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Chair

Mr. Robert Oliphant

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• (1730)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):
Good evening.

Welcome to the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee of Public Safety and National Security of the 42nd Parliament.

I want to welcome members of the public here, acknowledging that it's a Friday evening. I am glad that you are here with us.

I want to begin with a couple of remarks about what we are doing this week in the context of our study on the national security framework, and then I will have the members of the committee introduce themselves to you.

My name is Rob Oliphant and I am the chair of this committee. This past week, our committee has been undertaking a study of the national security framework that exists in Canada, which we began the week before in Ottawa. As you know, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, was the culmination of a set of different acts over the last number of years that had restructured the national security framework.

It was felt that when this government was elected they wanted to make some changes, so we felt, as a parliamentary committee, that we should do a study on this security framework, both to advise the government of what Canadians were thinking, and as well to respond to what the government was doing in terms of study or legislation.

There are two consultations going on right now. They are simultaneous. The first consultation is being done by the government, through the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. He has issued a green paper, a shorter version and a longer background document, that is engaged now in public consultation. You can respond to it online. We can show you how afterwards, if anybody doesn't know.

Parallel to that is a parliamentary review. In this committee we represent Parliament, not part of government. Some of us are on the government caucus and others are not. However, we have not come here with an opinion. In some cities we have had large gatherings where people have wanted to know our opinion on issues, and we're not at an opinion stage. We are consulting with the public to find out what you think about the parameters of the national security framework.

We were in Vancouver for two meetings on Monday, in Calgary for two meetings on Tuesday, and in Toronto for two meetings on Wednesday. Yesterday in Montreal we had three meetings, and we're

here in Halifax today. Our afternoon meetings are with experts in the field who may be academics or practitioners, and various civil society groups that come and give us their expertise. We have a chance to question them. Our evening meetings are your opportunity to tell us what your concerns or thoughts are.

The end of this study isn't quite clear yet. The goal is to report back to Parliament, and thus to have the government read our report and respond to it as well. Normally, when a parliamentary committee issues a report, they request a government response to that report. This study will also be fuelling all the legislation that the government is going to be bringing forward in the area of public safety. There's one bill that has already been tabled that comes under this umbrella. It's Bill C-22, and it establishes a committee of parliamentarians to do oversight of national security agencies. We are looking at oversight, but we will be studying that bill in depth beginning next week.

Tonight is your turn. I'm going to turn it over to the committee to introduce themselves. I let them tell you where they're from, and then we're going to turn on the microphone.

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Good evening.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Colin Fraser. I'm the member of Parliament for West Nova. I'm not a usual member of this committee. I am substituting this evening and look forward to all of your comments. Thank you.

A voice: What party are affiliated with?

Mr. Colin Fraser: I'm from the Liberal Party of Canada.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): I'm Pam Damoff, the member of Parliament from Oakville North—Burlington. This committee is composed of members from all parties. We have an equal number of government and opposition parties travelling with us. I'm a member of the Liberal Party.

• (1735)

The Chair: As I said, I'm Rob Oliphant. My riding is called Don Valley West. It's in the middle of Toronto, in southern Ontario. I'm part of the Liberal Party as well.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): I am Larry Miller, member of Parliament from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, in southwestern Ontario.

Thank you to all of you for coming here today.

A voice: What party are you with?

Mr. Larry Miller: The Conservative Party.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): My name is Dianne Watts. I'm the member of Parliament for South Surrey—White Rock in British Columbia.

A voice: What party?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Conservative.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): I'm Matthew Dubé. I'm the member of Parliament for Beloeil—Chambly in the suburbs of Montreal. I'm the committee member for the New Democratic Party.

The Chair: That was fine. I will say that I will not be responding to comments from the floor when you're not at the microphone, just to keep the meeting going.

We're giving members of the public three or four minutes each to make their comments. Members of the committee may have questions for you or they may not. You may be succinct.

We have four people who have requested to speak. The first is Scott Burbidge.

We invite you to come to the microphone.

Mr. Scott Burbidge (As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the standing committee and audience participants, it's an honour to be able to speak to this committee.

I come from a background that has in a way prepared me for this meeting but in a way has left me totally unprepared. I have a background in sociology and social work. I spent 20-odd years in the federal ministry of the solicitor general, working as a research officer and a policy adviser to the deputy minister. Our role was to assist that minister, the solicitor general—now the Minister of Public Safety—in fulfilling his statutory responsibilities for directing the commissioner of the RCMP and the head of CSIS. That relationship was one of accountability and control. It was a true oversight relationship.

I retired in 1998, but I never lost my interest in policing and public safety issues, so I got myself involved in the Arar inquiry in 2005-06. The policy review side of that inquiry looked at the need for oversight for the RCMP's anti-terrorist activities.

I have just a couple of quick points, given the limited time available.

I want to focus a bit on the minister's role, because I joined the ministry in the late seventies, at a time when of course the security service and RCMP activities were becoming of great concern in the context of a terrorist movement in Quebec, the FLQ. That led to the McDonald inquiry and, really, I worked in a department that had been shaped by the recommendations of Justice McDonald.

Central to that department was the central role of that minister, the solicitor general, in providing policy direction to the commissioner of the RCMP, as well as to the director of CSIS. In support of that role, there was an inspector of CSIS, there was the minister, SIRC was constituted, and there was a department headed by a deputy minister who provided the minister with policy and research support in his role as the minister responsible for the RCMP.

Much has changed since then. Having left in 1998, I have no experience from the inside in terms of what happened early in the 21st century. The war on terror changed everything in the sense of how we thought about the issues of public safety in Canada, and it changed the way we address public safety. As we've seen again in the discussion today, there's far more emphasis on the key role of our national security agencies and on providing them with the means and statutory justifications for powers to intervene in civil society and citizens' activities that are unprecedented, except in times of war and national emergency.

● (1740)

Having seen quite a number of the proposals for augmented review of national security activities, including the RCMP, CSIS, and CSEC, I have no difficulty with them. I don't think the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has either, given the scope and openness of this consultation. But what I think is missing from that discussion, that national conversation, is an examination of the capacity of the minister who, by statute, still is responsible for these agencies, to actually govern effectively the RCMP and CSIS, given the hugely expanded and more complicated scope of national security activities.

I think that is a huge issue, because no amount of post-review by SIRC or any new broader committee can make up for the absence of strong, consistent, and authoritative exercise of the role of the minister, and ministers cannot do that if they are not informed on an ongoing basis by the RCMP, on the basis of ministerial direction and their mandated responsibility to keep ministers abreast. I would remind you that the Arar commission was initiated because the prime minister of the day, the Right Honourable Paul Martin, and no less than four solicitors general all stated that they could not get a straight answer from the RCMP with respect to what was the Arar affair.

The Prime Minister initiated the inquiry because the RCMP had failed to be fully accountable. Subsequent to the Arar inquiry, a number of ministerial directions were initiated that required the RCMP to concentrate their anti-terrorist activities so they would be better controlled from headquarters, and to require the RCMP to keep the minister abreast of any sensitive or high-priority national security investigations. This was part of the response to the situation.

Since that time, my concern is that this has not happened or has not been consistent, and I think in particular of the B.C. Supreme Court *Regina v. Nuttall* case, which demonstrated an appalling lack of control and management of the investigation of the alleged terrorist plot in B.C. by a B.C.-based unit, and no indication at all that the minister of the day was being kept abreast of this evolving case, which turned out to be a disaster for public relations and public confidence in the RCMP. So that's my concern.

Thank you.

● (1745)

The Chair: Don't go away. I should have actually ended it quite a while ago, based on the time, and I'm just going to warn the rest of you that I'm not setting a precedent. We have one question already and we may have more.

The reason I actually gave you more time than we would normally give, is because we have been on the road and we've heard expert testimony and we've heard public testimony. The public testimony has become increasingly repetitive. You offered a different insight to the committee, very frankly, that we have not heard before. It was unique from your experience and the contribution you make. I'm just warning people that I may not be so lenient with others, but the role of the minister is something when we've been looking at oversight and activity.... We've had people talking about the legislation. We've had people talking about practice, about resourcing. We've had people talking about a parliamentary committee etc.

That was unique, so that's why I did it.

Mr. Dubé has a question or a comment.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Thank you very much.

I'm from Quebec and I appreciate the historical perspective of some of the things that went on leading to the McDonald commission.

I don't want to take too much time. I have two quick questions. The first is in terms of the role of the minister. Is this something related to how the minister exercises existing power or would this be a statutory and/or a legal change to the power that he has over different agencies? That's my first question.

My second question is does that run parallel with the nonetheless existing need for independent and expert oversight, which does get provided to the minister at the end of the day anyway regardless of how it's shaped? Are you imagining those two things existing together and allowing more accountability on the part of these agencies? Those would be my two questions for you.

Mr. Scott Burbidge: Thank you.

I have relatively uninformed comments because I haven't had the benefit of hearing the other witnesses before this committee.

Taking the second question first, my understanding and my experience in the ministry is that ministers have always welcomed review committees. These agencies were welcomed not only by the minister and the department, the secretariat or the department of the solicitor general, but also by an important school of thought within the RCMP.

The same is true I believe of CSIS historically, although there was a very rough patch at the beginning of CSIS because initially they thought they were an oversight committee and they found out they were only a review committee, for after the fact reviews, which itself is important. I think they're complementary.

Going back to the first question, my understanding of the history in Canada of the relationship between the minister and the RCMP is there is the notion that the RCMP is accountable to the minister and that the minister provides policy direction, except for quasi-judicial activities of deciding to investigate individual acts, arrests, etc. That has always been the core notion in the relationship between the RCMP and successive solicitors general.

• (1750)

The Chair: Are there any other questions?

I have a couple. The role of the inspector general was fairly important in my understanding in that original legislation that established CSIS after the McDonald commission. The last government got rid of the position of inspector general. Do you see it as something that is missing now in the system?

Mr. Scott Burbidge: Yes. As I've understood the distinction, SIRC is independent of government, but the inspector general was an office within the ministry of the solicitor general. It was another channel for the minister, which enabled him to determine on an annual basis, based on the work of the office of the inspector general, whether there were any issues in the conduct of CSIS in terms of compliance with the charter, with the Criminal Code, with any number of statutes, that the resources of CSIS were being effectively and appropriately used in the pursuit of their mandate.

When this came up in the Arar inquiry, the policy review, my view at the time was that—like this government channel with regard to CSIS—there should be a parallel channel with regard to the RCMP because it was another way for the minister to maintain control and be informed. It didn't imply a lack of trust, although McDonald did not trust police and he didn't trust the politicians to do their job in directing police either.

The Chair: Are there any other questions?

Go ahead, Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you very much for your information tonight.

We've had a few witnesses who have talked about the position of a national security adviser. I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts on that. It would be a position similar to the Auditor General or the Privacy Commissioner, so it would be someone who reports to the PM.

Mr. Scott Burbidge: To my understanding, there is such an office already.

The Chair: Yes, there is an office of the national security advisor to the Prime Minister. The thought is that perhaps that should be beefed up. They could even be an officer of Parliament, like the Auditor General or the Privacy Commissioner.

Mr. Scott Burbidge: I have two thoughts on that. One is that a committee of parliamentarians should not be a department of government reporting to a minister, who in that case, if it becomes law, would be the Prime Minister of Canada. A committee of parliamentarians should be a committee of Parliament. It should be the summit of the chain of accountability and responsibility for our national security efforts.

With regard to a kind of national security czar or someone with an office of oversight over all the different agencies, the kind of thinking I had at the time of the Arar inquiry, and I still believe in, was that we should do what the Australians and the Brits both did a decade or so ago. They completely reorganized their national security framework so that they had a coherent, integrated, comprehensive approach to national security. The lines of governance and control were clear.

I think we need to look at the roles and responsibilities of the RCMP in this regard. We need to look at the structure, the organization, and how these agencies work together. The inquiry into the Air India disaster showed the dysfunctionality of the separation of the security service from the RCMP in terms of unanticipated consequences. It was just a disaster. I think we need to go back, however difficult and intractable the issues, and look at it again.

• (1755)

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't see any more questions.

Thank you very much for your time. It was very helpful.

Mr. Scott Burbidge: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Philon Aloni is next.

Mr. Philon Aloni (As an Individual): Thank you.

I've had a long day. It started at 6:30 in the morning, and I just found out about this event at the last minute, so if I'm a bit tired, please forgive me. I didn't prepare anything ahead of time. I just made some notes while I was listening today.

Before I get to my notes, I want to have a little introduction, so you understand where I'm coming from in general. I am of the conviction or understanding that investing more in the people, investing more in healthy society and social justice on a national and international scale, and in peace—for example having a governmental department for peace—and things like this, will give us much greater bang for the buck in prevention of violence by terrorism than would more investment in securities.

Now, since it appears that Bill C-51 will pass regardless, I'd like to bring up some practical suggestions in order to mitigate the harm and maximize the potential good, although I'm not for the bill.

Again, investment in a more just and inclusive society will achieve much greater security dividends for society overall than Bill C-51-type bills could, and at far greater gross return for investment rates. Abuse of power by specially empowered entities is a basic human condition. We see it repeated throughout history. This is a very sensitive situation that we're dealing with, and we have to consider very carefully and methodically all possible means to mitigate such abuse.

For some suggestions in this regard, I'll go with something practical. For example, we can see examples of police brutality that were going under the radar in Canada or in the United States for many years. Only now, because of cellphones and the prevalence of cameras in people's pockets, the public has become more aware of this fact. I think entities that will have special privileges that keep them under the radar of the legal system, like CSIS, with extra powers that have been already allotted to it lately with Bill C-51, need to have extra vigilance of supervision. I think that records must be maintained of all activities of CSIS, not only of what they have observed, but the agents' activities. The agency's activities all have to be maintained for a supervising agency to continuously overlook....

Not too long ago, in countries that were highly civilized, where nobody believed democracy could be hijacked, democracy was

hijacked by organizations with extra powers, like Nazi Germany, for example, and later on in some parts of Latin and South America.

• (1800)

The Chair: You have 30 more seconds.

Mr. Philon Aloni: I have lots of practical suggestions. I thought you were here to get ideas, so I have ideas and I want to share them, right? What's the point?

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds. If you'd like to submit something in writing, we'll be very pleased to have it. We take into account all submissions.

Mr. Philon Aloni: For example, there's SIRC. It is underpowered right now. It's low in manpower, lower in potential. It would be a huge improvement in investment in making SIRC more powerful. It also has to be accountable to the judicial system more than the political system, because we have to protect the Constitution, first of all, not just the power of the moment in the country.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm just going to check if the committee has any questions.

No questions. Thank you very much.

Rana Zaman.

Ms. Rana Zaman (As an Individual): I'm a little nervous. I'm not as learned as the other gentleman that was here. I'm here as one of the people, one of the immigrants. I'm not a political person. I just got a wake-up call with the last government when this bill was passed. It made me jump out of my complacency and my trust in the government was just eradicated because I thought you were all very wise, caring people who looked out for the benefit of everyone and I mean everyone. You passed a law that I couldn't imagine, it was like George Orwell's *1984* kind of thing coming through for me, but it affected my children directly who are born and raised here and never have been back home, which I call home. I've only been back twice myself.

The whole idea under this law gives such unlimited power to a body that doesn't really have to answer or show proof really of anything except suspicion of intent. Please correct if I'm not as versed as I should be about this law, but I just have the basics, as I've said.

I couldn't believe that. I said these kids, how are they not as Canadian as anyone else who was born and raised here, who has never been anywhere else. If they, in their youth, in their stupidity, did something as a protest or anything that was somehow defined as a terrorist act by this body, what would happen to them? They'd be sent home where they have never been. I thought that's not possible and yet someone here, who was considered old-stock Canadian, would not be considered under the same law because they were considered Canadian.

I think that's where the second-class citizen idea came from. Bill C-24 and Bill C-51 were the two ones that really made me understand. As I said, I apologize, I'm not a politician yet, so I'm learning.

My whole point is that listening to that gentleman, I learned a lot right now. Basically we're giving power—according to the first gentlemen and the second—to an entity that really is not answerable in many ways and we know that “absolute power corrupts absolutely”. You just have to keep in mind that it affects you as well. I can't imagine how a government passed something that would interfere in your own personal information. I understand people are saying, “Well, I'm innocent, it doesn't matter”. How many people in the past who have been innocent have been railroaded for a crime they didn't commit or for some reason they were on the wrong person's radar? We have to look at this very carefully.

Also simple things such as the fact that they can observe you at any time based on any comments that you can make. How do you know the person on the other end is absolutely of a moral fibre that they won't abuse that power for their own benefit, if they have a personal beef against somebody? “I'm going to go in and tune in on that person and see what they're doing.” How do you know that their children...? God forbid, if someone who's a pedophile or something is not zooming in using your cameras and things to just basically get information about you and your family. These people are human beings. They're connected to other human beings. The possibility of abuse of power exists at any level. So my whole thing about this whole bill is the fact that it really infringes on a person's right and their privacy. It's just too much power for one organization to have. They can go to that level and not be answerable or not have to go to a judge or somewhere to get one to say we need to look into this person because they made these comments, they've made this kind of background.

And we're really kind of monitoring now even simple comments that we're making by phone or trigger words. It's just a frightening concept in a frightening future and I think you can hear it in my voice. We look up to you as our leaders and this affects you as equally, so how are you not afraid of it?

That's all my questions.

● (1805)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're not really here to defend either this government, or the previous government, or criticize the previous government, or this government, we're here to listen. I just want to clarify that Bill C-24 was passed in the last Parliament. The House of Commons has now passed a new law that would undo those parts of it called Bill C-6. I don't believe it's passed yet this week. It's in the Senate now, and this committee is looking at the whole framework to see how we can improve.

Go ahead, Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I wanted to thank you for coming out tonight. It's not easy to come in front of a...we're normal people, but I know it's not easy. And I just want to say thank you for coming out.

I'm curious how you found out about the meeting.

Ms. Rana Zaman: I've been on top of you since this started. Networking....

Ms. Pam Damoff: There's no right or wrong answer. I was just curious.

Ms. Rana Zaman: Facebook—you have to love Facebook. It's the only thing that isn't being manipulated at this point. Facebook was the way I got the information.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. I applaud everyone who's here tonight. With all of our meetings, it's getting the word out to Canadians that we are holding these meetings and that they can come forward.

Don't be nervous. I encourage you to come out again. You spoke very well, and you're obviously very knowledgeable. I just want to thank you for coming out tonight.

Ms. Rana Zaman: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Ray Silver.

Mr. Ray Silver (As an Individual): Thank you for your time.

How are you doing? I'm just an ordinary guy. I didn't even plan to be here tonight, but my son is very passionate about this whole thing about the rights of Canadians and things like that, so he said, “Dad, you have to go and speak.”

I'm an amateur, but when I look at High River—and you all know where High River is; it's out in Alberta, where there was a flood—the RCMP, without any warrants or any rights at all, invaded people's homes and took private possessions. They didn't even catalogue them. They took all the weapons. They took ammunition. They burned the ammunition without any records. They don't know what people lost. No records. Gone. They did it a number of times. The homes were empty because of evacuation, and the RCMP went in and just took things. There were no warrants. There was no reason to have any. There were no threats to security. Now there's no accountability. Nobody's been charged. There's a commission that found them guilty of breaking all kinds of laws, and there's no accountability. Nobody's been charged. And the RCMP, all the way to the top, doesn't know who ordered it, who okayed it. These men went in on boats into people's homes, and they invaded those homes.

Now I look at an organization that wants to give more power to the government. Okay, you're talking about preventive detention. You're going to lock people up without a just and liable cause, without a reason, and just because you think something might happen. As a Canadian, you're going to impact my rights and my freedoms. I'm not guilty until it's proved that something's wrong. You can't lock people up because of what they might think. I'm even scared to speak here because I think you might lock me up. What if you think I'm a threat? What if you think my ideas aren't right? You could just lock me up. Isn't that true?

● (1810)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: We're not going to lock you up.

Mr. Ray Silver: I'm talking in general. I mean, there's somebody here from security. This could open things up, things like no-fly lists. When I look at the government, the Canadian government, it looks to me like we're taking more and more rights and freedoms away from people. I see the freedom of speech disappearing in Canada.

Am I allowed to stand up and say that I don't agree with something that's politically correct? Just as an example, suppose I didn't believe in the whole environmental green warming crisis? What if I stood up and said, "I don't think that's right. I think that's biased. I think that's wrong." I wouldn't want to get locked up for that. There are other politically correct subjects I could talk about, but if I speak against those, I'm starting to be concerned that I might have some retribution coming back at me for that. I don't want to give more powers to the government.

I look at the RCMP, and I see them unaccountable. Why is that? There are no answers given to those people in High River, and that was two years ago. It wasn't back in the fifties or sixties; that was two years ago. Why is the RCMP not accountable? Nobody was charged. All these homes were raided, doors were broken in, cabinets were broken into, things were seized, and the ammunition was never given back. There's no record of what was taken from anybody's house, and they burned it all. You're talking hundreds of dollars, right? I definitely don't want to give the government more power until I can see up front that it's really justifiable and that the government's accountable.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Miller has a question or a comment.

Mr. Larry Miller: Thank you very much, Mr. Silver.

As far as the High River incidents go, you're absolutely right. Nobody was charged that I'm aware of. I believe the top commander, or someone near the top, basically lost his or her job over it, but there were no charges that I'm aware of either, and that is wrong.

They used the excuse when they first went in that they were searching for bodies, possibly, but they broke into houses. They broke into them, and windows and doors were smashed out of houses that weren't even affected by the flood in that town. They said that when they went into any of the homes, whether they were flooded or not, a lot of people had taken their firearms out of their cabinets and had laid them up on the beds in case the water came up like that. They said they couldn't just leave them. Well, they shouldn't have been in there to start with, so I will agree with you on that.

The one point that I wanted to clarify is on giving more powers to the RCMP or whatever. I'm not going to condone that in all situations without there being proper oversight, but you used it in the same tone as, say, giving government more power. Giving the RCMP more power—or whatever force—doesn't give the government more power. That needed to be clarified.

But today, comparing High River to the terrorism threat that is out there today, whether we want to admit it or not.... We had a gentleman here today at the earlier meetings who said that.... Maybe it was last night. We've had so many meetings this week that I'm confusing them. Anyway, he had been in some countries over there, and Afghanistan was one of them, where terrorism is an everyday

thing, so the level there is much higher than here, but just because it's much lower here doesn't mean that we can ignore it.

The FLQ back in the seventies has been brought up here tonight. There probably wasn't a lot of that kind of thing going on, that illegal activity, until 9/11 changed everything in 2001. Since then, we can't stick our heads in the sand and pretend that it isn't a threat out there, even though it's not as severe, so how can we give the powers that be—the RCMP, CSIS, or whoever—the power to investigate and pull people off the street and lock them up when they think there's a deliberate threat there?

• (1815)

Mr. Ray Silver: You can't assume people are guilty before they've committed a crime. Otherwise, that's too easy to bend; you can lock me up because you don't like what I'm thinking. You can't have thought police. That's the problem with the politically correct.... We have a political correctness committee here that can lock you up or make your life very miserable because they don't like your point of view. I can't remember the name—

Mr. Larry Miller: That doesn't happen in Canada, sir.

Mr. Ray Silver: I'm afraid it does.

I'm afraid it does. I could say things now that would get me in trouble just because I'm thinking a certain way.

With the FLQ crisis, I believe that was a special state of emergency, wasn't it, where they had extra powers, and regular, right, so that was a...?

Mr. Larry Miller: The War Measures Act, I believe it was called.

Mr. Ray Silver: The War Measures Act was in effect, but I don't want to have to live under the war measures effect, where they just have.... You know, I can be monitored, right? I can be surveilled just because somebody feels like it. That's just way too broad.

Mr. Larry Miller: Okay. What would you say to the two soldiers who were killed two years ago, one in the Montreal area and one in Ottawa? The powers that be, the experts—and I'm not an expert on the subject—said that they knew those people were a threat. They took their passports and stuff like that, but they couldn't detain them. They said that if they had have been able to detain them, Private Vincent and Corporal Cirillo would probably be alive today.

Those same people said that with what happened in the last month in Strathroy, Ontario, which is just two hours away from where I live, they wouldn't have gotten that guy without those powers. I'm not saying that all those powers are the right thing, but you've got to have something.

I'm going to end it with that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We'll give you a last word.

Mr. Ray Silver: I think that's a false economy. You cannot think somebody's possibly going to do something and lock them up or take action against them. You have to have a free society. I have to be free to move without the government taking action against me because it doesn't like the colour of my coat, my hair, or the things I say. The whole thought in Canada of thought police where it's not okay to think certain things...I don't know—

Mr. Larry Miller: The instance I just mentioned, sir, has nothing to do with the colour of your coat or the colour of your hair.

Mr. Ray Silver: That's right, but you're saying if they had a chance to lock these people up before they could have committed those crimes...is that what you want to do? You're saying they knew that these folks were suspicious and that they might do something and now you want the power to lock them up before they actually commit a crime. Is that what you're implying?

Mr. Larry Miller: I'm asking you for a solution to it.

Mr. Ray Silver: That's not right. You can't lock these guys up because—

Mr. Larry Miller: What is the solution, sir?

Mr. Ray Silver: You're not going to prevent every terrorism act by locking up people you are suspicious of. You'll lock up the whole country.

The Chair: I'm going to suggest we end the dialogue there. I think you've made your point very well and it's a point that has been made by many people across the country, as we've heard. You're not alone in your opinions about that topic and the committee has taken it very seriously.

Mr. Ray Silver: Thank you, I appreciate that.

The Chair: I meant to mention, because it was raised, that transcripts from all of our meetings will be available in about two weeks, maybe a little longer. You can get them at our committee website. You can get a copy of the transcript of what was said online. The reason we ask for your identity, your contact information, at the door is that if there is a misunderstanding or someone prepares the transcript and doesn't know what was said, we can verify it with you. That's what happens. The clerk holds that information until the end of the study and then destroys it. We don't retain that information.

We have one last speaker and that is Hannah Dawson-Murphy.

Ms. Hannah Dawson-Murphy (As an Individual): Hi, everyone.

Thank you for taking the time to consult us on this matter. It's extremely important in my opinion and in the opinion of a lot of other Canadians. Terrorism is evolving and we've seen that it's picked up speed in the last 20 years and continues to threaten our everyday lives with new developments and new technologies.

As a student, I have focused my research and my studies on this topic. I've tried in the last couple of years to grasp this whole concept of terrorism, but I've also tried to grasp how a government can protect its people from this ever-evolving threat.

The measures outlined in Bill C-51 in my opinion are the right balance between protecting our rights as Canadians while also protecting Canadians' lives. We must keep in mind that Canada is not immune to terrorist attacks and home-grown radicalization. We

currently have around 180 Canadians who are suspected of engaging in terrorist activities abroad, and we also have around 60 extremists who have returned to Canada after travelling overseas.

These rising numbers don't even include the people who are here now who are radicalized and haven't left, and who can take action at any moment. We've had two of our own military members lose their lives to terrorism-related activities, and I believe that if we'd had the measures imposed by Bill C-51 two years ago they might still be alive today. I hope as a committee you will work to ensure that our national security framework protects Canadians from this ever-changing threat, and I hope you will take my advice in this matter.

That's all I have to say.

• (1820)

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

Ms. Watts has a question or comment.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Yes, thank you very much for coming out and sharing your opinion.

When you said you were doing research, is this university research? What was it based on?

Ms. Hannah Dawson-Murphy: It's mostly for my own personal interest. I have been focusing on Operation Impact ever since 2014 when we sent our CF-18s over to Iraq and Syria. On my own personal time, I took some terrorism-related courses on public safety, and if I end up going to higher education, I plan on pursuing defence studies and policies.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Excellent. I hope you do. Thank you.

Ms. Hannah Dawson-Murphy: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Philon Aloni: It looks like you have some time. I have a whole research practicum on this.

The Chair: I believe that you have the card for the clerk. We'll receive that. Everything that comes in will be considered for sure, so we thank you for that.

We thank you all for your participation tonight. One always wonders in a small group if you are going to learn something, and I have, and I think the whole committee has. We thank you for enriching our understanding of the national security issues and the preservation of our rights. I think what we are about to do is try to figure out how we keep Canadians safe and safeguard our rights at the same time, and that is our challenge.

I just wanted to take a moment, because this is our last of 10 meetings, to formally thank the people who have facilitated our trip this week and these 10 meetings, and who made sure that it got into our public record and that they have done that work. I want to start by thanking our clerk, Jean-Marie David, who manages us. The concept of a clerk is quite a wonderful old tradition, but it doesn't at all signify the modern tasks that are required of handling members of Parliament, and arrangements, and other stuff. Thank you, Jean-Marie, for this work.

Tanya Dupuis is our analyst, and sometimes our therapist as well, who keeps us informed. She is our researcher, and she ensures that we are prepared for these meetings. Thank you for being so diligent and for being so well informed over so many years. You bring a wealth of knowledge, and that doesn't just happen with people who have recently come to the topic. We are very much enriched by that.

There's a whole logistics team Suzie Larocque has managed out there. Karen Thrieland was with us out west, and Robert Hoffman is with us in this area. We thank you for that logistics work.

Lynne Noël and Martin Chayer are back there. Their work is ongoing to make sure that we're getting the right words written down and that our records will be complete and pretty perfect.

In the booth, we've had a variety of interpreters. *Le chef* is Anton-Emmanuel Demarchi, who has been with us for the whole trip. Krissi Michaud has been with us the last three days. We're not supposed to mention it's her birthday today, but I'm mentioning it anyway. We

thank her for working with us on her birthday. Anna Fletcher was in Vancouver and Calgary, Patrice Schmitt and Josée Beauregard have been with us in this last part, and Eva Wilde was with us in Montreal. To all of them, thank you. On behalf of the committee, I extend thanks.

Mr. Miller.

• (1825)

Mr. Larry Miller: I should have had this in before you did the thank yous, and happy birthday, by the way.

I just wanted to say to everyone that came tonight and spoke, and not just the ones who spoke, but the ones who came, that we've heard a lot of different things over the course of our meetings. Quite often we hear criticisms, but we don't hear solutions. Anybody, when you're submitting, I encourage you to submit, but also to say, "This is wrong, committee, but this is how I think it should be fixed." Those kinds of things are valuable for me, and I think for all the members. That's all I wanted to say.

The Chair: We will continue to receive submissions. We consider it an important part of our work to make sure that we have your thoughts and opinions, and your friends' thoughts and opinions. Don't hesitate to repost on Facebook, because it seems to work.

Thank you very much for tonight, and thank you, committee, for our whole week. We continue next Tuesday in Ottawa.

The meeting is adjourned.

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