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Chair: The Honourable Geoff Regan





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Monday, April 12, 2021

• (1835)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 22 of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations. Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, the committee is meeting on its study of Canada-China relations.

[Translation]

This meeting is in hybrid format, pursuant to the motion adopted by the House on January 25, 2021.

[English]

I would like to welcome the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence.

Thank you for being here.

We also have, from the Department of National Defence, Jody Thomas, deputy minister; Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop, commander of the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command and chief of defence intelligence; and Major-General Cadieu, director of staff, strategic joint staff.

Finally, from the Communications Security Establishment, we have Shelly Bruce, chief; as well as Scott Jones, head of the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security.

[Translation]

Thank you, everyone, for being here this evening.

[English]

Mr. Sajjan, the floor is yours for your opening remarks. You have five minutes. Please proceed.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Committee members, good afternoon.

I'm joined here by my officials from both National Defence and from the Communications Security Establishment.

Thank you for inviting me to share some thoughts on Canada-China relations from a National Defence perspective. This is actually my first time appearing before your committee, and I'm grateful for this opportunity.

I want to thank you for the important work you are doing to help Canadians better understand our relationship with China.

First, let me say that Global Affairs Canada is the lead on Canada's bilateral relationship with China.

While our interactions and activities at National Defence have always been in line with foreign policy, we're more of what I would call a "key partner" in Canada's whole-of-government approach. Global Affairs drives our relationship with China. Public Safety is our domestic security lead. The Communications Security Establishment oversees our cyber-defence. National Defence is responsible for the regional security and engagement piece, among other key functions.

Canada recognizes China's importance in world affairs, especially in regional and international security. We share deep ties economically, culturally and especially people-to-people. Many Canadians have Chinese roots, and many Canadians frequently travelled to mainland China before the pandemic to visit family and friends.

Despite these ties, our bilateral relationship is complex and presents challenges. In our defence policy—Strong, Secure, Engaged—we committed to being a reliable partner in the Asia-Pacific region through strong partnerships and consistent engagements.

The world is changing rapidly, as is China's geopolitical role. That is why we are constantly assessing our approach to China. Any behaviours and activities that run counter to Canadian values and interests—and those of our allies and partners—require us to look at the relationship with eyes wide open. We are doing that.

Mr. Chair, here and around the world, we are adamant about supporting the rules-based international order. We will always work to uphold it and the stability it brings.

We believe that all countries benefit when we observe the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We will always stand up for freedom of navigation and overflight, while respecting the rights and jurisdiction of coastal states. We know that freedom of navigation is vital, and 90% of the world's trade travels by sea. That's why Canada opposes land reclamation projects and building outposts in disputed areas for military purposes. We support lawful commerce, freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight in accordance with international law.

We will continue supporting our allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the face of unilateral actions that undermine peace and stability. One way we signal this support is by maintaining an active naval presence in the region.

At the moment, HMCS *Calgary* is deployed in the Indo-Pacific region with a Cyclone helicopter on board to carry out Canada's forward presence activities under Operation Projection. Shortly, the ship will be chopped into Operation Artemis, which is the Canadian Armed Forces' mission to fight terrorism and to make the Middle Eastern waters more secure.

Under Operation Neon, we are also contributing to multinational efforts to implement the United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea, sanctions that China has also agreed to uphold.

Along with these naval activities, Canada has been a proud dialogue partner with ASEAN for four decades. ASEAN is the key group of nations in Southeast Asia working to uphold the rules-based order.

Canada is also seeking to deepen its level of engagement with ASEAN by pursuing member status on two expert working groups of its Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus on maritime security and humanitarian and disaster relief.

As said during a December ADMM-Plus meeting, Canada is looking to expand its navy, air force, army and special forces ties with ASEAN countries through high-level bilateral engagements, staff talks and participation in military exercises. We will keep prioritizing exchanges with ASEAN members in military education, including through our military training and co-operation program.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, Canada's relationship with an evolving China is a complex and challenging one. In all of our dealings with China, we will continue to be guided by our values, to defend human rights and to protect our interests at home and abroad. We will always work with like-minded countries to uphold the rules-based international order that brings stability and security to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

• (1840)

I want to thank the committee for its time today, and I would be glad to respond to any questions.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

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

We'll now go to our first round of questions.

Mr. Bezan, welcome to the committee. You have six minutes.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, as we know, in the last couple of days there's been some reporting that the Trudeau government threatened to pull funding from the Halifax International Security Forum if it gave the John McCain award to the President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen.

Do you support that decision, and why aren't you supporting President Tsai Ing-wen for this award?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, first of all, that's absolutely false. The Halifax International Security Forum is an independent organization. It makes its own choices with regard to the awards.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Are you supporting [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] receiving this award?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, as I stated, when it comes to this award, they're an independent organization and they decide where—

**Mr. James Bezan:** Did you personally support it, Minister?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, when it comes to our relationship with China, I'm happy to take many questions. You asked me a question regarding the Halifax International Security Forum and how they make decisions. They are an independent organization and accordingly they make a decision by themselves—

**Mr. James Bezan:** But did you threaten to withhold funding from the Halifax International Security Forum, which receives funding from the Department of National Defence, if it awarded the McCain award to the President of Taiwan?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, no. In fact, I authorized funding for the Halifax International Security Forum twice last year: once, I believe, sometime in early September, and once in November.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Will that go forward, then? Will the Halifax International Security Forum provide this award to President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chairman, I'm not understanding the question the member is asking.

**Mr. James Bezan:** All the reporting is that the Government of Canada, the Liberal government, is going to withhold this funding if this award is presented to President Tsai Ing-wen.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, when it comes to the Halifax International Security Forum, we have supported this forum since we came into government. It was actually in place before that. As I stated, it is not our decision to award this; it is the decision of the forum itself, and the organization, to make that decision on its own.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Okay. We'll probably return to that, Mr. Chair.

I want to get on with questions about the Chinese troops that were training in Canada back in February 2018. Troops from the People's Liberation Army took part and went to warfare training exercises at CFB Petawawa. How many Chinese troops were present for that exercise?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, I want to make it very clear that when it comes to our relationships with China and how that military relationship works, we work very closely with our allies on how relationships are done. In fact, the only formal relationship we had with the Chinese military was an agreement that was signed by Rob Nicholson, who was the minister at that time. Since then, because the situation has changed, as allies we have made assessments.... Actually, beforehand their participation in RIMPAC was not allowed, and then once—

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Chair, if I could—

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** If you'll allow me to answer the question, I'll get—

**Mr. James Bezan:** I'd just like to get to the questions here. The reality, Minister, is that no Chinese troops were ever trained in Canada when the Conservatives were in government. This was a new addition to the agreement that was made by the Trudeau government.

Again, how many troops were present during that exercise in February 2018? That's the question. Can you please answer that?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I'm trying to, Mr. Chair, if the member would allow me to answer the question.

After our two Michaels were arrested, very clear direction was given that we were not to continue with any type of military involvement, even though Minister Nicholson had signed that. I can provide greater detail of any involvement and future involvement through Major-General Cadieu, if you like.

**Mr. James Bezan:** How many troops were from the PLA, and what were their ranks?

• (1845)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** General Cadieu, can you answer that question?

**Major-General Trevor Cadieu (Director of Staff, Strategic Joint Staff, Department of National Defence):** Mr. Chair, for the exercise Mr. Bezan is referring to in February 2018, five members of the PLA were present as observers. They ranged in rank. The lowest rank was a sergeant and I think the highest was a major general.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, we know from documents accidentally released by Global Affairs Canada that the decision by the CDS to cancel the winter training exercise with the Chinese troops happened only after our Five Eyes partners warned us that there could be a dangerous sharing of military information and sensitive doctrine if it went ahead a second time in 2019.

Minister, were you prepared to go ahead with this exercise up to that point, because Global Affairs Canada and the Minister of Foreign Affairs told you to, or did you allow the military itself to actually make the decision to cancel it?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** No, Mr. Chair. As I stated in my earlier testimony, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] two Michaels were arrested, I gave direction that we were not to have any further involvement when it comes to the training, and that's exactly what we have done.

The training that was there was actually a direct result of the decision and the agreement that was made under then minister Rob Nicholson, under the member's government, so when the member says that under their time when they were in government, they had no involvement, this was us reversing that position.

Thank you.

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

Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lightbound, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for joining us today for this meeting.

Again today, the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] committee made public its 2020 report highlighting the growing importance of cyber-attacks by foreign actors to the security of Canadians. This is based on reports, communications from the Communications Security Establishment, which, among other things, identify two main players: Russia and China.

I'd like you to tell us what is being done to ensure that our networks are as protected as possible, including in the context of COVID-19. Indeed, as we know, there has been a lot of telework, which has resulted in greater vulnerability, which may not have been as present in the past.

I'd like to know what cybersecurity measures are being taken to protect our infrastructure and systems.

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** We have significant concern when it comes to cyber-actors around the world, and especially when it comes to Russia and China.

Our agency especially, the Communications Security Establishment, has a tremendous capability, and we now actually have the authorities to take the appropriate action. Before the Communications Security Establishment Act was in place, when we came into government we had the capability to do so but didn't have the authority. For example, we had to wait for a cyber-attack to occur—the equivalent of waiting to get punched in the face before you can take any action—even though you knew the attack was occurring.

One of the things we did here was that within the new CSE act, when we see an attack coming, we have now the authority to take further action to be able to shut it down. In addition, we also have the ability as a government to take offensive action.

Now, putting the authorities in place is one thing, but we also have now made significant investments by creating the cyber centre as well, under CSE, making sure that we concentrate all our support there. That's one aspect of it: making the appropriate investments there. It's about having the right people to maintain that capability and making sure you have the right authorities, but also investing in the right capabilities to be able to round it off in making sure that Canada is safe from cyber-attacks.

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Specifically on this issue, how important is it to work with our Five Eyes partners? How does the multilateral approach work with Five Eyes partners to combat these cyber-attacks?

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, our relationship in the Five Eyes, especially when it comes to CSE and its equivalent agencies, is extremely strong. This is built over time. With the CSE in Canada, we have an extremely good relationship because of the capability we provide and the responsibilities we share, but now our credibility has significantly increased because we actually have our authorities in line with those of our allies. That was very important.

The main thing for us is to continue to invest in the capability, so that we stay at the cutting edge. We have a very good position now, but we need to continue to make those investments, just like we are doing right now, so we stay on that path. Investing in capabilities through our people is the number one priority in making sure we have the ability to remain safe.

• (1850)

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. On a completely different topic, could you tell us about the efforts being made to ensure Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] In 2018, China described itself as a near-Arctic state.

Can you tell us about National Defence's policy on Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic?

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** We looked at Arctic sovereignty and put it in our defence policy in accordance with maintaining our sovereignty. It was going to take investments.

We had already started with the investments, for example, making sure we had the Arctic-operative patrol ships. In fact, we have the first one actually operating in the region and conducting tests. We're going to have six now, not just five. We will have 15 surface combatants as well, through a fully funded defence policy.

NORAD modernization and continental defence was the last pillar. We have outlined it in our defence policy. We are now moving forward with this. The reason we waited to do it is that we had to work in conjunction with the U.S. on this. We also wanted to make sure we did the proper costing and put the funding into it. This way, no government can come in and start cutting funding. Just like we secured [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] policy, we're going to do the same thing for the Arctic.

We also want to make sure the people in the north get the appropriate support as we make further defence investments up there.

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** I'll conclude by thanking the minister, since I only have about 30 seconds left, which isn't enough time to ask another question.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Bergeron, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the minister for being with us this evening. I'm very pleased about that.

I'm going to pick up on Mr. Lightbound's question about the Arctic.

We know of China's growing interest in the Arctic. Despite the fact that, in practice, it has no possession in either the north or the south, it has an interest. As we know, the Chinese tried to get their hands on a mine in the Northwest Territories. The decision not to allow this acquisition has been made.

However, I want to come back to the importance of defence, especially since Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic is not even fully recognized by our main ally, the United States.

How do we plan to deal with the wishes of China and Russia related to the Arctic, given the fact that Canadian sovereignty is being challenged by a certain number of states, including the United States, and the fact that Canada's military capabilities are far below those expected of us by the United States and NATO?

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** That's a really important question. When it comes to protecting the Arctic, we can't just look at it strictly from a defence nexus when we look to our sovereignty. We need to always look at a whole-of-government approach to ensure we're not preventing access to various industries. It is extremely important that we make the right investments.

When it comes to the state of where we're at, when we work with the U.S., we probably couldn't be in a better position, because of our NORAD treaty. NORAD is the only binational command in the world where you have a U.S. commander who is selected by the U.S. but also must be approved by the prime minister, just like the deputy commander, who is always Canadian, has to be authorized by the president.

Through this, we manage the security of our airspace. What we're trying to do now, and what we will be doing, is looking at modernizing NORAD and taking things to a whole new level. This is not just strictly about technology investments; this is about looking at new things we need to put in as part of this relationship, and how we possibly look at America. We need to be mindful that the Arctic.... Originally, we were just looking at it in terms of airspace. We want to go from space all the way to under water.

Significant work is currently being done in the research development world right now, in a classified sense, to make sure we figure that piece out and link it to the procurement piece, with our new ships that are coming online. It would then be linked to the ongoing command relationship.

That's what NORAD modernization, or a continental defence, will look like. Once we have that, we need to make sure we send a very strong message of deterrence.

When it comes to some of the other disagreements we have with the U.S., we have a very good relationship and are able to work things out. We have to always be mindful that our relationship with the U.S. can't be even remotely compared to how we work with China.

• (1855)

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I fully agree with you, Mr. Minister, however, when we compare the relations between Canada and the United States and Canada and the People's Republic of China, we realize that the People's Republic of China is making enormous investments in its defence, so much so that this is the second largest budget in the world.

As I pointed out, China is now a concern, even for NATO, although it's far away from the North Atlantic region. As I also mentioned, NATO and the United States are raising concerns about Canadian defence investments.

How do we respond to these concerns that are being expressed to us, given the views of China and Russia, among others, on Canada's North?

[English]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** First of all, Mr. Chair, when it comes to China's investments in defence, we have concerns with that as well, how we work with NATO.... This is where, Mr. Chair, I'll clarify the relationship.

Yes, there was a significant concern when it came to defence investments. This is why we conducted a very [Technical difficulty—Editor] policy review and then, once we launched our defence policy, demonstrated the.... In addition to what the previous government was going to add to defence, we added \$63 billion.

Probably the most important thing when it came to our defence policy was that we didn't just put the policy out; we actually added the money to it. For the 20 years of the defence policy, it will be carved out of a fiscal framework, so that now defence doesn't have to worry about the money for the 338 projects that are there.

We're going to be doing the same thing for NORAD modernization. When it comes to the level of investments, both NATO and the U.S. are very happy with the level of investments we're making. Obviously, we have more work to do. That's where NORAD modernization comes in. As I've always said at NATO—and I spoke with the NATO Secretary General many times about this—as we look at supporting NATO in a Europe—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Minister, but Mr. Bergeron's time is up.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

[English]

Now we'll go to Mr. Harris, for six minutes.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for joining us. There are lots of interesting questions arising from your visit.

First of all, I have a concern about the whole issue of security in Canada—that is what we're talking about here—and, in particular, cybersecurity. We know that China and other countries, including Russia and perhaps Canada, have capabilities in cyberwarfare, as I guess it's called sometimes—the capability of doing cyber-attacks. We recently had electricity turned off in India, allegedly by Chinese state or non-state actors. We have, of course, the history of interference with the Iranian centrifuges, which occurred I think in 2010 or 2014, and allegedly recently.

I have a question for you. I know that [Technical difficulty—Editor], but can you tell us how vulnerable Canada's key infrastructure might be to interferences of that sort? Hydro dams are very important. The Internet is very important. Communication is very important. What capabilities does Canada have to protect itself from these kinds of vulnerabilities?

• (1900)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, it's a very important question.

At the end of the day, we need to make sure we protect our valuable assets and our industry. That is why, through the communications security act, we have the authorities available to be able to engage with industry so that we can work with them to make sure they have the right cyber-capabilities.

In fact, the cyber centre works very closely with the various sectors and, more importantly, with almost any company that wishes to get additional information. What we want to do, as we look at not only the sectors, is to make Canada cybersecure. The only way to do that is to make sure, as companies develop and as industries develop—as sectors further develop as well—that they have the right cyber-capabilities from the get-go, advised by the cyber centre. Currently I'm very confident with the capabilities that we have, but it's an ongoing support that we need to provide.

I'm happy to have our chief, Shelly Bruce, provide a greater—

**Mr. Jack Harris:** We may ask more questions of the individuals from the CSE afterwards. I'm interested in your views on this.

You're talking about providing information. Is that the strategy—to provide information—or do you have an actual capability of ensuring that people's vulnerabilities are able to be made secure? Saying that companies that are interested... Clearly, Canada has a strategic interest in ensuring that the infrastructure is operating and is not subject to vulnerabilities. Have you looked at ways of ensuring that this happens, other than providing information?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** No, absolutely. In fact, Jack, a lot of work is actually done in providing not just the information, but when it comes to the infrastructure that is needed to make sure that you actually are cyber-safe. There is very close collaboration with the CSE, with those sectors. Also, there are certain things, obviously, that we can't talk about in this forum, but I'm sure our chief can provide greater information at the next session.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** You mentioned that the CSE act gives you the authority to do that, but the CSE act also allows the CSE to covertly undertake active cybersecurity operations intended to influence public perception, for example, of the Chinese government. You could do it by hacking into the country's information structure and distributing sensitive and embarrassing documents about activities; these are called “hack and dumps” or “hack and leaks”.

Now, if Canada is authorized to do that, you can be sure that China and other countries are also authorized to do that. Is the CSE the organization that's responsible for defending against that kind of attack from other countries like, for example, China? Are there examples of attacks that have been detected or deflected as a result of the CSE's activity?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** First of all, the CSE is responsible for protecting Canada when it comes to these types of attacks, and it does a very good job. I'm very impressed. More importantly, I just want to give a shout-out to the individuals. It is because of the people we have that we actually have this capability. The reason I say this is that I hear this from the allies as well. It's also extremely important, Mr. Chair, for all members of this committee.

With the CSE act, yes, we do have more authorities. What's very important with these additional authorities is that we have very strong deterrents as well. However, anything we do—just like when it comes to the military—is all based on Canadian law and on international law as well. We want to do things in a manner that makes sure that Canadians stay safe, but at the same time sends a strong message to any adversary that we have the capabilities to protect ourselves. We want to send a strong message of deterrence.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Can you tell us what capabilities Canada may have in protecting Canadians by performing a counterattack, or defences or defensive responses in the case of a cyber-style aggression against Canada involving information or an infrastructure attack against Canada?

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris, I'm afraid we'll have to wait for that answer, as your time has concluded. Perhaps it will come up again. You'll have another opportunity, of course.

[*Translation*]

We'll now start the second round of questions.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good evening, Mr. Minister. In your presentation, you mentioned Canada's efforts abroad to support the sovereignty of various countries. That's great, but here at home, from the beginning, we've been talking a lot about Chinese interference in the territory. In 2015, the communist government designated the polar region, the deep seabed and outer space as China's new strategic frontiers and noted that they were rich in opportunity. The Pentagon issued a report [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] warning that the Chinese government was mapping the Arctic seabed.

Have you been made aware of Chinese submarines in the Canadian Arctic?

• (1905)

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, one thing I can assure the member is that when it comes to China or any other nation that works up in the north, we take our sovereignty very seriously. We closely monitor activities, and we have a very strong presence in the area when it's needed as well. Obviously, I can't get into more detail than this.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We're talking about our presence in the Arctic. As we know, we don't have polar icebreakers. I know this comes under another department but, as Minister of National Defence, are you pressuring your government to have one? I imagine we're currently relying on our American colleagues. Actually, the Chinese are in the process of building some. They already have medium icebreakers and are building more.

Are you pushing to have *Diefenbaker* as soon as possible?

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, as we stated earlier on, this is a whole-of-government approach. In fact, we'll work together to make sure we have all the right support. For example, on the defence side alone and as the member knows from the time when he was a critic for defence, when it comes to our Arctic offshore patrol ships, we actually had the *Harry DeWolf* operating up in the north, conducting its trial.

We do have a presence there. We have now put up additional satellites so that we have a greater reconnaissance and outlook up there. We're doing some really cutting-edge research up in the north as well.



Plus, when it comes to the Coast Guard, we have made significant investments and we will be doing more to make sure we not only have the right presence, but that we provide the right support.

However, we need to make sure we have that layered approach. It's extremely vital, Mr. Chair. It's probably the most important piece. The investments we're making into the future right now are about aligning our space capabilities all the way down to under the water and into a command and [*Inaudible—Editor*] that will work with NORAD modernization.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you. As you know, the time we have is short, and we want to get this done quickly.

With regard to telecommunications, there is a dispute with Huawei. Everyone is aware of the 5G issue and other issues with the company.

Three years ago, we were told—this was at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, if I'm not mistaken—that a telecommunications network would be installed by Huawei in Canada's north and that the company's objective was to work with indigenous peoples to provide telecommunications services. But we know very well that this was a way for China to establish itself there.

Can you tell me if Huawei has or is the process of establishing a telecommunications network? I'm not talking about 5G here, but about Huawei's telecommunications.

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** First of all, I can't provide any details about exactly what the member is talking about in the north. I can say that when it comes to CSE and the work they do, the current infrastructure we have in place is one of the best in the Five Eyes because of the decisions our government—and previous governments—have made in this realm. This has allowed us to have a good system as we work with telecommunications companies.

Moving forward, we need to make sure that in the 5G world it is just as robust, if not better. Moving forward, this is not just about looking at one particular company. We need to be mindful that we're looking extremely broadly because we're making decisions for way into the future. We want to make sure we have the right one, just like we did with 4G technology.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you.

China received observer status on the Arctic Council in 2013. Will Canada oppose China's request for a higher status on the Arctic Council?

Since China obtained observer status, it has increased its presence here.

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, obviously I can't talk about what discussions may occur. One thing I can assure you when it comes to our government—especially from defence—is that we will be extremely mindful when it comes to our Arctic sovereignty. It's something we take very seriously. We'll be aggressively making

sure we send a message. One message that we [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] is that we actually have increased our CADI zone when it comes to the north, which we monitor with NORAD.

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

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*English*]

Madam Zann, you have five minutes, please.

**Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

I'd like to say thank you and welcome to the minister. *Shukriya ji.*

Minister, as we know, climate change is real. In fact, it's a real danger in the world. Canada is recognized as a strong ally globally in terms of disaster response and humanitarian assistance. In that regard, as an Australian-born Canadian, I would very much like to thank you for your direction to send help to Australia last year during the terrible, disastrous wildfires. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart for that.

Can you please tell us about the work of the disaster assistance response team and their operations on deployments around the world?

Thank you.

● (1910)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Thank you very much. I'm happy to talk about DART and all the work we have been doing in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific region. Climate impacts that region, and nations there know this extremely well. When they see sea levels rising, not just their livelihoods but their entire existence is at stake.

Back in 2015 we increased our presence in the Pacific. Having a greater presence there with the Canadian Armed Forces, especially our navy, gave greater confidence to those nations that we would be there for them. DART therefore plays a very important role when it comes to disasters. We do an analysis of when the team needs to be sent. It has to be requested. Then, when it is sent, it provides the necessary humanitarian support [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] great work. This is one area we have been trying to expand with our colleagues, especially working with Japan and South Korea in the region. We're looking at how we can partner up with other nations, especially Australia, and how we can work together to provide greater support [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Sometimes it's about airlift, and we've done that in other places.

Also, let's not forget that we have the heavy urban search and rescue teams that our government restarted funding for. These teams are designed to respond to disasters.

We're looking at various options for how we can provide greater support. Through those discussions, we'll have a better idea, but this is one area that we are paying very close attention to.

**Ms. Lenore Zann:** Thank you very much. My constituents will be glad to hear that, because in Cumberland—Colchester there is a threat of rising sea levels with the Chignecto Isthmus, which is surrounded by water on both sides. Nova Scotia does not want to become an island.

Minister, Canada is involved with our allies on a number of multilateral operations, and with the current environment, that allied work—solidarity, if you will—has proven to be really essential. Could you please expand a bit more on our efforts with our allies to maintain peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** As I stated earlier, for some time, we have been working with our allies, but early on, when I went to the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, it was noted that we did not have consistent engagement. This meant that when we showed up, we weren't taken seriously.

After my first meetings there, I committed that Canada will have a consistent engagement in the Pacific, and that's exactly what we have done. You've seen the tremendous work. We're part of Operation Neon, for monitoring sanctions against North Korea. We conduct exercises together with other militaries. This shows how we can respond to nations when they put up their hand at a time of need during disasters. We provide capacity-building training for many nations. Many nations in the Asia-Pacific region are part of our military training co-operation program. They come to Canada and we provide additional language training.

These are the relationships that are currently being built. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] not only enhancing those relationships, but developing other ones as well.

**Ms. Lenore Zann:** At some point after the pandemic, we'd like to welcome you to Pugwash, Nova Scotia, which is well known around the world for peace and for bringing people together to discuss how we can move world peace further along and work together multilaterally with all countries.

Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Chair:** Since I have 15 seconds, I'll tell you that Cyrus Eaton, who started the Pugwash thinkers' conferences, was once asked, "Where is Pugwash?" He said, "Well, that's easy. It's halfway between Shinimicas and Tatamagouche."

**Ms. Lenore Zann:** He was right.

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

• (1915)

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I'll try to be brief, Mr. Chair.

To begin, I'm going to come back to Mr. Bezan's question about what led the Department of National Defence to agree to a joint exercise with the People's Republic of China troops on Canadian soil.

Then, based on what you were told, Mr. Minister, why did the Department of Foreign Affairs want to continue with this exercise?

[*English*]

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** First of all, I want to make it very clear, Mr. Chair, that it wasn't the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We never actually had any discussion about this. I can't talk about whatever internal discussions might have happened at the lower levels of Global Affairs, but one thing I can tell you when it came to defence and this exercise is that I wasn't aware that it was actually taking place. It was based on the agreements that were done, as I stated, and signed by the previous government. That work was continuing.

Obviously, after our two Michaels were arbitrarily detained, I gave direction that we were not to continue with any type of further relationship. That's exactly what we have right now.

When it comes to the relationship with China, we work very closely with our allies in how we make decisions based on the work. Originally it was about humanitarian and disaster response, on which we could work together. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] made at the exercise that we conduct at RIMPAC. It's one of the largest naval exercises, and China would not be invited to that.

We work very closely with our Five Eyes partners on what types of relationships we build, because ultimately it's only through multilateralism that you're able to have the biggest impact.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 35 seconds left.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Minister, I'm sure you won't have time to answer, but I was wondering and I was worried about how we could ensure that the People's Republic of China is disciplined, if I can put it that way, in its space activities. There have been a number of incidents—I don't have time to go through them—that suggest to me that there's very little concern on the Chinese side about the impact these activities can have in space.

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

[*English*]

Now we'll continue, with Mr. Harris, for two minutes and 30 seconds.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll repeat my question of the last time, Minister.

What capabilities does Canada have in potential counterattack or defensive response to a hybrid-style aggression involving a cyber-attack on Canadian infrastructure or communications?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Mr. Chair, we have a number of capabilities. Obviously there are some capabilities we do not discuss in public. I'll hand it off to Shelly in a second here to discuss what we can talk about, but what I will say is that the authorities we have put into place allow the Communications Security Establishment to prevent attacks.

If you remember—

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I understand you have the authority, but capability is the concern, sir, because we understand that other countries have the capability of putting these kinds of attacks in place.

The question is, does Canada have an ability to respond to these attacks, or do we just simply have a defensive posture?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** No, we have the ability to do offensive cyber-action as well. It's within the authorities that have been authorized under the CSE act. When it comes to the defensive side, sending a very strong deterrent is equally important. When we can detect a cyber-attack that is coming and have the ability to shut it down before it comes, that's equally important. We didn't have that authority before. The reason I mention this is so that these authorities that we have in place can be understood, not only by all parliamentarians but also by future governments as well.

We had tremendous capability before, but the cyber-attack that we had with the NRC, because we did not have key authorities... We weren't able to respond with the capabilities because we didn't have those authorities. That's why the authorities are very important as we discuss this.

Shelly, can you add anything further to that, please?

• (1920)

**Ms. Shelly Bruce (Chief, Communications Security Establishment):** Sure, Minister, just to reinforce, we have both a foreign intelligence mandate and a cyber-defence mandate, so we have the capability of monitoring.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** It's not the mandate that I'm concerned about, or the authorities either. It's capability. We see these things going on in other places. We've seen recent examples of them, allegedly from China or potentially from Israel or somewhere else.

It's a question of whether Canada has those—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Harris. Your time is up.

We'll go on now to Mr. Williamson, for five minutes.

Mr. Williamson.

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Thank you, Minister, for joining us this evening. Could you tell us what you think of the Halifax International Security Forum?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** In what way? Can you elaborate further?

**Mr. John Williamson:** What are your views? You've co-hosted it the last couple of years. You've attended it many times.

Is it an organization from which Canada and Canadian taxpayers derive a benefit? Is it a useful agency?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I'm glad you asked that question. I want to make sure you're talking about the Halifax International Security Forum, not the office it has in Washington. Is that correct?

**Mr. John Williamson:** I'm talking about the event held in Halifax every year.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** That's just the event itself, not the office and not the employees or former Conservative staffers who work in that office. Is that correct?

**Mr. John Williamson:** That is correct.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Even before I was minister, I used to watch the Halifax International Security Forum. I felt it actually provided a very unique and intimate conversation that you could not have in other parts of the world, and I've said that publicly a number of times.

When I was actually able to take part in it for the first time, I had the former minister of defence, Peter MacKay, there. I told him how much I really valued the work it did. More importantly, it provided a really good economic benefit for Halifax. In fact, I spoke with Peter Van Praagh and some of other people. I asked, "How can we look at expanding it, so that maybe Atlantic Canada can benefit even more?" I always want to look at opportunities for how it can be better for Halifax every single year.

**Mr. John Williamson:** It's not something you would want to see leave Halifax or Canada. Is that correct?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I am really mindful.... Why are you asking those questions?

**Mr. John Williamson:** I'm just getting a sense. I assume if it's important to you—

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I just told you how I felt about it. I couldn't give a stronger endorsement for the Halifax International Security Forum as it happens in Halifax.

**Mr. John Williamson:** As defence minister, would you rather go to the meetings there than over in London or elsewhere?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** No, you actually do need to go to other meetings in other places. Halifax is important. As Mr. Bezan also knows, they tend to be—

**Mr. John Williamson:** Fair enough.

I'm surprised you referenced the Washington office, and the supposed Conservative staff, which kind of opens up something that I'd heard around this town. In fact, it's an open secret that your government doesn't like the fact that it was started under a Conservative government. It's an open secret that you'd like to find a way to defund it.

In fact, this John McCain award that is being proposed—potentially or apparently from the news reports—to the heroic president of Taiwan gives you an excuse to do just that, to cut its funding while maintaining your close relations with Beijing.

What say you to that, since you're so quick to label these Conservative organizers or employees? I didn't know that was an issue.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** That couldn't be further from the truth.

In fact, when Peter MacKay was there, I actually said to him, in front of everybody, how important this was, and that I wanted to make sure this continues. If you actually recall, and if you take a look at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the report it put out in a news release, it talks about this.

I want to make sure that Canadian tax dollars go to the Halifax International Security Forum, because at the same time, when you were talking about the same organization, the business side of it is headquartered in Washington. When you were asking me that question, I didn't know what exactly you were talking about. I support the Halifax International Security Forum.

I don't know what's so funny about this, because it's extremely serious. One, it provides a lot of economic benefit. We invite people from all over, and if you—

**Mr. John Williamson:** All right.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I'm trying to answer the question.

**Mr. John Williamson:** Based on this strong support and your support for the group in Halifax, can you commit to us today that regardless of what award is presented or not presented at this next meeting, you'll continue to fund this organization?

• (1925)

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Why are you concerned? I thought we were talking about the Canada-China relationship. I've stated that when the funding request comes to me, as it does every year, I will take a look at it. I have given my public endorsement for the Halifax International Security Forum so often, and I'm kind of surprised that you keep going on about the support for this.

The reason I asked this question was that the company is actually headquartered in Washington, and I want to make sure our Canadian tax dollars—

**Mr. John Williamson:** Minister, read the newspaper then.

**The Chair:** Order.

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

We'll now go to Ms. Yip for five minutes.

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Thank you for coming, Minister Sajjan.

I'll go back to our topic for this evening.

Minister, COVID has brought many obstacles. I was wondering if you could tell us more about how we've managed to sustain our engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** I'm glad we're going back to the topic at hand.

Canada is a Pacific nation. When I became Minister of National Defence, it was very clear that we did not have a significant presence in the Pacific. In fact, it was quite consistent that we didn't have a regular presence at the Shangri-La Dialogue. We committed to not only increasing our presence with the military, but being there reliably on exercises, working very closely with our partners.

A perfect example I can give is what we call Operation Neon, the section's monitoring against North Korea. In Vancouver a conversation was convened by foreign ministers, led then by our then foreign minister, Chrystia Freeland, with other foreign ministers, the secretary of state and me. The secretary of defence from the U.S. also attended and provided the military outlook. Through this we were able, with all the foreign ministers, to look at the military challenges and emphasize the importance of diplomacy. To do this, we needed to have credible military presence in the region against North Korea. That's exactly what we did.

Through the convening of that conversation, we were able to have a greater presence in the region and we have consistently provided both aerial and ship support for monitoring these sanctions. This gives greater confidence to the members of the nations there that Canada will be there. That's exactly what we have done. We need to continue this. We have significant security concerns in the region, but if we also want to have a voice we need to be there. That's exactly what we're doing now.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** In your opening statement, you said you were looking to expand your navy ties, which you've just mentioned, and that would include military education with other countries. Can you tell us more about that?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** In terms of relationships, we have a military training co-operation program in the region. We've been in to enhance that, so their members can train with us at our school here in Canada. Obviously, this has been impacted by COVID, and we look forward to resuming a lot of that. We also do capacity-building work.

Now we want to look at opportunities and how we can increase the relationship to start working on co-operation on humanitarian and disaster response. We know how much that impacts the region and how we can provide greater support when we work together.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** What has DND's involvement been in protecting Canadians against cybersecurity interference, like Operation Fox Hunt to suppress dissent among the Chinese-Canadian community?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** One thing I can say with absolute confidence is that our folks at CSE work very closely with our allies in protecting Canadians and our allies [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] against intrusion. A lot of great work happens behind the scenes that we can't talk about with Canadians, for good reason.

I've already talked about the authorities with the CSE act, but it is important to mention that the authority we finally have allows us those capabilities, which require the appropriate investments we are currently making. For example, the creation of the cyber centre allows us not only to have a tremendous capability to protect Canadians but also to start building a culture of resilience inside Canada, so we can make sure that everybody is cyber-safe.

As little as this may sound, it has a significant impact. You can work with small businesses and even individuals to make sure they're cyber-safe. Everybody's walking around with their phones, even kids these days. It's extremely important to educate them on how to change their password regularly and make other choices to make sure they stay safe.

● (1930)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Yip, and thank you, Minister.

That concludes our first session. I understand some of the folks with you are staying for the next panel. We need to suspend for two minutes so we can add two additional witnesses.

Thank you very much.

● (1930)

(Pause)

● (1930)

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

I now welcome two additional witnesses. From the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have Daniel Costello, assistant deputy minister, international security; and Weldon Epp, director general, North Asia and Oceania bureau. Thank you very much for joining us.

We'll now continue with questions from committee members. We'll go first to Mr. Bezan for six minutes.

Mr. Bezan, please.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today I'm going to concentrate my questions for Jody Thomas, the deputy minister of national defence.

Ms. Thomas, when the Department of National Defence cancelled the winter warfare training exercise with the People's Liberation Army, we read about some push-back that DND received from officials over at Foreign Affairs.

Can you describe what that push-back was?

**Ms. Jody Thomas (Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence):** As was shown in the inadvertent release of the email, there was some concern about breaking existing agreements, and there was concern about commitments that had been publicly made. Five Eyes chiefs of defence had decided that this kind of winter warfare training—and it was winter survival training rather than

warfare training—was probably not the best use of our allied time, and we thought it was possibly a risk to continue with that training. Therefore, it was a difference of opinion amongst professionals that was resolved with the cancellation of the training.

● (1935)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Ms. Thomas, we know from those ATIPed documents that our Five Eyes partners, particularly the Australians and the Americans, warned the department that sensitive military doctrine risked being transferred to the communist Chinese troops if we went ahead with the winter warfare exercise.

Can you please explain what type of sensitive transfer of military doctrine was at risk, and why that would be considered so dangerous?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** I could ask Major-General Cadieu to expand upon the exact training in that it was a military training program. I think any transfer of knowledge that allows another country that is not an ally and not necessarily of the same view that we have of the world to expand its body of knowledge is always a risk. Whether it is how to operate a vessel, how to operate and survive in the winter, or any number of activities that are undertaken by a military, it was determined that the best approach was to not proceed with the training.

**Mr. James Bezan:** I'll quote what you just said a month ago, on March 10. It was regarding China's interest [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]:

China has a voracious appetite and will stop at nothing to feed itself, and the Arctic is one of the last domains and regions left, and we have to understand it and exploit it—and more quickly than they can exploit it.

Given the reality of China's ambitions in the Arctic and knowing how your mindset is now, what changed since having them here in 2018 in winter warfare and winter survival training alongside members of the Canadian Armed Forces?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** The training that was conducted and planned to be conducted in 2018 was very low-level training. Regarding the difference between the strategic view of China and the Arctic and what Canada needs to do to protect our interests and our sovereignty in the Arctic, I would say they are two completely different issues. One is about a very tactical level of training, and the other is about our sovereignty and a strategic-level view of Canada, our waters, our maritime domain approaches and the Arctic as an entire region.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Has a decision been taken now to halt these exercises indefinitely, or was the decision made to permanently ensure that we not go forward with any more training with Chinese troops?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** My understanding is there will not be this kind of training.

**Mr. James Bezan:** After the documents were released under access to information, what message did your department receive from Chinese officials in Beijing?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** I don't know of any message to the Department of National Defence at that time.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Were there any to the Canadian Armed Forces?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** There were none that I am aware of.

**Mr. James Bezan:** There was no pressure from the Chinese Communist regime in Beijing to continue on with the training at some future date.

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** No, sir, there was not.

**Mr. James Bezan:** It seems that we have two departments here working at cross-purposes. On the one hand, the Liberal government signed an agreement to work more closely with China's military, including more military exercises on our soil. That was backed strongly by members of the foreign affairs department. On the other hand, we have military leaders putting the brakes on this idea for national security reasons, especially from our Five Eyes partners, and having to fend off push-back from Foreign Affairs.

What is National Defence doing to ensure that our national security is not compromised by the Communist regime in Beijing while the Liberal government is complicit in enabling it and trying to appease the dictators in Beijing?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** The Canadian Armed Forces is executing the policy "Strong, Secure, Engaged". Our presence in the Indo-Pacific is a persistent presence. We are very active members on operations like Operation Neon, which is the sanctions enforcement. We are aggressively pursuing a range of activity options and investments for NORAD modernization and continental defence.

**Mr. James Bezan:** How am I doing for time, Mr. Chair?

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

**Mr. James Bezan:** I just have a question directly for officials from Foreign Affairs.

In the unredacted documents that were ATIPed, we read some push-back from your officials on the chief of the defence staff's decision to cancel winter warfare training with the Communist Chinese People's Liberation Army. Why does your minister continue to insist that diplomatic relations should trump national security?

• (1940)

**The Chair:** I'm afraid that's your six minutes, Mr. Bezan. We'll have to wait for an answer to that, perhaps with another questioner.

Mr. Fragiskatos, you have six minutes, please.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the officials for appearing tonight.

To begin, Ms. Thomas, I think anyone who looks at Canada-China relations obviously recognizes the importance of multilateralism. I'm wondering if you could shed some more light on exactly [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] on the issue of multilateralism. Are the Five Eyes allies the most important avenue through which we respond to China, or are there other partnerships and relationships you would point to that are critical?

I'm not asking you to rank them. I think it's important for us as a committee to recognize, from a defence perspective, where exactly the energy is focused. Is it focused through the Five Eyes allies or other relationships?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** Certainly Canada's primordial defence relationship is NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO has an interest in China, there's absolutely no doubt, but the majority of our exercising in the NATO environment, which I would invite either of the military members to comment on, is focused on the Atlantic and the North Atlantic.

The Five Eyes partnership certainly is very important for us in the Indo-Pacific. We have other alliances. The minister has been asked to join ADMM-Plus, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, which focuses on the Indo-Pacific, as an observer this year. That's been a critical move forward, as was mentioned earlier.

The partnerships provide different strengths and benefits, depending on the activity and the geographic nature of the world. Of course, we share a NATO relationship with two of the Five Eyes. There is an Indo-Pacific interest with all of the Five Eyes. Our activities are always in a coalition. We are a country that believes in multilateralism. We rely on and work with our allies for all the activities that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces undertake. I don't think there's a ranking or a difference. It depends on the focus and the need.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you.

I know you might be limited in what you can say here, but I still think it's an important question. Can you share anything on the Quad? I know there was some media focus on this recently and on whether or not Canada would work with the entity that's emerged, known as the Quad, to deal with China. Is there anything you can elaborate on there?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** Canada is not currently a member of the Quad. I would invite that question to go to Foreign Affairs.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Mr. Costello or Mr. Epp, can you add anything?

**Mr. Daniel Costello (Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Sure. I'm glad to speak to that. Thank you.

The Quad is an informal consultation group. We have great relations with every member of it. We look to co-operate with each member of it. It's something that is increasingly important in regard to the new strategic environment we're seeing in the Indo-Pacific, which is something that will be of greater and greater interest. As the deputy minister was saying, our partnerships in the region are really important to us, and they're growing.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you.

I'll stick with Foreign Affairs for my last question, Mr. Chair.

We've seen the federal government take steps in recent months to ensure as much as possible that any products sourced from the Xinjiang region of China that may have had as their source forced labour are not allowed to enter Canada. However, it is unfortunately still the case that websites like eBay and Amazon.ca—I just saw it myself tonight on Amazon.ca—advertise Xinjiang cotton. For those who might not know, Xinjiang cotton is a major source of the global cotton supply.

What can the Canadian government do further to what it's already done? Important steps have been taken, but I think there's clearly a call here to do even more to ensure that products and/or services that are the result of forced labour do not end up coming into Canada, period.

I know you might pivot now to talk about Employment and Social Development Canada and how it's their responsibility, and how Public Safety has a role. I get that. I get that there are various departments working on this, but can Foreign Affairs also be involved in looking at this? Is this happening? To what extent are you coordinating with other departments on this matter? It's a very critical issue facing the country right now.

• (1945)

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] but I will just say as I do that the situation in Xinjiang does concern us and we're working very closely with allies on these issues, which is what you saw in our joint approach on sanctions.

Weldon, perhaps you could take the question.

**Mr. Weldon Epp (Director General, North Asia and Oceania Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Mr. Chairman, I want to echo Dan's comments as well. We are deeply disturbed by developments in Xinjiang. They're not new. They've been ongoing, but the more that information comes to light, the more we are refining the advice we've provided to government.

To your specific question, it's an excellent point that, as you can imagine, we're well aware of. The government was very clear that it took a first step earlier in January, and we're exploring with other departments—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Epp. I'm sorry to cut you off, but Mr. Fragiskatos's time is up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bergeron, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the new panel for joining us at this late hour.

First of all, I would simply like to come back to the information published in the media that Global Affairs Canada wanted the joint exercise to continue with the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

What prompted officials with Global Affairs Canada to want this exercise to continue?

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** I wasn't in Ottawa at the time, but in Brussels.

I'm pleased to answer on behalf of the department because I keep in touch with my colleagues.

If I remember correctly, it was very soon after the arrest of the two Michaels, who were of great concern. A full and comprehensive assessment of the intentions of the Chinese authorities had not yet been conducted. So we wanted to keep all the channels open and keep all the commitments in place to make sure that we had access to all the mechanisms of dialogue [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] as a result of this escalation and arbitrary arrests.

At that time, we were still doing our assessments and we weren't trying to escalate, but we didn't want to back off either. That assessment was necessary to really understand the situation and to be in a better position to free the two Michaels as soon as possible through the dialogue mechanisms available to us.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you for that frank response.

Today, would I be right in saying that you now agree with the Department of National Defence's decision to interrupt this exercise?

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** Yes, absolutely.

China isn't the same country we knew a few years ago. It's much more repressive there and much more combative abroad. Our relationship with China has evolved a great deal, and we can now see that these dialogue mechanisms have not freed the Michaels. You still have to adapt to that very complex and difficult context and relationship.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you very much.

You've probably been following this committee's work, including on the contracts awarded to a Chinese conglomerate for visa management in the People's Republic of China, which subcontracted them to a Chinese state-owned company. It was done without much security screening.

I'd now like to take you to the department's plan to order Nucotech to equip 170 embassies, consulates and high commissions. The company was founded by the son of former Communist Party secretary general and president of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao. In addition, a number of concerns have been expressed by the U.S. government regarding corruption cases involving the company, particularly in Namibia.

In light of all that, were security checks done before this project was launched?

• (1950)

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** As I understand it, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development never ordered this equipment. It was a standing offer awarded to this company following a Public Services and Procurement Canada process, but that offer was never used.

I'm not responsible for this part of the department, but there was an independent analysis by Deloitte & Touche that was submitted to another committee of the House of Commons. It's under review by this committee. The bottom line is that we never bought or deployed that equipment in our embassies or in our system.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** You're referring to the study of the analysis by Deloitte. When he appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the then-minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Champagne, informed us that this company was conducting an analysis. According to what you're telling me, the analysis has been completed and the recommendation is negative.

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** The report has already been submitted to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, if I'm not mistaken. Perhaps my colleagues can confirm that.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, Mr. Bergeron's time is up.

[English]

Now we'll go to Mr. Harris for six minutes.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you.

If I may follow along from Mr. Bergeron's question, the recommendation from Deloitte was that consultations with security subject matter experts in the department be undertaken to do the assessment of the requirements regarding security.

The question I have is [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the Communications Security Establishment or anyone else, regarding the Nuctech contract that Mr. Bergeron referred to, and if not, why not?

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** Again, I'm not the expert in this area. This is a different.... The corporate services part—

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Maybe CSE can tell us.

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** My understanding, though, is that this was a standing offer process that was awarded by Public Services and Procurement Canada that was never used by Global Affairs Canada.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I understand. I'm interested in the procedures and whether you followed that advice, whether you used CSE or not, or whether you just ignored these suggestions by Deloitte, which was asked to investigate it.

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** I can assure you we don't ignore it.

If you want to hear from my colleague at CSE, I cede the floor.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** The question is whether or not [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** Mr. Chair, shall I answer the question?

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Yes, please. Give us a yes or no. If you don't know, tell us you don't know.

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** Well, I think that from a CSE perspective, we provide advice and guidance on a wide range of issues.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** That's when you're asked. Were you asked in this case?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** I will refer to my colleague, Scott Jones, who is head of the cyber centre responsible for supply chain assessments.

• (1955)

**Mr. Scott Jones (Head, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, Communications Security Establishment):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When this issue came to light, we worked with Global Affairs. However, in this case I'm going to have to get back to you to confirm exactly when that happened, because I think you're asking about a specific time. I just want to make sure I give you an accurate answer.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** That would be great. I'd rather you do that than take up the time saying nothing. Thank you very much.

This may involve you, Mr. Jones.

Microsoft, in March of this year, announced that there were multiple malicious actors compromising their Exchange email service. They blamed it on a group they called Hafnium, which they said was associated with China and [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Your organization issued a report on March 6, the next day, warning Canadians—or giving an alert—to apply their patches and look for signs of compromise.

Was CSE and your centre independently aware of that attack, and what kind of response would Canadians be able to expect regarding this kind of attack?

**Mr. Scott Jones:** There are a few aspects to that. That specific incident was something we call an out-of-band patch alert. Microsoft was issuing something outside of the normal process. Normally, that's called Patch Tuesday, and so that immediately draws attention. From a cybersecurity agency perspective, our goal is to make sure Canadians are aware and responding quickly, because that is something that is usually quite urgent.

The second aspect of that is in terms of previous knowledge. These companies have advanced notification programs, but in this case the scope [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] done quickly and released by Microsoft to respond to a very urgent threat that was faced.

Our goal here is to always get alerts out as quickly as possible so people can take action. Unfortunately, in these scenarios, the best response is to patch as quickly as possible to prevent any further exploitation.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thanks very much.



The departmental plans for DND state that “CSE and DND/CAF are working together to assume a more assertive posture in the cyber domain by conducting and supporting joint cyber-operations against adversaries who wish to threaten Canada’s international affairs, defence or security”.

The question I have is on whether Parliament is made aware of all authorized military operations that entail active cyber-operations, as it is with other operations.

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** When an active cyber-operation has occurred, and that’s not happened very frequently, there’s not a notification of Parliament. However, in a memorandum to cabinet authorizing an operation, if cyber-effects would be used, that authorization is sought in the MC.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Has the Canadian Armed Forces undertaken active cyber-operations using the authorities it has been given?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** Shelly may wish to answer that question.

I think that’s something we should take on notice.

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** I can say that under the CSE act, we now have the authority to assist the Canadian—

**Mr. Jack Harris:** We’ve been told that. Have you ever used that authority, and have you notified Parliament of it?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** As you can appreciate, I can’t go into details on any of the specific or sensitive classified operations that we undertake.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** So there would be clandestine operations that Canada’s—

**The Chair:** That concludes your time, Mr. Harris. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

We’ll now begin the second round.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is for RAdm Bishop.

In terms of the threat assessment, can you confirm that the threat assessment has increased over the last five years and tell us to what extent?

[*English*]

**Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop (Commander of the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command and Chief of Defence Intelligence, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Obviously, we’re very interested in the development of China’s military capabilities. It’s something we watch quite closely, and we’ve been watching it for quite some time. I would not characterize that we’re specifically concerned over the last five years, but looking at the broader trends of how China has evolved over the last couple of decades, it causes us some concern when we look at the trajectory it has been on.

If you look at China in the 1980s, there was a large, conscript military not really capable of doing much, primarily focused on

coastal defence. That’s a very different military from the one we see today. China has made significant efforts to modernize its military force, introduce modern, new capabilities and transform the way it commands and controls those capabilities to be a far more effective fighting force.

We also see that China has expanded into new domains that we’re quite interested in, including the space domain, with a significant increase in their operations in space. If you take a look at the 1980s, China didn’t operate satellites. Today they’ve launched over 540 satellites in space, so we’re watching that very closely.

Overall, it’s a trend over the last 20 or 30 years that has caused us a lot of concern. As China has built up its military capability, we’re also very interested in how it is using it, because—

• (2000)

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, sir. I have to continue.

[*Translation*]

Now, MGen Cadieu, given what RAdm Bishop just mentioned, does Canada have sufficient resources to deal with these threats, which have really changed over the years?

[*English*]

**MGen Trevor Cadieu:** The Canadian Armed Forces in recent years has also sought to advance our capabilities across all domains, including some of the emerging domains that were just mentioned by Admiral Bishop, such as cyberspace and the information domain.

Clearly, what we’ve seen from state actors is a concerted effort to advance their capabilities across all those domains. We’ve seen a more expeditionary posture as well. Moving forward, in order to maintain our ability to detect, defer and, if required, defend against those threats, we’re going to have to continue to develop and enhance our capabilities as well.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Major-General.

I’d now like to turn to Ms. Bruce, from the Communications Security Establishment, the CSE.

During his testimony, the minister spoke several times about amendments to the act. He was talking about Bill C-59, which I worked on when I was on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. Offensive external response capabilities were assigned. We also identified an issue that wasn’t necessarily addressed by the provisions of Bill C-59, which was strongly siloed operations. We currently have with us representatives from the Canadian Armed Forces, CSE, and the Canadian Centre for Cybersecurity. There are often communication problems between these organizations.

Has this situation improved? Can you say that there is currently close co-operation between the military and civilians in Canada?

[English]

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** I can assure you that we are working very closely with the military. In the C-59 legislation, there was a new part of our assistance mandate that opened up our capabilities and allowed us to use them in concert with the CAF's and the DND's authorities. This is a new place where we can come together and work more effectively together.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Ms. Bruce.

My last question is about the threat assessment report on Huawei and 5G.

When was the report submitted to the government, Ms. Bruce?

[English]

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** The 5G review is under way at this time, and the government is considering analysis that has been provided by a number of departments.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Paul-Hus.

We will now continue with Mr. Dubourg for five minutes.

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since this is my first comment this evening, I would like to acknowledge all the witnesses and thank them for joining us. I have met and talked to several of them on other occasions.

My first question is for Ms. Bruce, from the Communications Security Establishment.

Given the COVID-19 situation, could you tell me which key issues CSE is currently working on? I know that, in keeping with your strategies on what is secret or top secret, you may not be able to tell us everything, but I would like to know what issues you are currently working on.

• (2005)

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** Thank you for your question.

[English]

Mr. Chair, CSE is really very attentive to the fact that more and more Canadians are online—not just Canadian citizens, but also businesses, students and the academic sector. We are taking very strong actions to make sure we can help to educate and keep that increased threat surface more secure for Canadians.

We've been detecting phishing campaigns that have been used by non-state actors that are aiming to defraud Canadians, or to steal their information and play on their anxieties. We've put in place a number of activities to help reduce the risk.

For example, when we identify sites that are purporting to be Government of Canada authoritative sources, we work with the private sector to take those sites offline and reduce the risks of Canadians coming into contact with disinformation.

We have also been working with different partners in the government to find ways to help eliminate the idea that their accounts can

be spoofed. We are providing our threat feeds to other private sector organizations to allow them to build apps that Canadians can download.

We're also working extremely closely with the health sector. We have provided to them a great number of indicators of compromise and advice and guidance that can help them withstand and be more resilient in the face of the kinds of attacks we're seeing, like ransomware, directed at organizations that simply can't afford to go offline for any length of time.

[Translation]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Thank you very much.

In terms of the Canada-China relations, have your contacts with the Five Eyes intensified or have they remained at the same level?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** Again, thank you for your question.

[English]

Mr. Chair, we have a very close working relationship with the Five Eyes, as was described by the minister, on both the foreign intelligence and cybersecurity sides.

We have a very strong rapport and exchange of information on all levels of activity, from research and development all the way through to intelligence and technical exchanges. I would say the relationship is as strong as it has ever been.

We're actually celebrating our 75th anniversary this year. Some of those relationships date back all the way to the beginning of our existence. It's a long history and a very solid relationship.

[Translation]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Thank you.

I have a very quick question for Mr. Jones, since he is an expert in cyber attacks.

In the last year, have any of the cyber attacks happened out of the blue, taking you by surprise, and prompting you to take action to protect Canada and Canadians?

[English]

**Mr. Scott Jones:** The one thing with cybersecurity is that it's a constantly changing environment. I would say that in this last year we've seen a large number of changes in the environment, and some of the things [Technical difficulty—Editor] the SolarWinds incident, for example. Also, product vulnerabilities have been coming out fast. On one hand, every vulnerability that's found is a vulnerability that's no longer available to an adversary in the future, but on the other hand it requires a prompt cybersecurity response.

The key issues that we've been working on are how to get people to respond quickly when those come out, but also to work with partners, whether it be in the health sector to strengthen them long-term—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Jones. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Dubourg.

We will now continue with Mr. Bergeron for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the 2018 G7 summit in the Charlevoix region, it was decided that Canada would coordinate the G7 rapid response mechanism. At the same time, in its departmental plan 2021-2022, Global Affairs Canada states that it will coordinate “responses to foreign interference and hostile activities by state actors, economic-based threats to national security, international crime and terrorism, weapons proliferation, and regional and local security crises.”

Can you tell us what this rapid response mechanism is, whether it is in place, and whether it is effective in ensuring a G7 response to all of these interferences and threats, as departmental plan 2021-2022 states?

• (2010)

**Mr. Daniel Costello:** I think that's a question for me, since it falls under my responsibilities at Global Affairs. Thank you for your question.

Yes, this mechanism has been put in place and is very successful. We would certainly like to continue to improve it, and it is very important to do so because we are increasingly faced with misinformation. The trends and tactics of our adversaries are constantly changing and developing very quickly and they are very complex.

The mechanism calls on the G7 network, which has been joined by other partners, and a national network that includes partners and experts from within the federal government, but also from outside. We are working together to improve our capacity and to better understand and counter this wide range of foreign interference and encroachment. Sometimes, a collective response from the allies is possible. This effort to increase our capabilities and our understanding of everything that's happening in cyberspace is very much appreciated by our allies and is a great accomplishment.

**The Chair:** You have seven seconds left.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Chair, let me just very quickly say that, in 2018, in Mr. Costello's opinion, we were not properly assessing the changes that had taken place in the People's Republic of China. So how are we able to coordinate the rapid response mechanism, if we don't have a good grasp of the changes that are taking place internationally?

**The Chair:** Mr. Bergeron, that's certainly more than seven seconds, but thank you very much.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you for your generosity.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Harris, we'll go over to you for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you, Chair.

I have a question that I think Mr. Epp could answer in his capacity as the director general of the North Asia and Oceania bureau.

There's a concern recently—and for some time of course, generally speaking—about the People's Republic of China's intentions towards Taiwan. Lately there seems to be what might be called sabre-rattling.

How realistic is it that China could consider something as drastic as an invasion of Taiwan? What would be the consequences of such an action for Canada and the rest of the world?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** This is an issue that the Government of Canada has been consistent in conveying to both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Whatever the differences and the different perspectives, any solution to the tensions across the strait needs to receive the support of people on both sides of the strait. What we've seen in recent months is quite concerning, and we have at all opportunities raised our concerns about the increase in kinetic activity that pushes the boundaries of the current status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

The question is speculative, and you'll appreciate that I'm not going to speculate on the consequences of a hypothetical, but it's a grave concern not only to Canada and like-minded countries, but to many of our partners in the region—many of the neighbours. The PRC and countries like Canada around the world should look at dialogue and opportunities to encourage both sides of the strait to seek a peaceful resolution to the long-standing issue.

Canada will continue to speak out for Taiwan's inclusion in international fora where statehood is not an issue and where all people should be represented. The government has been very clear on that with respect to the WHO, the ICAO and other fora. It's very important under the kind of scenario we're seeing, where limits are being tested, that we continue to make it clear to both the people of Taiwan and the people of China that, again, any resolution to the tensions in the strait has to be found through peaceful means.

• (2015)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That concludes the time for Mr. Harris.

We'll now go to Mr. Chong for five minutes.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for Mr. Epp. I'm just following up on his most recent response.

Are you saying, Mr. Epp, that the Government of Canada's position is that Taiwan should participate at next month's World Health Assembly meeting?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** Canada has consistently called for the opportunity for Taiwan to be an observer at meetings and fora such as the WHA, where global common issues are discussed.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you.

The government updated the travel advisory for China on Sunday with some pretty serious warnings about visiting Xinjiang. The department warned that Canadians with familial or ethnic ties to the region could be at risk of arbitrary detention. Would you advise Canadians with ties to Xinjiang against attending the 2022 winter Olympics in Beijing?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** Listen, Mr. Chair; I want to be clear. I'm not going to go beyond the language in the travel advisory. That language is quite clear. As for the question about the Olympics, I would just say that this is an important question. I appreciate it, and I would say there are very active discussions currently under way interdepartmentally, as you can imagine, as well as with our close partners, because I think we need to look at the kind of behaviour we have seen from China, unfortunately.

It's behaviour that we've called out: arbitrary detentions of our citizens and treatment of Canadian citizens who may or may not be [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] but are treated by the Chinese differently. That's the reason for the updated warning, and that's why we're going to be looking at all situations around the Olympics very closely.

Thank you.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you for the answer.

Is Ambassador Barton back in China, or is he still in Canada?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** No, the ambassador is not in China at the moment.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** He was recalled to Canada and went through a hotel quarantine because there was something sufficiently compelling for him to come back to Canada during this crisis in relations and during the trials of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor. Can you tell us why he was called back to Canada?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** Yes. You're right. The ambassador was in Canada for a series of meetings. He wasn't recalled, per se, but he came back to undertake a fairly intensive outreach program that was really focused on, as you can imagine, the priority of the government with respect to China: to seek the earliest possible release for Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor. I won't speak about the details of his program or his discussions, but I'm happy to say that this was the focus of a very extensive program that he undertook in Ottawa.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you.

I have one final comment and question.

Mr. Epp, it could be argued that the only thing we provide China is about half a per cent of its economic output, about four-tenths of 1% of its GDP. In other words, we purchase about 70 billion dollars' worth of products from China per year. Per capita GDP in Canadian dollars is about \$10,000 a year. In other words, our \$70 billion employs about seven million Chinese workers. We know that 20 million people a year are moving from China's rural areas into cities, a phenomenon that has been going on for more than a decade and is predicted to go on for some time in the future, and

this is something confirmed by the Chinese ministry of housing and urban-rural development.

Has Global Affairs done an analysis of this phenomenon related to the existential need for China to grow at a certain rate, GDP currently [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] to ensure that internal migrants are gainfully employed? If so, what can you tell us about the conclusions of this analysis?

**Mr. Weldon Epp:** Mr. Chair, that's a very specific question. I will say, off the top of my head, that I'm not aware that such a study has been done, but we're a large department. I would be happy to look into it and let you know if we have.

More generally, the point is an important one. It plays to a number of concerns with respect to social cohesion and stability in China, as others have said—I think including Minister Champagne when he was before the committee in January. I mean, China has in many ways some fragility, and a lot of that fragility has to do with the large gap in incomes. Even as China has developed and grown richer, it's also seen a much greater income gap, and that disparity between urban centres and rural is, I think, well known to many of the members of this committee who have travelled to China and been briefed on that before.

In the mix, there has also been.... As urbanization has rapidly accelerated in China, it has created other issues beyond social and political, including environmental. However, it's also offered opportunities for Canadian exporters in areas where Canada is highly sought by Chinese consumers, whether that's with respect to our products or our homes, building, construction, etc.

• (2020)

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

Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Now we'll go to Ms. Yip for five minutes.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** Thank you to all the witnesses who are continuing to stay so late to answer our questions.

My first question is for Ms. Thomas. In a Globe and Mail article published earlier last month, you suggested that we deploy warships to the South China Sea in an effort to send a message to China that “we will not be bullied into changing the geography of the world”. Does Canada have any allies currently doing this? Is there room for collaboration there?

**Ms. Jody Thomas:** The approach of Canada and our allies to the South China Sea is very consistent. All of our Five Eyes allies use the same approach, and they see the South China Sea and the Strait of Taiwan as free and open areas to navigate through, so I would say that our approach is absolutely consistent with those of our allies.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** Thank you.

My next question is for CSE. On March 24, CBC News reported Facebook's announcement that members of Canada's Uighur community were being targeted in a cyber-espionage campaign. Facebook has managed to trace it to two companies in China reportedly attempting to infect devices with malware to permit surveillance.

Has there been an increase in cyber-attacks traceable to Chinese entities since the House voted to qualify China's action in Xinjiang as a genocide?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** I would say first of all that we were very pleased to hear the reports of Facebook disrupting the campaigns that were directed against Uighurs around the world and [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] in Canada.

It's important to note that CSE does not have a mandate to direct any of its activities at entities in Canada—so we're a foreign intelligence agency—and that prohibits [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] but when we detect information or indications that foreign actors are targeting individuals in Canada we can work with our domestic partners to ensure they have that information and can take action. I can't speak specifically about sensitive techniques, methods or intelligence activities we've undertaken, but I can assure you that when we see activities directed at Canadians we take action through our partners.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** Do Facebook and other social media platforms alert CSE at the same time as the public, then?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** It takes a very broad group of different players in the private sector and in government to monitor all of this space and to work together. Facebook plays a very specific role, and when it takes down these kinds of campaigns, we learn about it usually at the same time as everybody else.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** Do you have any concerns about WeChat?

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** CSE is not a regulator. We do not comment, endorse or ban specific technologies or specific companies, but we publish advice that helps Canadians to choose wisely and to understand how an app works, where their data resides, how to turn on the security features, how to update those apps when prompted and how to delete them when they're no longer used.

We do not comment specifically on apps, but we encourage very safe and responsible use and the best cyber-hygiene.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** I'm not sure if this question can be answered, but I'm going to give it a try anyway.

During the pandemic, getting accurate information backed by science to Canadians is really important. Sometimes this is difficult. You have a community that perhaps doesn't speak much English and/or are seniors relying on foreign media for information on vaccines. Sometimes in these media, they spread misinformation and cause vaccine hesitancy.

In particular, I've heard that some of the Chinese cable networks have been doing that. It's alleged that the Chinese government has a stake in those cable networks. What can we do to limit this type of telecommunications interference or misinformation campaign?

• (2025)

**Ms. Shelly Bruce:** I'll assume that's directed at me, unless somebody else wants to weigh in.

I can't really speak to the specifics of your question, but I can confirm that disinformation and misinformation are very serious matters and we are looking at them very carefully.

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

This will conclude our second panel.

As promised to my colleagues before the meeting started, I'll now suspend for five minutes for a health break. I think that would be appreciated.

We'll thank the witnesses and let them go.

• (2025)

(Pause)

• (2030)

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

The first issue to deal with is in regard to the motion for the production of documents. The clerk would like to confirm one aspect of the motion that was adopted on Wednesday, March 31, 2021. As the deadline for the production of documents was changed to 20 days, the deadline for Mr. Stewart and Mr. Poliquin to appear, should they fail to produce the documents, should now be 27 days as opposed to 17 days. The motion would change to include the part that says “within 27 days of this motion passing”.

Are there any objections to this? The clerk is simply looking for confirmation. Seeing no objections, I'll consider that adopted.

[*Translation*]

Also, the schedule of the committee has changed, as you know. We now meet only once a week, every Monday, for three hours. The clerk has distributed the proposed schedule to reflect this change.

Are there any comments on this?

[*English*]

The clerk has informed me that next Monday, April 19, 2021, Ms. Bartholomew, chairperson of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, has confirmed her appearance. She's currently on a two-witness panel. The clerk and analyst would like to know if members would prefer to hear from Ms. Bartholomew for a full hour on her own.

Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Did you say next Monday, April 19?

**The Chair:** Yes, April 19. That's correct.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** That's the evening of the budget. Are we planning to meet?

**The Chair:** That's up to the committee, of course. If the committee doesn't want to meet that night, the committee won't meet that night, but I'm in your hands.

Mr. Bergeron.

• (2035)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I think Mr. Harris' comment is very relevant. That said, we can choose to meet even if the budget speech is scheduled a few hours earlier. Presumably it will start at 4:00 p.m. and be over by 6:30 p.m.

Will the committee members want to meet anyway? I think that needs to be asked. It's still possible to do so.

I don't have any particular view on the matter, but we have to accept that it could be a problem.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** As eager as I am to see our first budget in two years, assuming it will be twice as long, I don't think it will be realistic for us to finish reading it before the committee or even in the subsequent 24 hours. Given that the budget speech will be over, I suggest we continue on with the important work of this committee.

I have no objection to the schedule as laid out.

**The Chair:** In terms of the question about Ms. Bartholomew, would members prefer to hear from her for a full hour on her own?

I'm assuming you would like to hear from her for a full hour on her own, unless I see indications otherwise.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Who exactly are we talking about, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** We are talking about Ms. Bartholomew, the chair of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Mr. Chair, I am trying to follow the discussion. I have the table in front of me. What are we talking about? Are there any changes to the list of witnesses who were supposed to appear? Perhaps I missed something.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, perhaps you could help us.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Marie-France Lafleur):** Of course. Thank you.

We had invited Mr. Waterhouse and Mr. Bowe, from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, to appear on April 19, but Mr. Bowe preferred that the chair appear in his place.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Okay, that's the part I had missed. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, that's very helpful in understanding why there were changes to the witness list. Thank you.

Mr. Lightbound, you have the floor.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Chair, we have to determine whether Ms. Bartholomew will be appearing in the first hour of the April 19 meeting or whether we'll have a separate hour for her. If it's the latter, we have to decide which meeting it will be at. Is that already planned? Our schedule calls for our work to be completed by the end of May. When will that one-hour meeting take place?

**The Chair:** My understanding is that Ms. Bartholomew is replacing someone lower down in the hierarchy of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. The individual we invited indicated that it would be best for us to hear from the chair of the commission. So we will hear from Ms. Bartholomew for one hour.

I must also mention that the clerk has asked Mr. McGuinty to appear before the committee, but he has not agreed to do so.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** I would like to know why Mr. McGuinty refused the invitation. He can still give us information about the report without detracting from his obligations.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, I think Mr. McGuinty said that he didn't want to appear before the committee, is that right?

• (2040)

**The Clerk:** That's right.

He didn't give me a specific reason, he just declined the invitation.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Maybe the clerk can clarify the rules. My understanding is that parliamentarians have a unique privilege with respect to not appearing, even if they are asked to. Does the intelligence review committee on parliamentarians have a vice-chair or a co-chair? We could send an invitation to the next appropriate person, since there was a desire to hear from someone from that committee.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, do you know if that's the case?

**The Clerk:** I'm checking that right now. I'm not sure. I can ask whether someone else would be willing to come in for Mr. McGuinty.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis, are you...? Can I go now to Mr. Lightbound?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Yes. I'd like to hear back from the clerk, maybe in a few minutes, once we have that answer, but we have certain limitations when it comes to Mr. McGuinty's choosing not to appear. It was an important perspective. The intelligence review committee of parliamentarians has tabled a public report, and I think we would like to hear about it. That's the context in which the request was made, and if he doesn't wish to appear, maybe the vice-chair would be appropriate.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

We'll continue with Mr. Lightbound, followed by Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Harris.

Mr. Lightbound, you have the floor.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Forgive me for being fussy, but normally when we deal with committee business, it's in camera.

Is it okay for this meeting not to be in camera?

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, can you clarify that?

**The Clerk:** Yes, of course.

We do both. The meeting can be public or in camera. At the moment, our meeting is public, but that is the choice of the committee members.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Lightbound.

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Chair, I would actually like someone to clarify this so-called privilege that parliamentarians have to not appear before a committee. If this privilege exists, I would like someone to explain it to us. If it does not exist, the question is whether we should be more insistent with Mr. McGuinty, as we have been with former ambassadors, for example.

It is ironic that the representative of a parliamentary body that is intended to provide some civilian oversight of intelligence and national security activities refuses to meet with his peers to report on his work. I must admit that I find this peculiar.

So I would like to know whether we are in a position to put a little more pressure on Mr. McGuinty, or whether that is off the table from the outset.

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis was right when he said that members of Parliament have the privilege of not being compelled to testify before a committee. Only the House itself can require them to do so. Committees do not have that power. So Mr. McGuinty has the right not to appear in this case.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you, Chair.

I agree with that observation. It's a privilege of members of Parliament not to be, I guess, cross-examined by committees, or required to appear before committees.

I put my hand up for another reason. I'm not sure that we clarified, after discussing that we wanted Ms. Bartholomew for an

hour... I don't know where we fit that hour in, or whether that hour was to replace Mr. Waterhouse and Alexander Bowe, or we just have her another time at some other place. Was that clarified at all by the committee?

• (2045)

**The Chair:** I think the clerk indicated that she's replacing Mr. Bowe because she is his superior. He suggested we have her instead.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] decided to have him. I think the committee has decided to have her for an hour. I'm just wondering where the hour is being found, as we have Mr. Waterhouse during the same hour on the current schedule that's in front of us.

**The Chair:** Let me ask the clerk to clarify what the result of this would be.

**The Clerk:** Yes, of course. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Bartholomew could be instead of Mr. McGuinty in the third hour of April 19. We would choose an alternate to go with Mr. Waterhouse.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that clarification.

Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To come back to Mr. McGuinty, we would have to check the rules because, as chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, he submits his annual report and other reports to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, among others. Given that our committee is a special committee dealing with Canada-China relations and that the report that has just been tabled mentions security issues, it is entirely appropriate that Mr. McGuinty appear before the committee to report on the situation. I don't see any reason why Mr. McGuinty shouldn't be pressed on this.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, can you explain the rules on that?

**The Clerk:** I can certainly clarify that. Let me refer you to pages 981 and 982 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*.

[*English*]

I have it in English here. It states that "certain limitations are recognized on the power to order individuals to appear".

[*Translation*]

A little further down, it says:

[*English*]

"This applies...to parliamentarians belonging to other Canadian legislatures, because each of these assemblies, like the House of Commons, has the parliamentary privilege of controlling the attendance of its members and any matters affecting them."

[*Translation*]

So the committee can invite Mr. McGuinty, but it does not have the power to compel his appearance.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Genuis, is your hand still up, or is it up again?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** It's up again.

Mr. Chair, I have two points. First of all, I think we should set aside the hour as planned to hear from either Mr. McGuinty or other members of that intelligence review committee of Parliament. There are other parliamentarians on that committee who may be willing to appear if Mr. McGuinty is not willing to appear voluntarily and if we're not able to find a workaround.

I would suggest that we send a follow-up letter to Mr. McGuinty, underlining the strong desire of members of the committee to hear from him. That doesn't violate any of the rules. At the same time, we extend the opportunity to the next appropriate...or to other members of that committee.

Further to Mr. Bergeron's comments and others in terms of this question of being able to summon people, it seemed from what the clerk has said and what I've seen in other cases that the House of Commons can direct a person to appear before the committee. It would be within the powers of the committee to, for instance, adopt a motion and refer that motion to the House, which then, if concurred in, would direct Mr. McGuinty to appear before the committee.

I just want to have some clarity on the rules. I'd be interested in the feedback of other members. Clearly it's not something I can do without the support of other members.

Madam Clerk, could you just clarify the formulation of that? If the committee were to adopt a motion like, "That the committee direct David McGuinty to appear for one hour before the special committee and report this motion to the House", would that motion, if concurred in, provide the appropriate instruction?

**The Clerk:** Yes, I can confirm it would be a motion that would be needed from the House.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Would the procedure that I'm describing satisfy that requirement?

• (2050)

**The Chair:** It would, if the House adopted it, of course.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Who do I have next?

Mr. Lightbound.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't think we should make a big deal out of this. I think we can simply invite M. McGuinty back. We can offer him other dates. Since April 19 is fast approaching, I would suggest that we reserve the third hour for Ms. Bartholomew, so that we don't lose that hour in committee. Our time is limited and it is valuable.

For Mr. McGuinty, we can suggest other dates that might be more convenient for him than the night of the budget.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Harris, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Thank you, Chair.

I just want to speak to that suggestion of Mr. Genuis's that a motion be presented to the House. I don't think that's a very wise thing for parliamentarians to do unless there were some extreme circumstances requiring a member to appear. Mr. McGuinty's not being asked to appear on some matter that he alone has knowledge of. The committee has issued a report. The report is available. My experience of Mr. McGuinty in front of committees is that he tells you what's in the report, and he doesn't tell you very much else. He talks about the report. He appeared before the public safety committee recently.

It would be a bad precedent to set that we would ignore the privileges of members of the House, because these are part of our privileges as members. We should be very loath to make it a common practice or even a precedent such as this where it doesn't appear to be crucial that Mr. McGuinty present himself to be examined by this committee on this matter. As a member of Parliament, I think it would be unwise to set a precedent like that.

Mr. Lightbound's suggestion is fine if he wants to be asked again—or other members of the committee. If the purpose of this is to have an opportunity to talk about the report and what's in the report, that's fine. We can have it on our agenda, and someone from the committee can come and lead us through the report or whatever, but I don't think we're going to hear anything that the committee learned through its report other than what's in the report itself.

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

Monsieur Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I have two points to make.

First, I think that the matter is not as trivial or anecdotal as it initially appears. As I mentioned a few moments ago, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians was created to ensure a certain transparency and civilian control over national security activities. Consequently, it is peculiar, to say the least, that the chair of this committee refuses to demonstrate that transparency by appearing before his peers.



I understand Mr. Harris' point. I think we need to be careful before we set such a precedent. That is why I would be inclined to agree with Mr. Lightbound's wise suggestion to offer Mr. McGuinty another date to appear before us and to present his views and the views of the committee on Canada-China relations from a national security perspective. We could even offer him an in camera appearance, although I know that is not the preference of my colleagues. Before we go there, I think we need to provide another date. If he continues to refuse, we can look at other avenues afterwards.

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

[*English*]

Before I go to Mr. Genuis, who's next, I've been informed by the clerk that the act creating the committee in question does not provide for any vice-chairs.

Now we have Mr. Genuis, please.

• (2055)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I agree with much of what has been said by everybody else. By querying the procedural mechanism by which someone could be summoned before the committee, I did not mean to suggest that it should necessarily be the first option. However, since we're having this discussion in public, it's good to just acknowledge the options that the committee has available to it. Those are real procedural options. They're not inventing something that doesn't exist in the rules. There's a history. I believe it was used for a certain former NDP leader. There is a procedure by which the House can summon a person to appear before a committee, and that can happen for a member of Parliament if the House is acting, as opposed to the committee.

I agree with Mr. Bergeron's point. This is a serious matter, not because Mr. McGuinty's own conduct is in question here, of course, but because the spirit in which that oversight body was created was to be a committee of parliamentarians that would provide parliamentary review over security and intelligence activities.

In that sense, this is information that members of that committee, and that committee only, can provide. It's not as if we can just substitute a different expert here, right? This is a particular body with a legislative mandate to be a connection between parliamentarians and security decision-making. Therefore, it's important that the committee hear from members of that body, and to honour the mandate of that body, that we be a little insistent.

I support the suggestion of Mr. Lightbound to send a follow-up letter to offer some flexibility in terms of timing. It is perhaps still possible for the committee to meet outside its regular time slot. Maybe the whips' offices aren't that keen on it, but we can try to be flexible on our end to accommodate his schedule. Maybe we just communicate to him the seriousness with which members of the committee are looking at this issue, and that at the end of the day it doesn't have to be next week but we have set aside an hour to hear about the work of that committee, if not from Mr. McGuinty then from other members of the committee.

Theoretically I suppose we could extend an open invitation for members of the committee to appear, whichever ones wish to. I

think it would be more orderly to hear from the chair. I hope we're able to do that, but we have other options whereby I think we can hear from and about the work of this committee in some way, shape or form.

Thanks.

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

Mr. Fragiskatos.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Lightbound provided a very reasonable path forward, and I think Mr. Harris echoed a very reasonable point of view. In the interests of moving ahead here, because I see us going around in circles, I think you know where most committee members sit on this issue. However, I would add that I doubt there's a single member of the committee who has read the annual review that was just tabled in Parliament.

If I'm not mistaken, I think that was today. I could be wrong about that.

Let's first read the report of the committee—the national security committee of parliamentarians looking at issues of security—and then the committee can decide whether it's appropriate to move forward. On this idea that we would just automatically summons Mr. McGuinty through Parliament, I'm not sure what this is all about.

I think you know where most members of the committee sit on this. I see it's nine o'clock. I'm not sure if this is the last issue we're dealing with, but we keep going around in circles.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Harris would tell you it's 10:30.

Monsieur Dubourg.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My colleague Mr. Fragiskatos said in English what I was going to say. I totally agree with him and with Joel Lightbound's proposal.

I would also like to add that we can invite members of the committee other than the chair. First, I would like to point out that the report presented today is redacted. As you know, all members have the secret or top secret clearance. So they will not be able to comment or analyze the elements that are not in the report. The report has been reviewed and redacted by a committee.

I will conclude by saying that this committee is made up of parliamentarians. It is made up of members of Parliament and senators from the parties represented in the House and it has a history of operating in a non-partisan way. We can always ask that another member of the committee be allowed to appear, but knowing the situation, I will be surprised if we get a positive response, because the same director will have to inform them. We can try, but if Mr. McGuinty doesn't show up, I'd be surprised if any other members would agree to appear before our committee.

Thank you.

• (2100)

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

[English]

I'm attempting to draw the consensus of the committee. Is it the wish of the committee that the clerk write to Mr. McGuinty again, indicating that the committee strongly desires to have him appear before the committee, or, if he's not available, that we'd like another member of the committee to appear?

Is that where we are? Does anyone object to that? Are there any concerns about that? Seeing none, that's what we'll do.

Thank you very much,

[Translation]

Madam Clerk, you may proceed.

Thank you.

Mr. Bergeron has asked me for some time to move his motions.

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know that we have already had this discussion at other committees and that some of my colleagues on this committee have also had the discussion at meetings of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. These are routine, housekeeping motions proposed by the Bloc Québécois. They are all identical. I know that we have made some changes to some of them in other committees and let me indicate from the outset that I am open to any suggestions.

I will read the first motion, if I may, Mr. Chair. All members have received it. It reads:

That the Clerk inform witnesses appearing before the Committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality prior to their scheduled appearance; and that the Chair advise the committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform or pass the required technical tests.

**The Chair:** We now move to questions from committee members about the motion.

[English]

Mr. Harris, please go ahead.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** That was quick. I love those brief comments.

Are there any objections to that?

[Translation]

Seeing no objections, I declare the motion carried.

Please continue, Mr. Bergeron.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Chair, the next motion reads as follows:

That all documents submitted for Committee business that do not come from a federal department or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

Mr. Chair, the objective of this motion is simply to make sure that we do not have to work with shaky, homemade translations that are barely comprehensible, either in English or French, and that members receive translations that can be easily understood.

• (2105)

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

Mr. Paul-Hus, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't think that this motion has been amended to include members' offices. All the committees that have passed these motions from the Bloc have included an amendment that adds members' offices, if I am not mistaken.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Speaking for myself, Mr. Chair, I have no objection to that addition. We can consider it a friendly amendment.

[English]

**The Chair:** Let me just ask if anyone objects to that amendment being included.

Go ahead, Mr. Fragiskatos.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Thanks, Chair.

I know that MPs' offices.... Mr. Bergeron was open to that in terms of the amendment. What about departments? Can we put that in there as well, to exclude departments?

[Translation]

**The Chair:** You want to exclude departments too.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Harris:** It's already there.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Sorry for the confusion if it was there.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** They are already there.

Mr. Lightbound, you have the floor.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** I was just going to ask Mr. Bergeron to read the wording as it presently stands. When you say "include", it implies including the exclusions. So documents coming from members' offices are excluded, if I understand correctly.

**The Chair:** True, it is a little confusing.

Mr. Bergeron, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I will try to read the motion in the way I understand it:

That all documents submitted for Committee business that do not come from a federal department or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

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

Are there any objections to the motion as submitted by Mr. Bergeron?

[English]

I see no objections, and therefore this motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** You may continue, Mr. Bergeron.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** The other motion is the one that may well provoke some reaction or resistance from my good friend Mr. Harris, who has already had the opportunity to express his views on it in another committee. However, I have a proposal, which seems to have been agreed to by other committees and to have secured the consent of our colleagues of all political parties.

I will read the original motion and explain my proposal afterwards. The committee can then decide what it wants to do with it:

That the text of any substantive motion, amendment or subamendment be distributed in writing in both official languages to all Committee members before the committee can begin debate on it.

I know that some members find that it would be very restrictive to demand distribution in that form before the committee can begin debate. Perhaps we could replace that part of the wording and ask that it be done before the committee makes a decision on the motion, the amendment or the subamendment in question.

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

[English]

Go ahead, Mr. Harris.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** In another committee I objected to the wording that was in the original motion because we couldn't even have made the amendments that we made tonight to the previous motion without them being submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

This is a little different, but I guess it would be.... He's talking about substantive motions or substantive amendments, and I'm not sure what substantive means in that context. I gather that it would make it very difficult or take a long time in some cases for amendments to be moved, which happens quite often in committees—there are amendments and motions, or spontaneous motions in some cases.

If the suggestion is that what would have to happen in the committee before the motion is voted upon is that it would have to be distributed in writing in both official languages, I'm assuming that would take some time, and I'm wondering whether it's necessary to do that.

When we had this debate in other committees, it was suggested that for the purpose of translation, you could repeat the motion or

have the clerk repeat the motion, several times if necessary, to ensure the full understanding of it. I'm of the view that this would normally be adequate. There may be situations where someone would be required to say, "Look, I want to be very sure that this motion is correct," and ask for the committee's approval to have it put in writing before it's voted on, but I don't know if it's necessary. The translation that we have, the interpreters that we have for [Technical difficulty—Editor] are very good, and if there's a problem with the translation then that can be raised as a point of order or a point of privilege.

I'm not sure it's necessary, but I'll be interested in hearing what other members have to say.

• (2110)

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Bergeron, for raising this.

I don't see this particular motion so much as an issue of language as it is an issue of the ability of the committee to be nimble. There are times when issues are raised and the committee wishes to respond to them with a substantive motion. For example, this adventure, as it were, that we're on with the Public Health Agency of Canada started when, in the context of the motion on the meeting itself with the officials, I moved a motion that received unanimous support to ask the officials to report back by that Friday. That was done unanimously, so there was clearly no issue with it, but it was a case of our responding to live events and therefore verbally crafting motions on the fly that respond to something we're hearing from a witness.

We have all learned that it's a good practice to provide written notice whenever possible, and of course that's required in certain situations, when a motion is not related to the subject matter being discussed.

I think the practice has to be equality of languages, so if it's being stated verbally in one language, it has to be available verbally in both languages, and if it's being submitted in writing in one language and sent around, it must then be sent around in writing in both languages.

I don't see the value. I see some big risks in putting this additional stricture on the committee, and I think the focus needs to be on nimbleness and also preserving the principle of equality of languages.

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

Before I go to Mr. Paul-Hus, could Mr. Harris please turn off his "raise hand" function?

Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Basically, I will say the same thing as Mr. Genuis.

I always speak in French at committee meetings. In my opinion, this motion would make me somewhat less nimble. It would not let me make motions or amendments in reaction to a given situation. It's not a language issue at all; it's really a question of being nimble as we do the work of the opposition and the government. That is why I believe it is a bad idea.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Lightbound, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** It is very rare for me to agree with my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, but I do in this case.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Chair, I see which way the debate is going. So, rather than seeing this motion defeated, which would send the wrong message about the respect we owe to both official languages, I would prefer to withdraw it for the moment. I will consult the Whip's office to see what has been done at other committees and what other proposal we could make that would accommodate the very appropriate arguments that my colleagues have put forward.

I therefore ask for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bergeron. The motion is withdrawn.

Mr. Dubourg, the floor is yours.

• (2115)

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** I am very glad that my colleague Mr. Bergeron is taking that approach.

I will wait my turn, because I submitted a notice of motion and I would like to introduce it. You tell me when I can do that, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I was actually just about to ask members if they had any other matters to raise.

Please go ahead, Mr. Dubourg.

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have already given notice of the motion I am about to introduce. I feel that it fits into the discussion we are having about official languages. As you know, I am the chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Please allow me to read the motion to everyone on the committee:

That any reference document that members share with the clerk of the committee or with the analysts in order to facilitate the committee's work be distributed to all members of the committee, in both official languages.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments on, or objections to, the motion?

[English]

Mr. Genuis, please.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I have some questions about this motion. Is this designed to preclude discrete communications between

members and the clerk or the chair—questions they might want to ask and those sorts of things? What kinds of documents would be referred to here? Occasionally I think members might ask a question.

What problem are we trying to solve? I'm trying to understand.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Dubourg, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** I can answer, Mr. Genuis.

Basically, it's documents that the analysts would use in the report. If we say we should take information from that document and include it in the report, those documents should be in both languages. If you have other kinds of discussions with the clerk or the analysts, that's okay.

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I wonder if we could further clarify this. The idea is that if there are documents that are intended to be used as evidence as part of a committee study, those should then be distributed in both languages. I think that's eminently reasonable. In fact, I would be surprised if that wasn't already the requirement, but if it's not.... I wonder, if that's the objective, if we could clarify that explicitly in the motion. For instance, I might revise the motion to read as follows: "That any reference document that members share with the clerk of the committee or with the analysts, for the purpose of it being entered in evidence, be distributed to all members of the committee, in both official languages".

**The Chair:** If a member gave a document to the clerk, seeking to influence the writing without it being in evidence, that would be excluded. Is that right? Do I understand it correctly?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I wouldn't want to create a.... I can't imagine a situation where you would send a.... I mean, it's routine for us to communicate with the clerk. I can't imagine a case where we would.... It's possible that in the context of that communication we might send a reference document to the clerk that is part of that intended private communication, but I think the goal here is that anything that is part of evidence for a study should obviously [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] members, which I agree with.

I don't have a problem with the translation. The question is distribution. Are we creating an obligation for the clerk to...? In certain cases, she's having a conversation by email with a member, and then suddenly this is triggered and she has to send it around to everybody.

I think maybe that could be clarified in the way that I proposed, but in spirit, based on Mr. Dubourg's explanation, I'm in favour.

• (2120)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Any further comments?

Mr. Harris, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I'm trying to figure out what this is really about here. I don't know. Obviously, correspondence with the clerk, if someone wants to ask a question about something, is one thing. There was a situation a while ago where there was a document sent to the clerk for circulation that wasn't circulated. Is that what we're talking about: a document about meeting schedules? I'm wondering whether it's related to a particular incident, Mr. Dubourg, or whether it's something that is kind of at large.

You talk about some document that might facilitate the work of the committee but is not shared with the committee; I guess that's what you're aiming it at. I don't know what questioning the goals Mr. Genuis is talking about here, but I think all offices communicate with the clerk about what happened, what might happen or that sort of thing, or in trying to understand what happened at the last meeting or what decision was made, but I think we're talking about something different here. Maybe you could explain a bit more, Mr. Dubourg, what might be included in that.

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Yes.

[Translation]

With pleasure, Mr. Harris.

[English]

I'm not talking about the kinds of communications or emails that you could send to the clerk or the analysts asking specific questions on procedure or things like that. Like I said, in my official languages committee, we had an article. It was only in English, and that article was so important that we said that we should take part of that article—it was on a website—to put in the report. It's important that those kinds of documents that we're going to use, that we're going to refer to in the report, should be in both languages. It has allowed all members to know exactly what's going on.

At that time, what we did was send that article to the translation bureau to get a French version, so that we could give it to anyone so they would be able to understand what was going on.

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Dubourg, are you talking about footnoting, then? Maybe I misunderstood, but I got the impression that you're saying we shouldn't footnote an article that's in only one language. You're not saying that. You're only saying that if you're directly quoting from an article or if you're including it in evidence.... Okay. All right.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think my question has just been answered. Referring to a complete document is too much. We should instead be referring to a passage from a document. For example, if I need to have one page from a book translated, I won't have the entire book translated. We need to be clearer, because everyone is asking questions. You mention a document, but that's too broad. It would be preferable to refer to a passage from a document that will be used in a report.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bergeron, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The motion that our colleague is introducing seems very clear to me. It talks about a reference document.

To take Mr. Paul-Hus' example, if he really likes the book he has in his hands and wants to give us one page of it for discussion purposes, to help us in focusing our discussions, I agree with him that we're not going to distribute the entire book. However, if he distributes one page and it's in French, it seems perfectly reasonable to me that it should be translated into English for our colleagues. If that page is in English, it seems reasonable to me that it be translated into French for our colleagues. This is exactly the same practice we use in translating documents from witnesses before they are distributed.

We are talking about reference documents. As I understand it, that does not mean any old document, like an email or an informal exchange. It means a document that we refer to, one that influences our thinking and our work. It seems very clear to me. If you want a reference document to be distributed, it cannot be distributed in one language only. It must be distributed in both official languages. For example, we make sure that a substantive article in *Le Devoir*, for example, is translated into English before it is circulated to francophone and anglophone members alike. Likewise, we make sure that a substantive article in *The Globe and Mail* is translated into French before it is circulated to anglophone and francophone members alike.

That seems very clear to me and follows the normal practices of our committees. There was perhaps a small oversight in our routine motions. They actually only address documents distributed or submitted by witnesses. Our thinking is not shaped only by the documents submitted by witnesses. It is also shaped by certain other documents [*Technical difficulty—Editor*], such as the absolutely tremendous briefing notes that the Library of Parliament prepares for us. Those notes are not circulated in English only or in French only. They are circulated in both languages, because the documents are important for the reflection that eventually must lead us to a decision.

In my opinion, it is self-evident that these reference documents can be circulated to the members of the committee only if they appear in both of the country's official languages.

• (2125)

[English]

**The Chair:** Before I go to Mr. Genuis, I'll note the time, which of course in St. John's is 10:57.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** It's time to go.

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we should be able to wrap up here quickly.

I think we all now understand and agree with the intention of Mr. Dubourg's motion. I would just like to amend the motion to read as follows: "That any reference document that members share with the clerk of the committee or with the analysts, for it to be entered into evidence as part of a study, be distributed to all members of the committee, in both official languages."

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, do you have that? Okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Genuis.

Is anyone opposed to that amendment?

**Mr. John Williamson:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

I agree completely with Mr. Bergeron, but the rule that documents be translated into both languages before they are given to members is already in effect, I believe.

[*English*]

Could you clarify that?

**The Clerk:** From my understanding of committee work, I think it's more related to reports, recommendations or a work plan. If a member submits a document to me that helps me organize either recommendations or a work plan, it would be distributed in both official languages.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bergeron is perfectly correct when he says that the house-keeping motion deals only with documents from witnesses. So we need to specify that all documents that the committee uses should be in both official languages.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Williamson, the floor is yours.

**Mr. John Williamson:** I agree with Mr. Bergeron.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Are there any objections to the amendment that would limit this motion to the evidence in reports, as I understand it?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Chair, I can read the amendment again.

**The Chair:** It's a motion to amend. Normally, you would add such-and-such words in such-and-such a place. Here you've read the whole motion, which is helpful.

• (2130)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** After the word "analysts", it adds in the words "for it to be entered into evidence as part of a study". It removes the words "in order to facilitate the committee's work".

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

Are there any objections to amending the motion?

Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I see no objection to that, Mr. Chair. However, this amendment seems to move slightly away from Mr. Dubourg's intent. I don't believe that he wanted to limit us to reference documents used in preparing a report.

If Mr. Dubourg tells me that the proposed amendment seems acceptable to him, I will not be going to the barricades to defend my motion as it stands. However, if the amendment does not seem acceptable to him, I will stand by his side in opposition.

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

[*English*]

I guess what I'm looking for is whether or not we're going to have to [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. We can certainly go to a vote, and that would be quick.

Mr. Harris, I'll go to you first, and then we'll go to a vote. I'm not clear here.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** I would like to agree with Mr. Bergeron that it makes it a different motion. If Mr. Dubourg is happy with that, I'll go along with it. As the clerk pointed out, there are working documents that may need to be circulated as well.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Dubourg, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** I'm not in agreement with the amendment. I will stay with my motion.

**The Chair:** I will ask the clerk to proceed with the vote.

(Amendment negated: nays 8; yeas 3)

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I suspect members would very much like for this meeting to now conclude, it being quite late. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

[*Translation*]

The meeting is adjourned.









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