



**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**

**VOLUME 35**

**ENGLISH INTERPRETATION**

**Held at :**

Library and Archives Canada  
Bambrick Room  
395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N4

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

**Tenue à:**

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada  
Salle Bambrick  
395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N4

Le mercredi 16 octobre 2024

**INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.**

<https://www.transcription.tc/>

(800)899-0006

## **II Appearances / Comparutions**

Commission Lead Counsel

Shantona Chaudhury

Commission Counsel

Gordon Cameron

Erin Dann

Matthew Ferguson

Hubert Forget

Leila Ghahhary

Benjamin Herrera

Howard Krongold

Hannah Lazare

Jean-Philippe MacKay

Kate McGrann

Emily McBain-Ashfield

Hamza Mohamadhossen

Lynda Morgan

Siobhan Morris

Annie-Claude Poirier

Gabriel Poliquin

Natalia Rodriguez

Guillaume Rondeau

Nicolas Saint-Amour

Daniel Sheppard

Maia Tsurumi

Commission Research Council

Geneviève Cartier

Nomi Claire Lazar

Lori Turnbull

Leah West

Commission Senior Policy Advisors

Paul Cavalluzzo

Danielle Côté

### **III**

## **Appearances / Comparutions**

Commission Staff	Annie Desgagné Casper Donovan Hélène Laurendeau Michael Tansey
Ukrainian Canadian Congress	Donald Bayne Jon Doody
Government of Canada	Gregory Tzemenakis Barney Brucker
Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections	Christina Maheux Luc Boucher Sébastien Lafrance Nancy Miles Sujit Nirman
Human Rights Coalition	David Matas Sarah Teich
Russian Canadian Democratic Alliance	Mark Power Guillaume Sirois
Michael Chan	John Chapman Andy Chan
Han Dong	Mark Polley Emily Young Jeffrey Wang
Michael Chong	Gib van Ert Fraser Harland

## **IV**

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Jenny Kwan

Sujit Choudhry

Mani Kakkar

Churchill Society

Malliha Wilson

The Pillar Society

Daniel Stanton

Democracy Watch

Wade Poziomka

Nick Papageorge

Canada's NDP

Lucy Watson

Conservative Party of Canada

Nando De Luca

Chinese Canadian Concern Group on  
The Chinese Communist Party's  
Human Rights Violations

Neil Chantler

David Wheaton

Erin O'Toole

Thomas W. Jarmyn

Preston Lim

Senator Yuen Pau Woo

Yuen Pau Woo

Sikh Coalition

Balpreet Singh

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Ottawa, Ontario

--- The hearing begins Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 9:33 a.m.

**THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

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

The time is 9:33 a.m.

**COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Good morning, everyone.

Good morning, Prime Minister.

Counsellor Chaudhury, you are starting this morning?

**MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation]

**COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So I invite you to proceed with your interrogation.

**MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Thank you. I am Shantona Chaudhury for the Commission.

Good morning. As you've said, our witness this morning is the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau.

I'll ask that the witness be sworn or affirmed.

**THE REGISTRAR:** Mr. Prime Minister, could you indicate your full name and spell your surname for the transcription?

**RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Justin Trudeau - T-r-u-d-e-a-u.

**THE REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

**--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Sworn:**

1 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you very much.

2 --- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY

3 MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY: Good morning, Prime  
4 Minister. As usual, we'll start the morning with the routine  
5 housekeeping, so we have three interview and examination  
6 summaries to enter into evidence.

7 Rather than going one by one, I'll just read  
8 out the Doc IDs and ask you to confirm them.

9 So the Doc IDs are WIT106, which is the PM's  
10 Stage 2 interview summary, WIT164, which is the Prime  
11 Minister's Stage 2 *in camera* hearing summary, and WIT160,  
12 which is an addendum to the Prime Minister's Stage 1 *in*  
13 *camera* hearing summary.

14 So Prime Minister, I'll ask you to confirm  
15 that you've reviewed these documents, that they are accurate  
16 and that you adopt them as part of your evidence before the  
17 Commission.

18 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: I have, they are,  
19 and I do.

20 --- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000106.EN:

21 Interview Summary: The Right  
22 Honourable Justin Trudeau

23 --- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000106.FR:

24 Résumé d'entrevue : Le très honorable  
25 Justin Trudeau

26 --- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000164:

27 In Camera Examination Summary: The  
28 Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,



1 Prime Minister of Canada

2 --- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000160.EN:

3 Addendum to In Camera Examination

4 Summary: Prime Minister Justin

5 Trudeau

6 --- EXHIBIT NO. WIT0000160.001.FR:

7 Addenda au résumé d'interrogatoire à

8 huis clos : le premier ministre

9 Justin Trudeau

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And of  
11 course, with the caveat these are publicly disclosable  
12 summaries of proceedings that took place in a classified  
13 space.

14 Okay. So we have two hours this morning and  
15 quite a lot of material to get through. We'll start with  
16 some things with which you're quite familiar already,  
17 information flow to the Prime Minister.

18 So I'll ask you to start with the mechanics  
19 of information flow. In Stage 1 of the Commission's  
20 proceedings, you told us that you would receive intelligence  
21 in writing daily or weekly, but that the primary way of  
22 informing you by the NSIA and the intelligence community if  
23 they really wanted you to know something would be by briefing  
24 you orally.

25 And we understand that since then, there have  
26 been some changes to the system, so can you explain how you  
27 now receive intelligence, what the changes have been and any  
28 benefits or drawbacks?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Over the -- through  
2 the first years that I was Prime Minister, I received, as you  
3 say, daily or weekly summaries or snippets prepared for the  
4 Prime Minister and the office and when things were put in  
5 front of me, I would read them. But as you say, most of the  
6 time, the more serious information would be briefed in person  
7 with the National Security Advisor at that point.

8                   Through the pandemic, things changed through  
9 the work that we've done significantly through both  
10 Commissions, but also through complex times, we've settled on  
11 a new model where about once a week, usually on Monday  
12 mornings, I receive a package of secure information with a  
13 national security officer in the room with me to oversee and  
14 handle the documents where I go through both summaries and,  
15 in some cases, a certain amount of more detailed raw material  
16 or at least primary analysis.

17                  It takes me about 45 minutes to an hour on  
18 given days, and that's sort of the regular baseline. Some of  
19 it is incredibly highly classified, some of it is slightly  
20 more routine.

21                  But on top of that, usually at least once a  
22 week, I end up sitting down in a secure room with advisors  
23 and officials to talk through some of the more germane or  
24 difficult or contentious or urgent intelligence that is being  
25 worked on or received at any given moment.

26                  **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And how's the  
27 new system working for you, so the weekly reading period plus  
28 the briefings?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It is working well.  
2       The consuming of information in that weekly briefing is  
3       really just that. I will sometimes ask for follow-up  
4       questions on this issue or that issue or verify that, okay,  
5       this seems very serious, you know, reassure me that everyone  
6       is taking this very seriously and acting on it. And the  
7       Client Relations Officer, or CRO, will do that.

8                   But if there are specific questions I have  
9       for the Client Relations Officer, usually they will be  
10      answered to me in the next meeting I have with the NSIA or  
11      sometimes there will be an addendum or a specific document  
12      that will be handed to me the following week in answer to the  
13      questions I have.

14                  In general, I tend to prefer to be able to  
15      challenge and ask questions right away of the NSIA, of people  
16      in positions of authority or power to be able to -- or  
17      influence over the actual collection and operations, to be  
18      able to ask them for more details than sometimes comes out,  
19      so I tend to prefer those in-person briefings, but having  
20      that baseline of a weekly session with a vast range of  
21      information is very useful.

22                  **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Speaking more  
23      substantively now in terms of what intelligence has brought  
24      to your attention specifically, there's been a lot of  
25      discussion in the Commission's proceedings, you may know,  
26      about whether or not certain intelligence has reached you,  
27      certain information, and whether it should have. And there's  
28      also been a lot of discussion about the vast universe of

1 intelligence and information that's out there. One figure  
2 we've heard is 70,000 products produced by the -- or  
3 published by the Canadian intelligence community per year.

4 So assuming you're not going to read the  
5 70,000 and that not all 70,000 will come to your attention,  
6 what is it that you expect to see? What is it that you need  
7 to see as Prime Minister?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I need to see  
9 information that is germane to my role as Prime Minister, and  
10 that means things that are directly impacting or threatening  
11 Canadians, things that are linked to particular policy  
12 decisions we need to make as a government, whether in an  
13 approach to a particular issue or region of the world or,  
14 indeed, country or whether it's looking at improvements that  
15 need to be made in our national security legislation or  
16 agencies, things where there are perhaps gaps highlighted or  
17 tools that would be necessary to act on to combat new threats  
18 around disinformation or misinformation that certainly nobody  
19 was thinking of 20 years ago to the same degree, or  
20 information that's particularly germane if I'm going to a G7  
21 or a NATO meeting or a G20 where I will be interacting with  
22 various leaders, are there things that I need to know about  
23 them that are relevant for our interactions or our potential  
24 interactions.

25 I guess in general, I mean, I have to trust,  
26 and I do, the intelligence officials, and more specifically  
27 my National Security and Intelligence Advisor, to make  
28 determinations on what it is that I need to see as a summary,

1        what I need to see as a full analysis or what I might even  
2        need to see in raw intelligence.

3                    And over the years of working with NSIAs, I  
4        would say that they have gotten very good at knowing what it  
5        is that I already know about, what it is that I'm  
6        particularly interested in and what I'm going to ask more  
7        questions about, and what it is that I really should see the  
8        raw intel and an evaluation of the sources. It's a single  
9        source but reliable, or a single source and somewhat  
10       unreliable, but the information is so explosive that you  
11       should have it in your brain, that sort of frame is very much  
12       why I have a National Intelligence and Security -- Security  
13       and Intelligence Advisor, to be able to know, okay, the PM  
14       already knows about, you know, the point of this document.  
15       We don't need to give him the full document. I can simply  
16       apprise it on him and he can spend his time digging into  
17       these other, more relevant or newer pieces of information  
18       that will complete his understanding of the threats and  
19       realities faced by Canada and Canadians.

20                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So the  
21       primary responsibility, then, for making sure that you do  
22       have what you need to know and maybe don't have what you  
23       don't need to know or that you don't spend your time on the  
24       wrong things, that falls to the NSIA, as you've said.

25                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would say the  
26       primary repository of those decisions is the NSIA, but there  
27       are a number of others who will flag that. Sometimes it's my  
28       Foreign Policy and Defence Advisor, Patrick Travers, or

1 others in my office who will see a larger range of  
2 information than I do because they have a specific task on  
3 that one area, whereas I'm covering all policy areas for this  
4 country. They will dig in and say, "Okay, the PM really  
5 should see this because it's particularly relevant for these  
6 reasons" that are perhaps not -- perhaps more political  
7 reasons that the NSIA looking at it from an official lens  
8 wouldn't have. In some cases, the Clerk of the Privy Council  
9 will flag things for me; or the Director of CSIS, in meeting  
10 with him he will say, no, you really should follow up on this  
11 or that.

12 But in general, the filter through which  
13 everything goes is the NSIA, with whom I need to have a very  
14 close relationship, which with whom I do, and a bond of not  
15 just trust in the judgement that she puts forward on what I  
16 should see or what I shouldn't see, but she needs to have a  
17 pretty good idea of the things I know about, the things I  
18 need to know more about, and the things that are going to be  
19 of particular interest or importance to me.

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** That's fair. So  
21 it's not just the NSIA, it's not ---

22 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, but it's  
23 primarily the NSIA, as you say.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fair enough. But  
25 so, it's a close two-way working relationship then?

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Very, very.

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** And we've also heard  
28 that part of the NSIA's role is to sort of play a convening

1       role within the national security community. So it's a  
2       significant role, and there have been suggestions made, for  
3       instance in the NSIRA report that the role should be  
4       formalized and a legal instrument. We've also heard talk in  
5       these Commission proceedings from the Clerk, I believe to  
6       suggest that the idea of a mandate letter, perhaps.

7                       What are your thoughts on that?

8                       **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Over the course of  
9       the years that I've been Prime Minister, we've had a number  
10      of different changes to the National Security Advisor role.  
11      One of the changes I made reasonably early on was actually  
12      adding National Security and Intelligence Advisor, because it  
13      wasn't just about security, intelligence was becoming more  
14      and more important in our approach.

15                      But from one NSIA to the next, there were  
16      significant changes in the threat environment around us, in  
17      the composition of the senior ranks of the public service and  
18      their different roles. When Ian Shugart was my Clerk, he  
19      came at that role with such a deep and expert understanding  
20      of international issues, of intelligence issues, that he  
21      played a role not just as a Clerk, but as a significant  
22      National Intelligence and Security Advisor to me just as --  
23      through his capabilities and personality. And therefore, the  
24      actual NSIA I had at that point had a slightly different role  
25      than in other times, where the Clerk wasn't as much of a  
26      national security focused individual and had other qualities,  
27      and the national security advisor was really the person who  
28      was centred around that for me.

1                   So those natural variations, and for example,  
2     the fact that right now my National Security Intelligence  
3     Advisor is also Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, which I  
4     think is very useful in this case, it isn't necessarily  
5     automatically something every future Prime Minister would  
6     want. Therefore, the idea of bounding in very prescriptive  
7     legislation the idea -- the role of a National Security and  
8     Intelligence Advisor, I think would be probably less flexible  
9     than the role actually requires. Because the most important  
10    part of the role is that the individual be empowered and  
11    connected to the Prime Minister in the right way, but also  
12    able to command the town, or the intelligence agencies  
13    respect and be able to convene.

14                  So some of the things we've done to  
15    strengthen and almost codify that role are around the  
16    creation of the National Security Council, which is more of a  
17    strategic convening of Ministers and top officials to look  
18    forward around larger issues, as opposed to an IRG, incident  
19    response group, which is to respond to a specific incident.  
20    This is a more strategic look, and the role of the National  
21    Security and Intelligence Advisor is to be the secretary to  
22    that council the same way the Clerk of the Privy Council is  
23    also secretary to cabinet. It's a role that gives them an  
24    official lever in convening and controlling the work done at  
25    that particular table, whether it be Cabinet for the Clerk,  
26    or NSC for the NSIA.

27                  So that has already strengthened and codified  
28    to a certain extent the role of the NSIA. But we have found



1       that publishing mandate letters that delineate clearly my  
2       expectations of what in most cases Ministers, which is what  
3       they are directed that, are expected to do, and what  
4       authorities they have, and how they're expected to function,  
5       has been incredibly useful a tool that is very bespoke for  
6       the moment you're in and the kind of organization that your  
7       government has particularly setup.

8               Publishing the mandate letters means that the  
9       public knows clearly what is expected of these individuals.  
10      Journalists and academics can dig into, you know, whether a  
11      particular official or Minister is fulfilling the roles  
12      expected, and how they're doing on that. But the most  
13      important use of the mandate letters we've actually found is  
14      internal to government themselves. We find that public  
15      servants in various departments regularly consult the mandate  
16      letters that we have published so that they know exactly what  
17      Minister is responsible for, what they're actually trying to  
18      do.

19             And a mandate letter for the National  
20      Security and Intelligence Advisor would seem to me to be an  
21      excellent use of both empowering and clarifying the  
22      expectations of a given government at a given moment in a  
23      public way, but also an accountable way.

24             **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So that would be a  
25      way to maybe give some structure without compromising on  
26      flexibility?

27             **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I wouldn't say  
28      that, because it's not the mandate letter that gives the

1 structure. The way we set up the office, the way we task and  
2 empower various parts of government is inherent. The mandate  
3 letter would outline, would reveal that structure, and give  
4 direction on the outcomes that we want to have, and I think  
5 that's where it could be useful.

6 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. I'm going to  
7 come back to the National Security Council, because it's  
8 something I wanted to discuss in more depth. But before  
9 that, and before leaving the topic of information more  
10 generally, there's a couple of intelligence products that  
11 have come up repeatedly in the commission's proceedings that  
12 I want to ask you about.

13 One is called the Targeting Paper, and so  
14 this one is -- just to introduce it briefly -- a document  
15 that was drafted by CSIS in 2021 about the PRC's essentially  
16 targeting of Canadian political actors for influence  
17 operations. And it wasn't published in 2021, it was  
18 published in 2023 and circulated to a small number of public  
19 servants. There was a second more sanitized version with,  
20 for instance names removed, produced of it and the intention  
21 was that that would be circulated more widely.

22 We know we've heard from the CSIS Director,  
23 Mr. Vigneault, former Director, that in his view that should  
24 have been provided to you. So last time we broached this  
25 topic, Prime Minister, was *in camera* and at that time you've  
26 never seen that -- or the Targeting Paper at all, and I  
27 understand that you know have. Okay.

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

1                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Having seen it now,  
2 do you have any views on whether it's something that should  
3 have found to your attention in 2023?

4                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** One of the  
5 reflections I have on how this sort of, piece of analysis,  
6 has caused so much reflection around this Commission and  
7 various chatter, is the phrase Targeting Paper by China is  
8 fairly alarming.

9                   What the targeting paper actually talks about  
10 is that China has broadly classified into three different  
11 groups parliamentarians in their diplomatic activities. Some  
12 as being positive towards China, and you know, perhaps there  
13 to engage in constructive ways; others who are neutral or  
14 convincing to be more positive towards China to show up at  
15 various events; and others who have demonstrated themselves  
16 to be more antagonistic to the Communist Party of China's  
17 government by speaking out strongly on the Uyghur issue, or  
18 human rights in Hong Kong, or on various other of the issues  
19 that China doesn't like people to discuss publicly and  
20 criticize them on. The fact that Chinese diplomats are  
21 categorizing MPs in their outreach abilities into those three  
22 categories is not itself particularly revelatory to me or new  
23 information to me. It is fairly obvious, and it is part of  
24 what diplomats do in every country around the world. I mean,  
25 when we are busy fighting for to defend or renegotiate and  
26 NAFTA with the United States under the Trump administration a  
27 few years ago, we had very clear lists of, okay, this  
28 Republican governor could be very helpful to us. This one is

1       going to be a challenge, so let's stay away from them, or try  
2       and come at them, or try to neutralize their influence on  
3       others. That's just part of diplomacy right there.

4               I will say that having read the targeting  
5       paper in detail now, there were some interesting factoids or  
6       tidbits in there that I said, oh, okay, that's interesting.  
7       None of them significantly altered, or altered at all my  
8       perception of China's behaviour, China's focus, China's  
9       engagement influence and, in some cases, interference in  
10      Canada to any significant degree. And I count on my National  
11      Security and Intelligence Advisor to look at various  
12      products, to make a determination whether or not they are  
13      ready to go to the Prime Minister. I think in both of these  
14      cases the papers were -- the other Special Report that you're  
15      going to be talking about in a moment were not in a final  
16      form, according to the NSIA, and, therefore, were -- there  
17      wasn't a decision made to pass it along to me. I have to  
18      trust the NSIA's judgment, as I said before, in knowing what  
19      is going to be useful for me, what is going to be an  
20      appropriate use of the 10 or 15 minutes worth of time that it  
21      would take to go over a document like this, whether it adds  
22      to my knowledge or whether there in those 10 or 15 minutes  
23      that she has to submit other information to me, there is more  
24      germane or more relevant information that she thinks would be  
25      a better use of my time.

26             The determination was made in the case of  
27      this targeting paper, or the targeting paper didn't get to me  
28      because of decisions made by the NSIA, or not made by the

1 NSIA in terms of not choosing to pass it along. I have faith  
2 having looked at the paper that it was, indeed, the right  
3 decision by the National Security Intelligence Advisor, that  
4 it wasn't a document that significantly added in a relevant  
5 way to my understanding of the situation.

6 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Just for  
7 clarity of the record, the evidence we actually heard from  
8 the NSIA at the time, Jody Thomas, was that she never  
9 received the final version, so ---

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** There we go.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- she never even  
12 made that decision that it wouldn't go up to you, but so you  
13 brought up a couple of interesting themes in that answer, and  
14 one of which, yes, you've been paying attention because the  
15 next document I was going to ask you about is the PCO Special  
16 Report, so why don't I go there and then I'll ask you some  
17 more general questions about the two of them.

18 So the Special Report then was the product  
19 produced by IAS, the PCO Intelligence Assessment Secretariat  
20 at late '21, early 2022. And this was a, for everyone's  
21 benefit, drafted in collaboration with CSIS, and,  
22 essentially, an overview of PRC foreign interference  
23 activities in Canada. This, as you've said, is one that  
24 wasn't finalized, and, ultimately, never reached you, and  
25 that you have now read. So in that time period where this  
26 was under discussion would be winter/spring 2022. And then  
27 having read it again, and you may have given part of this  
28 answer already, but is that something that you would have

1 wanted to have at that time and are there any problems  
2 ensuing from the fact that you did not receive it then?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Again, there were  
4 elements and facts and examples in there that I had not seen  
5 before. But the overview and the pulling together of  
6 information, while useful, I'm sure, for people who were  
7 coming at this without the kind of regular briefings that I  
8 got could have been very useful, I don't feel that there was  
9 anything in there that I didn't already understand and know  
10 about how China was engaging across different fields in  
11 Canada. It wasn't particularly new -- it was a very useful  
12 and good piece of work that combined and compiled everything,  
13 and for someone new to the job would have been  
14 extraordinarily important. Even not just new to the job of  
15 Prime Minister, new to a role in the office, or, you know,  
16 trying as an introductory level of, okay, now you're -- you  
17 need to understand this. But it was a compendium of many  
18 themes that I have been grappling with over the past number  
19 of years in regards to China. And I, again, feel that the  
20 NSIA was justified in not feeling that it was imperative that  
21 they put it rapidly on my desk, particularly, because, as you  
22 say, it wasn't yet in its final form.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We're  
24 actually going to move to -- I'll come back to some of the  
25 questions I was going to ask you on -- themes around that,  
26 but I'm going to move to a different topic for now, which is  
27 unclassified briefings to parliamentarians. And for this  
28 I'll ask the Court Registrar to pull up COM 363, please. And

1 if we can scroll down to paragraph 126?

2 **--- EXHIBIT NO. COM0000363:**

3 NSICOP Special Report on Foreign  
4 Interference in Canada's Democratic  
5 Processes and Institutions

6 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Prime Minister, for  
7 your benefit, this is a discussion about a succession of  
8 memos suggesting that, essentially, unclassified briefings be  
9 provided broadly to parliamentarians. And what we see here  
10 is that NSICOP made this recommendation in 2018 and 2019, and  
11 there are 3 memos that were intended to go to you in some  
12 way, shape or form. So 1 in December 2019 that was sent to  
13 PMO but never followed up on, and we heard from your staff  
14 that that sort of fell through the COVID cracks at the  
15 beginning of the pandemic; one in December 2020, which was  
16 discussed within PMO, but, ultimately, not actioned; and that  
17 the report mentions one I 2022, which was never finalized or  
18 even sent to PMO.

19 So just to confirm, first of all, that none  
20 of these memos ended up reaching you; is that correct?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Correct.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And we know  
23 that the -- this initiative of broadly briefing  
24 parliamentarians eventually did happen in June 2024. So if  
25 none of these reached you, the first question I'd like to ask  
26 is, should this have happened earlier, and are you troubled  
27 that it didn't?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** My position has

1 always been that providing more briefings to parliamentarians  
2 is a good thing. I'm fully in favour of it. We all receive  
3 security briefings when we first get elected on not leaving  
4 documents lying around, being careful about when you're  
5 speaking about delicate matters in a restaurant, or on an  
6 airplane, or anywhere people can overhear. We learn the  
7 basics of phone hygiene and how to keep your information  
8 secure. And I'm a huge believer in empowering  
9 parliamentarians to be able to be safe and thoughtful in how  
10 they do things.

11 The briefings to parliamentarians that you  
12 receive when you get elected and security briefings ongoing  
13 are not directed by the government of the day. They're  
14 directed by the House of Commons itself, the Sergeant-at  
15 Arms, if it's a matter of security, the Speaker's Office.  
16 You know, briefings to all parliamentarians is not in general  
17 something that the government of the day is directly involved  
18 in. But these various documents are certainly something that  
19 these -- you know, CSIS has the authority to go to either the  
20 Speaker or the Sergeant-at-Arms and request for those  
21 briefings. These briefings didn't get to me, but -- these  
22 decision points didn't get to me, but I made it very clear  
23 throughout conversations that I would have approved of or  
24 encouraged briefings of parliamentarians.

25 There is a process that I see regularly  
26 invoked. About every week or so I sit down with the Clerk of  
27 the Privy Council and we go over changes to the senior ranks  
28 of the Public Service, we talk about particular issues that



1 are coming forward, and part of our regular meetings is the  
2 Clerk highlighting, "Okay. There's this note that we sent to  
3 your office that has been there for a week or two, or for too  
4 long, and we need a return on this because this is important  
5 and we need this to be acted on." And I'll say, "Okay.  
6 We'll follow up." And we dig it up from the pile of notes  
7 that we get and make sure that we prioritize that.

8 In this case, nobody, neither CSIS through  
9 their Minister to me, or directly to the Clerk, or to the  
10 NSIA, flagged that this was something that was of importance  
11 to them that was stalled. And therefore, as you pointed out,  
12 they were not acted on in my office.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Why was your  
14 approval being sought do you think? Like, was your approval  
15 necessary for this initiative?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I said, my  
17 approval was not necessary for this initiative. It certainly  
18 wasn't wrong for them to check, if they wanted to. I wasn't  
19 insulted that they did, or I wouldn't have been insulted that  
20 they did, but it wasn't part of the necessary steps.

21 Often we get things for information, "Oh, by  
22 the way, the Minister is going to approve this. You should  
23 know about it, but it's within his or her authority to do.  
24 This is for information, not decision for you." Those are  
25 notes that we receive regularly that obviously when they're  
26 relevant or germane, they get dealt with either through the  
27 Office or directly to me. But in this case, the authority  
28 was not necessarily mine to give.

1                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And would it  
2 have fallen to a Minister? The Minister of Public Safety for  
3 instance?

4                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It could have. Or  
5 the -- CSIS could have checked in with its Minister. The  
6 Minister of Public Safety is directly the Minister that  
7 oversees and is responsible for CSIS. I know that the  
8 Director of CSIS has direct access to the Minister of Public  
9 Safety in a very regular way. If there had been concerns  
10 around this, the CSIS Director could have gone to the  
11 Minister either for a signals check, or for help in moving it  
12 through the approvals process in the Prime Minister's Office,  
13 or to even check that maybe I should just go straight to the  
14 Sergeant-at-Arms in Parliament to actually take on this  
15 briefing. And as far as I know, CSIS did not bring up this  
16 with even its own Minister.

17                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

18                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I have one question, Mr.  
19 The Prime Minister.

20                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oui.

21                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Do you have any idea why  
22 no reply was ever given to all of those that requested the  
23 authorization?

24                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well I think as was  
25 stated in the first case, it was in process when COVID  
26 happened and we all moved to different priorities and  
27 virtually. In other cases -- in the third case, it actually  
28 didn't actually get to my office. In the second case, no, I

1 don't know why.

2 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Because if an  
3 authorization is asked from your Office and no authorization  
4 is needed, at least in your view, usually do you, not you  
5 personally, but your Office, give the information to the  
6 person requesting the authorization? Or not at all?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It depends on the  
8 amount of notes, the various priorities of them as they go  
9 through. I really can't speak to the challenges around that  
10 particular one, other than saying that I was always very  
11 clear that briefings to parliamentarians is a good thing.

12 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. The next  
14 possibly related, possibly not, topic I want to talk about is  
15 Ministerial accountability in the foreign interference space.

16 So can we bring up CAN030999?

17 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN030999 0001:**

18 DM FI (Justice, RCMP, GAC, PS, CSIS,  
19 PCO NSIA)

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Prime Minister,  
21 these are notes -- this is not something you would have seen.  
22 This is notes or minutes from a DM FI, which was Deputy  
23 Ministers on Foreign Interference Committee meeting in April  
24 2023.

25 And if we can just scroll down so we can see  
26 the third and fourth bullet there?

27 The NSIA at the time here was Jody Thomas.  
28 And this is a discussion that was had at that meeting on

1       essentially where Ministerial accountabilities lie in the  
2       foreign interference space.

3               So if we see that, I think it's the third  
4       bullet on the page, the NSIA mentioned that the day before,  
5       she, Public Safety, the Clerk, and Deputy Clerk, had a  
6       discussion about foreign interference, during which the clerk  
7       mentioned that the ISR, so this is in the period where the  
8       Independent Special Rapporteur was doing his work:

9               "...seems as though they're [...]  
10       comfortable with the Panel and SITE,  
11       but what is becoming more obvious is  
12       [...] gaps on how FI is handled [...]  
13       between elections. Specifically,  
14       what is the role of Deputies, staff  
15       [...], and where is the ministerial  
16       accountability [...] more broadly?"

17       The second bullet then says:

18              "As a result, [the] NSIA has asked  
19       PCO to begin work on mapping this  
20       [...]. [So] how is intelligence [...]  
21       circulated, how are minister's  
22       informed, [...] how do they exercise  
23       [their] ministerial accountability.  
24       [...] the governance [...] seems to work  
25       well at the Deputy level and even  
26       between PM [and] PMO [but] that gap  
27       at the ministerial level [may be] a  
28       concern..."

1                   So we discussed this a bit with the NSIA at  
2     the time, Jody Thomas, and what she said about this, and the  
3     reference for the record is at WIT151, paragraph 81. I won't  
4     bring it up, but I'll just tell you about it, the  
5     conversation around Ministerial accountability was that in  
6     the NSICOP and NSIRA reports, as well as the media leak  
7     discussions, everything needs to go to the PM, but in fact,  
8     in a Westminster style of government, Ministers have  
9     accountabilities.

10                  So that was the nature of the discussion that  
11     was being had at this meeting. From your perspective, how  
12     does this play out? Is there/was there an issue with  
13     Ministerial accountability in the foreign interference space?

14                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think what you're  
15     outlining is sort of the second part of the conversation.  
16     The first part of the conversation is clear to me, and I  
17     can't really speak to what Jody was sort of digging into  
18     there, but it's very clear from the first bullet "the gaps on  
19     how FI is handled in between elections."

20                  I think the important thing to remember is  
21     when we created the SITE Task Force and the Panel of Five, it  
22     is because during an election, during the writ period, the  
23     government is in caretaker mode. So there actually are  
24     significant limits on how and whether Ministers, and the  
25     Prime Minister, that continue to be Ministers or Prime  
26     Ministers even during an election, but they are limited in  
27     what they can actually go out and say, particularly if  
28     they're about to say that an opposition party is compromised

1 or benefiting from interference by a third country in an  
2 election context. That would be destabilizing and, you know,  
3 of concern to do. That's why we set up the Panel of Five top  
4 public servants to be able to address, during a writ period,  
5 and publicly speak to what a particular piece of foreign  
6 interference is trying to have as its impact on an election.

7 That makes total sense as a structure during  
8 elections, but during a by-election, where we've actually  
9 made sure that SITE looks in on that, you don't have a  
10 caretaker convention. During a by-election, the government  
11 continues to be the government, the Minister of Public  
12 Safety, or Foreign Affairs, or the Prime Minister, continue  
13 to be fully empowered to do all their work, and therefore it  
14 would be during a by-election, if there was a significant  
15 concern that a particular country was engaging in massive  
16 misinformation/disinformation, it would normally be the  
17 Minister who would do that, who would talk about that and be  
18 accountable for that communications and those actions, but  
19 because of the partisan nature of the event that is a by-  
20 election, there's a discussion on, well, whether that  
21 Ministerial accountability should be there around that, or  
22 whether officials should take on the communications, even  
23 though it's not in a caretaker convention.

24 There are arguments to be made on both sides,  
25 and that's the kind of issues that we're grappling with  
26 around interference in our democratic institutions and the  
27 fact that one Party was selected by Canadians to wield the  
28 full authority of the state which, in general times, is very

1 clear and, you know, hopefully without partisan spin or  
2 questioning, but in situations of electoral contexts become  
3 more delicate.

4 So where we could say, "Oh, a caretaker  
5 convention means that government is not fully active and  
6 leaning in as Ministers and Prime Minister during an election  
7 period", what you actually do during a by-election is the  
8 question that they're digging into around Ministerial  
9 accountability.

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Well, let me  
11 take you back to the National Security Council at this point.  
12 And can you tell us a little bit about how and why that  
13 Council was created?

14 We understand it was -- I think it was  
15 September 2023 it was stood up?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Very rapidly after  
17 2015, we created a mechanism to deal with various crises,  
18 whether it be a particularly dangerous storm or flood or  
19 weather event that was affecting a particular part of the  
20 region that required engagement from multiple Ministries.  
21 You could imagine Transport having to weigh in, Environment  
22 and Climate Change coming to the table, maybe there's a  
23 national security nexus so the Public Safety Minister needs  
24 to be there for overseeing policing.

25 We created something called an Incident  
26 Response Group, and this could involve either a natural  
27 disaster or a specific terrorist threat that we saw coming or  
28 needed to respond to after it actually hit, you know, various

1 responsive specific measures where we would gather the  
2 relevant Ministers and the top officials, the Deputy  
3 Ministers, around the tables and everyone would contribute in  
4 discussions as opposed to Cabinet meetings or Cabinet  
5 committees where the Ministers usually speak for their  
6 departments and their officials, maybe an official can -- a  
7 Deputy Minister will weigh in at one point and complete what  
8 the Minister says. But in general, the conversation is  
9 Ministers are speaking for their departments around committee  
10 tables.

11 The IRG, Incident Response Group, was useful  
12 in that it elevated the Deputies to be full participants  
13 around the table so you had both the political lens and the  
14 top officials lens dealing in, in a very open way that  
15 allowed us to coordinate across bodies on a specific incident  
16 that happened. And we, unfortunately, because of the times  
17 we're in, have been using Incident Response Groups much more  
18 regularly than I think we ever hoped to over the past number  
19 of years.

20 But we realized in having those conversations  
21 that sometimes those conversations would have a stretch at  
22 the last part that said, "Okay, how do we then strategically  
23 look forward to the next incident like this and already  
24 prepare for being able to better deal with it?". And we  
25 said, well, that's not really responding to this incident.  
26 There is a need for a larger outlook, a more strategic  
27 outlook where we can sit down and gather everyone around the  
28 table to talk about a particular theme and position Canada



1 strategically over the coming decade, perhaps, in our  
2 positioning.

3           There have been a number of those meetings  
4 already, and they have proved incredibly useful where  
5 Ministers and Deputy Ministers and heads of agencies in  
6 relevant positions are all gathered around the same table.  
7 It's managed by the Prime Minister, but the NSIA is secretary  
8 to that council, and it allows us to dig in on a very  
9 significant and specific theme.

10           Might imagine themes -- and I don't want to  
11 go into too many details, but might imagine themes being  
12 around how Canada positions itself around its Indo-Pacific  
13 strategy, which was sort of what our outlook and engagement  
14 on the region, which would involve a whole bunch of different  
15 parts of government and, obviously, involve both security and  
16 trade and diplomacy and all these different things that would  
17 come together in a cohesive view that we could plan out with  
18 that national security lens on it. Or another one was how  
19 we're approaching our critical minerals, the opportunity  
20 Canada has to be a supplier of the critical mineral  
21 ingredients to both the green and the technological  
22 transformation the world's going through that is right now  
23 perhaps constrained in supply by a particular country.

24           You know, Canada stepping into that space and  
25 being able to be a reliable supplier of critical minerals  
26 that are essential to national security around the world is a  
27 theme that is worthy of a big strategic discussion.

28           So that's how we created the National

1 Security Council and, in its meetings so far, it has proved  
2 an extraordinarily effective tool.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So it's --  
4 just to summarize a little bit of what you said, it's a  
5 strategic body, essentially, specifically on national  
6 security issues which now brings, as you say, both Deputies  
7 and Ministers to the table sort of along the lines of taking  
8 the model of the IRG in that sense but not *ad hoc*. It's  
9 something that's more long term and strategic.

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It's also -- it's  
11 not regularly scheduled. We don't have one every couple of  
12 weeks. It is thematically, when there is an important  
13 discussion to be had, we will convene.

14 I mean, they come together at regular  
15 intervals and we plan what the next ones will be, but we  
16 could have, you know, one every few weeks, like we could go a  
17 month or two without having one depending on the theme, the  
18 time of year, all those things. So it's not as rigidly  
19 scheduled as, say, Cabinet meetings or even Cabinet committee  
20 meetings, but it is a legitimate, powerful tool.

21 But you're right, it's not entirely *ad hoc*,  
22 but it is not regularly scheduled.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So -- and I  
24 appreciate that you don't know or you can't speak to the  
25 discussion we were looking at in the DMFI minutes here, but  
26 in terms of getting the people around the table and having  
27 these conversations -- and I understand it's not a cause and  
28 effect thing, necessarily, but does that assist in ensuring

1       that there is sort of those conversations happening between  
2       Ministers in the national security space?

3                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:**   Yes.

4                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:**   Okay.   And in the  
5       timing of its creation, September 2023, when was -- why was  
6       that the right time to do it, in your view?

7                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:**   I believe there was  
8       some -- there was a recommendation from maybe it was NSIRA,  
9       maybe it was NSICOP, maybe it was a parliamentary committee  
10      or some other source that highlighted that this was a good  
11      thing to do, and it had already been something that we were  
12      thinking about.

13                   Coming out of the pandemic, which was a  
14      significant crisis for the government, we were very much  
15      looking at different ways of being able to better respond to  
16      and learn from the things we did well, the things that we  
17      could improve on in future pandemics or crises to realize  
18      that this was a body that made sense for us to put together  
19      to handle things like this.

20                   I mean, to a certain extent, the COVID  
21      committee that we had throughout the course of the pandemic,  
22      I think, played a bit of a role of somewhat IRG, but also a  
23      strategic overlook, and we wanted to replicate the  
24      effectiveness of that committee in a more flexible way to be  
25      able to cover different themes around the real strategic  
26      threats to Canada.

27                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:**   You mentioned also  
28      that the IRGs were becoming more and more frequent as a

1 result of things that are going on in the world. More  
2 crises, more IRGs.

3 I'm wondering if you can speak to the shifts  
4 in the geopolitical landscape that have happened especially  
5 in recent years. I think we can probably -- it's not  
6 terribly controversial that the -- Russia's invasion of  
7 Ukraine, for instance, was a watershed moment.

8 How have those affected the national security  
9 threats that Canada faces and has there been any sort of  
10 corresponding shift or evolution specifically in the foreign  
11 interference threats? Not just Russia, but more broadly the  
12 shifts in the geopolitical landscape.

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think there is no  
14 question that foreign interference and, in general, threats  
15 geopolitically have increased significantly around the world  
16 over the past number of years.

17 Obviously, as you say, Russia's invasion of  
18 Ukraine, the pandemic itself in terms of a destabilizing  
19 crisis for the global economy and for countries around the  
20 world, the rise of the tools around social media  
21 misinformation and disinformation that were present back in  
22 2015 but not nearly as sophisticated or pervasive as they are  
23 now have caused a lot of challenges.

24 One of the other things is in 2015 is we  
25 watched the American impending election of Donald Trump and,  
26 you know, the rise of right-wing populism around the world.  
27 That seemed to be one of the big threats or big concerns that  
28 we had that was potentially destabilizing; things like Brexit

1 coming along, Donald Trump's election. There was a lift of  
2 right-wing populism that was very much the moment we were  
3 living in in 2015, 2016, 2017, and grappling with, as a  
4 responsible, progressive, rule-of-law democracy that believes  
5 in facts and evidence as a basis for policy decisions, as we  
6 are as a government.

7 But over the subsequent years, it is not just  
8 about right-wing populism; it is still there, there is a  
9 significant rise of authoritarianism and an aggressive  
10 decline of democracy and democratic values in many corners of  
11 the world that are aggressively attempting to destabilize  
12 mature democracies where populism can sometimes sort of twist  
13 the rules and the emphasis and, you know, twist the facts a  
14 little bit for its own gain. The attacks on the cores of our  
15 democracy and our institutions that the authoritarian  
16 narratives and attempts at disinformation and propaganda and  
17 sowing chaos in our democracies are much more serious and  
18 severe over these past years than they have been.

19 You know, we need only to look at the  
20 headlines this week to see the extent of interference  
21 activities and the impacts they have on Canadians. But we've  
22 seen that with a rise of a more authoritarian China and the  
23 arbitrary detention of two Michaels. We've seen that through  
24 the complete rejection of the UN Charter and the rules-based  
25 order by Ukraine's being invaded by an authoritarian Russia.

26 The world is more uncertain and less safe  
27 than it ever has been, and the answer that Canada needs to  
28 give is to double down on the rule of law and on the

1 international rules-based order that protects us all. We  
2 cannot allow might to become right once again in the world.  
3 We have multilateral rules-based order as a protection  
4 against that, and the fact that Russia, in particular, has  
5 chosen to upend that, along with other countries, is  
6 something that Canada must stand unequivocally and strongly  
7 against us, because it protects us, but it also protects  
8 countries around the world.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Well, as you say,  
10 the headlines this week also reflect that, and we'll come  
11 back to those as well.

12 Before we break, I do want to talk about, or  
13 begin the discussion on, the development of the government's  
14 response to foreign interference in the face of all of this,  
15 or earlier. And I'll start with talking about the HASA MC,  
16 so the memoranda to Cabinet on hostile activities to state  
17 actors. And I'll ask the Court Operator to pull up COM.SUM4,  
18 which is the summary of that MC.

19 **--- EXHIBIT NO. COM.SUM000004.EN:**

20 Summary of a Memorandum to Cabinet -  
21 Modernizing Canada's Approach to  
22 Addressing Threats from Hostile  
23 Activities by State Actors

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So this, we know, is  
25 a major Cabinet initiative in the foreign interference space  
26 that has been discussed in the Commission's proceedings.

27 If we can zoom out so that you can see the  
28 four bullet points essentially. Next page; there we go, one,

1 two, three, four.

2 So we see a number of elements in the  
3 strategy here, one is, first, broadly endorsement of the HASA  
4 Strategy; the second is a strategic whole-of-government  
5 communications approach; the third is consultations on  
6 legislative tools, the *CSIS Act*, the *Criminal Code*, and the  
7 *Security of Information Act*; and the fourth is new  
8 capabilities for the RCMP.

9 So in all this, we know that parts of this,  
10 at least, eventually became the legislation that we know  
11 fondly as Bill C-70, which was introduced into Parliament in  
12 spring of 2023 and recently passed into law in, I believe,  
13 June 2024.

14 So first question I want to ask is what  
15 happened in that two-year interval? So HASA ends up being  
16 ratified in 2022, and Bill C-70 coming into law in June 2024.  
17 It took two years for that to develop. Can you explain why  
18 that happened, and did it happen quickly enough?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oh, sorry, I was --  
20 it absolutely happened in the time it needed to happen. The  
21 -- any time you are giving more powers to security agencies  
22 to counter, in this case, hostile actions by state actors, or  
23 any time in general you're giving more powers to security  
24 agencies to do new things, to counter new threats, you have  
25 to be very, very careful about the balance you get on  
26 protecting citizens' rights, protecting diaspora communities,  
27 that could be affected; by protecting marginalized groups  
28 that have historical and systemic reasons to be worried about

1 authorities having more powers to enforce the police to  
2 investigate on them.

3           You know, it is not a small thing to grant  
4 new powers to counter new threats to intelligence agencies.  
5 And that's why over the process of C-70 there were multiple  
6 visits to Cabinet over subsequent years; there were multiple  
7 rounds of consultations with different diaspora communities,  
8 with stakeholder groups, with human rights defenders, and  
9 Charter rights groups. We knew that getting a significant  
10 piece of legislation that would strengthen Canada's ability  
11 to protect itself from national security threats from other  
12 countries was something that was delicate and that needed to  
13 be done right.

14           I mean, we had the example of Bill C-51 in  
15 the last years of the Harper government where the balance  
16 wasn't gotten right, and we committed in that election that  
17 we would repair the balance on that, and we did, rapidly  
18 after getting elected. And strengthened the balance to make  
19 sure that we were -- even as we were granting new powers to  
20 intelligence agencies that were relevant and needed, the  
21 protections of fundamental rights of Canadians, and  
22 particularly of vulnerable groups, were strengthened in our  
23 measures that we took in the first years in office.

24           So we had direct experience, and getting this  
25 balance right is really important because people may remember  
26 from the 2015 election the NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, made  
27 it a huge point of contention for him that the violation of  
28 *Charter* rights within Bill C-51 were fundamentally so



1       egregious that it was terrible not just that Stephen Harper  
2       put those forward but that myself and the Liberal Party would  
3       actually say, "No, we're going to accept those improvements  
4       but we're going to fix them as soon as we get elected," which  
5       we ended up doing. We chose to not play politics with issues  
6       of national security, and we said, "It's not what we would  
7       do, and we will change it if and when we get elected."

8               But that experience deeply informed our  
9       approach to building C-70. And I think that the result of  
10      the work that we did with C-70, the fact that it passed  
11      through the House with broad support and the Senate with  
12      broad support, and is now in place and active without  
13      significant outcry by minority communities or concerned  
14      groups shows that we did do the work to get it right, and  
15      getting this right and building consensus around these issues  
16      was a fundamental goal of this government. And, quite  
17      frankly, when C-70 passed, there was criticism that we'd  
18      moved too quickly on it. As you highlight, there's also  
19      criticism that maybe we took too long for it. Doesn't always  
20      work this way, but in this case, I can say that it probably  
21      means that we took about the right amount of time to get it  
22      right, certainly because it was passed and is generally seen  
23      as -- by all parties, as an effective and important piece of  
24      legislation.

25                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** [No interpretation]

26                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No, I'm okay. Just  
27      listening.

28                   If you have any more questions before the

1 break, that's okay.

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** I did want to ask,  
3 Prime Minister, the second question I wanted to ask on that  
4 is, is it enough? One of the -- Bill C-70, obviously,  
5 countering foreign interference, countering hostile  
6 activities of state actors is an even broader term, but one  
7 of the criticisms we've heard is that the government has not  
8 done enough in this space, and has not done enough to counter  
9 what is now a recognized threat. How would you respond to  
10 that?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, I think,  
12 first of all, I mean, I'd heard that criticism as well, or  
13 the frame that, well, since you had to, you know, do C-70,  
14 obviously, there was a mistake in the powers that CSIS or  
15 intelligence agencies didn't have before. You're correcting  
16 a mistake, or an error, or a shortcoming that existed before  
17 you corrected it. And I think that's the wrong way of  
18 looking at it.

19 I think we are in a situation where the  
20 threats are constantly evolving, whether it's newer  
21 technologies, the advent of AI, the shifting and pervasive  
22 impact of social media in how people collect their news, and  
23 understand the world around them, and the vulnerability to  
24 foreign interference and misinformation and disinformation  
25 that comes through that vector that wasn't the case even 10  
26 years ago. The shift in geopolitics where you have more  
27 assertive authoritarianisms, countries like Russia willing to  
28 invade a neighbour on the flimsiest of justifications means

1       that the world is changing in very real and dangerous ways  
2       that require us to step up.

3                       And at no point would I say that C-70 is  
4       enough, and we can now sit back and coast on this for the  
5       next few decades because there will be no need to adjust and  
6       add more. That would simply be irresponsible. There is  
7       always going to be more work to do on ensuring that our  
8       agencies have the necessary tools to keep Canadians safe,  
9       while at the same time, protecting the freedoms and rights of  
10      everyone in this country. And that is the constant,  
11      rigorous, responsible work that a government needs to do, to  
12      constantly be questioning, well, what more can we do to keep  
13      Canadians safe, given these new threats, given these new  
14      challenges? How is the best way to do it while upholding the  
15      democratic and fundamental values and freedoms that is  
16      important to Canada? That's a constant debate in which not  
17      just the government, but stakeholders, communities, and even  
18      opposition parties have -- and all parliamentarians have an  
19      essential role to play. It shouldn't be about the partisan  
20      disagreements whether, you know -- or a basis for partisan  
21      attacks when it comes to the question of protecting Canada's  
22      citizens, its institutions and its sovereignty.

23                     And, you know, the kinds of debates we were  
24      able to have around C-70 and the kind of consensus that we  
25      had around getting it passed indicates that, to a certain  
26      extent at least, there is an understanding amongst  
27      parliamentarians that we shouldn't be politicizing or overly  
28      partisan in our approach on these issues of fundamental

1 safety. We need to challenge. We need to make sure we're  
2 getting the balance right, and that different parties coming  
3 from different perspectives with substantive challenges to it  
4 is a really important piece of it. But my expectation is  
5 that there will pretty much always be, through the life of  
6 any Parliament or over the coming decades, there will always  
7 be some sort of tweak, or improvement, or, you know,  
8 adjustment to our national security infrastructure that is  
9 being debated, or looked at, or legislated on, or studied, or  
10 reflected on an ongoing basis. Keeping Canadians safe is not  
11 a one-day job. It's a constant, regularly updated,  
12 foundational priority for every government, every single day.  
13 And it'll come together in certain pieces of legislation, but  
14 there's always going to be more to do, and that is the work  
15 the government continues to do.

16 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. [No  
17 interpretation]

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Okay. So we'll take a  
19 20-minute break and we'll be back at 11:00.

20 We'll resume at 11.

21 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

22 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
23 recess until 11:00 a.m.

24 --- Upon recessing at 10:40 a.m.

25 --- Upon resuming at 11:02 a.m.

26 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please.

27 This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
28 Commission is now back in session.

1 The time is 11:02 a.m.

2 **--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Resumed:**

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Before we continue,  
4 Commissioner, just one quick clarification for the record.  
5 Apparently, I said that Bill C-70 was introduced in the  
6 Spring of 2023, obviously it was not, it was Spring of 2024.  
7 Counsel for the Attorney General was careful to remind me of  
8 that.

9 **--- EXAMINATION IN-CHIEF BY MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY (cont'd):**

10 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Moving on  
11 with our next topic now, Prime Minister, I would like to ask  
12 you about responding to foreign interference in a federal  
13 environment. And to do that, I'm going to ask the Court  
14 Registrar to pull up CAN44456, and again zoom out so we can  
15 see. That's great. We can see the summary.

16 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN044456 0001:**

17 Reply to Premier Pillai - Ensuring  
18 the future success of the Canada-  
19 India relationship and sharing secure  
20 intelligence with Premiers

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So, Prime Minister,  
22 you may recognize this. This is a memorandum that was sent  
23 to you about a letter received from the Yukon Premier, Ranj  
24 Pillai, about responding to Canada's relationship with India,  
25 and sharing intelligence with Premiers. And so, in this  
26 summary we learned that Premier Pillai has expressed some  
27 concern at a lack of consultation with Premiers regarding  
28 national security incidents and the inability of security

1 agencies to share classified info with them. He also notes  
2 support for the normalization of relationships between Canada  
3 and India. I suppose that a, that was then this is now.

4 But in any event, can you speak to the  
5 challenges really, and how managing national security in an  
6 environment where it's essentially a federal responsibility,  
7 but touches provincial jurisdictions as well, is done?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, I mean, I  
9 think we've seen over the past number of years that attacks  
10 on our democratic institutions, attacks on our democracies,  
11 do not limit themselves simply to federal electoral events or  
12 federal parties. Provincial parties, municipal elections  
13 even have had -- have proven to be targets of note for  
14 foreign interference as well.

15 So part of what we wanted to do within Bill  
16 C-70, was explicitly make it possible for CSIS to give, to  
17 grant appropriate security clearances to provincial Premiers  
18 so that they can actually have a better lens on protecting  
19 their institutions and also their citizens, in addition to  
20 the work that the federal government does to protect their  
21 citizens.

22 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And  
23 jurisdictionally, as you mentioned, foreign interference can  
24 touch not only sub national governments, but areas that fall  
25 within provincial jurisdiction. And how can that be  
26 ameliorated, or how can those relationships happen, and what  
27 role can the federal government play in that space?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, I think part

1 of protecting Canada, protecting our institutions, and  
2 protecting Canadians and our economy means people who have  
3 authority and responsibility over various aspects of our  
4 country should be able to be fully informed of the threats  
5 and look at what the responses are.

6 I mean, one of the classic examples is  
7 there's a number of times where we've seen cyber attacks,  
8 significant cyber attacks which are not foreign interference,  
9 but significant cyber attacks on provincial institutions,  
10 whether it be power grid or hospitals. The federal  
11 government has significant and deep expertise in cyber  
12 defence and cyber capacity, and it has been only over time  
13 that we have been engaged by the provinces to strengthen  
14 their defences as opposed to building -- having each province  
15 build up its own exclusive cyber jurisdiction, it makes more  
16 sense to lean on the federal area -- federal expertise, and  
17 federal tools to protect hospitals, or whatever, even though  
18 they are fully within provincial jurisdiction.

19 So that sort of collaboration between orders  
20 of government has been happening for a while in the cyber  
21 realm, can and should happen much more in the interference  
22 realm. But in order to do that it will be important that the  
23 appropriate people, Premiers in this case, get the security  
24 clearances. It shouldn't be the federal government  
25 directing, for example, you know, what's going to happen in a  
26 municipal or provincial election, you know, that would be not  
27 appropriate, and quite frankly, sort against the Constitution  
28 and the structures that we have in place as a federal

1 government, as a federal system.

2 But empowering the Premier to be able to  
3 access relevant classified information that impacts upon  
4 their structures or institutions, or their members and their  
5 areas of responsibility, is exactly the right kind of  
6 principle. And that's something that this government has  
7 enabled and will continue to, so we're happy to do that.

8 To go back to even before C-70 was passed,  
9 there have been instances in which we have directly brought  
10 in provincial Premiers on issues that are directly relevant  
11 to them, but systemizing it in a much more robust way is what  
12 C-70 accomplished.

13 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We can take  
14 that down now, thank you. And for the next part of the  
15 question, you can pull up WIT160. So these questions, Prime  
16 Minister, are going to focus around some intelligence  
17 regarding MP Michael Chong, and this goes back to -- well,  
18 let me ask you first, actually, when and how did you first  
19 learn of allegations concerning the PRC targeting MP Chong in  
20 any way?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I learned about  
22 them in the media after a criminal leaked that classified  
23 information.

24 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So we've heard about  
25 intelligence products that were circulating in 2021 that  
26 spoke to this issue, and I take it from your answer that  
27 those never reached you?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.



1                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. What was your  
2 understanding when you did learn of this in May 2023 then, of  
3 what the nature of the threat two MP Chong was?

4                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, obviously  
5 like most Canadians, when I read the accounts in the paper of  
6 what the classified information actually was purported to  
7 have said, my instant reaction was to turn to my NSIA  
8 officials and say, find out what exactly the threat is, and  
9 if it indeed is this, why am I only learning about this in  
10 the newspapers, in the media? Yeah, that was my first  
11 reaction.

12                  **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And if we  
13 just zoom out a little bit on this so we can see the  
14 discussion that was had *in camera* about this? Paragraph 2, I  
15 believe. There we go. So sort of towards the end of that  
16 paragraph you note, Prime Minister that well this was  
17 extrapolated through the leaks into China's going after  
18 Michael Chong's family as a way to pressure him, that's not  
19 the assessment that the professional analysts made. Can you  
20 speak to that?

21                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, that is an  
22 example where criminal leaks of classified information can be  
23 damaging to reputations, to people's confidence in our  
24 institutions and in our intelligence agencies.

25                         The conclusion that was drawn, I think it's a  
26 little further down on this page by the Director of CSIS, is  
27 that there actually were no direct physical threats do  
28 Michael Chong or to his family. But that's certainly not the

1 impression you get from the leaks of classified information  
2 that were selective and certainly portrayed in a way that  
3 looked much more serious than they actually were.

4 This is not to minimize the fact that it is a  
5 real issue that China has chosen to single out for particular  
6 attention parliamentarians from all different parties that  
7 have stood most clearly and strongly against Chinese actions  
8 in regards to Uyghurs and in regards to the rights for  
9 democracy protestors in Hong Kong or what have you. But the  
10 stories that circle in and around this, that they were going  
11 after Michael Chong's family, are simply not borne out by the  
12 actual intelligence or the analysis by intelligence  
13 officials.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Let me stop  
15 you there and just ask the Registrar to pull up CAN.SUM17,  
16 please? So take the witness summary down and put up  
17 CAN.SUM17.

18 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN.SUM.000017:**

19 PRC Interest in Michael Chong

20 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** This is a topical  
21 summary that was produced by the government for the  
22 Commission and contains publicly disclosable information on  
23 this topic, PRC interest in Michael Chong.

24 So can we zoom out quite a bit so I can see  
25 most of this page? Thank you.

26 So in the first couple of paragraphs there,  
27 what this document says, Prime Minister, is essentially it  
28 talks about that the Uyghur motion, and then the PRC having

1 imposed economic sanctions on MP Chong in relation to this,  
2 and these sanctions are in keeping with the PRC sanctions  
3 regime, which allows not only sanctioning of individuals, but  
4 their family members as well.

5 And then you'll see at the second paragraph  
6 that that option to sanction family members wasn't invoked in  
7 the case of MP Chong.

8 If we scroll down now, and I think around  
9 paragraph 10, so I think somewhere in this document -- there  
10 we go, paragraph 8 ---

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Paragraph 8.

12 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- I think is what  
13 you were referring to perhaps, in this document at least:

14 "The CSIS Director emphasized that  
15 CSIS intelligence did not reflect  
16 direct physical threats to MP Chong  
17 or members of [...] family or intention  
18 to cause physical harm."

19 And then the last paragraph talks about how  
20 building -- the process of using information through open  
21 sources and gathering information on MPs is part of regular  
22 diplomatic activity, which I think goes back to something you  
23 mentioned earlier this morning.

24 In that vein, I'd like to ask you, because  
25 when your officials testified yesterday, counsel for MP Chong  
26 put to them, well that may well be, but we know that the PRC  
27 is a repressive regime and we know that it has a history of  
28 taking action against dissidents, particularly in Hong Kong.

1 So with that in mind, how can one say that it's convincing  
2 that there were no threats against MP Chong or his family?  
3 What's your reaction to that?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Our intelligence  
5 professionals, our intelligence services, examine threats to  
6 Canadians every single day and have to make determinations  
7 around which are credible, which are of concern, which  
8 require action, which require notification. I will highlight  
9 that even before the criminal leaks, there had been threat  
10 reduction measure meetings with MP Chong by intelligence  
11 officials who shared with him, you know, the concerns about  
12 China's interest and negative views of him. That is entirely  
13 in keeping with the analysis and the roles and the  
14 responsibilities of our intelligence agencies.

15 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We can take  
16 that one down now. Thank you.

17 Within about a week of this article appearing  
18 in *The Globe and Mail*, significant action was taken by the  
19 government in response to PRC foreign interference, the  
20 PNGing of a diplomat named Zhao Wei. So we went through this  
21 in, I would say, painstaking detail with your officials  
22 yesterday, so I'm not going to take you through the  
23 succession of meetings, but I will ask you, first of all, the  
24 authority to PNG a diplomat, that lies with the Minister of  
25 Foreign Affairs, not the Prime Minister. Is that correct?

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

27 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Is it  
28 something that you have to approve at all?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, it is not  
2 something I have to approve, but it is always a decision that  
3 I am, at the very least, apprised of, but more accurately,  
4 engaged in, in terms of the discussions and the  
5 deliberations, because kicking out a diplomat is a big thing,  
6 not a small thing, and it is right and proper that the  
7 authority be at the foreign minister level, but it is  
8 something that, as Prime Minister, I am very much kept in the  
9 loop on and, you know, my perspective on that, positive or  
10 negative, is certainly taken into account by the foreign  
11 minister.

12                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** What was your  
13 understanding of why Zhao Wei was being PNGed?

14                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Three things.  
15 First of all, over the past number of years leading up to  
16 this, there have been increasing instances of foreign  
17 interference by China and increasing moments of Canadian  
18 officials informing China directly that their interference  
19 activities were unacceptable and needed to stop, needed to  
20 decrease, needed to -- they needed to stop attempting to  
21 interfere in Canadians' lives and in our institutions. That  
22 perhaps had its most clear moment in the G20 meeting in  
23 Indonesia, where I directly informed Premier Xi that he  
24 needed to make sure that China was -- ceased interfering into  
25 Canada -- into Canadian democracy. It wasn't a conversation  
26 that went particularly well, but it was a conversation that  
27 needed to be had, and that we had.

28                   However, despite that and many other messages

1 to China, the interference continued, and even in some cases,  
2 increased. So that was part of the reason why we needed to  
3 make sure there was a clear consequence.

4 Secondly, as we looked into it, as the  
5 allegations around Michael Chong surfaced publicly, on  
6 digging into it with the Foreign Affairs Ministry here in  
7 Canada, it was clear that even though in the case of Michael  
8 Chong, Zhao Wei was not engaged in interference, so much as  
9 influence, that is regular diplomatic collection of  
10 information with a goal of sanctioning, for example, so in  
11 the case of Michael Chong, not direct interference in the  
12 analysis of our intelligence agencies, but in other cases had  
13 been involved in interference activities, we realized that  
14 that was a reason to look at kicking him out of the country,  
15 that he was involved and known to be involved in foreign  
16 interference, even if it wasn't directly in the case of  
17 Michael Chong.

18 And third, the fact that there needed to be  
19 consequences for China, he'd been involved in foreign  
20 interference activities, and third, it had been made public  
21 meant that he was also not going to be able to operate as a  
22 regular diplomat in Canada anymore. His utility as a  
23 diplomat to both Canada and I guess to China, had ended  
24 because he was so clearly outed in the media as being a bad  
25 actor.

26 Those three things together meant that, to  
27 give a consequence to China, to give consequences on foreign  
28 interference, and specifically the fact that he was not going

1 to be much use as a diplomat anymore, we chose to kick him  
2 out of the country.

3 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. I'm going to  
4 move now ---

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And actually, I  
6 think we asked ---

7 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Sorry.

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- China to remove  
9 him from the country first, and when they didn't, we said,  
10 "Okay. Well then we're going to have to kick him out."

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. So one last  
12 chance, then he was gone.

13 I'll move now to another event that led to  
14 the PNGing of a diplomat, this time an Indian diplomat, which  
15 is the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

16 I'll ask the Court Registrar to pull up  
17 WIT106, please.

18 So there's a few things to talk about in  
19 this.

20 And if we can scroll down to paragraphs 52 to  
21 55, please? There we go.

22 So the first question I'll ask you to take us  
23 through, Prime Minister, is what led to your announcement in  
24 the House of Commons in September 2023?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Over the course of  
26 the summer, I was apprised by my intelligence services that  
27 there was credible intelligence that agents of the Government  
28 of India were involved in the killing of Hardeep Singh

1 Nijjar. This is something that we had actually asked the  
2 intelligence agencies to look into because following the  
3 rather high-profile killing months before, the initial  
4 assessment was, oh, this was gang related or criminal  
5 related. There was not an obvious, immediate international  
6 nexus to this, and that's how we were briefed after the  
7 meeting -- after the killing, in the days after.

8               However, hearing directly from a number of  
9 our South Asian Members of Parliament and seeing and talking  
10 with members of the South Asian community around who were  
11 quite insistent that it was something that was likely  
12 connected to Government of India, we actually asked  
13 intelligence agencies, and it turned out they were doing this  
14 anyway, to look in more closely to the circumstances around  
15 this particular murder.

16               So in late July, early August, I was briefed  
17 on the fact that there was intelligence from Canada and  
18 possibly from Five Eyes allies that made it fairly clear,  
19 credibly clear that India was involved in this killing.  
20 Agents of the Government of India were involved in the  
21 killing of a Canadian, on Canadian soil. This was something  
22 that we obviously had to take extremely seriously. That  
23 violation of sovereignty, of international rule of law with  
24 extrajudicial killing in a foreign country, in a fellow  
25 democracy was a massive mistake, if India had indeed done it,  
26 and we had reasons to believe that they had.

27               So our immediate approach was to engage with  
28 the Government of India to say -- and we had our various



1 security officials reach out to India and say, "Look, there  
2 are real concerns that your security agencies were involved  
3 in the killing of Nijjar. We need to work on this together  
4 because that can't stand. We need to make sure that there  
5 are changes and there's accountability for this process, but  
6 let's try and do it in a responsible way that doesn't come  
7 and blow up the relationship between Canada and India." And  
8 that was the attempts we made in the month of August.

9 As we approached the end of August and  
10 September, the big thing that was happening was India was  
11 itself hosting the leader of -- the Summit of the Advanced  
12 Economies of the World, the G20. So it was a big moment for  
13 India, welcoming the world, all the leaders of the world to  
14 Delhi for a very important summit. And we had the  
15 opportunity of making it a very uncomfortable summit for  
16 India if we went public with these allegations ahead of time.  
17 We chose not to. We chose to continue to work behind the  
18 scenes to try and get India to cooperate with us. Their asks  
19 of us was, "Well, how much do you know? Give us the evidence  
20 you have on this." And our response was, "Well, it's within  
21 your security agencies. You should be looking into how much  
22 they know. You should be engaging." "No, no, no, tell us  
23 what you know. Show us the evidence." And at that point, it  
24 was primarily intelligence, not hard evidentiary proof. So  
25 we said, "Well, you know, let's work together and look into  
26 your security services, and maybe we can get that done."  
27 "No, no, no, we're not doing that."

28 It culminated with a conversation I had with

1 Prime Minister Modi on the -- after the end of the last  
2 session of the G20 in Delhi, where I sat down and shared that  
3 we knew that they were involved and expressed a real concern  
4 around it. And he responded with the usual response from  
5 him, which is that we have people who are outspoken against  
6 the Indian government living in Canada that he would like to  
7 see arrested. And I tried to explain that freedom of speech  
8 and freedom of people who come to our country to be  
9 Canadians, to criticize governments overseas is -- or,  
10 indeed, to criticize the Canadian government is a fundamental  
11 freedom of Canada. But as always, we would work with them on  
12 any evidence or any concerns they have around terrorism, or  
13 incitement to hate, or anything that is patently unacceptable  
14 in Canada. And we have taken action in the past, we continue  
15 to take action, even as, as I emphasize, and I emphasize  
16 regularly, my position and Canada's position is to defend the  
17 territorial integrity of India. One India is official  
18 Canadian policy. And the fact that there are a number of  
19 people in Canada who advocate otherwise does not make it  
20 Canadian policy, but also does not make it -- is not  
21 something that is illegal in Canada.

22 Having done all that, we returned to Canada,  
23 and it was obvious that the Indian Government response,  
24 particularly through the media, was to instead attack Canada,  
25 to attack Canadians, to criticize us, to undermine our  
26 government and our governance, and, quite frankly, the  
27 integrity of our democracy. Combined with the fact that as  
28 we approached the end of September, it looked like there was

1       going to be media stories detailing some of these allegations  
2       that were getting out there.

3               On the first day that the House returned, I -  
4       - we determined that it was in the interest of public safety  
5       in Canada to let people know that we knew about these  
6       allegations, that we were following up on them, there was an  
7       investigation into them that was taken on by police services  
8       in Canada to ensure that -- partially to ensure that nobody  
9       in Canada and any communities felt like they needed to take  
10      action themselves. That they should trust Canadian  
11      institutions to take this threat seriously and follow up on  
12      it. And that's exactly what we then did. We launched  
13      investigations.

14             The Indian response to these allegations and  
15      to our investigations was to double down on attacks against  
16      this government, attacks against this government's integrity,  
17      attacks against Canada in general, but also, to arbitrarily  
18      eject dozens of diplomats from Canada -- from -- Canadian  
19      diplomats from India on absolutely no cause other than to  
20      say, well, we don't like what you said in the House about us,  
21      and we're going to punish you for that.

22             This was a situation in which we had clear  
23      and certainly now even clearer indications that India had  
24      violated Canada's sovereignty and their response was to  
25      double down and attack Canada further, rather than take  
26      responsibility or say how can we fix this, yes, this was a  
27      violation of the rule of law, and even take any of the many  
28      offramps we offered because we don't want to be in this

1 situation of picking a fight with a significant trading  
2 partner with who we have deep people-to-people ties and a  
3 long history and our fellow democracies. But standing up  
4 unequivocally for Canadian sovereignty and for the safety of  
5 Canadians back then was essential and absolutely led to the  
6 very, very clear pronouncements we made earlier this week  
7 that the RCMP, the conclusions and the evidence that the RCMP  
8 determined in terms of violence towards Canadians that has  
9 been enabled by and directed by, in many cases, the Indian  
10 Government.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So you made  
12 reference to the allegations that were -- the announcement of  
13 the RCMP earlier this week, and we know that that wasn't  
14 solely connected to the Nijjar investigation, per se, it's a  
15 broader thing than that, and it involves allegations of  
16 interference by India in promotion of violent extremism,  
17 tying agents of the Government of India to homicides, violent  
18 acts, the use of organized crime, and interference into  
19 democratic processes. So it's a much wider thing. And we  
20 know that it led to over the past weekend the PNGing of six  
21 Indian diplomats. What can you say -- and you mentioned  
22 before that the hope was not to blow up the relationship with  
23 India for the Nijjar murder. Obviously, things have  
24 progressed since then, what comment are you able to offer on  
25 what the RCMP announced on Monday and where things stand at  
26 the moment?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The decision by the  
28 RCMP to go forward with that announcement was entirely

1 anchored in public safety and a goal of disrupting the chain  
2 of activities that was resulting in drive-by shootings, home  
3 invasions and violent extortion, and even murder across  
4 Canada, particularly in the South Asian community, largely  
5 Sikh, but not exclusively, the Sikh community.

6 The goal of disrupting the chain that was  
7 diplomats collecting information on Canadians who are  
8 opponents or in disagreement with the Modi government,  
9 passing along that information to the highest levels within  
10 the Indian government and then having that information  
11 directed through criminal organizations like the Lawrence  
12 Bishnoi gang to then result in violence against Canadians on  
13 the ground, it was the RCMP's determination that that chain  
14 or that sequence, that scheme needed to be disrupted and  
15 going public on Monday, as they did, and removing those --  
16 therefore, removing those diplomats.

17 The first option was actually being able to  
18 question those diplomats and interview those diplomats by  
19 having them waive diplomatic immunity, they didn't. That's  
20 not surprising that they didn't. Canada wouldn't waive  
21 diplomatic immunity in many cases either. But therefore, we  
22 had to ask them to leave the country.

23 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And just to  
24 be clear, when you speak of diplomats collecting information  
25 in this instance, we're not talking about research and Google  
26 searches. We're talking about covert, clandestine ---

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. Covert,  
28 clandestine ---

1                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** --- coercive.

2                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- coercive  
3 measures, threatening to withhold family visas, paying  
4 sources. A range of things that the RCMP can detail if they  
5 feel they -- I mean, one of the important things on this is,  
6 these are ongoing -- there are ongoing court cases and  
7 trials, so if the RCMP had its druthers, it wouldn't have  
8 revealed any of this. It's just that it hit the threshold  
9 before it came out naturally in court through our judicial  
10 process, as it would -- as much of this will. But the threat  
11 to public safety and the need to disrupt pre-emptively even  
12 before the court cases were fully adjudicated were -- made it  
13 the RCMP's decision to go public with this.

14                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Well, as you  
15 mentioned, there are ongoing investigations and, in that  
16 sense, I think we've probably gone as far as we can go on  
17 that topic, so we'll move on.

18                   We can take the Najjar document down now.

19                   Going back to the chain of events, I think,  
20 that we can say followed the May 2023 media leaks and the  
21 revelation of the PRC interest in Michael Chong, one thing  
22 that we know happened was Minister Mendicino issued a  
23 Ministerial directive on threats to the security of Canada  
24 directed at parliamentarians.

25                   And when we spoke about that initiative *in*  
26 *camera*, you expressed some ambivalence towards the policy,  
27 and I'm wondering if you can tell us about that.

28                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I have very little

1       doubt that had there been genuine threats or they had been  
2       deliberate threats to -- direct threats, sorry, is the word  
3       that CSIS used -- direct threats to Michael Chong or his  
4       family, that information would have been elevated to at least  
5       the Minister of Public Safety, if not -- if not directly to  
6       my office on threats to a parliamentarian. But in the  
7       messiness of having a criminal leak, erroneous information to  
8       the media and the attention and worries that ensued, I asked  
9       Minister Mendicino to put out a clear directive that said if  
10      there's any threats to parliamentarians or their families,  
11      that should be automatically elevated regardless of whether  
12      they are credible or single source or reliable or unreliable  
13      or not. We need to elevate the attention that is given to  
14      parliamentarians' safety.

15               I don't know that it's entirely necessary, if  
16      I'm being honest. I have confidence that if there is a  
17      threat to a parliamentarian, CSIS and our NSIA and our  
18      security apparatus would take it very seriously and make sure  
19      there was awareness and follow-up on it, but in the moment  
20      and to show Canadians how seriously we were taking this very  
21      serious issue, emitting this directive that said yes,  
22      explicitly, you have to do it was a responsible step.

23               I prefer to demonstrate confidence in the  
24      decision-making frame of intelligence agencies around how  
25      they elevate and how they evaluate information as, okay, this  
26      is really credible, we need to see this, this is not so  
27      credible, but let's let the local police of jurisdiction or  
28      let the RCMP know about this.

1                   Like they make determinations around where  
2                   information should go and what should be done with it every  
3                   day all the time on a whole bunch of different information,  
4                   and being overly prescriptive is not the ideal way of doing  
5                   things. But in this case, I think it was a fine thing to do.

6                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. That's fair.

7                   The next topic I want to ask you about, then,  
8                   is providing classified information to -- about foreign  
9                   interference, of course, to Party leaders, leaders of  
10                  political Parties or cleared representatives of political  
11                  Parties, as the case may be.

12                 The first question I'll ask is fairly  
13                 general, but when you, as a Party leader, receive information  
14                 about potential foreign interference happening within your  
15                 own Party, what can you do about it? What are the options  
16                 available to you in such a scenario?

17                 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Oh, there are many,  
18                 many things I can do.

19                 If it comes early enough in the process, I  
20                 can simply disallow a candidate from running for a nomination  
21                 or to be a candidate in my political Party. And a Party  
22                 leader, all Party leaders, have ultimate discretion because  
23                 Elections Canada requires that the Party leader signs off on  
24                 every single one of the 338 candidates they can run across  
25                 the country in an election, and withholding that signature  
26                 from a particular candidate is one of the core  
27                 responsibilities -- or that signature is a core  
28                 responsibility and powers of a Party leader. And it happens



1 at an early enough stage that if someone expresses even  
2 publicly that they want to run for the Party and don't end up  
3 running for the Party, there's not necessarily a scandal  
4 around them not running. There could be sour grapes, there  
5 could be, oh, I just had to decide to stick with -- you know,  
6 family was more important or anything.

7 There's all sorts of face-saving ways in  
8 which if a leader quietly says, "No, there have been concerns  
9 raised, you're not going to be able to run for us but we  
10 don't need to talk about it publicly. You can go back to  
11 your life", that is a very effective way of having things  
12 done that don't require revealing of any classified  
13 information but is based on intelligence that a leader can  
14 get.

15 Once someone's an actual MP, a Party leader  
16 cannot fire an MP. MPs were elected by Canadians. All a  
17 Party leader can do is, at the largest level, remove them  
18 from their Party caucus, have them sit as an independent,  
19 something that I've done many times for a range of different  
20 reasons around sexual misconduct or other things. That's the  
21 biggest tool a Party leader has, but there's also other  
22 tools.

23 If there is an allegation around -- to use  
24 the National Security and Intelligence Advisor's words  
25 herself, around inappropriate behaviour or poor judgment or  
26 untrustworthiness, as a Party leader I can decide which  
27 committees an individual sits on or doesn't sit on, whether I  
28 give them a critic role or a parliamentary secretary role or

1 even a Minister's role. We have many tools to respond  
2 depending on the seriousness of the allegation. If it's that  
3 they are overly friendly with a particular Consulate General,  
4 maybe we just say, yeah, you know what? You need to clean  
5 that up, and then maybe we can revisit a committee or  
6 parliamentary secretary role for you in a couple of years, or  
7 in a year if CSIS comes back and says, yeah, there's been no  
8 contact there or anything like that.

9 There's lots of tools that a party leader can  
10 exert to counter real or risks of foreign interference in  
11 their party. But it requires the leader to actually be able  
12 to receive the classified information from the intelligence  
13 agencies to then turn around take action on that.

14 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. On that  
15 topic, I'm going to ask you what happens when you receive  
16 intelligence about potential foreign interference having do  
17 not with your own party, but with opposition parties. To do  
18 that I'll ask the Court Registrar to pull up CAN047007.

19 **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN047007 0001:**

20 Transmittal Note

21 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So we'll just go  
22 through the document to situate us a little bit and then I'll  
23 ask you to pull up a different one.

24 So, Prime Minister, this is a memo for you  
25 from your NSIA, Nathalie Drouin, in May 2024. You'll see  
26 what it says at the beginning of that summary is:

27 "Intelligence details alleged foreign  
28 interference activities in

1 Canada...directed at opposition  
2 parties...Given the serious nature of  
3 the allegations,...(PCO) is working  
4 with...(CSIS) to develop TOP SECRET  
5 level briefings for opposition  
6 parties on the intelligence."

7 Then speaks to Various political parties and  
8 whether or not they have leaders who are security cleared,  
9 and then the last bullet there speaks to PCO sharing a  
10 protocol of more -- regarding more regular classified  
11 briefings to recognized parties.

12 If we can scroll down again, please, I'll  
13 tell you when to stop. Scroll through the background, I  
14 think we want to get to Page 3. There we go. PCO comment  
15 there, so PCO notes that informing party leaders could allow  
16 them to identify the issues and take the necessary action.  
17 And then says, an ad hoc approach of sharing intelligence is  
18 not ideal, and we should maybe think about doing something  
19 more systematic.

20 So if we can take that document down now and  
21 put up WIT164, paragraph 25? This is the publicly  
22 disclosable version of the conversation that was had *in*  
23 *camera* about this. So I would like it up as a reference  
24 point.

25 And I'll just ask you, Prime Minister, to  
26 take us through from your recollection what happened here,  
27 what this situation was, and what was done about it?

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** In paragraph 26 you

1 mean?

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Yes.

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah. I received  
4 the characterize here as explosive, certainly extremely  
5 alarming, information around foreign interference into a  
6 particular political party. And I directed CSIS to try and -  
7 - or intelligence agencies, to try and ensure that the  
8 opposition parties had the tools to respond to these  
9 allegations, or had at least the information that would allow  
10 them to do this.

11 I have to be really careful about what I say  
12 here because this is all very, very, sensitive and even  
13 talking about which party these allegations aimed at is  
14 something I'm trying to avoid doing.

15 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fair enough. And I  
16 won't ask you many more questions about them, because we are  
17 treading very thin lines here. The only thing I'll just sum  
18 up by saying, so essentially information came to your  
19 attention, and it was through the system put to the right  
20 people in the right places?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think it is  
22 perhaps useful to point out -- we don't need to pull it up --  
23 but in the -- well, two things. First of all, I'm Prime  
24 Minister, so I receive a tremendous amount of classified  
25 information covering a broad range of individuals across this  
26 country including different political parties.

27 But as leader of the Liberal Party, it is  
28 awkward to say the least, to use a mild word, for me to be

1       engaging in who should run, or what consequences, or who  
2       should be a critic, or who should be in what position for an  
3       opposition party. So my -- as you pointed out earlier, the  
4       answer was to offer classified briefings to all the leaders  
5       of the parties so that they could best be positioned to take  
6       the necessary actions to protect their MPs, some of whom  
7       might vulnerable, some of whom might be witting or unwitting  
8       around foreign interference, and therefore demonstrate to  
9       Canadians that the integrity of their parties and the  
10      protection of their parties from federal -- foreign  
11      interference was done.

12                   And that's -- that was always my instinct. I  
13      shouldn't be -- I can know about it, I don't act on that  
14      stuff because I don't believe in the partisan -- using  
15      national security information for partisan purposes, nor  
16      should any Prime Minister. But informing the leaders so they  
17      can take proper actions is, I think, the right way of doing  
18      things.

19                   Stepping away from this specific example,  
20      because I don't want to weigh into this as a specific  
21      example.

22                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** We can take it down.

23                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because I am Prime  
24      Minister and Privy to all these informations, I have the  
25      names of a number of parliamentarians, former  
26      parliamentarians, and/or candidates in the Conservative Party  
27      of Canada who are engaged, or at high risk of, or for whom  
28      there is clear intelligence around foreign interference. And

1 I have directed CSIS and others to try and inform the  
2 Conservative Party leader to be warned and armed to be able  
3 to make decisions that protect the integrity of that party,  
4 of its members, from attempts of foreign -- activities around  
5 foreign interference.

6 And the decision of the leader of the  
7 Conservative Party to not get those classified briefings  
8 means that nobody in his party, not him, nobody in position  
9 of power, knows the name of these individuals and can take  
10 appropriate action. It also means nobody is there to stand  
11 up for those individuals if the intelligence is shoddy or  
12 incomplete, or just allegations from a single source, and  
13 that is something that as you've seen we are ready to  
14 question intelligence when it comes towards the Liberal Party  
15 members, because we need to make sure if you're going to end  
16 someone's career you're doing it in a responsible way.

17 The decision of the leader of the  
18 Conservative Party to not receive necessary clearance to get  
19 those names and protect integrity of his party is bewildering  
20 to me, and entirely lacks common sense. Particularly when  
21 you look at the NSICOP report that clearly lays out -- the  
22 public NSICOP report, that clearly lays out that in both of  
23 the most recent Conservative leadership races there was  
24 foreign interference.

25 The fact that there seems to be absolutely no  
26 curiosity, or openness in trying to figure out what happened,  
27 or whether someone was compromised, or whether a foreign  
28 country impacted those leadership races, is simply

1       irresponsible. The fact that we see -- and then getting a  
2       little more partisan than I tried to in this case, but it is  
3       so egregious to me that the leader of the official opposition  
4       who is certainly trying very hard to become Prime Minister,  
5       he is choosing to play partisan games with foreign  
6       interference and accusations around foreign interference, but  
7       not taking it the least bit serious, as regards to his own  
8       responsibilities as Party Leader, or even to get top  
9       officials within his party briefed up as they bring on  
10      candidates from across the country is inexplicable and quite  
11      frankly concerning.

12                So stepping back from that, our  
13      recommendation, and certainly one of the things that is  
14      alluded to in some of these reports, and certainly the  
15      Commission's work can be, is to indicate that it would  
16      probably be pretty important that as a matter of course,  
17      party leaders, certainly of the main political parties, maybe  
18      not the Marxist-Leninist candidate that runs against me every  
19      election in Papineau, but certainly the main political  
20      parties, be given security briefings and clearances that  
21      allow them to respond to the very real threats that we have  
22      seen of foreign interference in their parties and that top  
23      officials at the party level, as Jeremy Broadhurst was, by  
24      dint of his day job in my government outside of the campaign  
25      period, was able to take that information and discuss with me  
26      the consequences that should be kneaded out or whether action  
27      should be taken or not.

28                It is, I think, a vulnerability to foreign

1 interference that we have as a democracy that some party  
2 leaders have decided not to get access to some names that  
3 would be very germane for them to at least know and  
4 understand the risks around.

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Well we have  
6 heard evidence, the Commission -- through the Commission's  
7 proceedings that foreign interference affects or can affect  
8 all political parties. That's certainly true.

9 In terms of providing information to  
10 political parties, what about the -- there have been other  
11 ideas suggested of how classified information might be  
12 provided. For instance, if the leader is a Privy Councillor,  
13 would that entitle them to receiving such information?

14 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** There are Privy  
15 Councillors who were sworn in in the 70s. As an example,  
16 Marco Mendicino was made a Privy Councillor when he became a  
17 Minister, but now that he is no longer a Minister, in order  
18 to appear before this Commission, and to deal with documents  
19 that he himself had generated and worked with as Minister, he  
20 needed to get security cleared once again.

21 There is a perception around this town that  
22 being a Privy Councillor allows for a higher degree of  
23 security clearance or access to documents than not being a  
24 Privy Councillor is. That's simply not true in concrete  
25 terms.

26 Ministers have access to secure documents by  
27 dint of their roles of Ministers and go through a vetting  
28 process that clears them for that when they are -- before



1       they are appointed Ministers, but having been a Minister  
2       years ago does not give you any inherent ability to see  
3       classified documents without the reupping or reinstating a  
4       security clearance.

5                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. We'll leave  
6       that topic for now and go to -- I'll ask the Registrar to  
7       pull up the CSIS IR, which I've lost the doc ID, CAN.DOC44,  
8       please.

9       **--- EXHIBIT No. CAN.DOC.000044:**

10                   Canadian Security Intelligence  
11                   Service (CSIS) Stage 2 Institutional  
12                   Report - unclassified

13                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Prime Minister,  
14       this is -- the questions I want to ask you around this around  
15       about the Commission -- and it does relate a little it to the  
16       last point you were making, but the Commission essentially  
17       asked the government in its proceedings to come up with a  
18       list of the significant instances of foreign interference in  
19       Canada's democratic institutions and electoral processes over  
20       the period of the Commission's review. And this exercise  
21       sort of seems broad. Everyone around the table considering  
22       what was initially a longer list produced by CSIS, and what  
23       was eventually obtained was a consensus list of these six  
24       instances.

25                   Many of the incidents that we've heard about  
26       over the Commission's proceedings are actually not on this  
27       list, but there are six that are there.

28                   So the first thing I'll ask you is specific,

1 and then I'll actually go to some more general ones, but in  
2 terms of being informed about instances as a party leader,  
3 the second bullet there on that list reads:

4 "Reporting indicates [that] a foreign  
5 government undertook several actions,  
6 including interference, to reduce the  
7 likelihood of a specific Liberal  
8 candidate from being elected  
9 federally. It is suspected that the  
10 foreign government sought to thwart  
11 the candidate's bid given their  
12 support for issues perceived to be  
13 contrary to the foreign government's  
14 interests."

15 And am I correct in saying that this never  
16 came to your attention, this particular instance, before the  
17 Commission's proceedings?

18 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. The list of  
19 six were all -- I expected that -- as I said, I have access  
20 to, you know, regular intelligence briefings and updates on  
21 these things. It was surprising to me to see number two on  
22 this list, because I had no idea. And there are lots of  
23 details about this that I know that I am -- I continue to be  
24 astonished that I was not apprised of this, because it was  
25 relevant in a whole bunch of different ways and would have  
26 been very relevant at the time.

27 But I also understand, without being able to  
28 give too much timing or details around this, that processes

1 we have in place now would have meant that that there is no  
2 doubt I would have been informed about this incident, were it  
3 happening now. When it happened, we did not have the  
4 measures that we have subsequently put in place.

5 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Understood.  
6 So this is one you would have liked to see?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

8 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay.

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would have liked  
10 to have seen this one.

11 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Another thing we've  
12 heard about the development of this list is, as I said, it  
13 brought Deputy Ministers around the table having  
14 conversations about whether some of these instances were or  
15 were not foreign interference. And you mentioned earlier in  
16 your remarks that there can be different perspectives across  
17 government on whether activities are really standard  
18 diplomatic activity, for example, or foreign interference.  
19 How do those -- how do you see those debates happening, from  
20 your vantage point as Prime Minister, for sort of in the  
21 existential sense. Like, is this a good thing? And when  
22 does it come to you and what do you see? Are different  
23 perspectives brought to your attention or how does this play  
24 out?

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think it is a  
26 very, very good thing that on something as important and  
27 sensitive as foreign interference by another state, that  
28 there be different perspectives looking at it.

1                   You know, as I said, our diplomats in the  
2   United States were very alert to, you know, which members of  
3   Congress or which Governors might be helpful in making a case  
4   for a more successful NAFTA renegotiation than others, and  
5   that involved a lot of, sort of, conversations and looking  
6   into voting records, and, you know, lunches by diplomats in  
7   place. And that -- gathering information on foreign  
8   parliamentarians is a core part of diplomacy. And that can  
9   be foreign influence, which is something that diplomats are  
10  actually hired to do and is a primary job around the country,  
11  make sure that the government of the country that you're in  
12  representing Canada is -- looks favourably upon Canada,  
13  without crossing into interference.

14                  Now, it is possible to use information  
15  collected for purposes of influence to then turn around and  
16  use it for interference. If a diplomat were to collect the  
17  home address of a particular parliamentarian to be able to  
18  send them a personal note or a Christmas card that didn't go  
19  through the Office, that would seem, okay, I'm trying to  
20  influence them, make them friendly. That's the work of  
21  diplomacy. If that foreign address that -- that home address  
22  was then used to organize a massive intimidation protest in  
23  the street in front of that person paid for by a foreign  
24  country, that would be foreign interference or that would be  
25  much more serious.

26                  So there is a bit of a continuum on this, and  
27  having discussions between Global Affairs Canada diplomats  
28  and intelligence agencies, and spies, and, you know, on the

1 push-pull of what is appropriate, what is inappropriate, what  
2 is problematic is more of an art than a science. I mean, it  
3 can involved intent, it can involve what -- whether it's a  
4 friendly country doing it or an unfriendly country doing it,  
5 why they're doing it, what preoccupations there are. You  
6 know, there is nuance that is not just across departments,  
7 but even within departments.

8           You can have different people within Global  
9 Affairs having a different perspective on that. And all  
10 those debates and discussions, I think, are a strength of our  
11 system that allow us to come to much more thoughtful answers  
12 or measures to take in complex and perhaps delicate  
13 situations.

14           So you know, having those engaged, thoughtful  
15 debates in government and even, quite frankly, to a certain  
16 extent, understanding that there are complexities in it for a  
17 public engaging with how to protect ourselves from foreign  
18 interference is very key.

19           I think of the Baltic states example when  
20 Canada positioned itself as the country lead on the enhanced  
21 forward presence in NATO by positioning troops in Latvia.  
22 One of the things that we learned about very quickly was the  
23 incredibly robust system that citizens in Latvia had to  
24 detect and deter and render ineffective Russian  
25 disinformation because Russia is constantly flooding the zone  
26 in the Baltic states. And they have a very sophisticated and  
27 attentive population in knowing that this piece of  
28 information is just Russian propaganda or disinformation that

1 I think Canada is moving towards, but we are not as far  
2 forward as some other countries may be in terms of detecting  
3 misinformation and disinformation from hostile state actors.

4 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So when these  
5 different perspectives may exist in government, do your  
6 officials make you aware of them so that you know that maybe  
7 CSIS has a different view on something from GAC?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

9 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Does this come to  
10 your attention?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, absolutely.  
12 Either actually in person by watching the Director of CSIS  
13 and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, you know, have a  
14 conversation back and forth about a particular thing, or it  
15 is obvious in the briefings come to me where it says CSIS  
16 will -- leans on this way, but the diplomats say that this  
17 might be it, and, at the same time, the Clerk's decision is  
18 this.

19 One of the reasons that I've said I prefer to  
20 have active engaged discussions around intelligence is it  
21 allows us to challenge and bring together those different  
22 points of view and different perspectives to get a better  
23 picture than simply one document that perhaps summarizes  
24 different elements but is written by one person in one  
25 department and not another.

26 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. And I -- I  
27 see that I'm out of time, but I have still two topics to  
28 tackle with the Prime Minister, if you allow me.

1                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes, go ahead.

2                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So Prime Minister,  
3 the next -- I do have a couple more questions to ask you.

4                   The next one is on a different topic now and  
5 something that we spoke about at great length *in camera*, so I  
6 think we'll have the Reader's Digest of this conversation  
7 today. But the vulnerability of political Party processes to  
8 foreign interference that have been raised *à maintes fois* in  
9 the Commission's proceedings.

10                  And we know that Elections Canada will soon  
11 be making some suggestions or recommendations as to things  
12 that might be done to ameliorate this situation.

13                  Can you give us your viewpoint on the idea of  
14 increased oversight or increased regulation of internal  
15 political Party processes for the purpose of dissuading  
16 foreign interference?

17                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** First of all, there  
18 is already oversight and regulations over political Parties  
19 in Canada that we all understand is important and necessary.  
20 I think of the very strict election financing rules, how a  
21 political Party can raise money, how it is accountable for  
22 every dollar it raises, from whom it receives money, what it  
23 can spend the money on, how it needs to account for it.  
24 That's a really important principle that applies to all  
25 political Parties and is sort of foundational for our  
26 democracy.

27                  So the idea that, in our democracy, we should  
28 regulate political Parties is well established that, yes,

1       there are many things in which it's important to uphold the  
2       freedom and openness of our democracy that we regulate  
3       political Parties.

4                 In C-70, we actually indicate with greater  
5       clarity and legislate around foreign interference in  
6       political Parties as being illegal.

7                 I mean, these are things that -- yes, there  
8       are certainly things that governments and our democracy  
9       should do to ensure the accountability and responsibility of  
10      political Parties.

11                However, when we get into the issue of  
12      determining how a political Party picks its candidates or who  
13      gets to be the ultimate decision-maker in a political Party  
14      or how to structure a political Party internally or how to  
15      run its nominations, we get into an area that I think one  
16      needs to tread very, very carefully.

17                I mean, one of the things we see first in  
18      authoritarian countries like Venezuela, to use an extreme  
19      example, is the government regulating what Opposition Parties  
20      can do or say or how they can organize themselves or how they  
21      fund their -- fundraise, is a great way for a Party in  
22      government to control and render ineffective Opposition  
23      Parties. And that is the last thing that we would ever want  
24      in Canada.

25                I think it's extremely important that  
26      political Parties have a large degree of autonomy in their  
27      operations, independence in how they choose to operate and  
28      function as political Parties, as Opposition Parties



1 particularly, but that comes with it a responsibility by  
2 those political Parties to be able to demonstrate the  
3 processes in place that they have to reassure Canadians, but  
4 particularly their members, that they are not arbitrary, they  
5 are not subject to whims or influence or interference by  
6 foreign interests or special interests across the country.

7 That's why, for example, in our Party we have  
8 nomination races that have very clear requirements that need  
9 to be hit within the Party frame. We have an appeals process  
10 for anyone who loses the nomination. We have scrutineers and  
11 lawyers that every Party gets to have on every candidate's  
12 team, gets to have in the nomination process to ensure that  
13 it's a rigorous process.

14 We've created many, many mechanisms like that  
15 because, you know, the Liberal Party has had nomination races  
16 of six, seven, eight thousand people contesting for a single  
17 nomination -- sorry, 7,000 members supporting a handful of  
18 candidates contesting for a particular nomination.

19 Are there things that can be done to give  
20 political Parties more information and better access to it?  
21 Well, the first one is making sure people, at least someone  
22 in a decision-making position at the top of the Party,  
23 structure, the Party organization, the campaign director or  
24 someone like that, gets the necessary security clearance so  
25 that if CSIS or other see flags they can carry that to the  
26 Party or inform the leader about it so the leader can make  
27 sure that the processes, whether it's a leadership race or a  
28 nomination race, can account and say publicly these are --

1       this was not interfered with.

2                   I think it's on the Party itself to  
3       demonstrate the measures it has taken to protect itself from  
4       interference rather than a government or even Elections  
5       Canada weighing in and saying, "You have to do this, this,  
6       this to protect from foreign interference".

7                   I think it is better for Canadians and media  
8       and oppositions to be calling out where a Party does not have  
9       robust processes in place and is not taking seriously the  
10      threats of foreign interference, but overly prescribing or  
11      regulating the organization, the behaviours, the structure,  
12      the decision-making processes within parties by what is  
13      necessarily one party in a position of power in government is  
14      something that I think requires a lot of caution. But there  
15      are many things that could be recommended for parties to take  
16      on as tools to keep them safe, that I'm certainly hoping that  
17      Elections Canada and the Commission's work will highlight  
18      that are important principles for how parties can protect  
19      themselves from interference.

20                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Okay. Moving now to  
21      a topic that you've raised on a couple of occasions already  
22      in your remarks but not completely directly; it's the  
23      classified NSICOP Report.

24                   So as you may know that the Commission was  
25      charged with looking into the NSICOP Report, and has done so.  
26      And we've heard some evidence over that process, which I'll  
27      just -- I'll highlight a couple of things that came out from  
28      that process and that investigation.

1                   One of them is some questions raised as to  
2     the strength of the conclusions that NSICOP expressed versus  
3     the strength of the assessments that CSIS actually made. So  
4     NSICOP's conclusions are NSICOP's, not CSIS's. There are  
5     also instances in which some discrepancies may have been  
6     found between the conclusions that get made and the  
7     underlying intelligence.

8                   We've heard concerns in these proceedings  
9     from two of your -- well, your former Minister, Mr.  
10    Mendicino, current Minister, Minister LeBlanc, about the  
11    strength of the public reaction to the NSICOP Report. And  
12    I'm wondering if you can comment that, having, of course,  
13    read the classified NSICOP Report and having knowledge of its  
14    contents?

15                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I created the  
16    National Security and Intelligence Committee of  
17    Parliamentarians for a very specific purpose; to make sure  
18    that parliamentarians from all different parties would be  
19    able to look into everything that our national security  
20    agencies are doing, with at least two clear goals; one is to  
21    make sure that our national security agencies are behaving  
22    appropriately and not violating Canadians' fundamental rights  
23    or overreaching or, you know, or doing the bidding of one  
24    particular government versus the well interests of Canadians.

25                   Just about every one of our democratic major  
26    democracy partners has oversight by parliamentarians of their  
27    national security agencies. Canada did not, and the previous  
28    Conservative Government refused to even begin to entertain

1 the idea that parliamentarians should have the ability to  
2 oversee national security agencies. I felt strongly that we  
3 needed that, and that's why it was one of the first things  
4 that we did, worked on, in terms of national security.

5 The second reason NSICOP is important is --  
6 the first reason is to make sure there's not overreach into  
7 -- and there's other mechanisms as well, like NSIRA, to make  
8 sure there's not overreach into Canadians' fundamental  
9 rights. But the second is to make sure that national  
10 security agencies are taking seriously all the threats and  
11 acting in appropriate ways to counter the threats.

12 But being a body that's only come into being  
13 about eight years ago, and being one -- or less than that,  
14 six years ago, being one that as recently as just a year or  
15 two ago in the House of Commons is still contested as to its  
16 legitimacy and usefulness, it's still very much in a learning  
17 process. It's trying to figure out how to manage a very  
18 multipartisan structure in a highly polarized and partisan  
19 environment. When it comes to something like foreign  
20 interference, that is such a contentious and worrisome topic  
21 that you can imagine that any pronouncement that gets out,  
22 whether it's a criminal leaking information to the newspaper,  
23 or NSICOP, you know, putting out a report, or this  
24 Commission's televised hearings, is generating a lot of  
25 interest.

26 Did NSICOP get everything right in its  
27 report? As CSIS pointed out there were some discrepancies.  
28 But I don't think that's automatically a bad thing. I think

1       that's part of making sure there are different tools and  
2       different perspectives and different organizations working on  
3       similar challenges from different things. Yes, there's some  
4       of the things that NSICOP put in there that I really would  
5       have rather they didn't frame that way because it worried  
6       Canadians and, you know, talked about traitors in Parliament,  
7       when that is not the assessment that our intelligence  
8       agencies put forward. But it's salacious and it sells  
9       newspapers, and it worries Canadians, so it got put to the  
10      fore.

11               I see this more as part of growing pains as  
12      building mature, not just institutions around national  
13      security within and around government and Parliament, but a  
14      part of the learning process that citizens get to be part of  
15      in figuring out how to talk about real threats and how to  
16      evaluate in our democracy, you know, where the lines are and  
17      how to best protect our democracy without harming the exact  
18      things that make us a free and open democracy. And those are  
19      sophisticated conversations that can't just happen within  
20      governments or within commissions but can and should happen  
21      as part of active, engaged debate, discourse, and political  
22      conversations between elections and during elections.

23               So, yeah, there's some things that I feel,  
24      certainly with all the perspective I have and all the direct  
25      briefings I have from CSIS, that they didn't get quite right,  
26      but I'd much rather have an effective and confident NSICOP  
27      committee that goes forth and draws its conclusions and says  
28      things that we will all learn to say, "Okay, yeah, they got

1       this right. They maybe were off a little bit on this, but  
2       this helps us advance this understanding and CSIS was able to  
3       come out and correct the record on this. And some of the  
4       things that NSICOP had talked about, CSIS had actually made a  
5       little bit of a mistake, and that's where NSICOP's Report  
6       was." So that's thoughtful as well.

7                       So for me it's all part of a system that is  
8       robust and serious, but because we're in an open, free  
9       democracy that stands up for everyone's rights, that is  
10      working hard to get it right but that we don't always need to  
11      expect perfection from. And when, as consumers of  
12      intelligence materials, individuals and media and Opposition  
13      parties become more and more experienced at it, more  
14      thoughtful about it, Canada will be even better served than  
15      we are right now in the important debates we have around  
16      foreign interference.

17                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** So maybe it's not  
18      about getting everything right but contributing to the  
19      building of a national discourse?

20                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Absolutely,  
21      although it would be nice get more things right too, at the  
22      same time.

23                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** Fair enough.

24                   [No interpretation]

25                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** [No interpretation]

26                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Commissioner, before we  
27      break, ---

28                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes.

1                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** It's Gib van Ert for  
2 Michael Chong.

3                   I see Commission counsel has taken an extra  
4 30 minutes in her examination. Pursuant to the O'Connor  
5 Rule, ---

6                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Eighteen (18).

7                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** I had thought we were  
8 finishing at 11:50.

9                   **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** The clock says 18.

10                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** That's okay. Just go  
11 on.

12                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Okay. Well, we'll figure  
13 out exactly how much extra, but pursuant to the O'Connor Rule  
14 that governs in this proceeding, that extra time should be  
15 allocated to the parties for their cross, to ensure that  
16 Commission counsel's time and the parties' time is equal.

17                  So I'm asking that we be given that extra  
18 time. We'll have to figure out between ourselves how to  
19 allocate it, but I wanted to bring that to your attention  
20 straight away.

21                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Okay. Let me look into  
22 this issue at lunchtime but we'll let you know through an  
23 email.

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

25                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll take a shorter  
26 break today, so -- lunch today, so make sure to come back at  
27 no later than 1:20.

28                  **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

1                   This sitting of the Commission is now in  
2 recess until 1:20 p.m.

3 --- Upon recessing at 12:22 p.m.

4 --- Upon resuming at 1:21 a.m.

5                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please.

6                   This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
7 Commission is now back in session.

8                   The time is 1:21 a.m.

9                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Good afternoon. Maître  
10 van Ert, I must apologize. You were right, it was nearly 30  
11 minutes. The 18 minutes that I had were just for the period  
12 following the break so, indeed, there will be an additional  
13 30 minutes granted for cross-examination, and a portion of  
14 this time will be allocated to the Attorney General.

15                   I believe that you received information with  
16 regard to the time allocated to you.

17                   So I think you have received through emails  
18 the time that will be allocated to you for your cross-  
19 examination. But just in case ---

20                   **MS. ERIN DANN:** Commissioner?

21                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes?

22                   **MS. ERIN DANN:** I'm so sorry to interrupt.  
23 It's Erin Dann. An email was sent around. I've just  
24 distributed a hard paper copy that unfortunately I don't  
25 believe reflects the email that was sent around. So if we  
26 could just -- if I could just have one moment because I  
27 believe the copy that's on your desk is incorrect. So I will  
28 make sure that you have the correct version, which is the



1 version that was circulated by email to the parties. If I  
2 could just have a brief indulgence, I will go get your -- the  
3 ---

4 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Sure. So I will ---

5 **MS. ERIN DANN:** --- corrected version.

6 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** We'll suspend two  
7 minutes.

8 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

9 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
10 recess until 1:25 p.m.

11 --- Upon recessing at 1:25 a.m.

12 --- Upon resuming at 1:29 p.m.

13 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please.

14 **--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Resumed:**

15 **THE REGISTRAR:** This sitting of the Foreign  
16 Interference Commission is now back in session.

17 The time is 1:29 p.m.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we were able to  
19 resolve the little issue that we had.

20 Just to make sure that everyone has the right  
21 time, I'm going to indicate the time allocated to each and  
22 every one. So it will be Sikh Coalition will go first for 15  
23 minutes. Michael Chong's counsel will go second for 20  
24 minutes. After that, counsel for Han Dong 10 minutes.  
25 Counsel for Erin O'Toole 10 minutes. Counsel for Jenny Kwan  
26 15 minutes. Conservative Party 15 minutes, Human Rights  
27 Coalition 11 minutes, UCC 10 minutes, RCDA 12 minutes, the  
28 Concern Group 12 minutes, and the Attorney General 20

1 minutes. If need be, there will be re-examination by  
2 Commission counsel as usual, but it's not counted in the 30  
3 minutes. And we'll take a break after the Conservative  
4 Party's cross-examination.

5 Before starting the cross-examination, I have  
6 two questions for you, Mr. Prime Minister.

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** [No interpretation]  
8 question me in French as well.

9 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Yes, indeed. It's a  
10 little strange to have two francophones speaking to each  
11 other in English.

12 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, we should try  
13 to avoid that.

14 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** You stated earlier today  
15 at the end of your testimony that you would prefer to see  
16 NSICOP perhaps go too far rather than not benefiting from its  
17 analysis and that this would allow for a healthy debate  
18 around the issue.

19 So my question is this. How do you envisage  
20 the possibility of having a debate with regard to what will  
21 or was reported? The work of NSICOP is mainly based on  
22 information that is classified, so how do you view this?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** First of all, I  
24 would clearly prefer that NSICOP be exact and precise and  
25 well-founded in everything it is reporting and putting out.  
26 We understand that this is an organization that is rather new  
27 that's still developing its ways of doing things and, for me,  
28 a learning curve is appropriate for an institution that we

1       hope will be in place for decades in order to defend Canada's  
2       interests.

3                       Clearly, when NSICOP made its report, I asked  
4       the Minister for Public Safety to publish a response to the  
5       report to explain -- to thank NSICOP for its work, but also  
6       to explain that there were elements that we weren't perhaps  
7       perfectly aligned on that might have been slightly erroneous.

8                       For me, the important debate is that which is  
9       taking place within the government with NSICOP that's  
10      learning. We're saying, well, maybe the next time we  
11      shouldn't go as far. These are adjustments to be made and  
12      you are right in underscoring this.

13                      The idea of having a broad debate, a public  
14      debate on how NSICOP is working may not be valid, but there  
15      could be articles, analysis by journalists, et cetera, saying  
16      the Minister stated this, NSICOP said this. I think that is  
17      part of the lived experience that we must all accumulate in  
18      areas of security intelligence and interference.

19                      **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** I have a question  
20      flowing from your response, and I want -- I don't want to  
21      pre-judge the responses. As you know, we must also look at  
22      the NSICOP Report, so I don't want to pre-judge the  
23      conclusions we might reach. But do you see a risk here were  
24      there to be errors, as some have stated or identified, or if  
25      stronger terms will be used by NSICOP or by the intelligence  
26      community, do you have a fear that the trust of people in  
27      these institutions might be harmed by a public report that  
28      can't be necessarily corrected given the classified

1 information involved?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It was corrected by  
3 the response of the Minister underscoring the fact that there  
4 were elements that we disagree with as a government and this  
5 process -- well, clearly we won't always have a Commission of  
6 Inquiry on all of these reports, but I think that the  
7 learning process throughout the process will result in a  
8 situation where NSICOP and those who take a close look at  
9 these reports will be in a better position to judge -- to  
10 judge the information and the analysis provided.

11 I think we also must underscore the fact that  
12 there's rarely very clear black and white analyses of these  
13 types of situations. There's always an approach based on  
14 analysis, reflection, debate such that, for me, if we have a  
15 broader perspective, even if it's not perfect, especially in  
16 the first years, this allows us to develop expertise that  
17 will be stronger in the coming years.

18 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

19 Second question that becomes, in fact, the  
20 third question, you indicated that we must be very prudent  
21 before regulating or legislating with regard to nomination  
22 races, et cetera involving the various political Parties.  
23 And you added that what's important in your mind is that the  
24 political Parties take into account the rules in place and  
25 respect their rigor.

26 Would you have a suggestion with regard to  
27 the way these requirements should be imposed on political  
28 Parties?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Ideally, these  
2                   wouldn't be rules imposed by legislation, imposed by a  
3                   government or even by Elections Canada. These would be,  
4                   rather, expectations on the part of citizens for oversight  
5                   and accountability vis a vis journalists. Members of Parties  
6                   also should require that the Party demonstrate that it is  
7                   following a rigorous system in order to protect itself, in  
8                   order for voters to be able to evaluate the situation.

9                   There's no way of legislating. We could ask  
10                  Elections Canada to take a closer look, but there are  
11                  political Parties -- I mentioned the Marxist-Leninist Party,  
12                  for example. There are Parties, as I was saying, for which  
13                  the rigor in their structure might be different from what we  
14                  might expect from a Party that would want to form government  
15                  or hold a balance of power in the House of Commons.

16                  We must be careful when requiring certain  
17                  behaviours or processes on the part of a political Party. We  
18                  mustn't be creating barriers to the creation of political  
19                  Parties in a free and open democracy. We must be careful to  
20                  always allow our democratic institutions to organize  
21                  themselves with integrity vis a vis what they want to propose  
22                  or oppose for the country.

23                  I'm not saying no, there's no way of doing  
24                  this, but we must be extremely careful so as to not harm our  
25                  democracy, hinder it. We must not hinder it as we seek to  
26                  protect it.

27                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

28                  So we'll begin with the cross-examination.

1 So first one is Mr. Singh for the Sikh Coalition.

2 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. PRABJOT SINGH:**

3 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you, Commissioner.

4 Mr. Trudeau, my name is Prabjot Singh for the  
5 Sikh Coalition. You spoke to Commission counsel earlier  
6 about this intricate network of Canada-based Indian  
7 diplomats, senior government officials in India, and then the  
8 Lawrence Bishnoi Gang and who went on and engaged in violence  
9 in Canada. So before we move into some of the more  
10 substantive issues, I just want to clarify and confirm a  
11 couple of facts for the record. You spoke about a number of  
12 ways that diplomats covertly and illegally collected  
13 information on individuals in Canada, including threatening  
14 to revoke visas. Some of the information that was collected  
15 by diplomats was also done by coercion, including threats of  
16 violence against family members in India; correct?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I am very aware  
18 that there is an ongoing RCMP investigation, and, indeed,  
19 trials and court cases on these issues, so I really would be  
20 hesitant to venture much further than I already have into in  
21 which what I was saying was pretty much repeating what the  
22 RCMP announced on Monday. I wouldn't want to go further in  
23 characterizing things that are questions better asked of the  
24 RCMP.

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure. That's totally  
26 fair. So the RCMP's press release and its comments at the  
27 press conference stated that organized crime was used to  
28 execute the violent activities to create the perception of an

1 unsafe environment targeting the South Asian community in  
2 Canada. Do you recall that?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

4 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So I think you would  
5 agree that this is quite an alarming and intrusive attack on  
6 Canada. So this goes beyond simple disinformation and  
7 amplifying narratives in the media that Canada is unsafe.  
8 These individuals and government officials actually  
9 orchestrated violence to make people feel unsafe and come to  
10 that conclusion. Is that fair?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'd actually say  
12 there seemed to be two goals in this. One is, yes, to make  
13 Canadians, particularly South Asian Canadians, feel less safe  
14 here in their own country, but secondly is actually to help  
15 prove a point that India -- or, sorry, the Indian Government  
16 has been trying to make about Canada for quite some time,  
17 that we are a country that doesn't take seriously violence or  
18 terrorism or incitements to hatred, which are -- is entirely  
19 false. But failing an ability to point out how Canada has  
20 been supposedly failing to prevent violence, it seems like  
21 folks within the Indian Government have decided to create  
22 violence and unlawfulness in Canada as a way of demonstrating  
23 the point that they are trying to make, that there is  
24 violence and unlawfulness in Canada. And I think that is  
25 exceptionally egregious as an approach to a -- as a neighbour  
26 -- a sovereign democracy.

27 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So you also indicated to  
28 Commission counsel earlier that the diplomats were passing

1 information to officials at the highest level of the Indian  
2 Government, who then would pass on the information to the  
3 criminal gangs to orchestrate the violence. So given that  
4 reality, this was not just a rogue operation of a few  
5 individuals that went off track. At some level, in some  
6 form, there was a clear policy decision that was authorized  
7 and directed by responsible members of the Government of  
8 India to orchestrate this violence. Is that fair?

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think that is an  
10 extremely important question. And that is a question that  
11 actually we have been repeatedly asking the Government of  
12 India to assist us on and to get to the bottom of. The  
13 question of whether it is or could be rogue elements within  
14 the government, or whether it was a more systemic, systematic  
15 endeavour for the Government of India is exactly the kind of  
16 thing that for investigators here on the ground in Canada, it  
17 is, you know, somewhat removed from being able to uncover the  
18 internal machinations of the Indian Government of who went  
19 wrong, or who did this, or who did that. That's why from the  
20 very beginning we have been asking for India -- of the Indian  
21 Government to take these allegations seriously and proceed  
22 with their own investigations and work with us on figuring  
23 out exactly how these egregious violations of Canadian  
24 sovereignty actually happened.

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Are you aware of public  
26 statements made by Prime Minister Modi in spring of this year  
27 where he said something to the effect of today's India  
28 doesn't send the dossiers to other countries to request



1 assistance. Today's India will kill our enemies in their  
2 homes. Are you aware that that statement was made publicly  
3 by the Prime Minister?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That was a public  
5 statement that I am aware of. Maybe not in those exact  
6 words, but ---

7 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Sure. Something to that  
8 effect. So you spoke earlier about the geopolitical  
9 instability and context that we exist in right now and how it  
10 intersects with different foreign interference threats. So I  
11 think you would agree that the Modi Government autocratic  
12 behaviour, in terms of these specific violent acts that have  
13 been carried out over the past year or two, is a threat not  
14 only to Canada's sovereignty and institutions, but a very  
15 real threat to the international rules-based order itself.

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** One of the reasons  
17 we have been so deeply engaged with our allies, particularly  
18 our Five Eyes allies of the United States, the UK, New  
19 Zealand and Australia, on this we are a tight security  
20 partnership as five countries, but also others, is because we  
21 are seeing right now around the world a pulling back of the  
22 rule of law, contesting of the international rules-based  
23 order, whether it be Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine,  
24 whether it be China's coercive diplomacy as evidenced by the  
25 arresting of the arbitrary detention of two Michaels.  
26 Ensuring that, amongst our community of nations, particularly  
27 democracies that purport to be and aspire to be rule of law  
28 countries, that we be there to highlight and stand strongly

1       against violations of international law is really important.  
2       So this is something that we have highlighted to allies and  
3       it's something that many, many countries around the world  
4       share of concerns that if we don't have the rule of law and  
5       the international rules-based order at this particular  
6       complex moment in global history, then everyone becomes less  
7       safe, and everyone is poised to suffer, either economically  
8       or worse.

9                   **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:**   So that's a helpful kind  
10       of exposition on the rules-based order in general. The  
11       question was whether India's violent activities and attacks  
12       against Canada and Canadians, you would consider them a  
13       threat against the rules-based order and stability on the  
14       geopolitical stage.

15                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:**   I think ---

16                  **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:**   Specifically with  
17       relation to these acts.

18                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:**   --- I think I have  
19       been very clear that Canada, as a country of the rule of law,  
20       will always stand up for the rules-based order, regardless of  
21       whether it is the arbitrary detention of two Michaels by  
22       China, or actions that we've -- that the RCMP highlighted  
23       earlier this week that involves India government engaging in  
24       facilitating violence in Canada against Canadians. This is  
25       something we will always take very seriously.

26                  **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:**   So a significant amount  
27       of attention in the Government's communications this week  
28       focused on disrupting India's capabilities, but in the

1 context of a sustained campaign of violence that lasted at  
2 least a year, I would suggest that accountability for those  
3 responsible is crucial to deterring this kind of violence.  
4 So my question is about what steps Canada can and will take  
5 to ensure that the senior officials who actually orchestrated  
6 and authorized this are held accountable. Will Canada apply  
7 targeted sanctions against RAW, India's intelligence agency,  
8 as well as those officials found to be responsible in an  
9 investigation in order to push India to cooperate?

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The primary driver  
11 of the government's actions in this case, and in most if not  
12 all cases, is ensuring the safety and security of Canadians.  
13 That is one of our top foreign policy goals, always, and we  
14 will continue to look at things we can do to ensure that  
15 Canadians are safe in Canada and when they travel overseas.

16 Many of our foreign policy positions have  
17 flowed from that, and that will always be the lens with which  
18 we look at any possible future decisions. And I'm not -- so  
19 I'm not going to hypothesize about what steps we might need  
20 to be taking to keep Canadians safe. What I can say is the  
21 steps that we have taken so far have been focused on ensuring  
22 greater safety for Canadians, ensuring our ability to keep  
23 Canadians safe by disrupting networks that were causing  
24 significant violence to Canadians.

25 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So I don't think that  
26 really answered the question about accountability.

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, it didn't.

28 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** But I'm going to move on.

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That's a good idea.

2                   **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** You mentioned Prime  
3 Minister Modi's comments to you in September 2023, urging  
4 Canada to arrest people who are outspoken against the Indian  
5 government. We've also heard evidence from SITE, from RCMP,  
6 and Global Affairs, that India seeks to influence Canadian  
7 policy, to criminally prosecute Sikhs who advocate for  
8 Khalistan or otherwise criticize India.

9                   So yourself, and the other witnesses have  
10 rightfully insisted that Canadian agencies already  
11 investigate any criminal activity, but that lawful political  
12 advocacy is protected by the Charter. So given that fact and  
13 that India engages in foreign interference with the objective  
14 of influencing Canadian policy in this regard, would you  
15 support suspending intelligence and information sharing  
16 agreements signed in 2018 that can be misused by the  
17 Government of India to target Sikh activists engaging in  
18 lawful advocacy for Khalistan?

19                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Let me be very  
20 clear once again. Canada's policy is around One India. We  
21 believe in the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of  
22 India. We respect that. We certainly expect India to  
23 respect the sovereignty of Canada, which in this case they  
24 have not.

25                   It is also extremely important that people  
26 who come to this country from every corner of the world  
27 understand that they are free to hold the political beliefs  
28 that they choose to when you are in Canada. We have a

1 Charter that protects people's freedoms, people's freedom of  
2 expression, people's freedoms of political views. And that  
3 is not just a foundational principle of free democracies all  
4 around the world, but it's particularly important for Canada  
5 that is a country to which people have come from every corner  
6 of the world, in some cases choosing to leave their home  
7 country because of political disagreements or other reasons.

8 So defending the rights of people to hold  
9 political views that may be unpopular in their home country  
10 is a foundational responsibility for any Canadian government.

11 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So will you consider  
12 suspending those intelligence and information sharing  
13 agreements that can be misused by the Government of India to  
14 target Sikh activists, particularly considering the evidence  
15 we've seen that India engages in foreign interference and  
16 disinformation for that objective?

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I've said a  
18 number of times, we are not looking to provoke or create a  
19 fight with India. The Indian Government made a horrific  
20 mistake in thinking that they could interfere as aggressively  
21 as they did in the safety and sovereignty of Canada. And we  
22 need to respond in order to ensure Canadian's safety. What  
23 other steps we will take will be determined in due course,  
24 but every step of the way our single overarching priority is  
25 ensuring that we are keeping all Canadians safe.

26 **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** So we heard this week  
27 that six diplomats have been expelled from Canada and sent  
28 back to India. But given the long history of Indian foreign

1 interference, the intensity we've observed and learned about  
2 through this Commission, and the fact that this appears to be  
3 in some form, a conscious policy decision by the Government  
4 of India, I think it's reasonable that there's concerns that  
5 when new diplomats come to replace those ones, that there are  
6 concerns that they might continue to engage in similar kinds  
7 of activities.

8 So looking back at India's foreign  
9 interference activities, which have clearly escalated, I want  
10 to look forward and ask you to provide some insight to the  
11 Commission, because I think it's fair to say that the  
12 Government of Canada, and Canadian agencies failed to detect  
13 India's activities before they occurred, before the  
14 assassination of Hardeep Singh and this campaign of violence,  
15 and whatever steps have been taken failed to deter India from  
16 continuing to engage in violence against Canada and in  
17 Canada.

18 So can you provide some insight on what  
19 lessons you think have been learned by the government and  
20 agencies that can actually inform how Canada increases its  
21 capacity to detect that kind of activity, and actually  
22 effectively deters it in the future?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, first of all,  
24 let me say that the issue of the Indian Government as a  
25 possible source of foreign interference is not something that  
26 only appeared over the past weeks, or even over the past  
27 year. Canadian intelligence agencies have been collecting  
28 that information for a number of years now.

1                   And as I've said in an earlier answer this  
2 morning, we are constantly adapting and adjusting to shifting  
3 approaches by other states as they engage through different  
4 technologies, through different means, through different  
5 vectors, into advancing their aims in Canada. And we will  
6 continue to learn and adjust as necessary to do what we must  
7 do to keep Canadians safe, to protect our institutions and  
8 our democracy.

9                   **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Madam Commissioner, with  
10 your leave I have one final question if that's possible?

11                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** No, because you're two  
12 minutes over your time and we have many this afternoon.

13                   **MR. PRABJOT SINGH:** Thank you, those are my  
14 questions.

15                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

16                   Counsel for Michael Chong.

17                   **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GIB van ERT:**

18                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Prime Minister, my client  
19 was here in September and gave evidence to the Commissioner,  
20 and one of the concerns that he expressed is that this  
21 country has become, in his words, a playground for foreign  
22 interference by states like PRC and India. Mr. Mendicino was  
23 here last week and disputed that phrase, playground of  
24 foreign interference. Given the revelations by the RCMP and  
25 by you, Sir, on Monday, isn't Mr. Chong's assessment closer  
26 to the mark than Mr. Mendicino's?

27                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. I think it  
28 reinforces how wrong Mr. Chong is, because what this week has

1       been all about is demonstrating the capacity and the reality  
2       that Canada has been both detecting foreign interference and  
3       acting on it. I would suggest that ---

4               **MR. GIB van ERT:** After the fact.

5               **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- knowing about  
6       this and revealing it to the public, and creating diplomatic  
7       malaise to put it lightly, is an example of us pushing back  
8       strongly against attempts at interference in this country.

9               **MR. GIB van ERT:** Not just attempts, Sir,  
10       successful interference.

11              **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

12              **MR. GIB van ERT:** You confirmed this morning  
13       that your government's assessment of the PRC's targeting of  
14       Michael Chong and his relations in Hong Kong is not foreign  
15       interference, but is instead lawful diplomatic activity.  
16       Sir, there have been -- there were in 2021, four intelligence  
17       products, we've only seen one of them, but there were four  
18       concerning PRC activities directed at my client, all coming  
19       from CSIS.

20              The one that we've been able to see in some  
21       unredacted form is the famous IMU from the 31st of May, which  
22       I expect you've seen before. It says explicitly that CSIS  
23       regards there as being multiple threat actors, including the  
24       Ministry of State Security.

25              Are you aware of that, Sir? I can show you  
26       the document if it helps, but you may be familiar with it  
27       already.

28              **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I am ---



1                   **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Madam Commissioner,  
2       sorry, just before the Prime Minister answered, my friend  
3       said, "You confirmed this morning that the PRC's targeting  
4       Chong was not foreign interference". And I'm -- my  
5       recollection is the Prime Minister testified that Zhao Wei's  
6       targeting of Chong was not foreign interference.

7                   So I believe that that was the evidence the  
8       Prime Minister gave, but I stand to be corrected by my  
9       friend.

10                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, I was talking  
11       about Zhao Wei.

12                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yeah, it's much of a  
13       muchness to me, Sir.

14                  So my point is this. The Ministry of State  
15       Security, you're familiar with that agency?

16                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

17                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Is there any such agency in  
18       this country?

19                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think drawing  
20       parallels between Canadian structures and the PRC structures  
21       is extremely difficult at best.

22                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes, particularly in the  
23       case of the MSS because it's a foreign intelligence agency  
24       and we don't have one of those; right?

25                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, we have an  
26       intelligence agency that focuses on collection  
27       internationally, which is CSIS.

28                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. Right. But we

1 don't send spies abroad and we don't send secret police  
2 abroad. Isn't that right, Sir?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm not going to  
4 speak to CSIS operations, but I can tell you there are CSIS  
5 employees all around the world.

6 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, my point is this. The  
7 MSS is PRC's ---

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Or I'm missing  
9 something about what CSIS does.

10 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Well, let me get to it.  
11 MSS is PRC's equivalent of Russia's FSB or  
12 the Soviet Union's old KGB or, indeed, India's RAW, the  
13 Research Analysis ---

14 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Or the U.S.'s CIA.

15 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Right. We don't have  
16 anything like that.

17 My point, Sir, is that if a diplomat -- a so-  
18 called diplomat, Wei Zhao, in this country is sending  
19 information about a Canadian MP -- two Canadian MPs, as it  
20 turns out, back to MSS -- not back to the foreign  
21 departments. Not back to foreign affairs, but to China's spy  
22 agency, that, Sir, is not lawful diplomacy. Don't you agree  
23 with that?

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'll say two things  
25 about that.

26 First of all, I'm not entirely certain that  
27 you understand what CSIS is if not Canadians' agency for  
28 collecting intel overseas. And secondly, in terms of the

1 analysis of what Zhao Wei or others were doing, I am  
2 obviously not an expert in the hierarchies within the  
3 People's Republic of China's various agencies, but what I can  
4 say is, I defer to CSIS's conclusions on these because they  
5 are the intelligence agency that provides me information,  
6 provides us information on foreign activities, particularly  
7 bad actors.

8 CSIS's conclusion in this case that we've  
9 seen before this Commission is that the actions that Zhao Wei  
10 engaged in in regards to your client did not constitute  
11 foreign interference.

12 Now, I am reporting that. I am not the  
13 person who made the analysis and determination that it was on  
14 one side of the line or others. I have confidence in our  
15 agencies that do make that determination, however.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, Zhao Wei was not a  
17 lawful diplomat. He was a foreign intelligence agent. He  
18 was a Chinese spy. Do you accept that?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I accept when I --  
20 I will state that he was ejected from Canada because he was  
21 no longer able to even carry the role of diplomat, which was  
22 his overt role, but I also explained that there were  
23 situations in which CSIS has concluded that he engaged in  
24 foreign interference activities, albeit not towards your  
25 client, Michael Chong.

26 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, I put it to you that  
27 Zhao Wei was outed as a foreign spy not by your government,  
28 but by *The Globe and Mail*.

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** There's no question  
2                   that the criminal who leaked the information to the media had  
3                   a role to play in our decision to expel Michael Chong (sic),  
4                   but as I said, there were -- sorry, expel Zhao Wei. But  
5                   there were three factors that went into that decision to  
6                   declare him *persona non grata*.

7                   One was the escalating tensions between  
8                   Canada and China where they, despite repeated attempts,  
9                   refused to decrease or stop their interference activities.  
10                  Two was the fact that Zhao Wei was, indeed -- and this  
11                  perhaps goes to your contention, was engaged in foreign  
12                  interference activities, albeit not towards Michael Chong.  
13                  And three was the fact that his name was plastered across the  
14                  newspapers made it impossible for him to continue to be a  
15                  diplomat in Canada.

16                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** NSICOP reports that CSIS  
17                  identified Zhao Wei as a candidate for expulsion in 2019,  
18                  several years before *The Globe and Mail* story, but your  
19                  government let him stay here. Nothing was done about him and  
20                  you, on your own evidence, had never even heard of him until  
21                  you read about him in *The Globe* that morning.

22                  I put it to you, Sir, that as head of  
23                  government you ought to have known who Zhao Wei was and what  
24                  was going on. Should someone not have informed you about his  
25                  activities?

26                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I've said a  
27                  number of times, in my role as Prime Minister I need to know  
28                  the behaviour of China, I need to know the behaviour of

1 India, I need to know the behaviour of Russia in regards to  
2 Canada and in regards to Canadians, in regards to Canadian  
3 interests. I do not need to know the operational details to  
4 be able to establish and empower the agencies to actually go  
5 after it.

6 Now, I need to know the type of things they  
7 are doing, but knowing the actual name of the individual,  
8 there are such a large number of names that I trust and count  
9 on my intelligence agencies to do the follow-ups on the  
10 dozens of diplomats that they must keep a close eye on across  
11 the country at all given times. And ---

12 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'm sorry. It goes ---

13 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- me sitting with  
14 a list of names of potential problematic people does nothing  
15 to help keep Canadians safe in the role that I have.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, it goes well beyond  
17 particular names because what you weren't told was that there  
18 was a debate raging in your government between CSIS on the  
19 one hand and Global Affairs on the other. CSIS assessed that  
20 these activities -- we see it in the 2021 MIU -- were threats  
21 to the security of Canada. CSIS conducted a TRM of Michael  
22 Chong on the 2nd of May for that same reason.

23 Meanwhile, Mr. Morrison ---

24 **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** Excuse me. There was  
25 not a TRM.

26 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It was a defensive  
27 briefing, actually. I mis-spoke this morning, so you caught  
28 me on that.

1                   It was a defensive briefing to Michael Chong,  
2                   not a threat reduction measure, which is apparently an  
3                   important distinction, but ---

4                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Well, I'll leave that for  
5                   now.

6                   I thought Mr. Chong's evidence was that he  
7                   was informed by CSIS it was a TRM.

8                   In any event ---

9                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That was after --  
10                  after the leaks.

11                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** That's what I'm talking  
12                  about.

13                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That was -- okay.

14                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Yes.

15                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I believe that was  
16                  a TRM. It was the earlier one that was a defensive ---

17                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** On the 2nd of May, 2023,  
18                  that was a TRM.

19                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Twenty twenty-three  
20                  (2023). Yes.

21                  **MR. GIB van ERT:** Precisely. So you've got  
22                  the security service on the one side assessing that these are  
23                  foreign threats, this is foreign interference. You've got  
24                  Mr. Morrison and Jody Thomas, Global Affairs, saying no,  
25                  you've misunderstood. This is consistent with the Vienna  
26                  Convention.

27                  What you ought to have known but were never  
28                  told, Sir, was that there was this debate going on and that

1 it was causing disagreements between agencies about how to  
2 properly analyze and characterize particular instances.  
3 Michael Chong happens to be one. There may very well have  
4 been others. Someone ought to have told you that and so I  
5 want to push back on this notion that we've heard from other  
6 witnesses and ---

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Actually, let me  
8 push back on that right there, that I testified earlier today  
9 that I am fully aware and, indeed, regularly apprised of  
10 tension between -- of constructive, creative tension of  
11 disagreements of perspective between diplomats and spies or  
12 between our Global Affairs Canada and CSIS on ---

13 **MR. GIB van ERT:** But sir, no one told you  
14 before -- before May 2023 that there was a dispute in your  
15 government about whether Zhao Wei was acting lawfully or  
16 illegally.

17 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** You're right. Not  
18 about this particular person.

19 **MR. GIB van ERT:** That's my point.

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But about a range  
21 of diplomats from many different countries who are engaged in  
22 questionable activities that we have to make determinations  
23 around which ones and when we kick out knowing full well that  
24 as soon as we PNG anyone, we lose diplomats on the other side  
25 who are not engaged in subterfuge, so there are many factors  
26 that go into when one takes a PNG decision.

27 If we were to kick out every single diplomat  
28 who raised concerns, we wouldn't have any diplomats and,

1       therefore, no representation in any of our adversarial  
2       countries. And part of diplomacy is making sure that we do  
3       have people there, and the price of that is having people  
4       here.

5                       Now what our intelligence agencies are  
6       constantly doing, as you were pointing out, is keeping an  
7       eye, you know, metaphorically or actually, on many of these  
8       people while engaging in an ongoing dialogue, sometimes a  
9       debate, with foreign -- Global Affairs Canada to ensure that  
10      we're getting that balance right of protecting Canadians and  
11      allowing the work that Canadians are doing overseas in these  
12      countries to continue to further protect Canadians.

13                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, you've characterized  
14      this debate as a good thing in your words this morning.  
15      Other witnesses have come and called it a healthy debate. I  
16      want to suggest to you that it wasn't a healthy debate.  
17      Having a debate about what foreign interference means and  
18      where the line is between that and lawful diplomacy is fine  
19      to a point, but at a certain point, where one of your  
20      agencies is saying one thing and the other one is saying the  
21      other, someone has to come to you as the head of government  
22      and say, "We have this dispute. It's causing us trouble in  
23      operationalizing particular instances." My client's instance  
24      being one, but no doubt there were others. Someone should  
25      have come to you, the NSIA should have come to you and said,  
26      "Prime Minister, we've got this difference of opinion, we  
27      want you to know both sides, and we need your guidance," but  
28      no one ever did that, and so you were left in the dark.



1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But that is exactly  
2 why the authority for PNGing someone rests in the Minister of  
3 Foreign Affairs's Office, and she was very much closer to this  
4 debate, because it is her responsibility. And when the  
5 decision was elevated to, "Okay. We should possibly and  
6 probably PNG this individual," then I was brought in as part  
7 of the discussion around that, recognizing that it was her  
8 authority to do.

9                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, when the story came  
10 out in *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Morrison explained to us that  
11 Global Affairs went back, looked at its records, found that  
12 in fact CSIS had been raising alarms about Wei Zhao's  
13 activities years before, but they had never, in Mr.  
14 Morrison's words, moved beyond the working level, meaning  
15 they somehow had not come to the attention of leaders within  
16 Global Affairs.

17                   So again I say to you that this is a failing  
18 of this government to take serious situations and serious  
19 debates about what's foreign interference and what isn't and  
20 actually resolve them. It's all well and good to debate  
21 them, but at a certain point, a judgement has to be made and  
22 someone has to give governance and guidance about how things  
23 should proceed, and that wasn't done until we read about it  
24 in *The Globe and Mail* ---

25                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** On the contrary, --

26 -

27                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May.

28                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- choosing to not

1 act is a judgement. The fact that it wasn't determined in  
2 those previous moments that the threshold for PNG had been  
3 met was an act of decision. Yes, you can act by PNGing  
4 someone, but you can also act by saying, "No, we're going to  
5 keep this individual under surveillance. We're going to keep  
6 -- or keep them within what we know." I can't speak to  
7 whether or not there is active surveillance on any individual  
8 or not, but continue to be aware of this individual and what  
9 they are doing because it is -- it has purpose.

10 Finding out when that right line is, when  
11 that moment is, is not something to be taken lightly and it  
12 is something that rests on the collected and collective  
13 expertise of people who have been working in the security and  
14 intelligence domain for years to develop the expertise on  
15 when that timing is right.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Sir, it wasn't a matter of  
17 you choosing not to act when it came to Wei Zhao. You didn't  
18 know you had a choice before you at all ---

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But the ---

20 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- because your officials  
21 ---

22 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- act is not  
23 mine.

24 **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- never told you.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The act is not  
26 mine. I do not determine when ---

27 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Well the same ---

28 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** --- someone should

1 be PNGed ---

2 MR. GIB van ERT: --- goes for ---

3 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: --- or not.

4 MR. GIB van ERT: --- Madam Joly. She chose  
5 ---

6 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Then you can ask  
7 Madam Joly about that.

8 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Just a moment. Just a  
9 moment. I think -- just wait for him to answer, and same  
10 thing on your side.

11 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Of course.

12 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Just wait for the  
13 question too.

14 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: We go back to  
15 debating days at McGill, so there's a little bit of back and  
16 forth there.

17 MR. GIB van ERT: My point, Sir, was that  
18 there's no evidence that this was put before Madam Joly or  
19 whoever the Foreign Minister was at the time either. It all  
20 came to a head because of the leak. And what I'm suggesting,  
21 you have rightly said that the leak is criminal. Absolutely  
22 right. Should not have happened. But this debate, which I  
23 say is not healthy, but was festering in your government,  
24 boiled over with someone taking the law into their own hands,  
25 which they ought never to have done, and revealing all this  
26 to the world, and only then did you react. There was nothing  
27 proactive. That's my concern, Sir.

28 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Well the issue with

1 the criminal who leaked this information is they got it wrong  
2 in what they leaked. And regardless of what's in the  
3 newspapers or not, it is incumbent upon a serious responsible  
4 government not to react to partisan attacks or erroneous but  
5 salacious headlines, but to react on the substance of things.  
6 And that's exactly what we did when we, as a government  
7 collectively, in the person of a Foreign Minister, made the  
8 determination that it was time to PNG Zhao Wei.

9 **MR. GIB van ERT:** So you seem to be  
10 suggesting that Michael Chong overreacted in worrying about  
11 his relations in Hong Kong.

12 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, not at all.  
13 When ---

14 **MR. GIB van ERT:** Well that is what you're  
15 suggesting, it seems.

16 **MR. GIB van ERT:** No, I am suggesting that  
17 confronted with or faced with a leak that is itself  
18 erroneous, that suggests that China has threatened, with  
19 violence, his family, as the inference of the leak and the  
20 subsequent headlines were, Mr. Chong had every right to be  
21 concerned and even outraged, as did everyone, as were we by  
22 the idea that his family had been threatened with direct  
23 physical violence, which is what the leak and the leaker  
24 suggested.

25 We now know that that is wrong. And that is  
26 why it is really important that governments act based on  
27 actual analysis and actual intelligence and evaluation of  
28 that intelligence and not just what appears, as you say, in

1       *The Globe and Mail.*

2                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** Well, Sir, I told Mr. Clow  
3       this yesterday and I'll say it to you. Mr. Chong does not  
4       share your seeming confidence that his relatives in Hong Kong  
5       will never be coerced, or threatened, or even physically  
6       harmed by that state. It is not a rule of law democracy. It  
7       is not a state that has a track record of respecting people's  
8       freedom of conscience, freedom of political thought. And so  
9       these concerns that he has, whether they are based in  
10      intelligence that was misinterpreted in *The Globe and Mail* or  
11      not, are legitimate and fair, and you seem ---

12                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

13                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- to be wanting to  
14      downplay them, and I want to ---

15                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

16                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** --- push back on that.

17                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I am not  
18      downplaying them in the least. What I am saying is as a  
19      responsible government, as a government that is making  
20      decisions about how best to protect Canadians, including and  
21      especially parliamentarians, we need to rely on the best  
22      intelligence, and evidence, and analysis, and recommendations  
23      of our security agencies. And that is what we have leaned on  
24      in terms of concluding what threats were there on Mr. Chong  
25      and what positions and postures we should take because of it.  
26      We are a country that leans on its intelligence agencies, not  
27      on criminals leaking things to newspapers.

28                   **MR. GIB van ERT:** One final point, Sir. The

1 evidence repeatedly has been that other parts of the  
2 government have not relied on CSIS' warnings. In fact, the  
3 Minister of Public Safety doesn't even seem to have received  
4 them, or certainly didn't read them. The same is true of the  
5 NSIA. The same seems to be true of the Clerk of the Privy  
6 Council. So it's all well and good for you to say we're a  
7 country that respects our security agencies, the evidence,  
8 Sir, has been that the security agency has been sidelined and  
9 the concerns it's been trying to raise have been neglected,  
10 and sometimes not even read.

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think much of  
12 what we have demonstrated through this Commission as a  
13 government is that we have taken seriously, from the very  
14 first day, threats to national security through creating  
15 things that Mr. Chong was opposed to, like the National  
16 Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

17 But I would suggest, if Mr. Chong wanted to  
18 be part of an organization that was taking security  
19 seriously, he implore his leader, Pierre Poilievre, to get a  
20 security briefing so he can hear directly from CSIS on the  
21 challenges threatening his institution, the Conservative  
22 Party of Canada.

23 **MR. GIB van ERT:** I'll take that advice back  
24 to him. Thank you, Prime Minister.

25 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Thank you.

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

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

28 Next one is counsel for Han Dong.

1                   **MS. EMILY YOUNG:** Good afternoon, Madam  
2 Commissioner.

3                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Okay.

4                   **MS. EMILY YOUNG:** We have no questions for  
5 the Prime Minister. Thank you very much.

6                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you. Counsel for  
7 Erin O'Toole?

8                   **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. THOMAS JARMYN:**

9                   **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you, Commissioner.  
10 My name's Tom Jarmyn. I'm counsel for Erin O'Toole. I'm  
11 going to start with a question to which I expect your counsel  
12 will object, but it's a process we have to go through. So  
13 section 21 of the *CSIS Act* creates a statutory process  
14 whereby the agency requests the Minister to approve an  
15 application to Federal Court for a warrant. And in the  
16 course of that warrant, it's supported by an affidavit. That  
17 affidavit sets out the affiant's knowledge of the target and  
18 the affiant's reasonable expectations of the names of the  
19 individuals whose communications will be intercepted.

20                   I will ask you, first of all, has anyone ever  
21 advised you of the name of an individual who's been mentioned  
22 in a warrant?

23                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I actually ---

24                   **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** We would object to the  
25 question on the grounds of national security,  
26 confidentiality, in line with the objections made yesterday,  
27 they're the same question.

28                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I've actually got a

1 question for you, Sir. In your reading of that specific Act,  
2 what is the role of the Prime Minister in the granting of  
3 warrants for CSIS?

4 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Well, in fact, I was  
5 going to make that point is that neither the Prime Minister  
6 nor the Prime Minister's Office is named in the *CSIS Act* or  
7 is even part of the warrant process, and so the question  
8 we're seeking to have answered is whether or not that  
9 information was passed on to your staff yesterday and  
10 yourself today, but I take the objection ---

11 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So the question is  
12 noted.

13 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Thank you. And I would  
14 like to also the follow-on questions who passed on the  
15 information, the context of the discussion, and what was done  
16 with that information if the answer is yes. Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So it's noted.

18 **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** And we maintain the  
19 objection.

20 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Yes, I appreciate that.  
21 In the course of your direct examination this  
22 morning, Commission counsel took you to three items in which  
23 permission of yourself was sought by CSIS to brief  
24 parliamentarians. And for one reason or another, that issue  
25 never rose to your attention. And I guess the first question  
26 I would ask, to use your own words, what can the public  
27 service conclude when your Office refuses to decide  
28 something, because choosing to decide is a choice.



1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, first of all,  
2                   in terms of those three instances, the third instance never  
3                   actually materialized, so it's not an issue. The first  
4                   instance got interrupted by the pandemic after a few months.  
5                   I think everyone can understand that. And the second  
6                   instance, as my staff testified to yesterday, was busy being  
7                   worked on by my staff until the point that the election  
8                   called. They actually had -- my Office had questions back on  
9                   that, referred to briefing of non-parliamentarians who would  
10                  be in an important role. So it was being worked on and  
11                  didn't end up getting to me, as the staff testified  
12                  yesterday.

13                  **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And, in fact, this  
14                  morning you said that the -- CSIS could well have gone to the  
15                  Minister of Public Safety to have raised these matters with  
16                  him because they had direct access to him. Is that -- that's  
17                  consistent with your recollection?

18                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, the Minister  
19                  of Public Safety is the Minister responsible for CSIS and  
20                  they have regular meetings.

21                  **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** But I put it to you that  
22                  this is just one instance of a pattern throughout this file  
23                  in which CSIS doesn't go to the Minister of Public Safety.  
24                  It goes to your Office to seek approval with respect to  
25                  matters. Is that accurate?

26                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm not as -- I can  
27                  say with clarity that CSIS usually and often does go to its  
28                  Ministers. There are moments in which CSIS works directly

1 with my Office or orbit in the person of the National  
2 Security and Intelligence Advisor, but it is all part of the  
3 work that CSIS does.

4 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** There are at least five  
5 occasions that we're aware of where approval had been  
6 requested by the public service, so actions either by your  
7 Office, or by Minister Blair, or by Ms. Astravas, and the  
8 issue was raised, well, the public service didn't come back  
9 and raise the issue again. Is that actually a justifiable  
10 response when the public service asks for ---

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Given the volume of  
12 work done by the public service, the number of requests to go  
13 through, it is usual for something that is particularly  
14 urgent or important to be elevated by the asking department  
15 when a certain amount of time is taken on responding to a  
16 file. As I said, the Clerk raises that to me, the NSIA could  
17 raise that to me in any of our regular meetings, just like  
18 CSIS could raise it with the Minister.

19 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So if they don't ask  
20 twice it's not important?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. If they find  
22 that the usual course of affairs is taking longer than is  
23 necessary or than would be optimal for this particular issue  
24 they're concerned about, they will flag it and it will be  
25 prioritised.

26 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** And I assume you've  
27 reviewed the Commission's first phase report and would agree  
28 with me that, in fact, foreign interference has been a

1       serious problem in Canada since at least 2019?

2                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, that's why in  
3       2018 we actually took a significant step on foreign  
4       interference and created the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, and  
5       this is something that we've been working on from the very  
6       beginning in terms of protecting Canada's democracy and  
7       national security.

8                   **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** So I'm going to touch on  
9       something that Mr. van Ert raised but from a different  
10      perspective. We've heard evidence from Mr. Morrison, Mr.  
11      Vigneault and the Deputy Ministers of Public Safety about  
12      this conflict of views about what exactly constitutes foreign  
13      interference. If it's been a problem for 5 years, why does  
14      it take until July of 2024 for the Deputy Ministers to sit  
15      down and come to a common understanding of what foreign  
16      interference is?

17                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because when it  
18      comes to a matter like foreign interference, it's -- it is  
19      one thing to have a clear definition, which is actions of a  
20      nature that are either clandestine, or illegal, or covert by  
21      foreign government agents on Canadian soil or in Canadian  
22      institutions. It's another thing entirely to make informed  
23      judgments around whether something is simply interference --  
24      simply influence or interference. And those debates are --  
25      they're not a bug of the process. They're a feature of the  
26      process. They are essential to continue to make sure we are  
27      adjusting to the new technologies, the new vectors of  
28      interference, the new realities as more countries, you know,

1 do different things and other countries do less.

2 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Forgive me, Prime  
3 Minister, maybe I just don't understand, but since 2019, this  
4 has been a serious problem, and it's only in July of 2024  
5 that the senior Deputy Ministers on this file are sitting  
6 down to come to a common understanding of what particular  
7 instance are foreign interference. And, in fact, they never  
8 raise the issue with their Ministers.

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I completely object  
10 to your characterization of this. We started to become  
11 preoccupied with foreign interference during the 2016 U.S.  
12 Presidential Election where it was obvious that foreign  
13 interference was a reality. We then saw it in the Brexit  
14 Referendum in the UK. We saw it in the 2017 French  
15 Presidential Election, which is why we built the SITE Task  
16 Force and the Panel of Five to be able to defend Canada's  
17 election integrity and ensure that the subsequent elections  
18 in Canada in 2019, 2021 and all future elections are free  
19 from the foreign interference that impacts their outcomes.  
20 That is why we have taken -- that is a demonstration, and  
21 there are many more, of how we have taken seriously foreign  
22 interference from the very beginning. G7 in 2018 had a  
23 significant mechanism created around that and we've continued  
24 to do more and more on that. So I can't speak to some  
25 meeting of Deputy Ministers that may or may not have happened  
26 at the right time. That is something for the officials  
27 involved to ask about.

28 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Well, I appreciate that

1 the Government is using the word foreign interference with  
2 respect to its discussions from 2016 on, but if there's not a  
3 common understanding about what those words mean, how can the  
4 Government be actually doing anything?

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm sorry, at the  
6 danger of repeating myself, when we created the Rapid  
7 Response Mechanism for the G7 to be housed in Canada around  
8 our 2018 Charlevoix G7, there was a clear understanding that  
9 acting against foreign interference was a goal that we set  
10 out and actually took concrete action on. So I would  
11 completely refuse your contention that we didn't know what  
12 foreign interference was and weren't acting on it from the  
13 earliest days of this government.

14 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** I'll conclude with this  
15 question; when there's this fundamental disagreement in 2022  
16 between Mr. Morrison, who at that time was acting as your  
17 NSIA, and Mr. Vignault, who was the Director of CSIS, about  
18 what constitutes foreign interference, why wasn't the issue  
19 raised to the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of  
20 Public Affairs to sort out?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I don't know that  
22 it wasn't raised. I will -- I can certainly say that  
23 discussions around foreign interference were ongoing within  
24 many departments in this country, in this government,  
25 particularly those of Foreign Affairs and Public Safety, as  
26 well as being raised within my office and the PCO.

27 **MR. THOMAS JARMYN:** Well, there's certainly  
28 no evidence of that dispute being raised in the disclosed

1 documents, Sir.

2 Thank you.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

4 Mr. Choudhry or Ms. Kakkar for Jenny Kwan?

5 It's Mr. Choudhry.

6 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Thank you, Commissioner.

7 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:**

8 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Prime Minister, good  
9 afternoon.

10 Prime Minister, I'd like to ask you some  
11 questions about a different topic, and it's about foreign  
12 interference in political party nomination processes. So it  
13 picks up a bit on some of the points that Ms. Chaudhury made,  
14 and also the Commissioner raised with you when we came back.

15 And so I'd like, if we could, to take the  
16 Prime Minister to Witness Statement 106, to PDF page 10, and  
17 particularly to paragraph 36.

18 So Prime Minister, this is one of your  
19 statements.

20 So great, thank you.

21 So Prime Minister your evidence here is that  
22 you noted that political parties are not unique in their  
23 vulnerability to foreign interference from hostile actors;  
24 universities, research institutions, and businesses are also  
25 targets. And so I want to dig into that a bit and ask you a  
26 question about that statement.

27 And so in your testimony this morning  
28 briefly, and also I think a bit more in your witness

1 statements you talked about Bill C-70, didn't you?

2 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

3 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: And I think it's fair to  
4 say that you'd regard Bill 70 as, let's say, a signature  
5 piece of legislation from your government on foreign  
6 interference?

7 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Any time we, as a  
8 government or as a Parliament, pass measures around national  
9 security they tend to be significant.

10 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: So with leave of the  
11 Commissioner, I've been advised to our friends from the  
12 Department of Justice regarding this, I hope they don't  
13 object, I'd like to take you to the version of Bill 70 we  
14 have in the database, because there's a provision about it  
15 I'd like to ask you about, if I could.

16 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: That's fine, if there's  
17 no objection.

18 MR. BARNEY BRUCKER: No objection.

19 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Thank you.

20 And so it's Commission 382.

21 --- EXHIBIT NO. COM0000382:

22 Bill C-70, First Reading

23 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: And in particular --  
24 it's a long bill, as you know, and so it's page 37 that I'd  
25 like to go to, and it's the part of it that there's a heading  
26 on that page which is "Political Interference for a Foreign  
27 Entity."

28 So if we could go to section 20.4? Yes. And

1       so Prime Minister, I imagine it's been a while since you've  
2       read this, so I'd like you to refresh your memory.

3                               So there is 20.4(1) creates a new offence  
4       which is titled, "Influencing political or governmental  
5       process," and that's the phrase I want to ask you a couple of  
6       questions about. I's the phrase a, "Political or  
7       governmental process," and it actually appears in that  
8       provision, four lines down. Do you see it?

9 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

10                               **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And I know you're not a  
11       lawyer, but you are a member of Parliament, and this is a  
12       Bill of your government ---

13 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: The Legislature,  
14 yes.

15                               **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- and so I'm going to  
16       ask you as best I can about this provision.

17                               And so if we could scroll down to the next  
18     page, the term, there's some definitions here, and if we  
19     could just scroll down a bit more, please? Great, that's  
20     terrific. Thank you.

21 And so there's a definition of what a  
22 political or governmental process is, and so it's a six-part  
23 definition, but what I want to draw your attention to, Prime  
24 Minister, is that it includes in that definition not just the  
25 holding of an election, so electoral interference let's say  
26 would be captured by this, but also:

27 "the nomination of a candidate or the  
28 development of an electoral platform



1 by a political party."

2 Do you see that?

3 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

4 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Oaky. And so I'd now  
5 like to take you away from this document and take you to the  
6 NSICOP Report, which I know the Commissioner also asked you  
7 about, and this is Commission Document 363.

8 And if we could please go to page 38 of the  
9 PDF, and paragraph 69 to 70. So that's perfect, thank you.

10 And so, Prime Minister, just to confirm, you  
11 have read the NSICOP Report, is that right?

12 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah. Including the  
14 classified version?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

16 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And so this --  
17 these paragraphs, 69 and 70, appear in a section called,  
18 "Exploiting vulnerabilities in political party governance and  
19 administration." And so I'd just want to confirm, have you  
20 read this part of the report?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

22 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Good. And so I want to  
23 ask you a couple of questions about it, if I may?

24 And so is there any reason to disagree with  
25 NSICOP's conclusion at the beginning of paragraph 69? And  
26 I'll quote, which is that:

27 "...foreign actors covertly supported  
28 or opposed candidates by exploiting

1                                   vulnerabilities in political party  
2                                   governance and administration."

3                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

4                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** You disagree with that?

5                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah.

6                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Could you give me a bit  
7 more detail?

8                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** This is a very  
9 general and broad statement that, from the CSIS analysis that  
10 I've seen, there have been instances where, yes, we know that  
11 there were attempts at foreign interference in various  
12 political party processes and nominations, and that's  
13 something that we talked about in the last public hearings as  
14 well. But I tend to disagree with the words, "Exploiting  
15 vulnerabilities in political party governance  
16 administration." Not that there aren't vulnerabilities in  
17 everything, but that emphasis makes it seem like some of the  
18 choices that political parties have made are only  
19 vulnerabilities and not strengths within the political  
20 process.

21                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Well -- so Prime  
22 Minister, there's a couple of follow-up questions I want to  
23 ask you about your answer, if I may?

24                                   So the first is, and I saw your evidence in  
25 the witness statements, it wasn't discussed this morning, but  
26 I think it's fair to say that the view expressed is that any  
27 regulation of internal political party governance has to  
28 accept that there's a trade-off between hardening those

1 institutions and processes, to use a security sector  
2 term, ---

3 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

4 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: --- and dampening  
5 participation and inclusion.

6 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

7 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: That's fair?

8 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

9 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Correct?

10 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Very much.

11 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Right. And so it's --  
12 but the framing of that trade-off in your evidence does  
13 concede that that hardening might need to be done because  
14 institutions do have vulnerabilities, isn't that fair?

15 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes, which is why I  
16 lean heavily towards the hardening being done by the  
17 political party itself in an open, responsible, and  
18 transparent way, rather than have external bodies come and  
19 try and constrict or limit the operations of a political  
20 party.

21 MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY: Good. And we'll get to  
22 that in just -- in a minute. But before we do there's  
23 another follow-up point I want to make and then I want to ask  
24 you some questions here about these paragraphs.

25 So you did point out that NSICOP relied on  
26 CSIS intelligence products in reaching this conclusion. And  
27 I just want to ---

28 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: And in some cases

1 extrapolated a bit from CSIS products.

2 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Fair, and Prime  
3 Minister, as you know, I can't ask you a question about that.  
4 But ---

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But CSIS testified  
6 to the fact that there were inconsistencies and inaccuracies  
7 in the NSICOP Report.

8 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** With respect to specific  
9 allegations involving parliamentarians but not specifically  
10 about these paragraphs.

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because they didn't  
12 -- they weren't asked to weigh in on these.

13 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Sure. And so we don't  
14 know what their view is on these paragraphs.

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** You don't.

16 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Yeah, I don't. And I  
17 take it -- unless you're telling us they do? I don't think  
18 we have ---

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm not able to  
20 talk to that. No.

21 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** So let's leave it at  
22 that, shall we?

23 And so, Prime Minister, just for the record,  
24 there are footnoted CSIS reports or intelligence products  
25 from three different years that are relied on by the NSICOP  
26 in this -- these -- this section? You agree with that?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That sounds  
28 reasonable.

1                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. And so what I  
2                   want to do is to ask you some specific questions about the --  
3                   what NSICOP represents as vulnerabilities and to ask you  
4                   whether you agree or disagree.

5                   So the first vulnerability NSICOP identifies  
6                   is in paragraph 69. It's five lines down and it says:

7                                 "First, many ridings are considered  
8                                 'safe seats', so winning the  
9                                 nomination is akin to winning the  
10                                subsequent election without having to  
11                               interfere in the election itself."

12                  Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

13                 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well that there are  
14                 fewer of them, in the case of my own Party, but there are  
15                 safe seats in the country.

16                 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And the statement that  
17                 NSICOP makes is ---

18                 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That was a joke.  
19                 You guys can laugh.

20                 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** --- but because there  
21                 are safe seats, interfering in a nomination is -- makes  
22                 interfering in the election for that seat unnecessary. Is  
23                 that a fair -- that's what NSICOP's view is. Do you agree  
24                 with that statement? Yes or no?

25                 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I wouldn't  
26                 characterize how foreign governments would choose to  
27                 interfere or not, or whether it's worth interfering in one  
28                 place or not. There are many different goals that they might

1 have. So I'm not entirely sure what you mean by the  
2 question.

3 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Okay. Well I'm just  
4 asking if you agree with NSICOP's statement there? Yes or  
5 no? It's a simple question.

6 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I agree with the  
7 first part of it.

8 "Many ridings are considered 'safe  
9 seats', so winning the nomination is  
10 akin to winning the subsequent  
11 election..."

12 If you put a period on that one, I absolutely  
13 agree with that statement. The "...without having to interfere  
14 in the election itself" isn't -- putting my English teacher  
15 hat back on, isn't necessarily -- makes a whole bunch of  
16 sense as a sentence out of the context of the rest of the  
17 paragraph.

18 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Well, Prime Minister,  
19 I'm not NSICOP, just as you're not CSIS, but I think we can  
20 say that for the record, I think NSICOP was saying that if a  
21 seat -- if the nomination is really what's at issue in a  
22 seat, if a state interferes with that nomination process, it  
23 needn't interfere in the election itself?

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** If it interferes  
25 successfully in getting the outcome that they are trying to  
26 achieve, then yes, if it's a safe seat, whoever ends up  
27 getting the nomination is -- has a better chance than  
28 expected to win the seat. Yes.

1                   **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Fair. So let's go to  
2 the second vulnerability of the three that NSICOP identifies.

3                   "Second, nomination processes are not  
4 directly regulated or safeguarded by  
5 federal, provincial, or territorial  
6 legislation or enforcement bodies,  
7 such as the Commission of Canada  
8 Elections."

9                   And so that's the second statement they make.

10                  "As a result, the likelihood and  
11 consequences of the detection of such  
12 activities are low."

13                  Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

14                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I disagree with  
15 that statement.

16                  **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** And why do you disagree  
17 with that statement?

18                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because political  
19 parties, I can specifically speak for my own, the Liberal  
20 Party has established a very robust system of overseeing  
21 nominations, particularly contested nominations that often  
22 happen, as you point out, in safer seats, where it is  
23 expected that whoever wins the nomination has an unusually  
24 high chance of becoming the MP in that seat.

25                  We have had to develop over the years,  
26 particularly in 2015, where all of our nominations were  
27 potentially open nominations, we had to develop very rigorous  
28 processes, and not uniquely, or only, or even specifically to

1 counter foreign interference, but to make sure that various  
2 outside groups or community organizations who would mobilize  
3 individuals were doing so in a way consistent with the rules  
4 of both Election Canada around financing, because there are  
5 rules around nominations around the money that goes into  
6 nominations, but also the rules of the Liberal Party around  
7 who can be a member, who can vote, and who is eligible to  
8 vote.

9 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Well then that actually  
10 leads to my next question, Prime Minister, which is in  
11 paragraph 70, if you look six lines down, NSICOP reports the  
12 following. It says:

13 "CSIS assesses that it is relatively  
14 easy to fraudulently add voters who  
15 live outside a riding to a nomination  
16 process's voter list with inaccurate  
17 addresses. It is also reportedly  
18 relatively easy to show an altered  
19 phone bill with the wrong address, or  
20 a fraudulent letter from a school, in  
21 order to vote in a nomination."

22 Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

23 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That issue of  
24 accurate or inaccurate addresses is something that comes up  
25 not just in the context of foreign interference, but in the  
26 context of the push and pull of internal party processes,  
27 where one candidate who is keen on winning the election may  
28 try and bring in people who live outside the riding, which



1 means that we have developed not infallible, but strong  
2 processes whereby we oversee -- the Party oversees the  
3 registration process and also has the possibility of legal  
4 counsel for the various candidates to oversee the nomination  
5 process and challenge the result if they feel that it was  
6 contested. So we have structures in place in the Party to  
7 oversee that.

8 Now, can those structures be strengthened? I  
9 have no doubt. And this is something that I'm entirely open  
10 for parties to be working with CSIS and the Commission on.

11 What I will say is I'm speaking right now to  
12 the way the Liberal Party manages contested nominations. I  
13 have no idea how the NDP or the Conservatives manage their  
14 contested nominations, and perhaps having the Commission look  
15 into a certain amount of transparency on that by the Parties  
16 might be a good idea.

17 **MR. SUJIT CHOUDHRY:** Commissioner, I have  
18 many more questions, but I'm out of time.

19 Prime Minister, thank you.

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

22 So Mr. De Luca for the Conservative Party.

23 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. NANDO DE LUCA:**

24 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Good afternoon, Prime  
25 Minister. Am I correct that you have top-level security  
26 clearance in government by virtue of your Office?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

28 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Do you know which

1 Minister is responsible for the Communications Security  
2 Establishment, Sir?

3 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

4 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: Minister of Defence?

5 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

6 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: Do you know Ms. Zita  
7 Astravas, Sir?

8 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes.

9 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: She worked on each of  
10 your Liberal Party Election Campaigns in 2015, 2019, and  
11 2021; correct?

12 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: I believe so, yes.

13 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: And she worked in your  
14 PMO Office as your Director of Issues Management until 2017?  
15 Is that correct?

16 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: That sounds right,  
17 yes.

18 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: Are you aware that she  
19 was Chief of Staff to Minister Blair in 2021 in the lead up  
20 to the 2021 Election Campaign?

21 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes, that sounds  
22 right.

23 MR. NANDO DE LUCA: And the Commissioner has  
24 heard that a politically sensitive warrant application that  
25 would have empowered CSIS to investigate foreign interference  
26 languished on Ms. Astravas' desk for approximately 54 days in  
27 the lead up to the 2021 Election. Are you aware of that  
28 fact?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I believe there are  
2 questions about the dates involved.

3                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Does that mean that you  
4 disagree with the overall time period of 54 days?

5                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

6                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. And how long, in  
7 your understanding, ---

8                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** My understanding,  
9 it was a number of days before it was -- a number of days  
10 within those 54 days before it ever got near Ms. Astravas'  
11 desk.

12                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. And ---

13                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But again, these  
14 are things that I have learned over the course of the various  
15 testimonies over these past days, not anything I was aware of  
16 at the time.

17                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. Have you heard the  
18 figure 54 days at all in connection with these proceedings?

19                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I've heard that you  
20 used it yesterday.

21                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. And if that time  
22 period is correct, 54 days, have you learned at all, or do  
23 you have any understanding as to whether that length of time  
24 for the processing of a CSIS application for Minister  
25 approval for a warrant is ordinary, out of the ordinary,  
26 extraordinarily out of the ordinary? Have you formed any  
27 view on that?

28                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because I have, as

1 Prime Minister, absolutely no involvement in the process  
2 whereby CSIS is granted warrants, I have no frame to conclude  
3 on that. What I can lean on is I believe the Director of  
4 CSIS raised that there was no flags about the timelines  
5 involved.

6 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. Mr. Blair remains  
7 in Cabinet today, Sir?

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

9 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. And he serves as  
10 the Minister of National Defence; doesn't he?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

12 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. Just give me a  
13 second.

14 And has Minister Blair, or anyone in his  
15 office at the time that he was Minister for Public Safety,  
16 faced any consequences for the fact that that warrant  
17 application we've come to know, did languish in that office  
18 for what I'm going to suggest to you is a period of 54 days?

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Like I said, the  
20 Director of CSIS himself testified that he had no issues with  
21 the timelines involved, and I can certainly say that I  
22 continue to have full confidence in everyone involved.

23 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. I want to switch  
24 subjects. You leveled some criticism and professed  
25 bewilderment at the leader of the CPC this morning not  
26 agreeing to receive a security clearance. Is that correct?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

28 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Am I correct, Sir, that

1 Mr. Poillievre has said that the reason he does not wish to  
2 receive the security clearance is because he does not want to  
3 be constrained in terms of the use he can make of the  
4 information that he would receive?

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I don't believe  
6 that was his argument. I believe his argument was that he  
7 wouldn't be able to talk about the information he received.

8 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** How is that different  
9 than what I just said?

10 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Because as leader  
11 of a political party you have many, many tools at your  
12 disposal to act on information you receive. You can choose  
13 to not sign the nomination of a candidate who is under a  
14 cloud of suspicion. You can choose to not elevate them to a  
15 critic's position. You can choose to not promise to make  
16 them a Minister one day. You can -- you have many -- you can  
17 choose which committees they sit on.

18 A leader of a party has many, many tools that  
19 they can use that are not requiring him to speak publicly  
20 about his knowledge. The leader of a party has quite a bit  
21 of power over what happens within that party, and that's why  
22 the ultimate decision maker in a political party should  
23 always be the leader.

24 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Are you aware that there  
25 are other security cleared individuals within the CPC that  
26 can and do receive regular security briefings?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think you're  
28 speaking of Ian Todd, the Chief of Staff?

1                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Among others, yes.

2                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can't help but  
3           imagining how people would react if I sort of sat back and  
4           said, well, no, Katie Telford got cleared on this  
5           information, she made a determination about who could run for  
6           me or not and I don't need to worry about that sort of stuff.

7                   Canadians didn't elect -- or Conservative  
8           Party members didn't select Mr. Todd to make decisions about  
9           who could run for the Conservative Party of Canada, they  
10          expect Mr. Poilievre to take those decisions, but he has  
11          decided that he doesn't want to take those decisions.

12                  **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Sir, just over the lunch  
13          break -- and you didn't mention Mr. Todd at all in the  
14          bombshell disclosure that you made today. But just over the  
15          lunch break, in light of that, in response to your news this  
16          morning that you were aware of a number of CPC  
17          parliamentarians and former parliamentarians that are at risk  
18          of being compromised by foreign interference, Mr. Todd has  
19          advised that he has received a number of top secret briefings  
20          from the security establishment and in none of these  
21          briefings has the name of any Conservative parliamentarian,  
22          or candidate past or present, been brought to the attention  
23          of Mr. Todd. Why is that?

24                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** You'd have to ask  
25          CSIS for that. But my supposition is that Mr. Todd is not  
26          the one who is responsible for determining what candidates  
27          can run or not for the Conservative Party of Canada, that it  
28          would be the leader. And much of the information that is

1 handed out to various individuals with security clearances is  
2 determined on their need-to-know basis.

3 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** You indicated today, as I  
4 indicated earlier in a very public forum, and in a very  
5 public manner, your knowledge of the names of CPC  
6 parliamentarians and the risk that they're -- they risk being  
7 compromised by foreign interference. Am I correct, Sir, that  
8 one way that you could arrange for those threats to be  
9 mitigated is through the use of threat reduction measures  
10 under section 12.1 of the *CSIS Act*?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Threat reduction  
12 measures are tools that CSIS has used regularly in many cases  
13 regarding different parliamentarians. And it is very  
14 possible that a number of those parliamentarians will have  
15 had visits from CSIS and either defensive briefings or  
16 others, to try and mitigate the risks that they are going  
17 through. That is different from a leader choosing to  
18 willfully remain ignorant of very serious contentions,  
19 including by the NSICOP, that the leadership race that  
20 elevated him to leader was compromised by foreign  
21 interference.

22 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** And if the tool of the  
23 TRMs were used, you couldn't use the Leader of the  
24 Opposition's reluctance to obtain security clearance as an  
25 excuse not to provide that information to the CPC. Isn't  
26 that correct?

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm sorry, I'm not  
28 following. Can you rephrase the question?

1                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Sure. If someone wanted  
2 to get this information, this information about the names of  
3 the parliamentarians for example, because of some imminent  
4 threat to the leader of the CPC, TRMs could be used, and in  
5 that event it wouldn't be necessary for the CPC to obtain  
6 security clearance.

7                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No. You're  
8 entirely wrong on that. If you were to know that a certain  
9 candidate had a high degree of exposure to foreign  
10 interference and vulnerability, either witting or unwitting,  
11 giving a threat reduction measure to that candidate would not  
12 necessarily, and quite frankly in my experience, highly  
13 unlikely to have the candidate spontaneously decide to step  
14 down as either a candidate or a member of Parliament and not  
15 run in the next election.

16                   That is a determination that only a leader  
17 can make looking at the vulnerabilities of that candidate,  
18 looking at the behaviour, and to use the words of the NSIA,  
19 potentially poor judgement, or inappropriate behavior, or  
20 untrustworthiness. Those are the kinds of things that only a  
21 leader can actually ensure for the team that they're  
22 building. And potentially future ministerial elevations that  
23 would then have to run into a security clearance process that  
24 would stop them like a brick wall.

25                   Knowing that as a leader, as you are hoping  
26 to become Prime Minister of this country, would seem to be a  
27 very basic bar to hit if you want to take national security  
28 seriously.



1                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** But the premise -- the  
2 underlying premise of that answer you just gave is that the  
3 TRM has to -- can only be directed at the person affected and  
4 not the leader of the opposition. Isn't that correct? The  
5 TRM could be directed to Mr. Poilievre.

6                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The identities of  
7 the people involved are themselves classified and available  
8 to only those with top secret clearances. So certainly, CSIS  
9 could go to the leader of the opposition and say, you really  
10 have to be careful to instruct all of your MPs to stay away  
11 from this country or to be concerned about diplomats from  
12 that country or not accept money. But from -- or not accept  
13 support from these particular diplomats.

14                   But the TRM would be unable to identify which  
15 of those individuals are in question unless the leader chose  
16 to get a security clearance to be able to hear those names.  
17 And the fact that the leader does not, leaves him in a  
18 position of being unable to protect the integrity of his  
19 party.

20                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** I'm going to suggest that  
21 you're wrong on your understanding of the law as to what a  
22 TRM can and can't do and who it can be directed to. And I'm  
23 going to suggest that the fact that you leveled this  
24 accusation earlier today and didn't mention the possibility  
25 of a TRM was just for the purpose of grandstanding here  
26 today.

27                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** On the contrary,  
28 threat reduction measures are regularly used to highlight to

1 people potential vulnerabilities. But having watched many,  
2 and having known a number of parliamentarians who went  
3 through TRMs, they often come out of TRMs with a general  
4 sense of having to be more careful, but specifics are often  
5 not given. And there is no guarantee that a TRM to the  
6 leader of the party would include the names of the people  
7 most at risk or most engaged in potentially problematic  
8 activity. And that's why the refusal of the leader to  
9 actually access the intelligence on those names is, as I  
10 said, bewildering.

11 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Do you agree that often  
12 when CSIS or some other security agency shares classified  
13 information the recipient is severely constrained in what he  
14 or she can do with that information?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

16 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. And in fact, your  
17 own Chief of Staff yesterday gave evidence that the recipient  
18 of that information would not be able to use that information  
19 in any manner. Do you agree with that?

20 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, I disagree,  
21 because the party leader can choose to not allow someone to  
22 run for them for any number of reasons, knowing in that back  
23 of your mind that this is the real reason, but giving it as  
24 an example, I'd actually prefer to have this other person run  
25 instead, or you had, you know, sketchy business dealings in  
26 the past. That means we're not going to go with you. There  
27 are all sorts of reasons that do not prove injurious to  
28 national security. The leader has a level of power over who

1 runs and what roles they have that doesn't require them to  
2 explain themselves. So, again, the choice that Mr. Poilievre  
3 has made to not avail himself of available information, of  
4 readily available information to him if he were to get a  
5 security clearance and choose to take national security  
6 issues seriously is unfortunate and shows a lack of  
7 seriousness around national security.

8 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** And in your salacious  
9 testimony earlier today, you mention that you're aware of the  
10 names of past and present Conservative parliamentarians,  
11 former parliamentarians, candidates that are in risk of being  
12 compromised by foreign interference. I'd like to ask you,  
13 are you aware of the names of any Liberal parliamentarians,  
14 former parliamentarians or candidates that are at risk of  
15 being compromised by FI?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, and for other  
17 parties as well, because I have access to large amounts of  
18 information.

19 **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Right. You didn't  
20 mention those today; right?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** We spent an entire  
22 session the last time we had a public hearing talking about  
23 concerns and named individuals that the -- that CSIS and  
24 intelligence agencies had within the Liberal Party. Don  
25 Valley North comes to mind as a riding. So as I have said  
26 many times, there have been actions taken and choices made  
27 based on information we got because I have that security  
28 clearance.

1                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Right.

2                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Mr. Poillievre has  
3 decided not to get that security clearance, so he can't even  
4 know how to begin or not to make decisions regarding that  
5 information.

6                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Okay. So you've  
7 acknowledged Mr. Dong. I want to see if you can help us with  
8 -- in connection with the warrant application that we were  
9 talking about earlier, that I was talking about earlier with  
10 you. Can you confirm that either the target of the  
11 information or one or more of the individuals on the  
12 Vanweenan list were Liberal operatives?

13                   **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** We object to that ---

14                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can't ---

15                   **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** --- question on the  
16 grounds of national security.

17                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** With all due respect,  
18 Madam Commissioner, when it suits the Prime Minister's  
19 purpose to say that there are Conservatives on a list that he  
20 can discuss or he can't discuss, that's fine, but when I ask  
21 for confirmation if there are Liberal operatives that are on  
22 a list ---

23                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I said yes.

24                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** --- my friend -- well,  
25 I'm asking you in particular on that list there.

26                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** But that is ---

27                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** On the warrant or on the  
28 Vanweenan list.

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** The Prime Minister  
2 has absolutely no engagement or authorities or involvement in  
3 the granting of CSIS warrants. That's a very different thing  
4 than concerns about parliamentarians who may have been  
5 exposed to foreign influence. And your attempts to conflate  
6 them are simply ineffective.

7                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Well, you're attempting  
8 to evade the question. I just asked you if any of the names  
9 there were Liberal operatives, not whether you could or  
10 couldn't do anything about it. That's all I'm asking for  
11 confirmation of.

12                  **MR. BARNEY BRUCKER:** Well, if we're -- I'm  
13 not sure what we're talking about. If we're talking about  
14 the warrant -- anything that might be related to the warrant,  
15 then there's an objection to the question. If we're talking  
16 about some other list, then ask the question about the other  
17 list.

18                  **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Well, it's ---

19                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So it's about the  
20 warrant ---

21                  **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** --- it's about the ----

22                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** It's about the warrant?

23                  **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** --- the target of the  
24 warrant or the people that are named in the Vanweenan list  
25 that accompany the warrant. Are there ---

26                  **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So the questions are  
27 noted. I have no choice, as you know, and we'll see whether  
28 the Commission will pursue these questions or not.

1                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Thank you, Madam  
2 Commissioner.

3                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

4                   **MR. NANDO DE LUCA:** Thank you, Prime  
5 Minister.

6                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Thank you.

7                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So we'll take the break.  
8 I think 15 minutes will be okay, so we'll come back at 3:15.

9                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

10                   This sitting of the Commission is now in  
11 recess until 3:15.

12 --- Upon recessing at 3:02 p.m.

13 --- Upon resuming at 3:16 p.m.

14                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Order please.

15                   This sitting of the Foreign Interference  
16 Commission is now back in session.

17                   The time is 3:16 p.m.

18 **--- RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Resumed:**

19                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** So next one is Ms. Teich  
20 for the Human Rights Coalition.

21 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SARAH TEICH:**

22                   **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Good afternoon, Mr. Prime  
23 Minister. We heard earlier this month from Katpana Nagendra,  
24 spokesperson of Tamil Rights Group, that it is imperative  
25 that Canada takes decisive actions to hold the Sri Lankan  
26 Government accountable as a root cause of transnational  
27 repression. Specifically, Ms. Nagendra stated that the Sri  
28 Lankan Government's ongoing interference in the lives of

1 Tamil Canadians will only cease once they are held fully  
2 accountable, since as long as they continue to operate with  
3 impunity, feeling shielded from repercussions for their war  
4 crimes and human rights violations, they will persist in  
5 using intimidation tactics against Tamil activists in Canada.  
6 Do you agree with this view?

7 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I'm sorry, I'd need  
8 to know more of the context. I certainly agree that the --  
9 like many diaspora communities, Tamil Canadians are exposed  
10 to actions by the Government of Sri Lanka that we need to do  
11 everything we can to protect them from.

12 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Thank you. Mr.  
13 Prime Minister, under your leadership there have been  
14 commendable efforts to resettle vulnerable populations in  
15 response to global conflicts. There's the Afghan Refugee  
16 Settlement Initiative. There's another special stream for  
17 Ukrainians, and, of course, M-62 passed recently, which  
18 creates one for Uyghurs. However, as far as I know, there  
19 has never been a special refugee stream created in response  
20 to a crisis in Africa. There's family reunification  
21 available now for refugees from Sudan, which, of course, is  
22 different from a special stream. Meanwhile, Tigrayans are in  
23 danger in the region and there has been highly disturbing  
24 evidence of Eritrean forces in Tigray forcibly deporting  
25 Eritreans in Tigray back to Eritrea. Diaspora groups  
26 representing these communities have expressed concern that  
27 there has been no special stream created in response to these  
28 crises. Do you share these concerns?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I am, of course,  
2                   very concerned with the situation in Sudan and in the region.  
3                   Canada's response to various challenges around the world,  
4                   beginning with the special stream, although we didn't call it  
5                   that way for Syrian refugees, has continued to happen on a  
6                   case-by-case basis. They are all slightly different in terms  
7                   of cases. What we have done in terms of the family  
8                   reunification around Sudan is significant, and we're always  
9                   looking for ways to do more.

10                  **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Would you oppose the  
11                  creation of special streams for Tigrayans and Eritreans to  
12                  come to Canada?

13                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That is not a  
14                  proposal before Cabinet or before -- in discussions right  
15                  now, but as we look at how Canada can best help in Africa and  
16                  elsewhere, I'm sure there will be different things looked at.

17                  **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Another  
18                  recommendation that diaspora groups have repeatedly made is  
19                  that Canada should avoid cooperating with authoritarian  
20                  regimes on criminal matters. The rationale behind this  
21                  suggestion is fairly simple, because authoritarian regimes do  
22                  not operate under the rule of law, Canada should not assist  
23                  these regimes in removing individuals from Canada whom they  
24                  accuse of committing crimes. Do you disagree?

25                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Canada has a very  
26                  strong policy around extraditions, around deportations, and  
27                  we make evaluations on a country-by-country, and indeed case-  
28                  by-case basis.



1                   **MS. SARAH TEICH:** There is, at present, a  
2                   treaty between Canada and China on mutual legal assistance in  
3                   criminal matters. Would you object to this treaty being  
4                   terminated?

5                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think it is  
6                   certainly a question that we have reflected on over the past  
7                   years. With China, it is important to try and have a  
8                   complete approach. There are initiatives, and an example of  
9                   that is the Montreal-Kunming Convention of the Parties 15 on  
10                  Biodiversity in Montreal a couple of years ago where working  
11                  with China on protecting biodiversity in nature actually  
12                  resulted in a landmark agreement around the world of, you  
13                  know, where China successfully brought in many countries of  
14                  the global south to protect nature that demonstrated there  
15                  are areas in which we can work alongside China for the  
16                  benefit of Canadians and others.

17                  There are other situations in which we are  
18                  competing and challenging -- competing with China on  
19                  economics, whether it's the significant trade relations with  
20                  China, or economic opportunities that we are pursuing, but  
21                  also very conscious of the risks on, but there are areas in  
22                  which we are directly challenging China, whether it's on  
23                  democracy in Hong Kong, or the safety of the Uyghurs, or many  
24                  other issues.

25                  And as we move forward in this relationship  
26                  where we are very clear, at a high level, where China is, we  
27                  make determinations about how to use various instruments at  
28                  our disposal.

1                   **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Sure. And I appreciate all  
2 of that, but I am asking specifically on cooperation in  
3 criminal matters. Would you agree that it isn't appropriate  
4 at this stage for Canada and China to be cooperating in  
5 criminal matters?

6                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would contend  
7 that regardless of what an agreement might say, the actual  
8 cooperation right now is very carefully looked at if any of  
9 it exists at all.

10                  **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay.

11                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** And that is always  
12 top of mind as we work together or as we look to whether or  
13 not we work together. We look at the whole context of it.

14                  **MS. SARAH TEICH:** All right. We have  
15 primarily dealt in these hearings with regimes considered to  
16 be the major players: China; Russia; Iran; India. But of  
17 course there are smaller dictatorships in the world that  
18 collaborate with these bigger players. And I raised an  
19 example of this in my cross-examination of Mr. Shortliffe vis  
20 a vie Cuban state broadcasters replaying *Russia Today*  
21 programing in Canada. And indeed, Cuban human rights  
22 activists have flagged that Canada must address Cuban  
23 collaboration with the likes of China and Russia in order to  
24 comprehensively address the threats posed by those countries.  
25                   Would you agree with that assertion?

26                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think how we deal  
27 with every and any country in the world needs to be very  
28 alert to the context, alert to the potential pitfalls or

1 dangers, but also the potential benefits to Canadians in  
2 having a nuanced foreign policy that recognizes both  
3 challenges and dangers and opportunities is the hard work  
4 that the government does on an ongoing basis.

5 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** I understand that the  
6 Canadian Government engages in dialogue with Cuban Government  
7 actors. Another point that Cuban human rights activists have  
8 repeatedly made is that the Canadian Government should also  
9 be meeting with pro-democracy groups in Cuba. Would you  
10 agree with that?

11 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I can say from  
12 personal experience that I know we do engage and have engaged  
13 with pro-democracy groups all around the world.

14 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Does that include in Cuba?

15 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I believe so, but I  
16 would have to know -- I'm not apprised on it in its latest  
17 forms, where that's ongoing right now or not.

18 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. And if Canada does  
19 not engage with pro-democracy groups in Cuba, would you agree  
20 that Canada should?

21 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It is part of the  
22 responsibility of every Canadian Mission overseas to engage  
23 with civil society organizations and, you know, various  
24 actors, not just governments of the -- of any given country.  
25 So I am actually quite certain that Canada does engage with a  
26 range of civil society actors in Cuba, like everywhere else.

27 **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. And not to hammer  
28 the point, but just I want to make sure I get this right. If

1       it is the case that the Embassy does not, do you agree that  
2       it should?

3                                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I have just stated  
4       that I believe that it is important for every Mission around  
5       the world to engage with civil society in the country in  
6       which it's in in a way that is appropriate for that context.

7                           **MS. SARAH TEICH:** Okay. Thank you. I have  
8       no further questions.

9 COMMISSIONER HOGUE: Thank you.

10 Mr. Doody for the Ukrainian-Canadian  
11 Congress.

12            --- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. JON DOODY:

13                                   **MR. JON DOODY:** Good afternoon, Prime  
14           Minister. I'd like to talk about expelling diplomats from  
15           Canada. Last week on October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Director of MI5, Ken  
16           McCallum, gave a speech in which he stated that:

17 "Over 750 Russian diplomats have been  
18 expelled from Europe since Putin  
19 invaded [Ukraine in 2022], the great  
20 majority of them spies. This goes  
21 well beyond all historical precedent  
22 -- and has put a big dent in the  
23 Russian intelligence services'  
24 ability to cause damage in the West.  
25 With allies, we're keeping up that  
26 pressure by denying diplomatic visa  
27 applications from Russian spies.  
28 It's not flashy, but it works. Kick

1                               them out, keep them out."

2                               Canada has not expelled a Russian diplomat  
3       since March of 2018 when seven Russian diplomats were  
4       expelled in solidarity with United Kingdom in response to a  
5       nerve agent attack.

6                               Today Russia has 69 diplomats in Canada. By  
7       comparison, the U.K. has 53, and Germany has 50.

8                               Why does the Canadian Government permit  
9       Russia, a hostile foreign state, to not only have diplomats  
10      in Canada, but such a large number of them, exceeding the  
11      number of some of our closest allies?

12                              **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I don't have the  
13      numbers that you have, so I'm not going to repeat them, but I  
14      do know that a big part of diplomacy is ensuring that we both  
15      have -- that we have an opportunity to talk with adversary  
16      countries at home, but that we also have presence on the  
17      ground in Moscow and in Russia writ large.

18                              I know for a fact that Canada's diplomatic  
19      presence in Russia is reaching a point at which should it  
20      decrease much further, would be difficult to sustain at all,  
21      and I believe that there is value in continuing to have  
22      Canadians in Russia as it continues to be such a bad actor on  
23      the world stage.

24                              **MR. JON DOODY:** As part of that, Canada has  
25      currently 17 diplomats deployed in Russia. And so I  
26      understand the need to have someone there, but 17 Canadian  
27      diplomats in Russia versus 69 Russian diplomats in Canada  
28      seems quite uneven. It's four to one.

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Again, I'm not  
2 going to speak to the number of Russian diplomats in Canada,  
3 unless you can show me documentation from the government that  
4 highlights that. I'm not saying you're automatically wrong.  
5 I'm just saying that I know that our clear opposition to the  
6 Putin regime is well established, our support for Ukraine is  
7 well established, and quite frankly, counting diplomats is  
8 something that can be one measure of examining relations  
9 between a country, but is a fairly narrow view of whether or  
10 not Canada is standing up to Russia adequately or not.

11                   **MR. JON DOODY:** Okay. If Canada is in  
12 solidarity with Ukraine, why were no diplomats expelled from  
13 Canada after the invasion of Ukraine, but it was when there  
14 was a nerve agent attack in the U.K.?

15                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I specified, the  
16 small number of Canadian diplomats currently in Russia have  
17 reached something close to a threshold where if we go any --  
18 or much lower, we might not be able to have a diplomatic  
19 presence in Russia at all, and we feel that we can do more  
20 for Ukraine and for the rules based order in the world by  
21 continuing to be present in Russia, as Canada always has,  
22 including through the Cold War.

23                   **MR. JON DOODY:** And are you concerned with  
24 the message that the government's sending by this lack of  
25 action to the Ukrainian Canadian community that ---

26                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No.

27                   **MR. JON DOODY:** --- it may care about Russian  
28 actions in the UK, but an illegal invasion of their home

1 country does not get the same response?

2 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, I think that's  
3 a ridiculous contention. I think we have demonstrated time  
4 and time again, including with billions of dollars and  
5 renewal of a free trade agreement with Ukraine with very,  
6 very clear leadership on the world stage both in military  
7 support and financial support, in driving Europe and others  
8 towards seizing the benefits of Russian assets in order to  
9 continue to fund the heroic resistance of Ukrainians against  
10 Ukraine (sic). Canada is one of those countries that has  
11 been extremely fortunate to not have much in the way of  
12 political disagreements in our unequivocal stand with  
13 Ukraine, the only exception, obviously, being when the  
14 Conservative Party refused to renew the Ukraine-Canada free  
15 trade deal, but it passed anyway in the House and we continue  
16 to stand strong with Ukraine.

17 **MR. JON DOODY:** Much of the evidence we've  
18 heard in this Inquiry is focused on the ability of the  
19 government to detect and deter foreign interference at a  
20 governmental level but, of course, foreign interference  
21 activities affect more than just parliamentarians, but also  
22 Canadian citizens, specifically those of diaspora  
23 communities. And we've heard from witnesses that it can be  
24 difficult for individual citizens to be able to counter  
25 foreign interference, especially being able to detect mis or  
26 disinformation.

27 Aside from trusting the government is doing  
28 their best to protect Canadians, do you have any advice to

1 Canadian citizens, specifically members of diaspora  
2 communities, on how they can best protect themselves from  
3 foreign interference?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would actually  
5 contend that one of the most important responsibilities of  
6 the government in regards to foreign interference is to work  
7 with diaspora communities who are usually the first victims  
8 of foreign interference. We know that interference by  
9 countries around the world on Canadian diasporas is a real  
10 challenge, and that is why we have put in place many measures  
11 and will continue to work with various diaspora communities  
12 to counter that.

13 That is something that we do in an ongoing  
14 fashion and will continue to do.

15 **MR. JON DOODY:** But again, it involves --  
16 relation to the government and Canadian citizens, there's not  
17 much citizens can do on their own to deter foreign  
18 interference within their communities.

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, that's simply  
20 not true. I could point out to the fact that the Iranian  
21 Canadian community is very active to threats that the Iranian  
22 regime poses on them and I know the Ukrainian Canadian  
23 community is very active in pushing back against Russian  
24 false narratives, needing no help from the government on  
25 that, although we are certainly there to help.

26 So I would actually disagree with your  
27 contention and point out that there are many Canadian  
28 community groups and diaspora groups that are very active in



1 an ongoing way in countering propaganda, misinformation and  
2 disinformation.

3 **MR. JON DOODY:** And my last question, Prime  
4 Minister, Parliament adopted a motion on May 31st, 2023 to  
5 establish a public inquiry into foreign interference and you,  
6 along with the rest of the Liberals, voted against it. And  
7 at that time, you raised concern that if it was to happen,  
8 much of it would have to happen behind closed doors.

9 And so I'd like to know today at the end of  
10 the Inquiry where you've heard a number of witnesses say that  
11 they can't answer questions because of national security  
12 concerns and we know that a number of witnesses testified *in*  
13 *camera* with only summaries being disclosed publicly, does the  
14 concern you had in May of 2023 still a concern you have  
15 today?

16 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, I think you  
17 just sort of proved my point in your question. But what I  
18 will say is in a very difficult context the Commission has  
19 done outstanding work in navigating through some very, very  
20 delicate matters knowing full well that it's not just  
21 Canadians watching, but our adversarial countries around the  
22 world are watching closely every document that is published  
23 here, every word uttered by everyone testifying before this  
24 Commission, to try and find out where our strengths are,  
25 where their vulnerabilities are, what our tradecraft is, how  
26 they can further their goals of interfering in Canadian  
27 democracy. So I would say that that has been top of mind for  
28 everyone involved in this Commission all the way through,

1       which is why we are careful about respecting national  
2       security.

3                       But at the same time, I think this exercise  
4       has demonstrated to Canadians how robust the measures this  
5       government has put forward on national security and to  
6       counter foreign interference are and, quite frankly, to go to  
7       the origins of the question of foreign interference,  
8       Canadians can take great comfort with confidence in the fact  
9       that the results of the 2019 and 2021 election were  
10      determined by Canadians themselves, that the election  
11      integrity held. And that was, as we'll remember, one of the  
12      core concerns about the question of foreign interference.

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

14                   **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

15                   Mr. Sirois for the RCDA.

16      **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:**

17                   **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** Good morning, Prime  
18      Minister, or hello, Prime Minister.

19                   I would like to talk about Russian propaganda  
20      and the effect on the Canadian population.

21                   You talked about the hostile activities by  
22      foreign states have increased over the past few years,  
23      especially since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I'd like  
24      to come back to the events at the beginning of that invasion.

25                   The invocation of the *Emergency Measures Act*  
26      was on February 14th. The "Freedom Convoy" began on the  
27      February 23rd, and Russia crossed the Ukrainian border on the  
28      24th of February, the day after that.

1 Did I remember that correctly?

2 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Yes. I don't have  
3 the dates in front of me. It seems possible.

4 Yes, the 24th I know, but for the other  
5 dates, I believe you on your word.

6 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: Thank you. I

7 --- EXHIBIT No. RCD0000060:

8 View of Russia's Role in the Far-  
9 Right Truck Convoy

10 MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS: So it's an article  
11 published in *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and*  
12 *Warfare* published February 16th, 2023 by a researcher,  
13 Caroline Orr, who specializes in disinformation. This  
14 research looked at the role of Russia in the "Freedom  
15 Convoy", and especially an analysis of media activity related  
16 to the "Freedom Convoy" in 2022.

17 It's a 22-page analysis, but I'd like to draw  
18 your attention to the conclusion of the study that we can see  
19 here.

20 The final sentence, "Based on these".

21 Can we go back to -- on the abstract, please?

22 Yes. Thank you.

23 "Based on these findings, it is  
24 reasonable to infer that there was  
25 Russian involvement in the 2022 truck  
26 convoy, though the scope and impact  
27 remain to be determined."

28 Do you believe that Russia used the "Freedom

1       Convoy" in 2022 to distract Canada and the world from its  
2       invasion of Ukraine?

3                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I certainly agree  
4       that Russia amplified the chaos and the disputes and conflict  
5       in Canada surrounding the convoy. They're very opportunistic  
6       in that sense that they will amplify any disagreement or  
7       differences of opinion, especially in our democratic process,  
8       in our democracy.

9                   But having seen these RT activities,  
10       including in the most recent information that we received  
11       about the Tenet group, I would say that it would be hard to  
12       draw direct conclusions as to the Russian invasion of Ukraine  
13       and its activities in Canada because the Russian activities,  
14       the propaganda and disinformation, misinformation activities  
15       on the part of Russia have been fairly constant in our social  
16       media, in our Canadian democracy on the part of Russia. To  
17       say that one is directly linked to the other, I wouldn't feel  
18       comfortable to say that if I didn't have more concrete  
19       evidence to make that connection.

20                   **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So I'm not necessarily  
21       asking you to make that connection, but I appreciate your  
22       answer.

23                   Could we look at the messages that were  
24       transmitted or amplified in that respect?

25                   On page 7, there are some screenshots that  
26       were shown by the researcher.

27                   And could we zoom so that we can see the  
28       titles? I know there are quite a few of them there.

1 But I'll read a few of them in the middle.  
2 "Canada's [...] Convoy has perfectly exposed legacy media's  
3 conceited bias", "Half of Canadians say Trudeau 'is not up to  
4 the job'", or "MEP accuses Canada of human rights  
5 violations".

6 The "Freedom Convoy" is over, but these  
7 messages are still being sent nowadays.

8 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes, we have seen  
9 that anti-vax messages during the convoy and during the  
10 pandemic were amplified by Russian propaganda, especially in  
11 the media of the right, and it was continued by messages that  
12 -- the people who were sharing anti-vax messages.

13 It doesn't mean that there weren't people who  
14 were legitimately anti-vax, but that was hugely amplified by  
15 Russian propaganda. And once Ukraine was invaded, we saw a  
16 lot of those channels become pro-Putin propaganda channels.

17 And as I said, we've recently seen that RT is  
18 currently funding bloggers and other YouTube personalities at  
19 the right such as Jordan Peterson, other names that are well  
20 known, Tucker Carlson as well, to -- in order to amplify  
21 messages that are destabilizing democracies.

22 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** We can close that  
23 document.

24 So now I wanted to talk about Tenet Media.

25 So they have basically the same *modus*  
26 *operandi*, if we may say so.

27 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

28 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I wanted to talk about

1 the increase of right -- populism of the right, especially  
2 recently. Do you think that these Russian operations can  
3 contribute to the increase in populism in Canada?

4 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, listen,  
5 populism doesn't need Russia to be successful, but we can see  
6 that Russia is very active in its desire to undermine the  
7 confidence that citizens have in their democracies, and that  
8 around the world.

9 What we saw with the Russian interference in  
10 the 2016 election, in the French elections in 2017 and in the  
11 Brexit campaign in the UK, Russia is very, very savvy as to  
12 how to amplify distresses or dissatisfaction in our  
13 institutions within democracies in order to undermine the  
14 sentiment of belonging, of confidence, and even of competence  
15 of our democracies to respond to major issues.

16 It's an approach that's not specific to  
17 various communities such as in the interference by India,  
18 Iran or China. We can see that there are links with the  
19 diaspora communities.

20 Russia prefers to or is better able at  
21 sending destabilizing message to the entire population rather  
22 than a diaspora community and is using an instrumental --  
23 instrumentalizing voices that attack our democracy and that  
24 decrease our confidence in institutions so that people no  
25 longer believe in democracy or believe in it less so, and  
26 they do it in a very visible and obvious way.

27 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** I understand that  
28 populism doesn't need Russia to succeed, but I still would

1       like to dwell on that factor because it is the objective of  
2       the Commission.

3               Do you think that there are political Parties  
4       or politicians that might be using these more polemic  
5       narratives to advance their own interests?

6               **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** One thing that we  
7       did see was that often the statements of some Parties are  
8       more likely to be amplified by Russia. Some elements of  
9       disinformation that Russia might be presenting will also be  
10      amplified by some political actors. It's a phenomenon that  
11      several have noticed.

12              **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** And might this have an  
13      impact on the priorities of some Parties? If there's more  
14      dissatisfaction with regard to domestic issues like housing,  
15      inflation, et cetera, can that change the focus of certain  
16      Parties leading them to pay more attention to domestic issues  
17      than to, for example, foreign issues or help to Ukraine?

18              **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, Russia's  
19      trying to demonstrate that democracies don't function.  
20      Therefore, if they can amplify statements along the lines  
21      that everything is broken, that's what they will do.

22              That's it.

23              **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** That's it? Okay.

24              We also have seen that the role of Russia  
25      with the "Freedom Convoy", well, it's clear that they were  
26      following this closely. It took a researcher a year to find  
27      the truth, but the harm's already been done once the  
28      operations have taken place.

1                   What could we do more to discourage Russia  
2                   from interfering in this way?

3                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It's a broader  
4                   issue than simply Russian disinformation, misinformation.  
5                   When we talk about propaganda, online disinformation,  
6                   misinformation, we have tools we can use that we are  
7                   developing with the web giants in order to prevent  
8                   disinformation and misinformation, but each time we take such  
9                   measures, we have to be very aware of the fact that we want  
10                  to defend freedom of expression. If someone wants to support  
11                  Vladimir Putin, it's a freedom that we enjoy here in Canada  
12                  that the Russians don't have at home. Therefore, we need to  
13                  protect our freedoms.

14                 This is delicate and essential work for a  
15                 democratic society. It's for society, not just the  
16                 government. Yes, the government has a role to play, but  
17                 citizens themselves can and must become more vigilant, more  
18                 aware of Russian propaganda.

19                 We saw several reports in the U.S. where  
20                 individuals discovered after the fact that Russian content  
21                 was amplified by them without their even realizing it and  
22                 they were really disappointed in themselves because they  
23                 didn't want to support Russia. So we have to share these  
24                 realities more, we have to learn -- as I mentioned earlier,  
25                 the Baltic nations, we could draw lessons from them.

26                 They developed resilience within their  
27                 citizenry vis a vis Russian disinformation, misinformation.  
28                 They're close geographically and they're constantly exposed



1 to Russian misinformation, but we could all develop this in  
2 Canada.

3 **MR. GUILLAUME SIROIS:** So to conclude, we  
4 have to take this very seriously.

5 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Indeed.

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

7 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Mr. Chantler for the  
8 Concern Group.

9 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. NEIL CHANTLER:**

10 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you, Commissioner.  
11 Afternoon, Prime Minister. Neil Chantler for  
12 the Chinese Canadian Concern Group.

13 My clients are a group of Chinese Canadians,  
14 professionals, journalists, activists, who are deeply  
15 concerned about China's efforts to interfere with our  
16 democracy. In their daily lives, they see Chinese language  
17 media in Canada touting People's Republic of China party  
18 lines. They see Chinese Canadian community associations  
19 being overtaken by agents and proxies of the CCP, and they  
20 see CCP proxies attending political fundraisers of all  
21 parties, including of your own party. They see Chinese  
22 Canadians being threatened, intimidated and coerced to return  
23 to China for speaking out against China's human rights abuses  
24 at home and abroad.

25 Will you agree with me that the basic premise  
26 that hardening this country against foreign interference is  
27 critical to ensure the safety and security of Chinese  
28 Canadians?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** As I've said  
2 before, particularly in the case of Chinese Canadians,  
3 diaspora groups are usually the first victims of foreign  
4 interference, and we need to continue to do everything we can  
5 to keep Chinese Canadians safe and to keep them from the  
6 impacts of interference by the PRC.

7                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And will you commit to  
8 ensuring that partisan politics will not get in the way of  
9 the government's efforts to respond to this problem?

10                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I have endeavoured  
11 every step of the way to minimize the impact of partisan  
12 politics when it comes to foreign interference. It is  
13 something that we have always taken seriously, something that  
14 we have not tried to politicize. Something that can't always  
15 be said for other parties. But for us, it should be  
16 something that all Canadian parties can agree on, that  
17 protecting Canadians of all backgrounds here in Canada should  
18 be something we all work on.

19                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** In your testimony earlier  
20 today, you took us to a meeting with President Xi Jinping, at  
21 which the issue of overseas police stations came up. Do you  
22 recall that evidence?

23                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** It was more on  
24 interference in general. I didn't mention overseas police  
25 stations, but I did talk about active foreign interference.

26                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** That was the G20 Summit  
27 in Bali in November 2022. Correct?

28                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** In Indonesia, yes.

1                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And your evidence earlier  
2 today was that it wasn't a conversation that went very well.  
3 Is that right?

4                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Half of it was on  
5 video, I think people saw that.

6                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And then following the  
7 meeting, foreign interference in Canada continued and in  
8 fact, it may have even increased?

9                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think we've seen  
10 a steady increase in foreign interference over the past years  
11 as China has grown more and more assertive and aggressive in  
12 promoting and defending the Communist Party of China's goals  
13 and agenda. This isn't how China has always been, even in a  
14 decade past. It has gotten much more aggressive over time  
15 and Canada will -- has continued to work with partners and  
16 allies around the world, but also has continued to strengthen  
17 its own abilities to counter rising negative influence of  
18 China.

19                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Did you advise President  
20 Xi that continued foreign interference in our country was  
21 totally unacceptable?

22                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

23                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And did advise President  
24 Xi that there would be repercussions to the Canada China  
25 relationship if that activity was to continue?

26                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** That was implied.

27                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** What was your sense of  
28 his reaction?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think it's well  
2 understood that he, and the PRC officials, and the Communist  
3 Party of China deny that any such interference is happening  
4 at all.

5                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** The CCP has already shown  
6 that they are willing to flaunt our laws, to flaunt Canadian  
7 sovereignty. We see that in the actions that they've taken  
8 here and especially with respect to these overseas police  
9 stations, perhaps. Does diplomacy with the Communist Party  
10 of China have a meaningful role to play at this point in time  
11 in deterring and countering foreign interference by that  
12 government?

13                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes. Diplomacy  
14 always has a role to play. As has been pointed out a number  
15 of times, we have diplomats not so we can talk to our  
16 friends, but so we can talk to our adversaries.

17                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And to stay on the  
18 subject of these overseas police stations, you're well aware  
19 that this inquiry has been tasked with investigating Canada's  
20 capacity to detect, and deter, and counter foreign  
21 interference. And with respect to those stations, I suggest  
22 that it appears we were not able to detect them. They were  
23 detected by a foreign NGO. At this time, we've made no  
24 arrests, and we've expelled no diplomats as a consequence of  
25 those operations in this country, doing nothing I suggest, to  
26 deter those threats. And we may not have effectively  
27 countered these threats as those operations may still be  
28 continuing in this country.

1 Do you agree that the example of the overseas  
2 police stations serves to highlight various weaknesses in our  
3 system, in our limits to intelligence, our inadequate  
4 criminal laws, some of which with the passage of Bill C-70  
5 may have been rectified? But the need to enhance trust  
6 amongst the diaspora, the intelligence to evidence problem,  
7 and simply the futility of diplomacy with China. This  
8 example highlights all of those weaknesses.

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I would contend  
10 that the example of Chinese police stations highlights most  
11 the aggressive nature of China and how it is increasing its  
12 tools for repression of its nationals, or its people who are  
13 originally from China, everywhere around the world.

14 It is something that we have been pushing  
15 back on significantly. We'll continue to use all tools,  
16 whether its legal, or diplomatic, or intelligence, and we  
17 will continue to seek to protect Canadians and ensure that  
18 they are not being impacted as much as possible by hostile  
19 state actors.

20 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And do you agree that if  
21 operations like that are continuing in this country, that  
22 Canadians who are at risk, Members of the Chinese Canadian  
23 population, ought to be informed of that risk?

24 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I think part of  
25 this Commission and part of the work that Canada is doing is  
26 about highlighting the reality of foreign interference, while  
27 at the same time we continue to take action against various  
28 nexus' and vectors for foreign interference.

1                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Have you or has your  
2 office at any time weighed in with the Minister of Public  
3 Safety on Canada's response to policing those overseas police  
4 stations?

5                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yes.

6                   **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And what has your -- and  
7 how so, please explain?

8                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Well, when the  
9 first reports came out, we turned to the Minister of Public  
10 Safety and his team and said, you need to follow up on this  
11 and make sure that we're dealing with this appropriately.

12                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** And are you concerned  
13 that there have not been arrests or charges in respect to  
14 these?

15                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** There have been --  
16 there have been many follow ups, and I know that work is  
17 continuing to be ongoing.

18                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Are you concerned that  
19 those operations may still be continuing in this country?

20                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Chinese attempts at  
21 interference continue in this country. So we're going to  
22 continue to try and prevent them.

23                  **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Prime Minister, I'm going  
24 to shift gears and ask you about something else. This public  
25 inquiry will undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to our  
26 country's efforts to combat foreign interference, and it's  
27 brought sharply into focus the many significant steps that  
28 have already been taken to combat foreign interference.

1                   With respect to many of those steps, we've  
2                   heard that they've happened as a reaction to what you  
3                   referred to earlier as the criminal leaks. They led to  
4                   unprecedented briefings by CSIS with parliamentarians, and  
5                   the criminal leaks at least contributed to the expulsion of  
6                   Zhao Wei. And while those leaks undoubtedly without  
7                   question, put our intelligence agents, and sources, and  
8                   national reputation at grave risk of harm, there is a sense  
9                   that we might not be here in this room had they not occurred.  
10                  They galvanized the public around issues of foreign  
11                  interference, and they led to the appointment of the special  
12                  rapporteur and ultimately perhaps this inquiry.

13                 Do you agree with that assertion? And as a  
14                 two-part question, how can we ensure that future governments  
15                 and security agencies work together in an effective,  
16                 measured, and proactive way on the ever-changing nature of  
17                 foreign interference so that that type of situation doesn't  
18                 occur again?

19                 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I actually deeply  
20                 disagree with your original contention that it was the leaks  
21                 that spurred this government into action on foreign  
22                 interference. Like I said, we started engaging with the  
23                 issue of foreign interference back in 2016 while we watched  
24                 the American presidential election. We created the Rapid  
25                 Response Mechanism in the lead up to the 2018 G7 that we  
26                 hosted here in Canada in Charlevoix.

27                 We then moved forward on an MC focused on  
28                 protecting democracy, particularly from foreign interference,

1 where we established a SITE task force and the Panel of Five,  
2 and various other mechanisms to ensure the integrity of our  
3 elections. How we move forward on the creation not just of  
4 NSICOP, National Security and Intelligence Committee of  
5 Parliamentarians, but of NSIRA, the National Security and  
6 Intelligence Review Agency.

7 We then moved forward on a number of MCs,  
8 including the Hostile Actions by State Actors MC that  
9 directly resulted in C-20. And I will point out that the  
10 work on C-20 started long before there were any leaks.

11 So certainly I will agree that the  
12 sensational nature of those criminal leaks piqued the  
13 curiosity, and attention, and concerns of Canadians around  
14 the issue of foreign interference, but it was very much  
15 something with which this government had already been elbows  
16 deep in dealing with and has continued to.

17 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you, Prime  
18 Minister.

19 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Thank you.

20 **MR. NEIL CHANTLER:** Thank you, Madam  
21 Commissioner.

22 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

23 Attorney General.

24 **--- CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:**

25 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Good afternoon,  
26 Prime Minister. I have a few areas to cover. First of all,  
27 I'd like to clarify what role you play, if any, in the CSIS  
28 warrant application process.



1 First, as CSIS is preparing to apply for a  
2 warrant, would you ever be briefed?

3 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: No.

4 MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN: Have you ever seen a  
5 CSIS warrant application?

6 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: No.

7 MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN: And a Vanweenan  
8 list, we've heard, can be a part of a CSIS warrant  
9 application. So I think you've answered my question, but  
10 I'll make extra certain, have you ever seen a Vanweenan list?

11 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: I have not. I  
12 don't really even know what a Vanweenan list is, like most  
13 people in this country. The Prime Minister doesn't have any  
14 role in the issuance or processes around granting a CSIS  
15 warrant. That is something that we are completely out of.  
16 It is entirely the purview of the Minister of Public Safety.

17 MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN: I think you've  
18 probably also implicitly answered my next question, which is  
19 do you have any information about who might be on any  
20 Vanweenan list in a CSIS warrant?

21 RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: Absolutely not.

22 MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN: The next area is to  
23 clarify who has the authority over certain actions that CSIS  
24 may take.

25 First, my friend Mr. De Luca suggested that  
26 you, the Prime Minister, could direct CSIS to carry out a  
27 threat reduction measure. Is that correct? That you have  
28 the authority to direct CSIS to carry out a TRM? And if not,

1       what role do you play?

2                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** No, I do not have  
3       that role or authority. CSIS makes a determination of itself  
4       and can and does regularly grant TRMs on its own initiative  
5       and of its own initiative.

6                   There have been situations where in  
7       conversation with our National Security and Intelligence  
8       Advisor, or perhaps the CSIS Director, I've suggested that a  
9       TRM might be a useful tool to pursue in this particular case,  
10      but that is not my authority to grant. It is direction that  
11      they can choose or not choose to take. But it is a tool that  
12      has proven useful in alerting people to the impacts and  
13      dangers of foreign interference and I encourage its use  
14      wherever necessary.

15                  **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Now I want to ask  
16      about a slightly different CSIS action, which is the action  
17      of providing a top-secret briefing to a political party  
18      leader. I understand historically that wasn't something that  
19      could happen, but the decision by the government to offer the  
20      leaders top-secret briefings, to make that something that was  
21      available for them, I believe you said that that was  
22      something that you played a more direct decision or role in.  
23      So can you contrast that authority from the TRM authority  
24      that you just said belonged to CSIS?

25                  **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** Yeah. You know,  
26      whether it's brief -- non-secure, unclassified briefings to  
27      parliamentarians or defensive briefings, or TRMs, threat  
28      reduction measures, these are all things that CSIS has all

1 the authorities necessary to choose to do when they feel it's  
2 warranted as their course of operations and behaviours and  
3 how they fulfil their responsibilities around keeping  
4 Canadians safe.

5 The decision to grant clearances to the  
6 leaders of political parties is a decision that needs to be  
7 made by government itself, and in this case, by my  
8 government, by me to a certain extent.

9 It is not something that happened often, if  
10 ever, in the past, and one can imagine certain governments  
11 not wanting to do it at all for opposition leaders or others.

12 But given the serious matter of foreign  
13 interference and the impact and the anxiety, rightfully, that  
14 Canadians feel about the actions of hostile state actors in  
15 Canada, it seemed to me a responsible step to offer security  
16 clearances to the leaders of the Parties in the House of  
17 Commons.

18 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Thank you. So Prime  
19 Minister, this Public Inquiry has happened at least in part  
20 because there are questions about whether Canadians can and  
21 should have confidence in important things like their  
22 elections, the parliamentarians who represent them, and the  
23 resolve and ability of their government to defend against  
24 this threat of foreign interference in democratic processes.

25 From your perspective, from your experience,  
26 can and should Canadians have confidence in their elections,  
27 their parliamentarians, and their government's resolve? And  
28 if so, why?

1                   **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** First of all, in  
2                   the matter of the integrity of the elections in 2019 and  
3                   2021, we actually created, for the first time in this  
4                   country, processes whereby top public servants and our  
5                   security agencies would monitor, and if necessary, go public  
6                   about threats to the election's integrity as a way of  
7                   ensuring that the election integrity holds.

8                   And that is why we have heard repeatedly  
9                   throughout this process and over the last years testimony  
10                  from all top intelligence officials in this country that the  
11                  results of the 2019 and 2021 elections were determined by  
12                  Canadians, and by Canadians alone. That is a big thing for  
13                  Canadians to feel confident in. That despite attempts at  
14                  interference by foreign countries, Canadians decided the  
15                  outcomes of those elections.

16                  Now, what this Commission has, I think,  
17                  further demonstrated is the depth and the extent to which  
18                  this government has taken seriously the responsibility of  
19                  protecting our institutions, our democracy, and indeed  
20                  Canadians from the actions of hostile state actors, from the  
21                  countries that have been named a number of times throughout  
22                  this process and others.

23                  I think Canadians can see the extent to which  
24                  we have developed tools, we have created measures, we have  
25                  moved forward on initiatives that are all designed to protect  
26                  our democracy in a world in which the threats are increasing,  
27                  in which the impact of active authoritarian states is being  
28                  increasingly felt, in which democracy itself everywhere

1 around the world is under threat.

2 I think part of what this Commission has also  
3 demonstrated is that for everything the Federal Government  
4 can do, it is not alone in its responsibility to counter and  
5 protect against foreign interference. As I mentioned earlier  
6 with the UCC, diaspora communities have been stepping up  
7 their tools in terms of sharing with their members how to  
8 protect themselves against foreign interference.

9 Universities and businesses are working on that. And indeed  
10 political parties, many of them have decided to get their  
11 leaders briefed up so they can avail themselves of top-secret  
12 information or secret information to ensure that they can  
13 look Canadians in the eye and say the integrity of our  
14 political party processes holds.

15 It is an ongoing effort and it will never be  
16 enough. It is something we're constantly going to have to  
17 update, renew, bring on new tools on, because the world we  
18 are in is a complex and dangerous one. But our ability to be  
19 thoughtful, reasonable, and responsible in developing those  
20 tools to both protect our democracy and uphold the freedoms  
21 and principles that make our democracy strong is something  
22 this government works on and continues to focus on every  
23 single day.

24 **MR. FREDERICK SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Prime  
25 Minister.

26 Madam Commissioner, those are my questions.

27 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

28 Me Chaudhury, any questions in re-

1 examination?

2 **MS. SHANTONA CHAUDHURY:** No, merci, Madame.

3 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you very much,  
4 Prime Minister. I think it was your final appearance before  
5 the Commission. Thank you for the time you have given it.

6 I'm going to suspend just for a few minutes.  
7 I would like counsels to stay in the room. I have a few  
8 words to share with you.

9 **RT. HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU:** I also would like  
10 to thank you for the work you're doing and thank everyone  
11 who's working at this Commission. We sometimes had to do a  
12 lot of work in a very short time, and you've had to do a lot  
13 of work and examine a lot of material, and very sensitive  
14 material which have repercussions for national security and I  
15 think that all Canadians are very well served by your  
16 leadership, Madam Commissioner.

17 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Thank you.

18 **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

19 This sitting of the Commission is now in  
20 recess until 4:20.

21 --- Upon recessing at 4:11 p.m.

22 --- Upon resuming at 4:14 p.m.

23 **COMMISSIONER HOGUE:** Sorry, there has been a  
24 small misunderstanding. I was suspending just for a few  
25 minutes just to tell you first of all, subject to the  
26 Commission counsel following up on some of the questions that  
27 have been objected to by the Attorney General, it was the  
28 last testimony for the factual phase of the -- of our work.

1                   And although I believe that you will all be  
2           with us next week, I didn't want to take any risk and I  
3           wanted to thank you all right now for all the work. And I  
4           think you have done quite a lot of work in very, very  
5           sometimes difficult circumstances. So I really, really  
6           appreciate the collaboration the Commission received from all  
7           of you. And although I expect you will be with us next week,  
8           it was important for me to tell you that as of today.

9                   Next week, we will be devoting the entire  
10          week to the Policy Phase of the Commission's work and we will  
11          have seven -- I'm counting, as you have learned, I'm not good  
12          in counting. I think there is going to be -- yes, there will  
13          be seven roundtables. There will be roughly a bit more than  
14          35 experts. Various topics will be discussed. And as you  
15          know, you're all invited to participate, to suggest  
16          questions, and you know the way it will work. But I really  
17          expect that you will all participate.

18                   It will be very interesting, maybe  
19          challenging, but, you know, we are quite numerous, so I  
20          imagine at the end we'll be able to produce good  
21          recommendations.

22                   So thank you all.

23                   **THE REGISTRAR:** Order, please.

24                   This last sitting of the Foreign Interference  
25          Commission is adjourned.

26          --- Upon adjourning at 4:17 p.m.

27

28

## C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Sandrine Marineau-Lupien, a certified court reporter,  
hereby certify the foregoing pages to be an accurate  
transcription of my notes/records to the best of my skill and  
ability, and I so swear.



Sandrine Marineau-Lupien