the
13 transmittal note.

14 It's a memorandum for you by the NSI copied
15 to the Clerk, "Claims of foreign interference in the 2019
16 General Election for information". And the context of this,
17 Prime Minister, is this is shortly after the media leaks have
18 started about foreign interference, so a memo was written.

19 And we can again scroll through a bit to see
20 the content of that memo.

21 Just keep going a little faster than that.
22 I'm not really going to stop on anything.

23 But I will ask you, now that you've seen it a
24 little bit, to just scroll back up to the summary part, Mr.
25 Clerk.

26 Okay. There we go. "PCO searched its
27 holdings".

28 So what's happening here is the NSIA and PCO

1 are trying to figure out what you were briefed on and when,
2 and so there's a paragraph here:

3 "PCO searched its holdings and
4 engaged security and intelligence
5 partners to identify instances when
6 briefings on suspected interference
7 in the 2019 General Election were
8 provided..."

9 That identified a single PCO information note
10 dated January 14th, 2020, which is the one that we've seen
11 earlier, and then it references the February 9th, 2021
12 briefing.

13 Is that consistent with your recollection of
14 when you were briefed on these issues?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sorry. This note
16 of November 30th, 2022 was when we were asking, okay, there
17 have been all these leaks on what may have happened during
18 the 2011 -- 2019 election and we were asking, you know, were
19 these things we got briefed on, were these things that we
20 were flagged at that time.

21 And yes, that's the single POC information
22 note dated January 24th, 2020 ---

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And then the
24 February 9th, 2021 briefing.

25 So all I'm asking is whether that's
26 consistent with your recollection of when you were briefed on
27 these issues.

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But I wasn't --

1 these were requests I was made -- I made a request to our
2 National Security Intelligence Advisor because there were
3 things being alleged in the leaks that we had not been
4 briefed on, so I'm not entirely certain about the briefing
5 dates there given because there were things, including those
6 11 candidates as a quote, that we had never been briefed on
7 until we saw them in the papers because -- following the
8 leaks.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Right. So I guess
10 maybe my question wasn't clear.

11 The content of this particular document I'm
12 not asking you about except just to confirm that this is
13 consistent with your recollection of when you were briefed,
14 the January 2020 and the February 2021.

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** January 2020 ---

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Was the memo that we
17 looked at earlier.

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sorry. That was
19 the David Morrison memo?

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Right.

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I never read the
22 David Morrison memo, to my recollection. I got briefed on
23 the contents, which was basically that foreign interference
24 was lower than expected and the elections were free and fair
25 in 2019. Those were the top level conclusions that I was
26 briefed on within days or weeks of the end of the 2019
27 election.

28 By the time we got around to January, it was

1 good to have that report. I ended up reading the -- the Judd
2 Report, I believe, was the full assessment of the work that
3 SITE and the Panel did during the 2019 election, but I did
4 not read that -- I did not receive that January 24th note
5 because I had already been briefed on its entire contents.

6 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And then the
8 February 9th, 2021 footnote was that was, that was the phone
9 brief that we spoke about earlier, yes.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Right. I guess that
11 goes back to your point about oral briefings or what really
12 get to you, not necessarily the written ones.

13 Okay. Can we then pull up, Mr. Clerk,
14 CAN 017673.

15 **--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÉCE NO. CAN 17673:**

16 CAN 017673 - [Handwritten Notes of B.
17 Clow]

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And let me just --
19 I mean, wouldn't want to give people the impression that
20 briefings weren't something particularly -- intelligence
21 briefings we took very, very seriously. But in most of these
22 secure briefings, which we'd go into a skiff, a secure
23 compartmentalised room, where we would be told -- we're told
24 to leave our phones outside, take off our watches and our
25 Fitbits, and make sure were totally secure within a Faraday
26 cage, and then we received the briefings, often being told
27 no, we can't keep any of the documents that are given. We
28 can read the documents that are given, but we then need to

1 return them to the officials.

2 Certainly in the beginning, we were never
3 clear on whether we could take notes on this either because
4 security was important. Fortunately, as we've all seen
5 through various inquiries, it's a good thing Brian Clow does
6 take notes. But you know, there was always a sense that
7 there was lots of written material and lots of tracking of
8 that information, as the government must, and taking very
9 seriously all of these things and very careful controls.

10 But when it came to briefing and taking
11 actions and understanding the context, it happened through
12 secure briefings and conversations that were primarily us
13 receiving information, us asking questions, us directing
14 further actions or research in this area or that area that
15 they would then take away and do.

16 I wouldn't want anyone to think that oh,
17 because the briefings were primarily oral, or for example,
18 that that David Morrison memo I didn't read because it wasn't
19 delivered to me, because I got the content in other
20 conversations with my NSIA, with my Clerk about the fact that
21 the election was -- integrity was upheld.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We'll just go
23 to some other notes, then. I think -- I believe these are
24 Brian Clow's notes from November 30th, 2022.

25 Do you recall this briefing or this meeting,
26 Prime Minister?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** My notes indicate
28 that this was immediately before Question Period, a briefing

1 that happened over lunch hour as I was preparing to go into
2 deal with some fairly intense questioning on the issue of
3 foreign interference, given the explosive nature of the media
4 stories stemming from unsubstantiated and uncorroborated
5 intelligence shared by a leaker. So these were -- you know,
6 these were conversations around what I could say and what we
7 could and couldn't say around some of these allegations that
8 were in the paper, but would leave us limited on what we
9 could actually rebut, regardless of the fact that there was -
10 - there were inconsistencies, there were uncorroborated
11 information in the leaks. There were also things that were
12 flat out wrong.

13 But I was reminded of the old story of a FBI
14 agent questioning a witness in a organised crime situation
15 and saying, "Well, did you meet with that mobster in LA?"
16 Guy says, "I can't comment." "Did you meet with that mobster
17 in Detroit?" "I can't comment." "Did you meet with that
18 mobster in Miami?" "No, I definitely did not." You know,
19 sometimes in denying something you're giving information you
20 couldn't.

21 And throughout my preoccupation on why these
22 leaks were of such deep concern was that we couldn't actually
23 correct the record without in some cases confirming the
24 tradecraft and the work that women and men in our security
25 agencies, and sources relied upon by our security agencies to
26 keep Canadians, our institutions safe, without putting them
27 at risk, without sharing with adversaries some of the
28 information or the methods that we use to keep Canadians

1 safe.

2 And that's part of the reason for the complex
3 nature of a public inquiry into issues of foreign
4 interference, that if we say certain things or if we
5 contradict or deny other things we could be giving our
6 adversaries tools to actually understand how we go about
7 detecting their interference or illicit ways of engaging to
8 harm Canadians.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** It's a complex
10 problem.

11 So the next -- I'm going to keep going with
12 the briefings, and the post leak world briefings
13 specifically, Prime Minister.

14 Not long left, but CAN 018009, please.

15 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 18009:**

16 Handwritten Notes of Brian Clow

17 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So these are notes
18 from -- the date on the notes is March 19th, but we know it
19 was actually March 20th. So this is March 20th, 2023, a
20 meeting at which you were present and I believe your staff
21 was present and a number of senior national security
22 officials.

23 So if we scroll down so again, Mr. Prime
24 Minister, you can see the content of this document or the
25 unredacted content. Are you able to tell us your
26 recollection of what was happening at this meeting based on
27 these notes?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. I remember

1 this meeting well.

2 If you actually scroll back up, please,
3 Mr. Clerk, to -- yeah, a little higher so we get both --
4 there. Right there is fine.

5 PM, that's me, speaking of nominations. We
6 were talking about -- thank you.

7 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** We were talking
9 about nominations in there, and I don't remember what they --
10 what the next -- who the next speaker was, that's redacted,
11 but the emphasis on *Charter* rights or the bringing up of
12 *Charter* rights, and further down, "PM - no June 2019
13 meeting".

14 Those are two examples of us working
15 constructively with CSIS and the intelligence agencies to
16 better understand and validate certain pieces of information.
17 For example, in the information we were seeing, we've seen
18 that CSIS had a source that said that there was a June 2019
19 meeting that I was at that I can clearly and unequivocally at
20 the time and since then confirm never happened. I did not
21 have the meeting that the source had said.

22 Now, this doesn't mean that CSIS got it
23 wrong, it meant that CSIS was now able to validate that what
24 their source had said in this situation was wrong, and
25 therefore, that puts a particular understanding or colour on
26 their ability to interpret other statements of fact, supposed
27 fact that that source made.

28 And that's part of how intelligence work

1 happens. When you know for sure -- when a source says
2 something that you can verify is true, that's make them more
3 reliable. A source says something that you can then verify
4 was wrong, that also gives you more information about that
5 source. So it was important for us to highlight for example
6 in that meeting that there was no meeting, as was described
7 by that source.

8 Similarly, on the question of *Charter* rights,
9 that was a slightly different tweak where in the CSIS
10 analysis, the analyst had highlighted that there was possible
11 violations of people's Charter Rights in a particular
12 situation. And we had asked and pressed for more sort of
13 legal or judicial analysis of that assertion within, because
14 it didn't quite ring true to our instincts as political
15 actors in terms of the analysis that CSIS was making.

16 Again, it's part of the process that one goes
17 through as you engage with the experts in foreign
18 intelligence and security in an active way to try and make
19 sure we're understanding, getting the accurate picture, and
20 able to then continue to keep both Canadians and our
21 institutions safe through the various jobs we do.

22 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Madame la
23 Commissaire, I think I'm out of time. Vous me permettez une
24 dernière question?

25 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Certainement.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Mr. Prime Minister,
27 I'm going to sort of ask you to conclude this by addressing
28 the following question.

1 So we've heard about the existence of foreign
2 interference, the pervasiveness of the threat, and various
3 measures that, as you've said, have been put in place to
4 combat this.

5 You may know that earlier in these
6 proceedings we heard from a number of individuals who found
7 themselves sort of in the receiving end, being targeted by
8 potential foreign interference in some ways. And there have
9 been calls for the Government to do more than it's done
10 already to address this and to protect Canadians.

11 And in particular, I'm going to take you --
12 I'll just read you a small excerpt of former MP Kenny Chiu
13 when he was testifying here. He said that experiencing what
14 he had gone through in terms of the potential PRC, well, we
15 don't know PRC, but potentially PRC related misinformation,
16 disinformation, potential foreign interference, he said:

17 "...it's almost like I was drowning,
18 and they are watching, and the best
19 they could do, by the way, is to let
20 know that I'm drowning. I don't need
21 their notification. I need their
22 help."

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** H'm.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So, Prime Minister,
25 I'd like to hear your response to that, and essentially maybe
26 in providing this response, help set the stage for the second
27 phase of the Commission's work?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Starting by perhaps

1 taking a bit of a step back, and the idea that, you know, we
2 need to do more. I agree.

3 When we took office in 2015, there was very
4 little, if any, mechanisms to counter foreign interference.
5 Yes, our intelligence agencies did good work, but the idea or
6 the priority of protecting our democracy, particularly when
7 it comes to misinformation, disinformation, active engagement
8 in various diaspora communities, or electoral events, was not
9 on the radar at all when we took office. It hadn't been
10 something that the previous government or any previous
11 government had done much on at all.

12 So we started from a standing start. We
13 created the National Security Intelligence Committee of
14 Parliamentarians. We created NSIRA, we moved forward with
15 the Rapid Response Mechanism, and we've continued to do more.
16 Yes, the Panel for the 2019 to 2021 Elections, SITE. But
17 we've continued to continue to do more. The -- we recently
18 brought in a National Security Committee, National Security
19 Council of Cabinet to address sort of strategic threats on a
20 larger level. We're continuing to give more tools and powers
21 and learning from what the P5 was able to do in 2019 and
22 2021, that they'll be able to apply in the 2025 Election when
23 it's likely to come.

24 There is always more to do, and one of the
25 things I'm very much looking forward to, coming from the work
26 this Commission is doing, is to make recommendations on how
27 we can strengthen even further the protection of institutions
28 and of our democracy.

1 But that's only half of it. The other half
2 is giving Canadians confidence in their institutions and
3 their democracy. And whether it's a diaspora member worried
4 about stepping up to running for elected office in this
5 country because they're worried about the impact that might
6 be real or perceived from a country they chose to leave many
7 years ago for whatever reasons. There are real concerns and
8 feelings involved.

9 And ultimately, democracy only works when
10 people are confident in its ability to keep them safe, but
11 also be the articulation of what they want for their
12 community and their country. That's where confidence in the
13 integrity of the elections in 2019 and 2021 is so important
14 and something that we have emphasized throughout this
15 process, that the -- every briefing I've ever got from all my
16 intelligence and security experts is that those elections
17 were indeed free and fair and nothing we have seen and heard,
18 despite, yes, attempts by foreign states to interfere, those
19 elections held in their integrity, were decided by Canadians.

20 But the feeling that individuals can have
21 that maybe our institutions aren't so strong, maybe they are
22 impacted by foreign actors who wish to do ill to Canada and
23 to Canadians, is something that we need to be very, very
24 thoughtful about.

25 And one of the ways, ultimately, to keep
26 ensuring that our democracy is safe is to make sure that
27 citizens themselves are engaged, active, critical thinkers
28 who are empowered to see what is information, what is

1 misinformation or disinformation, and be robust in their
2 right to choose whatever direction they want for the country.

3 And we've seen with the intensity of
4 misinformation and disinformation, not just from foreign
5 actors, but just on social media generally in many topics,
6 that it's not automatic. Democracy requires constant
7 vigilance and constant hard work. It didn't happen by
8 accident. It doesn't continue without effort. It's not just
9 effort of Commissioners, and politicians, and spooks, it's
10 efforts of every single individual to feel like they have the
11 full ability to engage in our democratic processes and to
12 feel that they are safe and protected as they engage, whether
13 it's as a voter, or a candidate, or an elected Member of
14 Parliament, of Provincial Parliament or wherever.

15 These are things that we all need to continue
16 to work together on.

17 And I am in constant awe of everyone across
18 this country who continues to put up their hand and step
19 forward in a time where it's getting more and more difficult
20 and more and more challenging to be part of public and
21 political discourse, to say, "No, I want to build my country
22 for the better. I want to contribute to my community and I'm
23 going to step forward into a place where I'm going to take
24 slings and arrows," particularly members of diaspora
25 communities.

26 But bringing in that diversity of Canadian
27 experiences is the only way to make sure that we're actually
28 building the kind of country we need to be for the future.

1 So I salute everyone who steps up and will continue to commit
2 myself to making sure that those feelings of confidence and
3 of safety as we involve -- engage as citizens or more, as our
4 democracy, are protected.

5 **Me SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Madame la
6 Commissaire, ce sont mes questions.

7 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci. J'en ai quelques-
8 uns pour vous, Monsieur le Premier Ministre.

9 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Bien sûr.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** À votre connaissance,
11 existe-t-il un mécanisme ou une procédure en place pour faire
12 en sorte que la NSIA -- moi aussi je cherche le mot en
13 français -- soit... ait toujours accès et reçoive toujours
14 l'information qui circule en matière d'ingérence étrangère?

15 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** La NSIA a le rôle
16 de rassembler et d'aller chercher toute l'information dans...
17 pour nos différentes agences de sécurité, que ce soit à la
18 défense, que ce soit aux Affaires étrangères ou à SCIS, CSE,
19 ou la GRC. C'est vraiment la personne qui est à mes côtés
20 pour coordonner tout cet univers-là. Alors, elle a la
21 capacité et le pouvoir d'aller chercher ses réponses.

22 D'ailleurs, quand je me suis réveillé ce
23 matin et voyant des rapports dans les médias qui amenaient
24 certaines préoccupations, je me suis immédiatement tourné
25 vers ma NSIA pour dire « peut-tu faire un suivi sur ce que je
26 suis en train de lire ce matin et me revenir avec des
27 informations », et moi, j'ai confiance que quel que soit
28 l'univers ou l'endroit dans l'univers de sécurité et

1 renseignement où l'information se trouve, elle a accès à tout
2 cet univers-là. C'est la personne vers laquelle tout est
3 éventuellement conjugué.

4 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et je veux bien
5 comprendre, donc elle a accès à tout, mais est-ce que, par
6 ailleurs, tous, que ça soit les agences, que ça soit les
7 différents ministères, systématiquement transmettent
8 l'information relative à l'ingérence étrangère à la NSIA?

9 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Je suis confiant
10 qu'elle reçoit l'information que les différentes agences
11 trouvent pertinente, mais comme on a vu, il y a toujours des
12 améliorations à faire sur la façon que différents
13 départements et différents secteurs du gouvernement
14 travaillent ensemble, et l'existence même de la NSIA permet
15 d'avoir un point d'autorité et de capacité d'aller exiger des
16 réponses et des informations de partout.

17 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** OK. Lorsque vous recevez
18 des renseignements, et au sens d'intelligence là...

19 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oui.

20 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** ...qui ne sont peut-être
21 pas encore corroborés, mais qui sont susceptibles d'être
22 extrêmement importants d'avoir un impact significatif, est-ce
23 que vous pouvez demander aux agences en établissant une liste
24 de priorités de compléter ou de poursuivre les enquêtes qui
25 sont entreprises?

26 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Absolument, mais
27 souvent et presque dans toutes les situations, quand je dis
28 il faudrait faire un suivi là-dessus, ce que j'entends, c'est

1 « on est en train de le faire et voici ce qu'on est en train
2 de faire ». Évidemment, le travail que font les agences ne
3 dépend pas d'un premier ministre pour dire « ah, vous devriez
4 vraiment faire un suivi là-dessus », ils vont suivre les
5 enjeux préoccupants. Oui, un gouvernement ou un premier
6 ministre peut accorder plus d'emphase, peut mettre de la
7 pression pour aller plus vite, peut envoyer plus de
8 ressources, mais nos systèmes de... et nos agences de sécurité
9 et de renseignement ont les mandats et les responsabilités
10 pour pouvoir faire des suivis sur des enjeux préoccupants.

11 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et vous pouvez le faire
12 en changeant les priorités qui peuvent être à ce moment-là
13 déjà établies.

14 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oui, on peut
15 modifier, on peut accroître certainement. On a une réflexion
16 régulière sur les priorités en matière de sécurité pour le
17 pays. L'emphase qu'on met sur la cybersécurité, par exemple,
18 c'était pas ce que c'était il y a dix ans, par exemple. Le
19 monde est en train d'évoluer, la réalité d'un monde où les
20 grands pouvoirs sont en train de changer d'orientation, où la
21 Russie est devenue extrêmement problématique et pas juste un
22 peu problématique comme elle l'était il y a dix ans. On
23 s'ajuste constamment et les élus ont un rôle important à
24 jouer là-dedans, mais certainement le travail que font nos
25 agences de renseignement et de sécurité procèdent de façon
26 robuste de toute façon.

27 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Lorsque votre directeur
28 de campagne, monsieur Broadhurst, vous informe qu'il y a des

1 allégations voulant que des personnes aient été transportées
2 par autobus pour voter à une investiture, est-ce que vous
3 demandez, vous, que des vérifications additionnelles soient
4 effectuées?

5 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Par rapport aux
6 partis, oui, j'ai demandé d'abord qu'est-ce qu'on a comme
7 information là-dessus et « est-ce que tu peux faire un suivi...
8 est-ce que vous pouvez faire un suivi avec... », que le parti
9 fasse un suivi avec Élections Canada pour voir les rapports
10 qui ont été remplis, pour voir les conclusions, voir si on a
11 d'autres informations. Mais la réalité, c'est dans des
12 nominations contestées, il y a presque toujours des autobus.
13 Dans certaines situations, ces autobus sont payés par le
14 candidat soi-même et comme ça ils seront sur la liste de
15 dépenses soumise à Élections Canada, mais dans d'autres
16 situations, comme j'ai dit, c'est des autobus qui
17 appartiennent à un centre d'âge d'or qui sont utilisés ou qui
18 sont utilisés par d'autres, qui sont commandés par d'autres,
19 et là, il n'y aurait peut-être pas de reçus là-dessus.

20 Moi, dans mon propre concours à la nomination
21 en février-mars, mars-avril peut-être, 2007, il y avait
22 plusieurs autobus d'Italiens et de Grecs parce que c'était la
23 réalité pour mon comté de Papineau. C'est quelque chose qui
24 est assez commun et ça n'aurait pas été assez pour que
25 quelques regardants comment se déroulait la nomination
26 automatiquement disent « ah, il faudrait faire un suivi
27 immédiat là-dessus ». On n'est pas une organisation de...
28 we're not a forensic organisation. C'est de regarder à ce

1 point-là en termes d'un parti qui fonctionne principalement
2 par bénévoles, on est limités dans ce qu'on peut aller
3 regarder trois semaines plus tard.

4 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Et vous avez, si j'ai... si
5 mes notes sont justes, vous avez indiqué que c'était une
6 question be revisited after the elections.

7 Est-ce que la question a été « revisited
8 after the elections »?

9 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oui.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Oui? Par le parti?

11 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Par le parti, je
12 suis pas sûr qu'il y avait une norme, puis je suis sûr que
13 oui, il y avait eu des vérifications, mais les vérifications
14 ont été faites de façon assez complète, j'en suis sûr,
15 immédiatement après qu'ils auraient été avisés par le SITE
16 Task Force. Je suis pas certain qu'il y aurait beaucoup plus
17 de recherches qui auraient pu découler pendant des mois par
18 la suite ou même des semaines parce que on avait
19 l'information qu'on avait et on n'en avait pas beaucoup plus
20 que ça.

21 S'il y avait eu des enquêtes d'Élections
22 Canada à cause d'irrégularités, ça, il y aurait eu des
23 suivis, mais ça, c'est Élections Canada qui pourrait en
24 parler.

25 Pour moi, les suivis, c'était au niveau de
26 l'engagement possible d'autorités chinoises ici au Canada qui
27 auraient pris un intérêt actif dans un candidat particulier,
28 dans un processus de nomination particulier. C'est à ce

1 niveau-là où on aurait fait des suivis pas pour voir, OK,
2 est-ce qu'on peut savoir la vérité sur ce qui s'est passé
3 dans la nomination, parce que ça, c'est peut-être très
4 difficile à voir, mais est-ce qu'on peut établir un peu plus
5 de clarté sur le rôle ou l'intérêt potentiel qu'une autorité
6 chinoise aurait eu par rapport à ce candidat particulier.

7 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci.

8 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Merci.

9 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Alors, avant... before the
10 cross-examination, we are supposed to take a break, and I
11 think we will take a break.

12 So -- but we are running a little late a little bit,
13 so I suggest a 10-minute break. So we'll come back at 5:15.

14 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,
15 s'il vous plait.

16 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
17 Commission is in recess until 5:15. Cette séance de la
18 Commission sur l'ingérence étrangère est en pause jusqu'à
19 17 h 15.

20 --- Upon recessing at 5:07 p.m./

21 --- La séance est suspendue à 17 h 07

22 --- Upon resuming at 5:30 p.m./

23 --- La séance est reprise à 17 h 30

24 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please. À l'ordre, s'il
25 vous plait.

26 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
27 Commission is back in session. Cette séance de la Commission
28 sur l'ingérence étrangère a repris.

1 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So the first one to
2 conduct cross-examination is counsel for Michael Chong.

3 **--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Resumed/Sous le même serment:**

4 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

5 **MR. GIB van ERT:**

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Prime Minister.

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Gib.

8 **MR. GIB van ERT:** You've already heard Ms.
9 Chaudhury telling you that we had Mr. Broadhurst in
10 yesterday.

11 And I'll just ask the court reporter to turn
12 up the document that you've already seen and that we went
13 through with Mr. Broadhurst, and that's CAN 5461, please.

14 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN 5461:**

15 FI Efforts against Dong Han

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** And so this is the document
17 that we looked at earlier. I took Mr. Broadhurst through it
18 because I wanted to have his evidence about what he told you.
19 And of course, the value of this document is that it sticks
20 to things that we can talk about in an open proceeding like
21 this.

22 And so I just want to show you the key
23 points. Of course, the first one is that there were
24 allegations of foreign interference by China in the Don
25 Valley North nomination contest.

26 And then secondly, if you'll just scroll down
27 a little bit, please, this is the redacted bit. Thank you.

28 The summary of the redaction is:

1 "Buses being used to bring
2 international students to the
3 nomination process in support of Han
4 Dong at the direction of PRC
5 officials in Canada."

6 And so it's that second paragraph that I want
7 to focus on to begin with.

8 And I just want to begin by noting that
9 there's nothing in this summary that indicates what language
10 the students were speaking. They're described as
11 international students.

12 And the reason why I'm noting that is that in
13 your evidence earlier and also in the witness statements that
14 you adopted at the beginning, you referred to people on the
15 bus, the students, at points as being "Chinese speaking
16 peoples" or "Chinese speakers". Do you recall that?

17 I can take you to the passages, if you like.

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, no. No, I
19 appreciate that.

20 One of the challenges that I have is
21 remembering what I knew at a particular moment when months
22 later or even years later I would find out more information
23 about this means that I'm never 1000 percent precise on what
24 it is that I knew at a particular moment.

25 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes, I do appreciate that.

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I do remember at
27 one point when we were talking about whether or not CSIS
28 understood how nomination races worked and how community

1 organizations would regularly bring buses, there was a quote
2 -- or there was -- someone relayed to me that one of CSIS's
3 concerns was they were bus filled with Chinese speakers
4 showing up at the nomination. And my response, as I sort of
5 alluded to in my previous testimony, was, "Well, I had buses
6 filled with Greek speakers and Italian speakers because in my
7 nomination in Papineau those were the communities that were
8 mobilized".

9 That phrase stuck in my head, but I will
10 admit that I do not specifically remember whether or not the
11 Chinese speakers or Mandarin speakers element was part of
12 that what I call the airport briefing, that briefing on this
13 particular Sunday during the campaign, or not.

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes.

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But it certainly is
16 consistent with this.

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. No, that's very
18 helpful.

19 And I will ask the court reporter to turn up
20 WIT 067 on this. And if you'll go, Mr. Clerk, to paragraph
21 30, which is -- sorry, starting at paragraph 29, please.

22 Paragraph 29. There we are.

23 Right. Thank you.

24 And so the last sentence is the concern was
25 that buses of Chinese speakers had arrived at the nomination
26 or possibly been brought into the nomination.

27 And if we go to paragraph 30 and just over
28 the page, the top of the next page. A little further. There

1 we are.

2 Prime Minister, you see the last sentence:

3 "The central issue of concern was
4 that buses filled with Chinese
5 speakers could have been
6 international students directed by
7 the PRC."

8 So the point that I want to make with you,
9 Prime Minister, and it sounds to me like perhaps you've
10 already got it, is that the central concern of the service
11 here, as I understand it, is not that they were Chinese
12 speakers.

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** It's that they were
15 directed by the PRC.

16 Had these people been students from
17 Switzerland rather than China but were brought at the behest
18 of China and to do China's bidding, I say the service's
19 concerns would have been absolutely the same, which is ---

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

21 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- that this would be
22 foreign interference.

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. Entirely.

24 It is not the nature of that -- that is part
25 of what I remember as context around the Service's concerns
26 that China might have mobilized individuals, yes.

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you. And I
28 appreciate you acknowledging that. And I'll tell you why.

1 And it's because, as you'll recall, there have been times
2 where you have, let us say, cautioned us all as the news
3 about the allegations in Don Valley North came out and as
4 other allegations concerning Han Dong came out. You have, as
5 I say, let us say, cautioned Canadians not to fall into anti-
6 Chinese or anti-Asian stereotypes around this.

7 And what I want to press on you here is that
8 the ethnicity or the language of these students has never
9 been the issue, either for the Service or for any right-
10 thinking Canadian. The concern instead is that PRC was
11 directing people, whoever they were, to go do their bidding
12 and to help Han Dong into his seat in Parliament.

13 And you can have that concern, and worry
14 about that, and worry about the consequences for our
15 democracy, without having an ounce of racial prejudice
16 running through your veins. Do you agree with me on that?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Entirely. And that
18 was actually the point that I made to the Service, that I
19 made in response to them saying -- or the suggestion that,
20 oh, the concern was the bus filled with Chinese speakers. I
21 said, "That has nothing absolutely no bearing on anything."

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** And I want to be clear
23 though, I hope it is your evidence that you did not feel that
24 the Service itself was acting in some racially prejudiced
25 way?

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. My concern was
27 more that perhaps the Service didn't understand, as deeply as
28 political actors do, the prevalence of bussing of different

1 community groups in nomination campaigns.

2 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. And let's come to
3 that point as well.

4 If we could go to WIT 66, please?

5 That's your other statement.

6 Paragraph 24, please. Thank you. And
7 actually, it's at the top of page 7, so keep scrolling a
8 little. Yes. Stop there.

9 In the middle of the page, Prime Minister:

10 "The fact that there were buses of
11 Chinese-speaking people at the
12 nomination meeting did not
13 necessarily corroborate the
14 allegation that the PRC was
15 responsible."

16 And in fact, I should have read the sentence
17 before as well. He, meaning you, Prime Minister:

18 "...also remembered that the
19 intelligence was only an allegation,
20 [...] included no evidence that the
21 people being bussed to the polls were
22 supported by PRC officials."

23 Right. And you go on to say, Prime Minister,
24 that you remembered asking whether the Service understood
25 that busing is part of the nomination process. Is that
26 right?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

28 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. Thank you. And

1 again, going back to the reporting I just showed you, there's
2 obviously a reference to bussing there. But what I want to
3 suggest to you is that the emphasis again wasn't on the mode
4 of travel for these people. They took busses this time. All
5 right. They could have come some other way and it wouldn't
6 terribly matter for the Service's perspective because their
7 concern was that they were directed by PRC and assisted in
8 getting to the nomination place in order to, allegedly, help
9 one candidate over the other. So the way they got there
10 doesn't matter one way or another. I understand your point
11 that you wanted to make sure CSIS understood that busses per
12 say are not a problem, but my proposition to you, sir, is
13 that when you read that statement, that the emphasis is on
14 "direction by China". Yes, they got there by busses. That's
15 the allegation. They could have got there by tricycles. It
16 doesn't terribly matter. The point is, they were directed by
17 China.

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would suggest
19 that it might be more difficult for a foreign actor to
20 organize fleets of individuals showing up on tricycles,
21 rather than filling them into a bus.

22 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I expect that's right. But
23 one way or another, let's say they managed that miracle, CSIS
24 would still be concerned, and rightly so?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Absolutely.

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes. All right. I would
27 like to take you to the David Johnston report for a moment
28 now.

1 That's at COM 104.

2 --- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 104:

3 "First Report The Right Honourable
4 David Johnston Independent Special
5 Rapporteur on Foreign Interference"

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** And if you'll go to page
7 23, please? Now, I forgot that this is in two columns, so
8 I'm not sure where I'm going to find my quote.

9 Let me read it to you. I don't think it's
10 controversial. You may recall that Mr. Johnston, I hope we
11 can find it in here somewhere, but Mr. Johnston concluded in
12 respect of the Don Valley North allegations, he said:

13 "...there is a well-grounded suspicion
14 that the irregularities were tied to
15 the PRC Consulate in Toronto..."

16 Do you recall that, sir? I can try to find
17 it for you, if you don't. One moment.

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, there it is.
19 "Irregularities were observed..."

20 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes. And then there we
21 are, and there's -- thank you very much, Prime Minister:

22 "...and there is a well-grounded
23 suspicion that the irregularities
24 were tied to the PRC Consulate in
25 Toronto..."

26 That's what I wanted to ask you about.

27 Now, I fully appreciate, sir, that that was
28 not a conclusion you were able to make or prepared to make in

1 September 2019.

2 But my question for is today, now that we've
3 had Mr. Johnston's report and he's come to that conclusion,
4 do you accept, first, that there were irregularities in that
5 nomination contest, and secondly, that they were likely tied
6 to the PRC Consulate in Toronto?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'd suggest that
8 irregularities being observed is not itself enough to
9 overturn a democratic event. And I'd also suggest that a
10 well-grounded suspicion is certainly warranting more
11 reflection and follow-ups, but also might not hit the
12 necessarily very high threshold for overturning the result of
13 a democratic event.

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes, but I don't think
15 that's what Mr. Johnston is speaking to. He's just saying
16 that there is a well-grounded suspicion that the
17 irregularities, which he seems to have found, were tied to
18 the Consulate. And what I want to know is, do you accept
19 those conclusions today?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah, sorry, if
21 you're not asking me about how -- I accept there is a
22 suspicion that PRC officials in Canada were engaged in some
23 way with that nomination. I can't speak to irregularities.
24 Perhaps you know what irregularities specifically Mr.
25 Johnston was talking about?

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** No, not as well as some
27 people in this room. All right. Well you do accept though,
28 and you say that there's a suspicion. Do you accept that

1 it's well-grounded? That was Mr. Johnston's view.

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can't speak to
3 analysis made by others. I certainly -- and again,
4 distinguishing what I knew in 2019 from what I may have
5 learnt later leaves me in an awkward position around
6 answering this.

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. I'll move to my
8 next document, and that is CAN15842, please.

9 And you've seen this already. It is the
10 October -- late October 2022 briefing.

11 You've already given evidence that your
12 briefings are oral, you didn't see this document per say, and
13 I've got that point, sir.

14 But I do want to go to page 2 of the
15 document. And scrolling down a little further? There we
16 are. Thank you.

17 My question for you is, did the Director say
18 words to the effect of, or convey the message that, as you
19 see here:

20 "Canada has been slower than our Five
21 Eyes allies to respond to the
22 [foreign interference] threat..."

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

24 **MR. GIB van ERT:** All right. And if you
25 continue on in that same passage:

26 "...such as proactively publicizing
27 successful disruption [...]
28 activities..."

1 Was that something that the Director conveyed
2 to you?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. When I spoke
4 to this before, I believe I said that the briefing notes
5 prepared for the Director didn't particularly align with the
6 actual briefing we got.

7 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes.

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The briefing was
9 spent almost entirely on specific cases, and all of these
10 notes prepared for the Director generally saying, "Yes,
11 foreign interference is serious. India. China. Serious,"
12 would have taken up the first 30 seconds of what the Director
13 said, because ---

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Understood.

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- he would have
16 gotten right into the cases. So this is not ---

17 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'm just going to show you
18 one more point from this. I do have your point about that.

19 It's page 3. Yes, thank you. Yes.

20 It's the bullet point that begins with the
21 word "ultimately":

22 "Ultimately, state actors are able to
23 conduct [foreign interference]
24 successfully in Canada because there
25 are no consequences, either legal or
26 political. [Foreign interference] is
27 therefore a low-risk and high-reward
28 endeavour."

1 Did the Director convey, in those words or in
2 some similar words, that message, that this is an -- a
3 low-risk, high-reward endeavour because there are no
4 consequences?

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Thank you. That's very
7 helpful.

8 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

9 Counsel for Jenny Kwan.

10 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

11 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:**

12 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Prime Minister, good
13 afternoon. So Prime Minister, it's a matter of public record
14 that MP Kwan has alleged that she may have been the target of
15 foreign interference by the Communist Party of China in the
16 2021 general election. So based on that premise, there's --
17 time permitting, there is three sets of issues I hope we
18 could discuss.

19 The first is how MP Kwan came to know from
20 CSIS that she was a target for foreign interference; the
21 second is why she might be a target; and the third is how
22 foreign interference be occurring against her in Canada.

23 So you're aware, Prime Minister, that MP Kwan
24 received a confidential briefing from CSIS on May 26, 2023.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

26 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And you're aware that
27 she has not shared publicly any of the classified information
28 she received in that briefing.

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I believe that to
2 be correct, yes.

3 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** But you're aware she
4 stated that she was told that she is an evergreen target for
5 the Communist Party of China and for the rest of her life,
6 even after she leaves politics.

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can't speak to
8 directly what she was told, but that seems consistent with
9 what they might have told her, yes.

10 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So Prime Minister, are
11 you able in this setting to share with us whether you had any
12 role in the decision to brief MP Kwan about foreign
13 interference?

14 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** When there were --
15 when there are allegations or information brought to me
16 regarding a particular Member of Parliament or a particular
17 individual, often one of our first responses in my office,
18 and my response, is to ask CSIS, or the security agency
19 involved, to engage directly with the individual. The nature
20 of that engagement, often we find that CSIS is already
21 preparing to do that. Sometimes us encouraging it allows it
22 -- or encourages it to happen more quickly. It's certainly
23 something CSIS can make decisions about on its own as well,
24 but I believe in this case, we encouraged those briefings to
25 happen.

26 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And so you encouraged
27 them to happen. And if you're able to comment, was one of
28 the reasons why you and your office encouraged the briefing

1 to happen was to enable MP Kwan to herself identify foreign
2 interference that might be occurring and to take steps, if
3 she could, to counter foreign interference?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The challenge of
5 foreign interference exists for, as we've heard, for just
6 about every elected official at every different order of
7 government has a potential threat, but we also know that
8 diaspora communities, particularly from certain countries of
9 origin, are more susceptible to be targets on that. So
10 whether it's defensive briefings or threat reduction
11 measures, which are two different approaches that CSIS and
12 others can use in terms of briefing, it is their design to
13 both inform, make aware, and hopefully help the individual in
14 avoiding the kind of interference that is of concern.

15 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And so one -- so one
16 goal is to help individuals avoid foreign interference if
17 it's occurring, so a self-help remedy, if we could, but
18 surely another purpose would be to urge an individual to come
19 forth with concerns about potential foreign interference to
20 CSIS or the RCMP or the Commissioner of Canada Elections or
21 some other federal authority. Is that ---

22 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

23 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- right? Right. And
24 so the -- and of course, for anyone to come forward, a Member
25 of Parliament or any Canadian who might be targeted for
26 foreign interference, the expectation would be that if they
27 presented such a complaint or a concern that it would be
28 investigated thoroughly.

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That it would be
2 given the attention that it merits, yes.

3 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And so I want to ask --
4 dig in a bit to why MP Kwan might have been targeted and what
5 your thoughts are. So you're aware that MP Kwan's testified
6 here that she believes she has been targeted for foreign
7 interference because of her outspoken criticism over many
8 years of the human rights record of the People's Republic of
9 China. Are you aware of that?

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

11 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah. And so she's --
12 you know -- you're aware of her criticisms of the Tiananmen
13 Square massacre?

14 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

15 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And the Hong Kong
16 National Security Law?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, like many,
18 many Canadians of all different origins, but particularly,
19 progressive Canadians of Chinese origin, there are some very,
20 very strong and outspoken and brave individuals who speak up
21 against the government of their country of origin.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And she made some of
23 those criticisms as a parliamentarian ---

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** M'hm.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- on the floor of the
26 House of Commons.

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

28 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So for example, when she

1 spoke in favour and voted in favour of the resolution on the
2 Uyghur genocide. And so it's clear, then, in making these
3 criticisms she was actually exercising her right to free
4 speech. You'd agree?

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And that she was
7 exercising her parliamentary privilege when she ---

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

9 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- had made those
10 criticisms? And so no Canadian ---

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But I'd also say
12 more.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah.

14 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** She was fulfilling
15 her responsibilities as a Member of Parliament to represent
16 her constituents and her community in our Parliament.

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Agreed. And that no
18 Canadian, MP or not, should be subject to foreign
19 interference for expressing their political views?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Indeed. Yes.

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So I want to then take
22 you, then, if I may, Prime Minister, to how foreign
23 interference by the CCP might be occurring in Canada. And so
24 we have had testimony that the CCP's foreign interference
25 activities occur through the United Front, an arm of the
26 Chinese Communist Party. You're aware of that.

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Not exclusively.

28 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Right. Not -- but

1 including through the United Front?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. There are
3 many different ways, and the United Front is one of the ways
4 in which the Communist Party of China exerts either
5 influence, or perhaps in other cases, interference.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And the other -- are you
7 able to comment on the other ways?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Chinese police
9 stations are a perfect example of something that's been in
10 the news recently that our friend from the Bloc asked about
11 earlier today.

12 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And of course -- and
13 they often -- the United Front often operates through proxies
14 we've learned. You agree that that's correct.

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

16 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I think the words
17 you used to describe foreign interference in your examination
18 in-Chief were "covert", "coercive", "deceptive". And so
19 would it surprise you if you were told that the United Front
20 might funnel funds to Chinese proxies in Canada?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I am wary of
22 getting into too much of what I know in an open forum here,
23 but I think there has been evidence submitted along the lines
24 of that.

25 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And so -- and
26 you're aware that CSIS has confirmed that the United Front
27 uses proxies to disinvite or deplatform regime opponents from
28 invitations to important community events.

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I -- again, I would
2 encourage you to go directly to the source of these reports
3 and allegations. I can say that yes, I am kept very, very
4 highly briefed on various ways of interference. I am not
5 always sure which ones I can talk about that I know about
6 that others may not know about.

7 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Right.

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But if you're
9 talking about public record things, then it's good that
10 you're putting them into the record.

11 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure. And so as a
12 politician of course, part of the -- some of the rituals of
13 Canadian political life involve attending events hosted by
14 different ethnic communities that are potentially quite
15 significant, so the Sakhi would be one, I'm sure, that you
16 might be familiar with.

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And so there is a
19 certain significance, then, to having been invited for many
20 years to an event and then suddenly disinvited in a public
21 way. That would be designed to send a message, wouldn't you
22 agree?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think publicly
24 disinviting someone, as wrong as it would be, might fall into
25 the category of influence rather than interference. If a
26 diplomat is hosting an event that the Chinese government is
27 behind or through proxies, it's a fairly open and visible way
28 and perhaps meant to be open and visible to exclude an

1 individual.

2 That sounds like -- as wrong or as
3 unfortunate or much as we might disagree with it, it sounds
4 like something that is not covert or surreptitious, but more
5 very direct disapproval.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** But if it's a community
7 event organized by a Canadian organization ---

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think we're
9 getting into hypotheticals here, but I understand your point,
10 that it is unfortunate that China in general tries to silence
11 critics of its regime, including, you know, high-profile
12 Members of Parliament.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. So a couple of
14 concluding questions, if I may, Prime Minister.

15 So the GAC panel testified that if the
16 People's Republic of China or, for that matter, any other
17 foreign state were engaged in foreign interference in Canada,
18 it would violate international law. Do you have any reason
19 to disagree with that evidence?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, I'm -- yes.
21 The foreign interference is violation of Canadian law and
22 international law.

23 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And you'd agree, then,
24 it's a violation of Canadian sovereignty.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

26 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Thank you, Prime
27 Minister.

28 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

1 Mr. Jarmyn, representing Erin O'Toole.

2 --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR

3 MR. THOMAS JARMYN:

4 MR. THOMAS JARMYN: Thank you, Prime Minister
5 -- or thank you, Commissioner.

6 Prime Minister, my name's Tom Jarmyn. I
7 represent Erin O'Toole.

8 Just building on a question that my colleague
9 was asking, Mr. O'Toole, similar to Ms. Kwan, has also
10 received a defensive briefing from CSIS. And was that done
11 with the permission or direction of your office?

12 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Again, it is not
13 something that CSIS needs to get permission from the Prime
14 Minister's Office to do, but in this case, we certainly
15 encouraged it.

16 MR. THOMAS JARMYN: And has your office given
17 general direction when MPs come under this sort of, I guess,
18 scrutiny or attack that they should be made aware of that?

19 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: That is in general
20 our approach on things, yes.

21 MR. THOMAS JARMYN: But has your office given
22 direction to that effect?

23 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: It is not to us to
24 direct CSIS on what threat reduction or defensive briefings
25 it gives or doesn't give, but certainly our posture has been
26 one of encouraging CSIS to keep all Parliamentarians informed
27 and aware of not just threats against them, but of issues of
28 foreign interference.

1 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you.

2 I guess if we could go to CAN 4495.

3 And this is a document that supposedly
4 relates to a briefing which was intended to occur some time
5 in late February of 2023. It was prepared by CSIS.

6 Commission counsel has shown it to you and I
7 believe you also saw it during your witness interview.

8 If you could scroll down to the third page.
9 A little further, please. Thank you.

10 So I understand from your witness interview
11 that you were not advised of this -- these events concurrent
12 to them happening in the election in 2021, but I would ask
13 after February 21st of 2023, have you ever been briefed by
14 either CSIS or the NSIA with respect to conclusions similar
15 to this that:

16 "...observed online media activities
17 aimed at discouraging Canadians,
18 particularly of Chinese heritage,
19 from supporting Conservative Party of
20 Canada, leader Erin O'Toole, and
21 particularly Steveston-Richmond East
22 candidate Kenny Chiu.

23 ...the timing of these efforts to
24 align with Conservative polling
25 improvements; the similarities in
26 language with articles published by
27 PRC state media; and the partnership
28 agreements between these Canada-based

1 outlets and PRC entities; all suggest
2 that these efforts were orchestrated
3 or directed by the PRC.”

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think on this I'd
5 like to turn to the summary prepared of evidence on this one.
6 I believe it's ---

7 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** I think it's WIT 66,
8 paragraph 49.

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sorry. I'm talking
10 about the intelligence summaries, not the interview
11 summaries. The prepared summaries.

12 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Madam Commissioner,
13 I think the Prime Minister's referring to the multi-source
14 topical summary on ---

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That one, topical
16 summaries. Yes.

17 **MS. ERIN DANN:** I believe it's number 4, if
18 that assists, .4.

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, thank you.
20 That's it.

21 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So that's the topical
22 summary, but going back to my question, which was, has any
23 official, either the NSIA or Director of CSIS or anyone on
24 your staff, briefed you with respect to the conclusions that
25 were in CAN 4495?

26 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** And just to be fair
27 to the witness, perhaps he could be allowed look at those
28 conclusions one by one rather than ---

1 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Sure.

2 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** --- en masse.

3 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So possibly he can go
4 back to CAN 4495.

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, I have the
6 summary, so if we can go back on the page to the document you
7 brought up.

8 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you.

9 Scroll down. Thank you.

10 Just a little bit further. Thank you.

11 So the overall statement is observed online
12 media activities aimed at discouraging Canadians,
13 particularly of Chinese heritage, from supporting the
14 Conservative Party leader, Erin O'Toole, and particularly
15 Steveston-Richmond East candidate Kenny Chiu.

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah. What I will
17 go to is the bottom of that -- the last line in the second
18 paragraph there and refer to the general summary there, point
19 6, that says no PRC state direction of the incident was
20 detected or reported.

21 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Yes, I realize that's
22 what that document says.

23 But my question is, did anyone brief you with
24 respect to those allegations that are in CAN 4495? And if
25 your answer is no, that's fine.

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The -- first of
27 all, these are briefing notes that I never saw. These are
28 briefings for a briefer who then gave a briefing that, as

1 we've seen, may or may not have included all of these things.

2 I am and was, however, aware of the elements
3 in the summary that talked about whether it's following the
4 publication of the article in the Hill Times. There was a
5 number of different media organizations that picked up and
6 ran with those things, but again, getting to the bottom line,
7 no, you know, Chinese state direction of the incident was
8 detected or report.

9 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you.

10 And I'd like to turn now to COM 008, which is
11 the Cabinet directive from 2021 with respect to the Critical
12 Election Incident Public Protocol.

13 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 8:**

14 Cabinet Directive on the Critical
15 Election Incident Public Protocol

16 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And this is the standing
17 directive right now. It is -- unlike 2019, this is an
18 ongoing thing. Is that correct?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, this is the
20 existing directive now. Yes.

21 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And we've heard from
22 various witnesses, Madam Drouin, who said that the threshold
23 for intervention by the Panel of Five would either be high or
24 very high, were the words she used. Minister Gould used
25 "observed with certainty" and Minister LeBlanc used the "high
26 threshold" as well. Is that consistent with your
27 understanding of how the directive is meant to apply?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The directive is

1 meant to apply, and the Panel is meant to kick in when there
2 are threats to Canada being able to hold a free and fair
3 election. That must necessarily be a significantly high
4 threshold because just the act of engaging for the Panel
5 could itself have an impact on the unfolding of the election.

6 So the expertise and the experience and the
7 professional judgment of the people on the Panel is what we
8 lean on significantly for whether and how they intervene.

9 I will highlight that not every intervention
10 by the P5 would be to convene a supper hour press conference
11 to tell Canadians about something in the middle of an
12 election campaign. It could involve, as it has, apprising
13 different parties of concerns; it could be -- involve asking
14 or working with a social media giant to take down a
15 particular piece of misinformation. Like, there are
16 different things that would have different thresholds, in
17 terms of what is required to do to ensure that the election
18 remains free and fair for Canadians.

19 **Mr. THOMAS JARMYN:** Can we scroll down in the
20 directive itself, please, and into 5? There we are, the
21 Process. Actually, we need -- sorry; I have go to back up
22 again. So they say -- paragraph 3, please.

23 You say, Minister -- or Prime Minister,
24 rather, that this can be engaged by threats. The Panel of
25 Five has testified that it must be an event that has occurred
26 which affects a free and fair election, at which they would
27 give notice to Canadians. Is it your evidence that the Panel
28 can act on a perceived threat as opposed to an event?

1 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'd ask, actually,
2 to scroll down to -- go to 4.0 or -- no, next one, 5.0.
3 There we go:

4 "...lays out a process through which
5 Canadians would be notified of an
6 incident that threatens Canada's
7 ability to have a free and fair
8 election, should notification be
9 necessary."

10 I suppose an incident could be an event, but
11 I think if there is an imminent threat to Canada's ability to
12 have free and fair election, I have no doubt that the Panel
13 would engage with that, whether or not the incident or event
14 had happened or was just imminently about to happen.

15 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Okay.

16 Just one last question, please, Commissioner.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Sure.

18 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And that threat could
19 crystallize at the general election level, at the riding
20 level, or indeed, among a diaspora community level that's
21 spread out over across several ridings.

22 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sorry; and what's
23 your question?

24 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** That threat could
25 crystallize ---

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Good. Yes.

27 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** --- at either the general
28 election level, an individual riding level, or among a

1 broader community that's spread out over several ridings.

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, as long as it
3 threatens Canada's ability to have a free and fair election,
4 either at the riding level or in the aggregate general
5 election, which is just the sum of 338 individual riding
6 elections.

7 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you. Thank you.

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Thank you, Tom.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

10 Mr. de Luca, acting on behalf of the
11 Conservative Party.

12 **(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

13 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:**

15 **Mr. NANDO de LUCA:** Good evening, Mr. Prime
16 Minister.

17 Could I have -- just give me a moment. Could
18 I have TRN 6 called up, please?

19 And while that's being called up, Mr. Prime
20 Minister, in preparation for your testimony here today, have
21 you been aware that MP Han Dong confirmed under oath at this
22 Inquiry that he spoke to PRC officials on multiple occasions
23 about the two Michaels while they were held in captivity in
24 China?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I believe so, yes.

26 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And am I correct
27 that the two Michaels had been taken into custody and
28 detained in China commencing in December 2018 until they were

1 released at the end of September 2021?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

3 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Would you agree
4 with me that the detention of the two Michaels was a very
5 high profile and very sensitive matter, both in Canada and
6 abroad?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It was certainly
8 very high profile, and it was a detention that caused us to
9 mobilize broadly. It was certainly a very difficult
10 experience for the two Michaels and their families, but it
11 was also something that mobilized an awful lot of not just
12 Canadians but our partners around the world.

13 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Thank you.

14 We've heard evidence, and seen evidence at
15 this Inquiry, that at least one of the conversations between
16 Mr. Dong and PRC General Consul -- Consul General in Toronto
17 was intercepted and monitored, that it touched upon the two
18 Michaels in some respect, and that at least a summary of the
19 intercepted conversation exists, and I have a couple of
20 questions for you regarding this intercepted conversation.

21 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Just before my
22 friend does, I'm not sure whether -- of the details he is --
23 or the assertion he's making is one that can be found in the
24 public record, but I'm happy to hear from him about that. I
25 would urge him to refer to the summary, the topical summary
26 on this issue.

27 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** I'm going to come to the
28 topical summary, but if I could ask the Prime Minister

1 generally, when were you first made aware that Mr. Dong had
2 been having conversations with the PRC Consul General
3 regarding the two Michaels?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can't recall
5 offhand at what point that was.

6 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Do you remember what
7 year, sir?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Perhaps there's
9 documents that refer to the meeting that I can talk about
10 publicly, various briefings that I've had when these
11 allegations came out. I believe -- actually, I believe they
12 -- this was the source -- this was a matter disclosed in the
13 leaks in the fall of 2022, and it was only subsequent to
14 those leaks that I became aware of those conversations. So
15 it would have been late in 2022.

16 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** You don't believe you
17 were made aware of any such conversations prior to that?

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

19 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And could I ask that
20 CAN.SUM 2 be called up, please?

21 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. CAN.SUM 2:**

22 "Intelligence Relating to Han Dong
23 and Communication with People's
24 Republic of China Officials Regarding
25 the "Two Michaels"

26 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And I believe Ms.
27 Chaudhury took you through tis document, to some extent,
28 earlier. This is a summary of intelligence held by CSIS and

1 the intelligence agencies relating to Han Dong and some
2 communications with the People's Republic of China relating
3 to the two Michaels. And I take it from your answers
4 earlier, you reviewed this document in preparation for your
5 testimony here today?

6 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

7 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And there's a summary of
8 five points relating to this intelligence. Can you confirm
9 -- and I think you may have -- that aside from your review of
10 this particular document in preparation for today, that you
11 have received intelligence briefings and information that is
12 reflected in each of these five points?

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I have six points
14 on mine.

15 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** I may have misspoken,
16 you're correct. Quite correct, six points.

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Okay. Yes.

18 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Can I turn your
19 attention to point 4? Perhaps you can review that, and while
20 you are, the second sentence says:

21 "MP Dong expressed the view that even if the PRC released the
22 'Two Michaels' at that moment,
23 opposition parties would view the
24 PRC's action as an affirmation of the
25 effectiveness of a hardline Canadian
26 approach to the PRC."

27 You see that?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

1 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** When were you first made
2 aware of MP Dong expressing that view?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I said, this was
4 subsequent to leaks. But let me also just say that it's
5 aware of information alleging that MP Dong expressed these
6 views. As has been previously stated, there have been
7 significant questions around both translation and summary of
8 the actual exchange that -- you know, I don't think I need to
9 read the first page filled with *caveats* around incomplete,
10 single-sourced, varying degrees of reliability, you know, not
11 necessarily indicating corroboration or reliability of
12 sources. So there's a lot of uncertainty around even the
13 things that we're saying in -- that we're seeing in the
14 summaries.

15 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Can I ask you, Prime
16 Minister, have you personally reviewed that summary?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** This summary?

18 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** No, the summary of the
19 intercepted conversation.

20 **MR. FREDRICK SCHUMANN:** Madam Commissioner,
21 I'm concerned that we're getting into a sensitive area. I'm
22 frankly not sure ---

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can say yes to
24 that. Yes, I have. But there's not much more I can say
25 about it.

26 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** That's fine. Thank you.
27 Can we call up COM 118, which is the Special
28 Rapporteur's first report that was produced or dated May 23,

1 2023?

2 **THE COURT OPERATOR:** COM 118?

3 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Yes.

4 **THE COURT OPERATOR:** Just one moment.

5 **--- EXHIBIT No./PIÈCE No. COM 118:**

6 First Report The Right Honourable
7 David Johnston Independent Special
8 Rapporteur on Foreign Interference

9 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And I'd like to go to
10 page 26, small roman numeral viii.

11 There's an analysis of a piece of reporting
12 that Han Dong advised the PRC Consulate to extend the
13 detention of the Two Michaels, Global News, March 22, 2023.
14 Do you see that?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

16 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. And immediately
17 before that, Mr. Johnston comments on how there has been
18 considerable media attention about an alleged transcript of
19 this conversation. Do you see that?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

21 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And he then says:

22 "I have reviewed the same
23 intelligence report that was provided
24 to the Prime Minister relating to
25 this allegation, which I am advised
26 is the only intelligence that speaks
27 to this issue. I can report the
28 following..."

1 And we're going to come to the following.
2 But my question now though is, Mr. Johnston tells us that he
3 reviewed the same intelligence report that you did and that
4 this is the only report that exists that speaks to this
5 issue.

6 So my question for you is the following. Is
7 the intelligence report that Mr. Johnston is referring to
8 there CAN.SUM002 that we just looked at? Or is it something
9 else?

10 **MR. FREDRICK SCHUMANN:** I'm not sure the
11 witness can answer that in this setting.

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll note the
13 question.

14 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** And are there other
15 reports that, for now we'll go with written reports, either
16 hardcopy or electronic, that you're aware of that perhaps
17 were not shared with Mr. Johnston that might relate to
18 precisely what was or wasn't said between Mr. Dong and the
19 PRC official?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm not certain I
21 can answer that question.

22 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** For the same reasons ---

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Reasons of security
24 and confidentiality.

25 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Thank you.

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** National security.

27 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Thank you. Have those
28 reports, if there are any such reports, have they been

1 provided to the present Commission?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Again, I'm not sure
3 I can -- I cannot confirm or infirm the existence of any
4 other reports that I cannot speak to here.

5 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Thank you very much. Mr.
6 Johnston then gives his assessment of that particular
7 allegation as follows. He says:

8 "The allegation is false. Mr. Dong
9 discussed the Two Michaels with the
10 PRC official but did not suggest to
11 the official that the PRC extend
12 their detention. The allegation that
13 he did make that suggestion has had a
14 very adverse effect." (As read)

15 Do you agree with that assessment, sir?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. We know that
17 the media reports and the allegations made in rather a
18 spectacular fashion about Mr. Dong were false.

19 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. But would you
20 agree with ---

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** In regards to what
22 he said or didn't say about the Two Michaels.

23 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Okay. Would you agree
24 with me, sir, that all that Mr. Johnston was commenting on
25 was what is contained in that heading? That particular
26 allegation? Mr. Johnston didn't comment one way or the other
27 about whether -- what else Mr. Dong might have said to the
28 PRC Consul re: the Two Michaels was correct. So for example,

1 in CAN.SUM02, the conversation is stated slightly
2 differently.

3 **MR. FREDRICK SCHUMANN:** I'm not sure the
4 witness can comment on what Mr. Johnston was or was not
5 commenting on.

6 **MR. NANDO de LUCA:** Mr. Prime Minister, I
7 have very many more questions, as you might imagine, but I
8 simply don't have the time. Thank you very much.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you, Mr. De Luca.
10 Counsel for Han Dong?

11 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

12 **MR. MARK POLLEY:**

13 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** Thank you, Commissioner.
14 Prime Minister, I am Mark Polley, and as you
15 heard, I represent Han Dong.

16 I'm going to start with the same issue that
17 Mr. De Luca finished with, and that is the allegations that
18 were made in the -- in Global, at least, relating to the Two
19 Michaels.

20 And we -- as you know, we heard yesterday
21 from Mr. Clow, among others, and Mr. Clow told us about how
22 after the leaks came out, there were discussions about what
23 to do, what -- how to respond, whether there could be any
24 response, and in particular, he said there were a number of
25 discussions about how to get the truth out that the story was
26 wrong. And he explained that up until yesterday, he was not
27 able to say that publicly.

28 Are you able to, first of all, tell us, did

1 you have conversations like that as well about whether there
2 was anything the government could do, whether -- anything you
3 could do?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, further, what
5 we actually did was engage the Special Rapporteur, who had
6 the opportunity to go through the evidence and state quite
7 categorically that the allegations were false. We felt that
8 having the Special Rapporteur able to engage on that and
9 qualify those allegations as false was perhaps more
10 reassuring to concerned Canadians than having officials of
11 the same -- elected officials of the same party as Mr. Dong
12 categorizing that the same way.

13 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** And so does that -- well,
14 aside from ultimately making that decision, did you, like Mr.
15 Clow, have discussions about whether there was anything that
16 could be released before that, like immediately, to respond?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** There were many
18 discussions following the leaks on this issue, but on a
19 number of the issues that were leaking. As we highlighted
20 and attempted to highlight a few times in the media, there
21 were clear falsehoods and inaccuracies in the media
22 reporting. But the challenge of protecting national security
23 meant that we were very much limited in our ability to
24 contradict the false allegations being made by the leaker.

25 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** And that difficulty you're
26 describing, although we've heard, as I say, Mr. Clow talking
27 about finally being able to say something publicly yesterday,
28 you're speaking about it today to some extent, but I take it

1 that same tension continues? That there's only so much, as
2 we can see, that you can -- you're able to say?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But, you know,
4 given, as Mr. Clow pointed out yesterday, we are now in a
5 position to express and to repeat the way it was
6 characterized in the media was wrong.

7 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** So let me turn to busses.
8 The ongoing discussion about busses. We heard about you
9 being briefed by Mr. Broadhurst in September of 2019, and you
10 talked about him flagging concerns and describing this
11 scenario of students being brought to Don Valley North
12 nomination meeting. And you asked whether the intelligence
13 agency understood this thing that bussing people to
14 nomination meetings is standard, or I think you said regular
15 earlier. Is that right?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

17 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** And ---

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** This will be your last
19 question.

20 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** Thank you.

21 And you -- sorry, let me make sure. And you
22 raised the issue of whether the intelligence agency
23 understood this basic issue that someone like you who knows
24 politics and nomination campaigns knows, and did you figure
25 out an answer to that? Whether the people at the Agency who
26 were reporting this had that context?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oh, certainly.
28 Listen, our intelligence agencies, even though they don't

1 organise nomination meetings themselves as, you know,
2 political parties do, you know, regularly turn to experts
3 and, you know, learn about the things that they don't know
4 about when they need to. So I am very confident that our
5 intelligence agencies now know a lot more about the unfolding
6 of nominations, which is important because they need to be
7 able to ensure that those nominations, like all electoral
8 events, are decided by, you know, by the residents and indeed
9 by ensuring that our democratic processes are free and fair
10 and absent interference by foreign actors.

11 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** Okay.

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

13 **MR. MARK POLLEY:** Thank you.

14 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Human Rights Coalition?

15 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

16 **MS. SARAH TEICH:**

17 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** My name is Sarah Teich, and
18 as the Commissioner stated, I'm representing the Human Rights
19 Coalition. I understand, Mr. Prime Minister, that you have a
20 lot of confidence in your NSIA's ability to receive
21 information from the national security agencies, but I want
22 to ask about your level of confidence in the agencies'
23 abilities to receive information from those most vulnerable,
24 namely, members of targeted diaspora communities. So let me
25 just start with this, were you aware, Mr. Prime Minister,
26 that the RCMP's National Security Information Network is only
27 available in English and French?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I was not.

1 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Were you aware that the
2 CSE's online reporting tool, as well as CSIS's reporting
3 tool, and the OCE's complaints form on the website are also
4 available in only English and French?

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But I am also aware
6 that all those agencies use in language individuals who are
7 able to reach into and engage with communities, but I take
8 your word for it that the online forms are only in English
9 and French.

10 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** I appreciate that. And we
11 also heard on March 27th with the diaspora panel, that was
12 the first day of these hearings, that community members
13 oftentimes don't feel empowered to reach out to the agencies.
14 They feel that they won't be heard. They feel it's a waste
15 of time, for whatever reason. Given these limitations, how
16 can you expect the agencies themselves to really know, and,
17 therefore, how can you expect the NSIA to really know if
18 coercion, harassment, or intimidation of diaspora community
19 members is happening including in the context of elections?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** This is certainly a
21 challenge, and it is something that we've been working on
22 over the past years to try and improve and increase the --
23 not just the diversity within our various agencies, but also,
24 the ability of those agencies to reach into people who are
25 often most vulnerable to interference, particularly in
26 diaspora communities, but also, at the same time, often with
27 good reason, most suspicious of authorities and enforcement
28 agencies that have not always treated them fairly in the

1 past.

2 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Thank you. Given these
3 limitations, does this plant even a seed of doubt in your
4 mind in terms of the integrity of the 2019 and 2021 general
5 elections?

6 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think those are
7 two different things. The challenge of any democracy is
8 ensuring that people who perhaps disagree with the outcome of
9 a given election still have faith that that is indeed the
10 will of the people, the will of citizens. And that's where
11 having a panel in place, both in 2019 and 2021, that can say
12 that they have determined, or they have concluded that the
13 election was free and fair is a really important step. Now
14 nobody can say that about the 2015 election, for example, or
15 elections before because those panels didn't exist. At the
16 same time, what we've learned from the 2019 election was
17 applied to the 2021 election and will continue to be applied
18 and expanded and become more -- perhaps more sensitive or
19 alert to various vulnerabilities that are more difficult to
20 go into, particularly when you talk about racialized or
21 marginalised communities. So there is more to do, but I do
22 have confidence in the ability of our intelligence agencies
23 and our panel to have drawn the conclusion that the elections
24 in 2019 and in 2021 were indeed free and fair.

25 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** All right. Thank you.

26 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

27 Mr. Doody for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress
28 -- or, yes. No, it's the Sikh Coalition, I'm sorry.

1 You'll be next.

2 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

3 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:**

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you, Commissioner.
5 Mr. Trudeau, my name is Prabjot Singh. I'm appearing on
6 behalf of the Sikh Coalition. So I don't have a whole lot of
7 time, but I want to start by asking whether you would agree
8 that your government missed key opportunities to hold India
9 to account for its interference in Canada. And to be more
10 specific so we can narrow down a precise answer, that there
11 were attempts made by the government to minimise the threat
12 that India posed throughout this relevant period and actually
13 tried to hide the severity of the threat from Canadians.
14 Would you agree with that assessment?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

16 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Mr. Operator, if we can
17 bring up COM 155? So, Mr. Trudeau, this is a copy of the
18 2019 annual report of NSICOP, which you mentioned was a body
19 created by your government in the hopes of creating some
20 oversight and transparency on security and intelligence
21 issues.

22 And, Mr. Operator, if we can go to page 73
23 of the PDF? So as you know, this report deals with concerns
24 about foreign interference. Is that 73 of the PDF? Or,
25 yeah, 55 of the actual document. And so this is a section
26 that deals with foreign interference specifically. And if we
27 can continue to scroll down until 79, please? You can go a
28 little bit faster.

1 And right there if you can hold for a second.
2 If you can scroll up, please? So there is mentioned
3 specifically of foreign interference by the People's Republic
4 of China. Continue scrolling. There's mention of the
5 Russian Federation. And if we can pause right there and it
6 specifically says, "other states engaged in foreign
7 interference". And if you continue scrolling, that entire
8 section has been redacted.

9 Mr. Operator, if we can go to page 108 of the
10 PDF? And if you continue scrolling until 113, we see these
11 are instances of Canada's response to foreign interference in
12 relation to China. And then it goes into instances of a
13 response to Russian interference. And if we scroll down, and
14 this entire section again is redacted.

15 So, Mr. Trudeau, I'm going to suggest that
16 the redacted sections of this report outline details of
17 Indian electoral interference and coercive activities against
18 the Sikh community, as well as outlining governmental
19 failures in combating the specific threat. And so I
20 understand that you may not be able to address this in a
21 public setting for national security reasons, and if that's
22 the case, you can indicate that to the Commissioner, so can
23 you confirm that that is the substance that's been redacted
24 in this report?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Obviously, in a
26 public setting, I can't speak to redactions made for national
27 security, but I will say that the principle that anyone who
28 comes to Canada from anywhere in the world has all the rights

1 of a Canadian, to be free from extortion, coercion,
2 interference from a country that they left behind, and how we
3 have stood up for Canadians, including in the very serious
4 case that I brought forward to Parliament of the killing of
5 Nijjar, demonstrates our government's commitment to defending
6 the rights and freedoms of Canadians for whom we have --
7 which are the reasons for which so many people crossed oceans
8 and continents to come live in this country and build this
9 country. And the suggestion that we haven't and we won't do
10 everything we can to defend Canadian rules and values and
11 defend Canadians from foreign interference is simply
12 misplaced.

13 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And so I take your point
14 there and I have very limited time, but I do want to confirm
15 that it was you that approved the redactions in this report;
16 is that correct, based on suggestions from public servants
17 that you received?

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Redactions are made
19 by professional public servants, and we sign off on them, but
20 we do not modify them.

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** But you do have the
22 authority, the ultimate approval, and you do have the
23 possibility to push back against excessive redactions.

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Redactions are made
25 by professional public servants, not by the political wing.

26 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** And does the Prime
27 Minister have the authority to push back on the suggestions
28 that are made in cases where there may be excessive

1 redactions?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That gets into the
3 entire question of declassification of information. And in
4 the American system, the President can, you know, declassify
5 in ways that are not replicated in our system here in Canada.

6 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So just very simply, I
7 have one last question I want to ask after this, does the
8 Prime Minister have the authority and the ability to push
9 back against those suggestions when there's excessive
10 redaction?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The Prime Minister
12 has an ability to engage in discussions and ask for reasons,
13 but like I said, as Prime Minister and as a government, our
14 habit and our approach has always been to allow the
15 professional public service to make determinations around
16 what needs to be redacted in the name of national security
17 and confidentiality.

18 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Madam Commissioner, I
19 have one final question if that's okay?

20 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Very quick.

21 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure. I think you would
22 agree that the lack of meaningful steps to expose and stop
23 foreign interference activities when they first arise,
24 including deliberate actions to redact any failures that may
25 have been included in the NSICOP report, could play a role in
26 India's increasingly aggressive interference and repressive -
27 - repression activities over this period. So that would be a
28 consequence of failing to act effectively and failing to

1 bring the threat of Indian foreign interference to Canadians'
2 attention earlier; is that correct?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think that's
4 certainly a question one needs to ask of the previous
5 Conservative government that was known for its very cozy
6 relationship with the current Indian government; whereas, our
7 government has always stood up to defend minorities in Canada
8 and the rights of minorities to speak out, even if it
9 irritates their home countries overseas.

10 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you. Those are all
11 ---

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

13 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** --- my questions.

14 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So, Mr. Doody, it's your
15 turn.

16 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

17 **MR. JON DOODY:**

18 **MR. JON DOODY:** Good evening, Prime Minister.
19 It's Jon Doody. I'm counsel for the Ukrainian Canadian
20 Congress. We've heard that Russia's foreign interference
21 activities, foreign elections, was the catalyst for the plan
22 to protect Canada's democracy, and that Russia was a foreign
23 nation the Canadian government was concerned could
24 potentially interfere in Canadian elections; correct?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

26 **MR. JON DOODY:** Okay. And we've also heard
27 from the SITE Task Force and the Panel of Five that neither
28 identified any foreign interference activity by Russia in

1 either of the 2019 or the '21 general election. It would
2 seem possible that Russia was not interested in interfering
3 with Canadian elections in those years, or equally possible
4 that they did, and the Canadian government failed to detect
5 it. Would you agree that it's possible that Russia
6 interfered in one or both the elections and the Canadian
7 government simply failed to notice it?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would highlight
9 that, of course, it is always possible that the entire body
10 of our national security intelligence agencies, our very
11 sophisticated cyber and security communications establishment
12 detected absolutely nothing or got it wrong. But I would
13 also suggest that undermining Canadians' confidence in their
14 elections being free and fair is probably something that
15 Russia would love to see in Canada, so I would be very wary
16 about saying that, oh, you know, despite the fact you didn't
17 find any evidence of it, it still might have happened.

18 I think we have seen the extent to which
19 Russia is engaged in misinformation, disinformation and
20 actions of sowing chaos and destabilising democracies around
21 the world, including attempts at cyber attacks and successful
22 cyber attacks in Canada. But I think one of the big
23 differences between Russia and a number of other hostile or
24 challenging state actors is the significant lack of a
25 critical mass of either Russian diaspora or Russian speakers
26 in Canada, as you contrast with the situation in the Ukraine,
27 or in Latvia, or elsewhere where there is an easier threshold
28 for them to interfere in democratic processes.

1 **MR. JON DOODY:** You spoke about the need for
2 Canadians to be confident that the government is doing what
3 it can to keep Canadians safe. How confident are you in the
4 SITE Task Force and Panel of Five's conclusion that Russia
5 did not interfere with either election?

6 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** We know Russia is
7 responsible for significant amounts of propaganda, of
8 misinformation, of disinformation, and certainly attempts at
9 interference are no doubt ongoing from Russia. They are a
10 hostile actor, hostile to Canada, hostile to our values,
11 hostile to our support of the Ukraine and hostile to our
12 democracy. But to say -- to reach a threshold at which there
13 is a belief that Russia posed a threat to the integrity of
14 our elections, to the outcome of our elections is certainly
15 not something that either the SITE or the Panel determined.

16 **MR JON DOODY:** And finally, would you expect
17 members of the Canadian-Ukrainian community to have a high
18 level of confidence in that conclusion as well?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, I think the
20 Canadian-Ukrainian community, like all Canadians, can have a
21 high degree of confidence in the conclusions by all of our
22 national security experts and top public servants that the
23 elections in 2019 and 2021 are free and fair. At the same
24 time, I think Ukrainian Canadians, like all Canadians, need
25 to remain vigilant to Russian disinformation and to the
26 amplification of pro-Russian narratives in context and coming
27 from places that one wouldn't suspect pro-Russian narratives
28 to be amplified. I'm very pleased to see that Ukraine just

1 passed the updated Canada Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, yeah,
2 over the past days, and I am -- continue to be bewildered of
3 the fact that the Conservative Party voted against that
4 update because they fell prey to pro-Russian narratives that
5 are undermining Canada's support for Ukraine amongst
6 Conservative Canadians which I know is a thing of deep
7 distress for many Ukrainian-Canadians and rightly so.

8 **MR. JON DOODY:** Thank you, Prime Minister

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Me Sirois for the RCDA,
10 Russian Canadian Democratic Alliance.

11 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY/CONTRE-INTERROGATOIRE PAR**

12 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

13 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Bonjour, Monsieur le
14 Premier Ministre.

15 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Bonjour.

16 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Madame la commissaire.
17 Guillaume Sirois, avocat pour l'Alliance
18 démocratique des Canadiens russes.

19 On a entendu un témoignage à l'effet qu'une
20 certaine campagne de désinformation pouvait avoir coûté
21 quelques sièges à un certain parti politique lors de
22 l'élection de 2021. Je pense que vous savez à quoi je fais
23 référence, mais j'aimerais dépolitiser l'enjeu, si possible,
24 pour parler plus de désinformation.

25 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Sauf que la
26 conclusion a été, de nos experts en sécurité nationale et du
27 Panel chargé d'assurer l'intégrité de nos élections, qu'il
28 n'y a eu aucun impact de l'ingérence étrangère dans les

1 résultats, que ce soit au niveau des 338 comtés ou au niveau
2 de l'élection générale. Donc, oui, il y a eu des attentats
3 d'ingérence, mais nos élections ont demeuré intègres dans
4 leurs résultats.

5 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Ma question, c'est :
6 est-ce que ce genre de tentatives là affecte seulement un
7 seul parti ou un seul chef de parti ou elles peuvent affecter
8 des partis de toutes les couleurs, des chefs de parti de
9 toutes les couleurs, dont le Parti libéral du Canada ou..

10 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Et certainement
11 des... l'engagement ou l'ingérence étrangère pourrait affecter
12 juste un parti ou tous les partis, ou différents partis,
13 selon non seulement le pays, mais... le pays d'origine, mais
14 aussi et le comté, la région dans laquelle il se trouve.

15 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Et est-ce que c'est
16 quelque chose que vous avez témoigné en tant que premier
17 ministre lors des élections de... en tant que chef du Parti
18 libéral, pardon, lors des élections de 2019 ou de 2021?

19 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** En termes de chef
20 de parti, moi, ma job, c'était de faire campagne, de parler
21 au plus de Canadiens possible, et de faire élire le plus de
22 libéraux possible. Je me fiais aux institutions qu'on a
23 bâties, le SITE Task Force, le P5 Panel, pour s'assurer que
24 l'intégrité des élections tienne, et effectivement, ils ont
25 conclu dans les élections de 2019 et 2021 que les élections
26 ont été libres et justes.

27 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** J'aimerais mettre de
28 côté un peu l'institution pour l'instant, mais vraiment vous

1 poser la question en tant que chef de parti qui fait la
2 campagne électorale en 2019, 2021, puis savoir qu'est-ce que
3 vous avez vu ou entendu de vos propres yeux et oreilles. Est-
4 ce que c'est des choses comme des campagnes de désinformation
5 visant les libéraux ou vous-même en tant que chef de parti,
6 c'est quelque chose que vous avez entendu ou vu pendant l'une
7 ou l'autre des campagnes électorales?

8 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Ah, des campagnes
9 de désinformation, on en a vu énormément, plus en 2021 qu'en
10 2019, mais que ce soit au niveau des théories de complot par
11 rapport à la vaccination, que ce soit au niveau des théories
12 de complot par rapport au Forum économique mondial ou
13 d'autres, ou des attaques personnelles contre moi et ma
14 famille, oui, il y a eu de la mésinformation et de la
15 désinformation pendant cette campagne-là... ces campagnes-là.

16 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Mais ça ne doit pas
17 être une situation super facile, surtout quand ça touche la
18 famille, mais ma question, c'est concernant... vous connaissez
19 la puissance des médias sociaux, évidemment, vous avez fait
20 la campagne en 2015 grâce aux médias sociaux justement, ça
21 vous a certainement aidé dans cette campagne-là. Je me
22 demande est-ce que vous pensez que les campagnes de
23 désinformation que vous dites qui semblaient être importantes
24 en 2019, 2021, pensez-vous que ça a eu un effet sur les
25 électeurs lors de ces campagnes?

26 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Bien, tous les
27 partis politiques utilisaient des médias sociaux comme moyen
28 d'aller chercher des votes et chercher des électeurs. Donc,

1 certainement les médias sociaux ont joué un rôle important
2 dans ces deux élections-là.

3 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Mais je parle des
4 campagnes de désinformation spécifiquement. Pensez-vous que
5 celles-ci ont pu influencer la décision de certains
6 électeurs?

7 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Bien, je pense
8 qu'on voit que la mésinformation et la désinformation ont un
9 impact sur énormément de gens. Les milliers de Canadiens qui
10 croyaient que la vaccination était plus dangereuse que la
11 maladie de COVID-19 elle-même sont un exemple de gens qui ont
12 été affectés, des fois de façon mortelle, fatale, par la
13 désinformation.

14 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Votre dernière question,
15 Maitre Sirois.

16 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Oui. Il me reste encore
17 30 secondes. Je vais vous poser ma question, c'est : si vous
18 avez témoigné des campagnes de désinformation qui pouvaient
19 potentiellement influencer des électeurs, pourquoi vous
20 n'avez pas soulevé cette question-là avec des organismes, des
21 institutions justement du gouvernement qui sont mandatées
22 pour agir sur ces campagnes de désinformation là ou lorsqu'il
23 y a des atteintes à l'intégrité des élections?

24 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Parce que ces
25 institutions-là, et, au contraire, j'en parle régulièrement
26 avec mes conseillers en sécurité nationale de l'impact de la
27 mésinformation, de la désinformation, juste à regarder la
28 situation des convois à Ottawa et d'autres pour savoir que ça

1 a un impact réel, mais c'est pas à moi de dire au Panel qu'il
2 faut veiller contre la mésinformation et la désinformation,
3 ça fait partie de leur job pour s'assurer de l'intégrité des
4 élections. C'est une job qu'ils ont bien fait en 2019, 2021,
5 mais on reconnaît qu'en 2025, ça va être encore plus
6 difficile et ils vont devoir faire une... continuer leur
7 excellent travail.

8 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Donc, juste ma dernière
9 question, s'il vous plaît, Madame la commissaire.

10 Si vous, en tant que chef de parti qui fait
11 la campagne, remarquez des campagnes de désinformation
12 sérieuses lors des élections, vous pensez que c'est pas
13 nécessaire de rapporter ça au SITE Task Force ou au Panel des
14 5 en tant que chef du Parti libéral parce que vous avez
15 confiance qu'ils font leur travail?

16 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Non. Si j'ai
17 bloqué ça... j'ai confiance qu'ils vont faire leur travail,
18 mais ça fait partie de notre responsabilité à tous, qu'on
19 soit citoyens, qu'on soit candidats, qu'on soit chef de parti
20 ou de parti politique, de travailler avec le Panel, avec le
21 SITE Task Force pour souligner la mésinformation et la
22 désinformation, ça fait partie de ce qu'on va faire en
23 travaillant avec le Panel pour soulever des enjeux, mais le
24 Panel ne dépend pas de nous pour faire leur travail non plus.
25 Mais oui, on peut absolument participer et on devrait.

26 **Me GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Merci.

27 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci.

28 Du côté du Procureur général du Canada?

1 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Nothing from the
2 Attorney General. Thank you very much, Madam Commissioner.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Nothing.

4 Re-examination?

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** No, thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Merci beaucoup.

8 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Merci, Madame la
9 commissaire.

10 **COMMISSAIRE HOGUE:** Alors, si je dois dire
11 que vous êtes libre de quitter, mais je vais me permettre de
12 vous le dire que vous êtes libre de quitter.

13 **TRÈS HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Merci beaucoup,
14 Madame.

15 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please. À l'ordre,
16 s'il vous plaît.

17 This sitting of the Foreign Interference
18 Commission has adjourned. Cette séance de la Commission sur
19 l'ingérence étrangère est levée.

20 --- Upon adjourning at 6:51 p.m.

21 --- La séance est levée à 18 h 51

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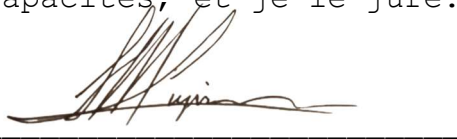
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, a certified court reporter,
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ability, and I so swear.

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