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# Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

EVIDENCE

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Tuesday, May 7, 2024

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Chair: Mr. Ben Carr





## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

• (1100)

[*English*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michael MacPherson):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order, nor participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mrs. Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I nominate Ben Carr.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Sherry Romanado that Ben Carr be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried, and Ben Carr duly elected chair of the committee. I invite him to take the chair.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

We're going to suspend very briefly, so that I can acquaint myself with my environment. I would like the opportunity to introduce myself to staff belonging to all members, just so there's a familiarity here. We are going to suspend briefly while I undertake that, and then we will come back.

I have a couple of notices to raise. I already see there are some members raising their hands. We will hear from them at that time.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** You just got elected, and you're already taking time off.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Mark, I did read that I'm not permitted to censor members, which is a good thing for you.

We are suspended for a few moments.

• (1100)

(Pause)

• (1105)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we are going to open it up. I do see some hands. I'm going to make a running list in just a moment.

I'm going to begin by reading the important information that we need to respect in regard to translation.

I want to remind all members and other meeting participants in the room of the following important preventative measures.

To prevent disruptive and potentially harmful audio feedback incidents that can cause injuries, all in-person participants are reminded to keep their earpieces away from microphones at all times. As indicated in the communiqué from the Speaker to all members on Monday, April 29, the following measures have been taken to help prevent audio feedback incidents. All earpieces have been replaced by a model that greatly reduces the probability of audio feedback. The new earpieces are black in colour, whereas the former ones were grey. Please only use the black earpieces that were provided.

By default, all unused earpieces will be unplugged at the start of the meeting. When you are not using your earpiece, please place it face down on the middle sticker for the purpose that you will find on the table, as indicated. Please consult the cards on the table for guidelines to prevent audio feedback incidents. The room layout has been adjusted, as you may have noticed, to increase the distance between microphones and reduce the chances of feedback from ambient earpieces.

These measures are in place so that we can conduct our business without interruption and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters.

Colleagues, I want to begin very briefly by saying that I have a deep respect, as I know everybody does, for the integrity and institution of Parliament, and the affairs with which we are, by virtue of the election to this place by the constituents we represent...is the vehicle through which we uphold the integrity of these institutions. I recognize the importance and the value of this committee in playing a prominent role in that. It's an honour and a privilege for me to be able to sit in this chair and to help conduct and facilitate the conversations that are so important to maintaining the respect and the integrity of this institution that means so much to all of us.

With that, I see a couple of hands are up. We are going to kick right off in terms of getting things under way.

I'll just read the list. I had Mrs. Romanado, Ms. Mathysen and Mr. Cooper. Was there anybody else who had their hand up?

Mrs. Romanado, the floor is yours.

• (1110)

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome to PROC, the best committee on the Hill.

I would like to move a motion that I put on notice a little while ago. It was circulated to the procedure and House affairs committee on September 15, 2022. We've been a little busy with other studies since that time. I know that you've all received it, but if need be, I can ask the clerk to resend it around, which he will do.

The motion reads:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee conduct a review of the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy and make any relevant changes to ensure members of Parliament are protected from violence and harassment of any kind between members; and that the committee report back to the House.

If you recall, a study was done previously on this, and there is currently a loophole in the harassment policy. Right now, the harassment policy that we are bound by does not prevent harassment between members. Our sexual harassment policy does cover sexual harassment between members, but the current harassment policy does not. There's a loophole in that, and we would like to look into that to see if we can close that. That was the purpose of this study, to close that loophole. That was the motion that I put on notice almost two years ago now, and I think that it would be wise for this committee to finally get to that study.

With that, I turn it back to you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Romanado.

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you.

I saw that motion, and I am newer to the committee, so I'm getting my bearings on what has been put forward before. I thought that it was important to expand on that. I have an amendment to this study, if you'll permit me. I think we just sent it to the clerk.

It is significant. It still holds the intent of the original motion, but it expands it a bit to the following. I apologize to the interpreters; I hope they get a copy shortly. I'll say it slowly:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee conduct a review of the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy, study occurrences and impacts of harassment within the House of Commons, Parliament Hill, constituency offices, and via the use of members' social media, and make any relevant changes to ensure members of Parliament, personnel and members of the public who participate in the day-to-day activities of the institution are protected from violence and harassment.

That the committee invite:

- a. The chief human resources officer
- b. The current and past Speakers of the House of Commons
- c. The Clerk of the House of Commons
- d. The head clerk of committees
- e. The Sergeant-at-Arms
- f. The interpretation directorate
- g. Anti-harassment specialists and workplace mental health and safety experts
- h. Non-governmental organizations dedicated to electing more under-represented communities
- i. Former members of Parliament
- j. Members of Parliament not seeking re-election
- k. Union representatives, and
- l. Other witnesses requested by the committee

That six meetings be devoted to witness testimony and that witness lists be submitted to the clerk within seven days upon the adoption of this motion. And that the committee report its findings to the House no later than October 31, 2024.

The reason, if I may speak to my amendment, is that we have seen changes, I believe, even since the study was done in this committee, that concern me. Between members—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have a point of order from Mr. Berthold.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Can we have a copy of the amendment before we start talking about it?

**The Chair:** Mr. Berthold, if I understand correctly, the clerk is in the process of translating the amendment, so I'll let Ms. Mathysen continue to speak a little, if it isn't too long. In a few minutes, we'll distribute a copy of the amendment to all members of the committee, in both official languages.

Is that okay with you, Mr. Berthold?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Yes, okay.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Continue, Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** My concern is this. I believe that, since the study and even since Mrs. Romanado introduced this motion two years ago, there have been changes. I know that I've heard about it. It is member-to-member, but it also has an impact on the larger institution and all those who work within it. It extends to our work in the community.

I want to put forward a more comprehensive list of all the people who would see those changes and have a say in terms of how we conduct ourselves here. I think that it's fairly substantial and it can have real meaning going forward. Having that date placed upon it, as there are many things that happen that this committee has to deal with, ensures that we stay on course and that we can focus on this, because I truly believe that this will have a lasting impact.

I will stop there. I hope that you are all able to get that amendment physically in hand so that we can continue the discussion.

• (1115)

**The Chair:** Okay, so there are a couple of things here, colleagues.

Ms. Mathysen, just so my understanding is correct, you moved your motion to amend. I believe we now have a copy of this translated into both official languages.

[*Translation*]

The clerk will distribute it right away.

[*English*]

Just as a reminder now, because we are in a discussion about the amendment proposed by Ms. Mathysen, I ask any members who wish to speak to this amendment to please let me know.

I am certainly happy to provide a couple of moments for committee members to review, particularly those who are just getting it for the first time in French. It's just starting to make its way around now, so we'll just give colleagues a couple of moments to review that. As I said, if anybody would like to speak to this, please indicate that to the chair so that I can start to create a new list.

Mr. Cooper, I still have your name from before, which we will return to once we're done dealing with the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** First of all, I want to commend the fact that we have a proposal on a topic that's been on the table for two years.

Let's remember that some of us sat on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs two years ago. We're being surprised by a lot of things we didn't anticipate and that worries me.

There's been a lot of talk about interference in recent months. There's also been talk of disinformation, including what's going on at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics right now, and misinformation. I think we're now at the stage of demystifying things.

I haven't taken the time to analyze who we should invite, but we have about 11 meetings left. If we want to do something constructive, I think we should look at that. This topic has been on the table for a long time now.

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

[*English*]

Mrs. Romanado, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank my colleague for bringing forward that amendment.

Obviously, since I put forward that notice of motion, almost two years ago, a lot has changed. The conversation about civility and how this place works has been top of mind, and I think it requires all of us to conduct ourselves in a way that Canadians expect of us.

There is a loophole, unfortunately, in terms of the harassment policy. I've heard from people, whether they be a witness or a colleague, that they're not enjoying the experience of their time on the Hill. I think it requires that we look at it a little more, have an adult conversation about how we conduct ourselves, and close any loopholes there may be, so that, in the event of a situation in which a member is subject to harassment, they have a vehicle they can use to address it.

I thank my colleague for bringing forward the amendment. It's much more prescriptive, which I think is a great idea. We have a few weeks left before the House rises. We can really get some interesting work done here and open that conversation.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Mrs. Romanado.

I have Mr. Gerretsen next.

[*Translation*]

He will be followed by Mr. Berthold.

[*English*]

Then, Monsieur Berthold will be followed by Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Gerretsen, the floor is yours.

• (1120)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Thank you.

Thank you for the amendment. I think it's extremely germane. I think it lends itself well to the motion.

As part of this study, I would really like to hear from the Sergeant-at-Arms, specifically because of the comments he's made and because of media reports lately that have involved the Sergeant-at-Arms: stuff that's going on at constituency offices and how MPs may or may not be harassing constituency employees by showing up at offices that don't belong to them. I'd also like to hear from HR experts as to what constitutes harassment exactly. Where does that fall into play here?

I'm very much open to this amendment. I think it's great. I think we should vote in favour of it. I'm looking forward to doing a study on this so that we can properly put in place the safeguards for members, obviously, as the motion indicates, but I'm more interested in my staff.

Thank you.

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

[Translation]

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I know that this motion has been on the table since 2022. The problem is that, since 2022, a lot of extremely important things have happened about protecting our democracy. We have talked about foreign interference and the Hunka affair in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, we haven't yet been able to get to the bottom of foreign interference.

Last week, a very important preliminary report was tabled by Justice Hogue, who acknowledged that the last two elections had been the target of foreign interference, particularly from the communist regime in Beijing.

We had asked for a preliminary report to get an initial overview of the actual situation. We're in a minority government right now, which means that an election can happen at any time, and that's why we needed to have the clarification of Justice Hogue fairly quickly, so that the government of the day, hopefully with the help of all the opposition parties, could take steps to ensure that the next election doesn't have an increase in foreign interference again.

Justice Hogue therefore acknowledged that there had been interference in the last two elections. Even though, as she said and as we said as well, this interference likely did not change the final outcome of the election, it still could have influenced the choice of voters in certain ridings.

Second, in the case of appointments—

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

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

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Mr. Chair, you told us that we had to discuss the amendment, but we are in the process of reviewing the history of other matters that could be studied here.

Discussions must relate directly to the amendment, so I invite you to remind Mr. Berthold that he must stick to the topic.

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

I assume that Mr. Berthold will soon be making a brief comment on the amendment proposed by Ms. Mathysen.

You may continue, Mr. Berthold.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I was going to talk about nominations. All the political parties are currently working on candidate nominations for the next election. We've learned from Justice Hogue herself that there were irregularities and that the Communist regime in Beijing has apparently succeeded in influencing the choice of a Liberal candidate. These include—

[English]

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Mr. Chair, we've had an intervention explaining that we are talking about the amendment, not the study on foreign interference. My colleague across the way is continuing to talk about another study and is not talking about the amendment that is in front of us.

If he'd like to start intervening on the amendment that is in front of us, that's great. I'm looking forward to hearing his comments on it, but we've already had a point of order to ask that he get to the relevance of the amendment in front of us.

Thank you.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Thanks, Mrs. Romanado.

Mr. Berthold, I do believe that we need to get towards the substance of the amendment soon. I will provide one more opportunity to get to that, but should we find ourselves on the same path we just were, I may ask to move to Mr. Duncan, who's next on the list.

[Translation]

Thank you.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Chair, it would be unfortunate if you began your mandate as chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs by engaging in a cover-up and preventing me from continuing and explaining my remarks.

For the sake of my colleagues, I'll explain why I need to speak to this in order to deal with the amendment. It's because we need to prioritize studies right now, and I'm making the case as to why we shouldn't prioritize the one that's in Mrs. Romanado's amendment and why I must therefore vote against it. We owe it to Canadians, who are waiting for an election to be called in the next year and a half or two, to finish the work we've started to get to the bottom of foreign interference.

While Ms. Mathysen's amendment is very comprehensive, the continuation of our study and the work we have to do to ensure that our elections are fully democratic would be pushed back too far. I had to talk about the nominations, Mr. Chair, because they're ongoing. Nominations are made every day and every week within each political party.

We were going to move a motion today to get to the bottom of what happened in Mr. Han Dong's riding. Unfortunately, we didn't have the opportunity to be the first to speak. I understand that, but I want to explain why we need to have all the necessary information in hand to make the right decision when it comes time to vote on holding this study.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Berthold. We understand your position—

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** I'm not done, Mr. Chair. A point of order.

**The Chair:** One moment, please.

You mentioned that you're opposed to the motion and the amendment, and that's obviously your right. Several of our colleagues want to comment, and we've already heard that we're starting to stray from the subject of the amendment, which I tend to agree with.

Mr. Berthold, we will therefore move right away to the next speaker—

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** No, Mr. Chair. A point of order. This is totally unacceptable. I'm not finished. I'm going to keep talking, because it's extremely important.

I'm a little disappointed. I haven't talked about why the government moved this motion today.

It is doing so precisely to avoid talking about the situation that occurred in Mr. Han Dong's riding. This motion was moved today by the government to prevent the opposition from doing its clear, clean and accurate work of ensuring that—

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'm trying to understand what's going on. I think we are in the process of—

**The Chair:** One moment, please.

Go ahead, Ms. Fortier.

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** We're talking about the amendment on the table, not another motion. We should finish this conversation. If we have to discuss other motions afterwards, we'll discuss them, but right now, we have to stick to the amendment on the table.

I, for one, am looking forward to being able to comment on it.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Berthold, I will give you the floor again, but once again, I'd like to remind you that the discussion concerns the amendment. For the last time, I invite you to speak to the amendment before us.

Thank you.

• (1130)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Chair, I respectfully disagree with your interpretation of things. With all due respect, since the beginning, I have been talking about the amendment and the consequences it will have on our committee's work.

I will read the amendment:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee conduct a review of the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy, study occurrences and impacts of harassment in the House of Commons, Parliament Hill, Constituency Offices, and via the use of Members' social media, and make any relevant changes to ensure Members of Parliament, personnel and members of the public who participate in the day-to-day activities of the institution are protected from violence and harassment. That the committee invite:

- (a) the Chief Human Resources Officer;
- (b) the current and past speakers of the House of Commons;
- (c) the Clerk of the House;
- (d) the head clerk of committees;
- (e) the Sergeant-At-Arms;
- (f) the Interpretation Directorate;

- (g) anti-harassment specialists and workplace mental health and safety experts;
- (h) non-governmental organizations dedicated to electing more underrepresented communities;
- (i) former members of Parliament;
- (j) members of Parliament not seeking re-election;
- (k) union representatives; and
- (l) other witnesses requested by the committee;

That six meetings be devoted to witness testimony, and that witness lists be submitted to the clerk within seven days of the adoption of this motion; and that the committee report its findings to the House no later than Thursday, October 31, 2024.

Mr. Chair, you won't be able to say that I'm not talking about the amendment; I just read it. I think that's pretty clear.

What does this amendment mean? That means that we're going to spend the next six meetings talking about this, when we have in our hands a report by Justice Hogue that all parties requested last week, a report that has been made public. I would remind you that this is a preliminary report that is extremely important and that has made some major revelations.

If we devote the next six meetings to this study, as mentioned in the amendment, we will unfortunately let the findings of Justice Hogue's preliminary report be swept under the rug. We can't do that. The role of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is to act on a motion of the House of Commons that was adopted unanimously, that called this public inquiry and that required us to have a preliminary report.

People now expect us to be able to study the contents of that preliminary report, in particular the Liberal nomination process that resulted in a candidate being chosen, it seems, following a strong presence of representatives of the Communist regime in Beijing. I know the Liberals don't like it when we talk about it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. Berthold.

Mr. Duguid.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to PROC and your first filibuster.

Mr. Chair, you've asked the member to speak to the relevance of the motion that is on the table. He is constantly slipping into discussing the second motion, which we will get to. If we can deal with this motion, we can then discuss Mr. Cooper's motion, which I'm looking forward to discussing.

I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that you go to Mr. Duncan, as you suggested you were going to do.

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

On a point of order, we have Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** I would just submit, Mr. Chair, that members have wide latitude to speak on amendments and subamendments. That has been the approach, and it has been consistent since I was elected as a member of Parliament. It has been the practice of this committee.

There have been many instances where Liberal MPs have deviated quite significantly from the wording of a specific motion. So long as it is in some way anchored to the motion, the members should be given the flexibility.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your perspective, Mr. Cooper.

[*Translation*]

We will continue with Mr. Berthold.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Chair, that is why I wanted to raise this extremely important point, beyond the content that I will discuss a little later. I would like you to add my name to the end of the list so that I can speak to the content of the amendment as such.

I wanted to ask my colleagues to be very aware of tactics currently used by the governing party to yet again avoid at all costs talking about the truly damaging findings of Justice Hogue's report concerning the Liberals' failure to act on foreign interference.

That is why our committee should make it a priority to analyze Justice Hogue's preliminary report and study her findings so that we, too, can be ready for the next election, which could take place in a week or two. An election could be triggered should the NDP decide to withdraw its support for the Liberal government, which is supposedly a minority government. We now know that it is a coalition government, but that coalition may be fragile, and we will see whether it will survive until the election scheduled for 2025.

However, for the time being, I implore committee members not to fall into the trap and to focus on studying the rest of Justice Hogue's preliminary report.

I repeat that we owe it to Canadians, and especially to the voters of this country, to do our job properly and not to let this preliminary report, which is quite detailed, be forgotten over the next six months until the final report.

Thank you.

• (1135)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

There has been a bit of time that has elapsed since the speaking list has grown. For the benefit of members, I'm going to quickly reiterate what the order is so members are aware. I have Mr. Duncan, who will go next, followed by Mr. Cooper, Madame Gaudreau and Ms. Mathysen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Berthold has the next turn.

[*English*]

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Thank you.

Congratulations, for now, on your role as chair of PROC. You're still in the chair, so that's a good start.

I want to give some context. You're not only a new chair for our committee, but a new member of PROC. I think it's important for you to have a bit of context in your role as chair. You'll be very busy with your finger, because very often when Conservative mem-

bers speak there will be lots of points of order. I've been a part of that or a witness to that in the last couple of months.

I will perhaps refresh the committee's memory that it was several months ago, but within a reasonable time ago, that we had Liberal members of Parliament on the other side with an exceptional latitude given to them as we worked to get the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Katie Telford, to come to committee. I sat in on those meetings, Mr. Chair: 24 hours of Liberal members talking. We had members coming in. They shared their life stories and backgrounds, including the now Speaker of the House. He actually was at committee and spoke at length about a lot of his Liberal background, partisan background, at that time, which I guess was fine. Nevertheless, they were able to have that latitude to speak about what they felt was the issue at hand. Conservatives were relatively respectful of giving them hours on end to share their views.

I would encourage committee members, before others have points of order about relevance, to consider the leniency the previous chair provided Liberal members when they felt they had things to say and to contribute to the debate. I will try to pre-empt any unnecessary points of order, although they are always allowed and welcome to be taken by you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Mathysen's subamendment, which we are speaking to—

**The Chair:** Just to be clear and correct, Mr. Duncan, it's the amendment. There is no subamendment.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** My apologies.

I will be speaking to the last part of the amendment. I'll start with that to give you the context of the comments I'm going to give:

That six meetings be devoted to witness testimony and that witness lists be submitted to the clerk within seven days.... And that the committee report its findings to the House no later than October 31, 2024.

The comments that my colleague made before me and that I will make here as well, some specifically on this, I think allude to asking PROC members to vote on what the priority of this committee is over the next several weeks. What my colleague before me has just said and what we will continue to say is that frankly this is a distraction.



Cynical me, but I think many Canadians tuning in to this today will say that the fact that Mrs. Romanado had this on notice for two years and that today is the day it's brought forward is.... There was full knowledge by Liberal members and all members of this committee that only just recently Justice Hogue provided her initial report—dated May 3, 2024—in the public inquiry into foreign interference, something that this committee has been seized with a lot, and rightfully so. The more information is gathered, and the more information is put out as public information, frankly, the more questions there are that need to be answered, many of which this committee could and should be dealing with as a priority.

We don't know when the next election may be, but candidates are being nominated. The issue of foreign interference.... We talk about the amendment that is here, about the number of meetings. Let's just call a spade a spade. For Canadians who are perhaps not memorizing the parliamentary calendar as much as maybe those of us in this room would, with a recess week next week, by the time the House rises in June, six meetings would likely take us right out to the summer. That is a deliberate attempt to push down any conversations, meetings and further study on the issue of foreign interference and the things that my colleague Mr. Cooper has raised. There is absolute relevance when we talk about what we're talking about today and what we are laying on the floor here.

To the amendment specifically and the main part, I do find it ironic that here we are and Liberal members and NDP members are talking about how hard it is to be a politician these days. There is an irony in this. With everything that's going on in the country, the mood of Canadians right now is, rightfully, one of frustration and despair. We hear about food banks. We hear about housing costs. We hear about crime. We hear about drugs and the disorder that is happening in every part of this country. There is a lot of frustration right now with the current government, their policies and what's going on. To know what those struggles are—the millions of people using food banks, the millions of Canadians struggling to own a home—and to sit here and say that it's a tough time to be a politician, I think most Canadians would shake their head about what the priorities are.

Instead, the procedure and House affairs committee needs to make foreign interference a priority. It should be of no surprise to members, including Liberal and NDP members, that this would be an issue and a notice of motion or a priority of this committee after the initial report came in of what we need to know. Mr. Cooper has done a fantastic job in raising a lot of points and trying to get answers to the many questions that the government has evaded.

We've seen time and time again, particularly on the issue of foreign interference, that the Liberals are never forthcoming with the proper information the first time and proactively: It has been media leaks. Frankly, the whole premise of the seriousness and the magnitude of the issue of foreign interference didn't come because a member like Mrs. Romanado brought a notice of motion to take a look at this. It was only brought forward by leaks that came into media and reporting. I don't know who it was. Obviously, we don't know who made those leaks, but they were obviously frustrated at the Liberal government and ministers withholding information from members of Parliament directly, with Mr. Chong being the major highlight, sadly, of that circumstance.

• (1140)

Many times, again, only in the last couple of weeks, there have been further leaks about how members of Parliament have not been provided proper disclosure in a reasonable time frame, but instead we have read, through media reports and questions from journalists, about foreign interference attempts, attempts to intimidate members of Parliament and so forth. It was time and time again, and I've seen it here at PROC several times as well, how the failure to properly disclose information proactively has led that.

When we talk about what the priorities of this committee should be in the coming weeks, as we have a few more weeks left in the parliamentary calendar before the summer recess, Canadians would expect us not to talk about how tough it is to be a politician these days. Even when we talk about that issue, the fact is that the Speaker threw the Leader of the Opposition out of the chamber last week and created chaos. I'll remind you that the Speaker, in his opening days—since we talk about the operations and the Standing Orders of the House—used to say that his job was to be the referee and never to be the story—oops, that's been the story many times.

Again, I think what we need to focus on and what Canadians are asking us for, particularly with the lens of the procedure and House affairs committee, is not six meetings and a very last-minute amendment that comes in to a motion that's been on notice for two years and suddenly needs to be done and dealt with and heard basically at all the meetings until the summer recess. Canadians are smart enough to know just how cynical this attempt is. It's an attempt to silence the opposition on the topic, I think, and to create a distraction from the real issue—

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** The real opposition.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** That's an excellent point, Mr. Cooper. The real issue is holding the government to account and getting answers. I think what we can do, Mr. Chair, is focus on the issue of foreign interference. Topics have been raised in the public discourse and through the report in the public inquiry by Justice Hogue that we can deal with here and that we can get answers to.

To the point about a real opposition and that being the priority, I would implore my Bloc and NDP colleagues not just to see past this attempt by the Liberals to do this, but instead to focus on these issues and to get answers that really do make Liberal members uncomfortable to have to defend their government's actions—or actually, in many cases, inactions. It would rightly make Liberal members uncomfortable to have to defend and to discuss the topic of foreign interference, because the more we learn, the more questions we ask and the more answers we seek, the more it is actually producing some information that has not been forthcoming from the Liberal side.

I would implore my NDP and Bloc colleagues to understand and to realize what the Liberals are attempting to do here. We argued that there was smoke, and in the initial report, there's a lot of information we can follow up on. There's a refusal.... I will say that Mr. Cooper, the vice-chair of this committee, has done a solid job in his role as the shadow minister for democratic institutions about what we heard through the initial report after its release, which talked about a Liberal Party member tipping off the then Liberal candidate for Don Valley North that CSIS was monitoring him.

In the case where Mr. Chong was being intimidated and threatened by foreign state actors, they did not bother to let Mr. Chong know that. Instead, we have a very serious report that came through *The Globe and Mail* as part of the conversations, the discussions and the report by Justice Hogue that a Liberal Party member was briefed. Then, instead of doing something about the nefarious activities that were going on in Don Valley North, it was decided to let the candidate know.

It has been several weeks since that information was put out in public light—again, not proactively by the Liberal government, as they avoid, at every turn, any accountability or providing any answers. For Canadians, when they look at this, it is only fair that we should have a focus on foreign interference and on getting to the bottom of that very serious issue.

Of course, as I always say, if there's nothing to see, if this is a nothing burger, if it's all fine and just a big misunderstanding, as Liberal members so many times try to say—and all of a sudden the opposite is true and they are trying to cover something up—then they should have no problem wanting to have the study into that topic specifically, to have witnesses on that and to get answers in public here at the committee room about that topic.

• (1145)

Mr. Chair, this is nothing more than an attempt from the Liberals to talk about how hard it is to be a politician today, but more than anything, make no mistake, the intent of this motion, which was sitting on the back burner as a notice of motion of which there are many notices of motion at many committees about the same thing.... Today, coincidentally, just after the initial report was made public, when we have information that our committee can follow up on and get further information for Canadians in a parliamentary context, which we're hired here to do, there's no thought about that—none. Let's talk about six meetings that run the calendar up to the summer so that the Liberals can try to avoid all the information and scrutiny here at this committee. I think Canadians rightfully see right through it.

Let's get to the issues at hand, the important issues of foreign interference.

I'll leave that now and ask you to put my name back at the bottom of the list, Mr. Chair.

• (1150)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Duncan. I will do that.

I'll just note, colleagues, that my understanding is that we have 11 meetings remaining between now and when we are expected, on the calendar, to rise. I just note that for the benefit of all members.

Mr. Cooper, I turn to you.

**M. Stéphane Lauzon:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper. Wait just one moment.

Mr. Lauzon, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Mr. Duncan gave us false information when he said that the report had been tabled.

It is indeed a preliminary report that was tabled, not the report itself.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Duncan, do you want to respond quickly?

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** With regard to that point of order, I've mentioned many times in my comments that it's the initial report. It is a report that is public. It is substantial and has many pieces of information. I did refer to it as the initial report, not the only report. It's a public document. It has many substantial pieces of information that our committee could study.

I'll also note, just to the point about the calendar and the number of meetings left, that this is not my first year here. Every year, near the end of the year—and I've been a member of PROC several times—we get into many committees trying to pass bills, and meetings also get cancelled. Many times, PROC meetings have been cancelled, and other committees as well. I raise that point for an important historical context, not just a calendar and a piece of paper.

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

Mr. Lauzon, are you satisfied? Okay.

We're going to resume the list.

Mr. Cooper, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Before I address the motion and the amendment to the motion, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation and your election as chair of the committee. I have no doubt that you will serve in that role well, so congratulations.

With respect to the motion by Mrs. Romanado and the amendment brought forward by Ms. Mathysen, it is not a coincidence that a motion that was put on notice in 2022 is suddenly the business of this committee at the first meeting following the issuance of the damning initial report of Justice Hogue. It confirmed what The Globe and Mail and Global News reported, namely, that Beijing interfered in the 2019 and 2021 elections, that the Prime Minister and his government turned a blind eye to that interference and covered it up, and, even worse, that they were in some respects complicit in Beijing's interference in our elections.

This motion and this amendment speak to what the Liberal priority is. It is to talk about politicians—to talk about us. I'm astounded that there are members in this committee who are more interested in talking about themselves and how tough it is to be a member of Parliament, at a time when our constituents are struggling, at a time when, after nine years of this Prime Minister, housing costs have doubled, rent has doubled and mortgage payments have doubled. Some two million Canadians are resorting to the food bank. The cost of living for everyday Canadians has worsened as a result of this government's punitive carbon tax, which went up with a 23% hike in April.

Canadians are struggling, and these Liberals and New Democrats just want to talk about themselves and how hard done by they are. Yes, I know they're feeling the heat. They're feeling the heat from their constituents, who are damn mad at them for their disastrous policies, which they have presided over for the past nine years and have done untold damage to this country and untold damage to Canadians.

Now, I will be moving a subamendment. I move that the amendment be amended, first, by adding after “the committee” the words “after it has completed its study on foreign election interference”, and second, by deleting all the words after “to the House”.

That's my subamendment.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'll speak to the subamendment.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** No. I'm speaking to the subamendment.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, give me just one moment.

Mr. Cooper, do you happen to have a written version of this, or could you repeat it? I'm sensing there's some confusion on the part of members as to what the actual wording of the subamendment is.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** I will read it, and then I will help guide members to find where the amendments are within the subamendment.

**The Chair:** Is that a point of order, Ms. Mathysen?

Mr. Cooper, give me just a moment, please.

I see Ms. Mathysen on a point of order.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** I'm just confused how a member can subamend the amendment on a study we don't have in front of us. We're not actually studying foreign interference, so I find that complicated.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Yes, we are.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** How are we doing that? How are we in the middle of the foreign interference study?

**The Chair:** Colleagues, let me just consult with the clerk for a moment.

Thank you.

• (1155)

(Pause)

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Okay, colleagues.

Ms. Mathysen, I think you said you withdrew. Did I understand that correctly?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Yes. I guess there was a split in terms of how the committee decided before I was a part of it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Got it.

Colleagues, here's where we're at. We have an admissible subamendment. We are now moving to debate on the subamendment.

At this point in time, I want to pause for a moment, as I am a new chair. As a courtesy to members, I hope that we can for a moment be informal in the following discussion.

There are two ways in which we can handle speaking lists. I have a long speaking list from the previous debate as it pertained to Ms. Mathysen's amendment to the motion. We can talk about creating a new list specific to the subamendment, or we can talk about continuing the list as it was prior to that.

Mr. Gerretsen, do you have a comment on this?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I do.

The way the previous chair did it was that she held on to the existing one and went to a new one. After we were done there, it went back to the other one.

I think doing it that way also encourages people to stay on topic.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, are we in agreement that we will start a new list?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay.

With that, just to inform colleagues of where we're at, we are moving to debate with a new list on the subamendment. The existing list as it pertains to the amendment will hold.

I have Mr. Gerretsen, Mrs. Romanado and Mr. Calkins.

Is there anybody else pre-emptively, or will we just see how our conversation goes? I have Madame Gaudreau. Okay.

Our colleagues here are just in the process of getting translation. Do we feel, colleagues, that we can move into this conversation without the translation in front of us right now, or do we want to wait a moment? I'm seeing some nods.

Mr. Gerretsen, the floor is yours in relation to—

• (1200)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Chair, I had just moved it and indicated that I wished to speak to it. Normally, the mover of an amendment speaks to it.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper. You're correct. We'll go to you on your proposed subamendment.

Colleagues, just quickly—I know there's a lot flying at us—I will reiterate where we're at.

Mr. Cooper has moved a subamendment.

Mr. Cooper, perhaps you could graciously speak to it, just so that we have some clarity for colleagues. Then, of course, you are permitted to speak to it at whatever length you desire.

From that point in time, we will go to Mr. Gerretsen, followed by Mrs. Romanado and Madame Gaudreau. If the list is exhausted at that point, of course, we will vote on the subamendment. Depending on the direction we get there, we will move back to our long and comprehensive speaking list number two, which I alluded to a moment ago.

With that, go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I will read the subamendment again and then explain it if there's any clarity needed. Then I will speak to the substance of the subamendment.

The subamendment is to (a) add, following “the committee” where it first appears, the words “after it has completed its study on foreign election interference”; and (b), delete all the words after “to the House”.

Just for clarity, if this subamendment were adopted, the motion as amended would say, “the committee, after it has completed its study on foreign election interference, invite”. Then there would be the individuals listed in paragraphs (a) to (l). As well, after the words “to the House”, the subamendment would remove that the report of the study be returned “no later than October 31, 2024”. It would remove that date.

That is the subamendment.

Do you have a point of clarification, Mrs. Romanado?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mrs. Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you.

I just want to make sure I'm understanding after which “committee” you're putting your (a) and (b). Is it after “Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee”?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Yes. That's correct.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** The rest stays the same until the removal at the end of “no later than October 31, 2024”. Is that correct?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Exactly.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are you good, Mrs. Romanado? Is that the clarity you needed?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, the floor remains yours.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is about setting priorities among ourselves versus fulfilling our responsibility to provide oversight and to hold the government accountable on a matter of significant importance and significant concern. That is foreign interference, particularly by the Beijing-based Communist regime, in our sovereignty, in our democracy and in our elections.

The report of Madam Justice Hogue is a damning indictment of Justin Trudeau and his government. Madam Justice Hogue confirmed that interference “occurred in the last two general elections” and that “the right of Canadians to have their electoral processes and democratic institutions free from covert influence” was impacted in those elections.

Justin Trudeau turned a blind eye to the interference that was taking place in the 2019 and 2021 elections, notwithstanding that he had been repeatedly briefed and warned by the security and intelligence establishment. He then attempted to cover up what he knew and downplayed the extent of Beijing's interference.

Madam Justice Hogue, on the contrary, confirmed the credible reports from Global News and The Globe and Mail that were first reported in the fall of 2022, which were, as I said, that Justin Trudeau was worried about Beijing's interference but did nothing to stop it. He worked to cover it up. Not only that, but in certain instances, Justin Trudeau was complicit in Beijing's interference when it benefited himself and the Liberal Party.

Among the most damning findings in Madam Justice Hogue's report is how Justin Trudeau handled Beijing's interference in the 2019 Liberal nomination in Don Valley North. Madam Justice Hogue determined that there were “well-grounded” indicators that Beijing interfered in the nomination to help the current member for Don Valley North secure the nomination. There were “well-grounded” indications that Beijing interfered in that nomination to help the member for Don Valley North win the nomination.

Think about that. Think about when those first reports of Beijing interference came to light in the media and how the Prime Minister and certain members of this committee responded to them. They said, essentially, that the reports weren't true and that the member for Don Valley North was a great member of the Liberal team. They launched personal attacks on certain members of this committee who dared to ask questions about the fact that a sitting member of Parliament was facing allegations that Beijing had interfered in his nomination to help him secure it.

It's quite interesting that the Prime Minister no longer utters the name of the member for Don Valley North. He can't utter his name. The Liberals no longer talk about the fact that he is a member of their team. I know a certain member of this committee, Mr. Gerretsen, has spent much time defending that member. I'd be curious if Mr. Gerretsen would do so today. I have my doubts.

• (1205)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Are you done?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** No.

I'm going to wait and see when the member for Don Valley North has an invitation to return to the Liberal caucus. Maybe it's in the mail. Who knows? I have real doubts.

It's one thing that there were allegations Beijing interfered to help the member for Don Valley North, which were found by Madam Justice Hogue to be well grounded. What's worse is that top Liberals were briefed by CSIS that Beijing had interfered to assist the member for Don Valley North. Three top Liberals were briefed during the 2019 election. Those top Liberals were the Liberal designates for the SITE task force: the national director of the Liberal Party, Azam Ishmael; Braeden Caley; and Mathieu Lafrance. They received that briefing at the end of September. I believe it was on September 29, 2019. It was a classified briefing.

We know Mr. Ishmael, in turn, briefed then Liberal campaign director and now top adviser to the Prime Minister, Jeremy Broadhurst, about the contents of that briefing. It should be noted that Mr. Broadhurst had the appropriate security clearance to receive the contents of that briefing. Mr. Broadhurst, quite appropriately, thought the information provided by CSIS was concerning, as he has said. He proceeded to brief the Prime Minister the next day. As it so happened, the Prime Minister was in Ottawa. Mr. Broadhurst briefed the Prime Minister about the contents of that briefing the next day in Ottawa.

What did the Prime Minister do with the information he had that Beijing interfered, going in to assist one of his candidates to secure the Liberal nomination? A leader who is concerned about foreign interference, as this Prime Minister claims to be, would have, at the very least, inquired for more information, but Justin Trudeau didn't do that. That is the very least that a leader concerned about countering foreign interference, about the integrity of our democracy and about the threat Beijing posed would have done.

With the information the Prime Minister had, I would submit the appropriate course of action for him to have taken would have been to remove that individual as the Liberal candidate for Don Valley North. However, the Prime Minister didn't even ask any further questions, let alone take what I would submit is the appropriate action. At that point, the individual should not have been the Liberal candidate for Don Valley North. Instead, the Prime Minister did absolutely nothing. He gave a pass to the candidate, allowing his name to stand as the Liberal candidate in the 2019 election. Madam Justice Hogue concluded that Justin Trudeau did so out of concern about the "direct electoral consequences" of removing a candidate, one the Prime Minister was briefed about having been assisted by Beijing.

• (1210)

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, was more concerned about his own electoral interests and the electoral interests of the Liberal Party of Canada than protecting our democracy from Beijing's interference. Those aren't my findings. Those are the findings of Madam Justice Hogue—the Prime Minister did it out of concern for

"direct electoral consequences". Direct electoral consequences to whom? It was to him.

I would submit that says everything Canadians need to know about this Prime Minister and is further evidence of his complete and utter unfitness to hold the high office that he serves in. This is a Prime Minister who—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** He's not going to [*Inaudible—Editor*]. Is that right?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Is this a point of order, Mr. Gerretsen?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It is a point of order.

**The Chair:** The floor is yours for your point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Although Mr. Cooper is trying to amend the motion in order to talk about foreign interference, all he's really doing is he's attempting to amend the motion's timing. This doesn't give him carte blanche to start talking about foreign interference. He can talk about the timing of it. He can filibuster in that regard to prevent it, but I don't think he's on topic by talking about the content of another report or another study, which is what he's trying to do.

• (1215)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Chair, on the same point of order, the objective purpose of the subamendment that I have put forward to the motion is to prioritize this committee's study on foreign interference. The basis of that prioritization is the findings of Madam Justice Hogue's report, which raises the need for parliamentary oversight and accountability. The—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That doesn't speak to the timing.

**An hon. member:** Whoa, whoa, whoa.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, time out.

Mr. Cooper, if we can get you to wrap up on the point of order, then the floor will be yours again, of course, in relation to the subamendment that you have moved.

I want to remind colleagues of two things. One, of course, is the respectful dialogue that we expect between one another. The other one is in relation to the hard work the interpreters have to do. It's very difficult for them to keep track of conversations on both sides of the table.

Mr. Cooper, just so I understand, are we done on your point of order to the point of order?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I just want to be clear. The point of order is concluded, and Mr. Cooper is resuming debate in relation to the subamendment that he has moved.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Right.

It's about prioritization. The Liberals and the New Democrats seem to prioritize themselves. The Conservatives want to prioritize both protecting our democracy from Beijing's interference and seeing that Canadians get the answers they deserve about some of the very, very troubling findings contained in Madam Justice Hogue's first report.

I'll go back to the Prime Minister's involvement and how he responded to the information that CSIS passed on to his top officials and that in turn was passed on to him about Beijing's interference in the Don Valley North nomination. I know that's something the Liberals no longer like to talk about, of course because of the Prime Minister's culpability. They were very interested in talking about that member a year ago, but not so much anymore. We saw an effort just moments ago by Mr. Gerretsen to try to shut me down from talking about the Prime Minister's actions in the Don Valley North Liberal nomination.

Madam Justice Hogue found not only that the Prime Minister made his decision to ignore the CSIS report and intelligence about the member, but also that it had an impact on the overall election in Don Valley North. In fact, as Madam Justice Hogue said, the Prime Minister's decision "affected who was elected to Parliament" in Don Valley North. The Prime Minister turned a blind eye to Beijing's efforts to assist someone win the Liberal nomination, and his decision to allow that individual to continue to stand as a Liberal candidate resulted in someone who happened to be Beijing's preferred candidate, someone who Beijing thought would advance their interests in Ottawa, getting elected to the House of Commons. That's on Justin Trudeau.

As bad as all of that is, speaking to the need for why we need to prioritize our study on foreign interference, it was also recently reported in *The Globe and Mail*, based upon a senior national security source, that the same Liberal candidate, the current member for Don Valley North, was tipped off that he was being monitored by CSIS.

In short, the contents of the classified CSIS briefing that was provided to three top Liberals, all within the Prime Minister's inner circle.... Jeremy Broadhurst and the Prime Minister were informed of the contents of that briefing. Someone, one of those five Liberals, likely leaked that classified information that resulted in the member for Don Valley North being tipped off that he was being monitored by CSIS.

This is a very, very serious matter. The report in *The Globe and Mail* contains very serious allegations that the member was notified and tipped off. If that is true, and there's every reason to believe it is true, then one of those top Liberals would have leaked that classified information. In doing so, the leaker broke the law. They violated multiple sections of the Security of Information Act. They could face up to 14 years behind bars for a contravention of multiple sections of the Security of Information Act. That's about as serious as it gets.

● (1220)

They not only violated the Security of Information Act, but also betrayed their oath of secrecy, undermined an active intelligence operation looking into Beijing's interference and, perhaps most concerning, compromised CSIS's sources and methods, which could have potentially put a person's safety at risk. That is the consequence. That is the gravity of the crime that someone in the Prime Minister's inner circle committed, if the report in *The Globe and Mail* is accepted.

If the Prime Minister or his inner circle wants to say the story is false, then they can come out and say so. They can testify before

this committee. When there's a credible report in *The Globe and Mail* from a top national security source that someone in the Prime Minister's inner circle leaked classified information, potentially the Prime Minister himself, that compromised an ongoing intelligence operation and compromised CSIS's sources and methods, and they committed an offence that is punishable by up to 14 years behind bars, this committee, which is studying foreign interference, ought to have some hearings to get to the bottom of exactly what happened with respect to that alleged leak.

On and on it goes. Madam Justice Hogue's report and some of the damning findings in it are not limited to what happened in Don Valley North. We know that when reports of Beijing's interference came to light, the Prime Minister repeatedly downplayed the extent of Beijing's interference. He falsely stated that in "every single constituency election...election integrity held, and it was free and fair." Those were the words of the Prime Minister.

Madam Justice Hogue concluded otherwise. She found that there were "strong indicators"—those are her words—that Beijing interfered in the Steveston—Richmond East riding to work against the then sitting member of Parliament, Mr. Kenny Chiu, and to help elect the Liberal candidate, who is now the current member for Steveston—Richmond East. She concluded not only that there were strong indicators that Beijing interfered in Steveston—Richmond East to work against Kenny Chiu and help the Liberals, but also that there was a "reasonable possibility" that this interference resulted in the defeat of Mr. Chiu and in the election of the Liberal candidate, the now member for Steveston—Richmond East.

So much for the Prime Minister's claim that for every single constituency election, election integrity held and that it was free and fair. That's simply not the case. Election integrity held in terms of the overall result, yes, but election integrity did not necessarily hold in every single constituency election. It is evidence that there was serious interference that could have tipped the scales in certain ridings, and that is consistent with the reports that the Liberals spent so much time last spring and last fall dismissing.

● (1225)

When there were reports that Beijing had targeted several ridings for the purpose of defeating Conservative candidates and electing Liberals, the Liberal response was that it was no big deal, it really didn't happen and there was nothing significant, because, as the Prime Minister said, election integrity in every single riding held. Well, that's not true. Again, I emphasize that Beijing's interference did not impact the overall election result, but I think most Canadians would be concerned. I'm certainly concerned.

If the result in even one riding was impacted by Beijing's interference or the interference of any foreign state, it would be unacceptable. That undermines the integrity of our elections and it needs to be addressed. Steps must be taken to ensure that such interference doesn't take place and that those who were involved and complicit in such interference are held accountable.

The scope of Beijing interference in Steveston—Richmond East consisted of a disinformation campaign that very much targeted Kenny Chiu. Not surprisingly, given that it was interference from Beijing, it targeted Chinese Canadian voters. The Chinese Canadian diaspora in Steveston—Richmond East comprises a significant component of the population of the electors in that suburban Vancouver riding.

As concerning as it is that there was interference in Steveston—Richmond East, where there was a reasonable possibility that such interference resulted in the defeat of Mr. Chiu and the election of the current Liberal member, it's not as though the Prime Minister, the Liberal Party and the Liberal candidate were bystanders in this interference. They, in fact, were participants in Beijing's interference.

Last week, I sat in on an ethics committee meeting when it heard evidence from Mr. Chiu that the Liberal Party and the Liberal candidate amplified Beijing's disinformation. The Liberal Party created various disinformation products that were then disseminated throughout the Steveston—Richmond East riding. They had the effect, as intended, of amplifying Beijing's disinformation. What was Beijing's disinformation? One aspect of the disinformation was to claim that a private member's bill that Kenny Chiu introduced to establish a foreign influence registry would somehow target Chinese Canadians. That was a complete falsehood.

We have a bill now—what a surprise, just after the report of Madam Justice Hogue—from the Liberals, who have introduced legislation to finally establish a foreign influence registry. I think it's been well recognized by experts on matters of national security that a foreign influence registry is the bare minimum of what should be done to counter foreign interference. Other countries, like the United Kingdom, have passed foreign influence registries. Australia passed a foreign influence registry in 2018. The United States has had a foreign influence registry since the 1930s, I believe, since 1936 or 1938.

• (1230)

In the 2021 election, Justin Trudeau and the Liberals not only opposed a foreign influence registry but were amplifying Beijing's disinformation to target a Chinese Canadian member of Parliament, someone who came from Hong Kong, Kenny Chiu. He came to Canada to build a better life for himself and his country and rose to serve in the House of Commons. Liberals amplified disinformation to target him, to sow confusion within the Chinese diaspora community and to create fear, all very calculated to cause Kenny Chiu maximum political damage and to win on the basis of what amounts to lies—

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'm going to pause you for a moment.

Mrs. Romanado, go ahead on a point of order.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Under Standing Order 18, attacking the integrity of a member is not permitted, and he's accusing members of the Liberal Party, me included, of spreading lies. I ask him to withdraw that statement. I have never ever sent out disinformation, and I take great offence with being accused of doing so. I ask the member to please withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** On the same point of order—

**The Chair:** Colleagues, I'm new to the chair today. I know that you've known each other for a long time, but please don't begin your responses until I've granted the floor. It just helps me to maintain control and order.

Go ahead, Mr. Cooper, in response to Mrs. Romanado.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** In response, it appears that Madam Romanado was not listening carefully to my submission, because I never made such an accusation with respect to her. I merely repeated the testimony of Kenny Chiu that the Liberal Party in the riding of Steveston—Richmond East amplified Beijing's information and created disinformation products. Disinformation amounts to untruthful, deliberate misinformation that amounts to spreading falsehoods and lies and doing so deliberately. That is the evidence of Mr. Chiu at committee. That is what I repeated.

**The Chair:** That concludes your response to the point of order.

Mrs. Romanado, are you satisfied with that response or do you want to, on another point of order, speak to this?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** I do not want to speak further to this. However, I would ask my colleagues to be judicious. That is the whole point of the study that I put forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Romanado.

Mr. Cooper, you may resume debate on your subamendment.

• (1235)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Going back to my subamendment, and with respect to the last comment made by Madam Romanado, it's very nice and well to say that we should be so very polite. Tell that to Kenny Chiu.

Have you talked to him lately? I did, last week—

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'm sorry to cut you off. Just as a reminder, things should come through the chair. Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You are correct in that regard.

I would submit to members that they should perhaps talk to Kenny Chiu, because he was subjected to a disinformation campaign by a hostile foreign state—which was amplified by the Liberal Party for electoral gain—that attacked him on a personal basis as a Chinese Canadian. They did irreparable damage to his reputation in his community, and as Madam Justice Hogue indicated, there is a “reasonable possibility”—her words, not mine—that that's why Kenny Chiu is no longer a member of Parliament. Quite frankly, in the face of that, I think so-called politeness takes a backseat to addressing this very serious interference and the involvement of the Liberal Party in amplifying and contributing to Beijing's disinformation in the riding of Steveston—Richmond East.

As we heard during the study on foreign interference, which this committee is still seized with, Justin Trudeau set up the critical election incident protocol, and that critical election incident protocol was established supposedly to counter foreign interference in our elections. Pursuant to that protocol, an election panel is hand-picked by Justin Trudeau. That election panel was entrusted with making decisions around informing political parties and candidates when there is evidence that they are the subject of disinformation, misinformation or interference by foreign state actors and their agents. They were to warn the Canadian public of such interference where such interference may impact a result or if there is a risk of impacting a result.

The election panel had information about the disinformation campaign going on in Steveston—Richmond East and a number of other ridings. The election panel, appointed by Justin Trudeau, did nothing about it. They sat on it. They kept Kenny Chiu and the voters in Steveston—Richmond East in the dark, as the voters of that riding were being bombarded with Beijing's disinformation, which was being amplified by Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party in the riding of Steveston—Richmond East.

That underscores the fact that the limited measures that had been put in place by Justin Trudeau's government to counter foreign interference did not hold. They did not work. What happened in Steveston—Richmond East and how Justin Trudeau's election panel responded—by not responding, by not doing anything about it—should not have happened. We need to get answers about why that happened, especially in light of the conclusions, the findings, of a superior court judge, Justice Hogue, who found that there were strong indicators of interference that resulted in a reasonable possibility of an impact on the result.

● (1240)

I see that certain members have dismissed Madam Justice Hogue's finding of a reasonable possibility. Given those findings, I think we need to have a better understanding of why the election panel set up by Justin Trudeau kept Kenny Chiu in the dark and kept the voters of Steveston—Richmond East in the dark. I would further observe, based on what came out at the public inquiry, that while Kenny Chiu was kept in the dark, when there was what seemed to be disinformation in an article on Facebook concerning Justin Trudeau, Justin Trudeau's department, the PCO, went to Facebook and demanded that it take that article down because it might have electoral consequences. That was the basis upon which the PCO went to Facebook.

Maybe the PCO was right in those circumstances to have requested that the article be taken down about Justin Trudeau. I don't know, but it did that. Contrast that with how disinformation was dealt with in the case of Kenny Chiu. There was bombardment of disinformation and nothing. They just completely turned a blind eye to it. When one article is critical of the Prime Minister but perhaps contains disinformation, the PCO, the Prime Minister's department, is all over it, but when it comes to Kenny Chiu, Justin Trudeau's election panel can't be bothered.

That is also what we heard from Erin O'Toole when he came before the committee, as well as the Conservative representatives who were on the SITE task force and were supposed to be receiving briefings about interference targeted at parties and the election more broadly. Despite the fact that Beijing had targeted certain Conservative candidates to work to defeat them and elect Liberals, Erin O'Toole and his representatives on the SITE task force were not briefed.

This speaks to a double standard of sorts. When there's any kind of disinformation negatively impacting Justin Trudeau, every effort is made to shine a light on it, shut it down and remove it from social media. However, by contrast, when it comes to Erin O'Toole and certain Conservative candidates—when it came to Kenny Chiu—nothing is done. Not only was nothing done, but the Liberal Party actually amplified the disinformation and created its own disinformation products to further amplify that disinformation, again for electoral gain.

In that regard, the Liberal Party was not just a bystander to Beijing's interference. It's not just that it turned a blind eye to Beijing's interference—as bad as that is. It was, in some respects, complicit and involved in Beijing's interference, which is scandalous. It is un-Canadian. It demonstrates that this Prime Minister, frankly, just isn't up to the job. He's not fit for the office that he holds.

I think it is important that when we reflect upon some of those findings of Madam Justice Hogue...and there are many, many more. It is a substantial report. I know one member of the committee on the Liberal side dismissed the report when Mr. Duncan was speaking, as if to say there's nothing there. Well, there's a lot in this report, and it doesn't look very good for Justin Trudeau. That's for sure.

● (1245)

It's no wonder that the Liberals don't want to talk about the report. They don't want to have hearings on foreign interference. They would rather shut that study down entirely, if they could have their way. I certainly recognize that there is merit to the motion, like undertaking a study on the topic contained in the motion, but when it comes to a question of setting priorities, it is obvious that election interference has to take priority over the study being proposed in the main motion.



That is all that my subamendment to the motion would do. It would say that yes, we'll proceed with the study proposed by Madam Romanado, but it's not going to come at the cost, expense or priority of the election interference study. I think that's reasonable. I think it is consistent with what we are here to do as a committee, which is to work on behalf of Canadians. It's not to work on behalf of ourselves, yet the priority of some members seems to be that it's all about them. Forget about the attack on our democracy. Forget about Beijing's interference. Forget about the record of the Prime Minister in turning a blind eye to Beijing's interference. Forget about the complicity of Justin Trudeau in that interference. Forget about all of it. Of course they want to forget about it, because the Liberal Party has a very poor track record on this.

Back in the spring, there were reports and allegations—

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'm sorry, but I'll interrupt you for one moment.

I just want to be mindful of a couple of things. We are going to continue. We have the resources to continue until two o'clock.

In five minutes, Mr. Cooper, assuming you're still speaking, I am going to suspend so that we can take a health break. As a former school principal and teacher, I know the importance of letting people stretch their legs, get blood flowing, get some water, go to the washroom and reset their brains. I think that's very important for productivity and efficiency.

I will say that again. We are going to continue—if necessary, I should say—to two o'clock. In five minutes, Mr. Cooper, regardless of whether you're still speaking, we'll suspend for a health break for about five minutes. Should you still wish to have the floor after the suspension when we resume, of course the floor would be yours again.

Is that understood by everybody?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, it's back to you. I'm sorry to have interrupted you.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will simply conclude for now.

**The Chair:** The next member on my list, then, as Mr. Gerretsen is not here, is Madam Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm glad to have an opportunity to address this, along with the subamendment.

The reality is that there are 11 meetings between now and the end of June, and 22 meetings between now and October 31. I understand from the subamendment that the date was removed and the reference is “after it has completed its study on foreign election interference”. The reality is that this committee has always functioned in a way where we can walk and chew gum at the same time. In the event that witnesses are not available one week, there's nothing stopping this committee from having multiple studies going at the same time, which we've done in the past.

Nowhere did anyone say that we were finished with foreign interference. It is still ongoing. I don't understand why we can't do both. I have been very patient with respect to the request for my study, which I brought forward a while ago. We finished the study on the question of privilege for Mr. Chong, so I thought it would be time for us to bring forward that study. It doesn't mean we're not doing any other studies.

I just wanted to clarify that for colleagues who seem to think I'm planning on bouncing the other study. That's not the goal here. I would just like us to do two things at once. I know that's crazy talk, but I think we can actually do that. In the event witnesses for one study aren't available for a meeting, we can do the other one.

I'm trying to find some common ground here. I know my colleagues have been talking for the last two hours about the previous study, which is still important to us. We still have other things we need to do on that. That doesn't mean we can't do both at the same time. The reality is that it was a Conservative member who came to me to ask us to do this study. I will not reveal who it was, out of respect for them, but that's why I brought it forward. There's no big master plan—there honestly isn't. There's a loophole and I'd like to fix it. I think we can do both. I'm throwing this out there to my colleagues. I think we can, and I think we should.

Can we find a way forward? That's my point. I think we can all agree on that. If both are important, we can do both. We're pretty talented.

Thank you.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Gaudreau, I know you have the floor, but if you'll allow it, Mr. Berthold would like to say something.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** I will, if he does so in under five minutes.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** My comments will be very brief.

**The Chair:** Very well.

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to seize on the proposal that Ms. Romanado just made, namely that we could accomplish two things at once.

Mr. Chair, we should suspend the meeting so we have time to discuss it before Thursday's meeting and see whether we can indeed reach a compromise allowing us to conduct both studies. We could at least discuss it outside of this meeting, and avoid using resources until 2:00 p.m.

I therefore move that this meeting be suspended.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

[English]

Here's what I'm thinking, colleagues, so we're all on the same page. I suggest that we suspend for two minutes so this can be discussed to make sure we're on the same page. Then we can come back, and if there is agreement that we suspend, we'll suspend until Thursday's meeting.

Is that okay with everyone?

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** It's for two minutes.

**The Chair:** Do you need more than that?

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I love your optimism. Let's try it.

**The Chair:** Let's start with a few. Colleagues can talk among themselves to see what the decision will be after this brief suspension.

We're suspended.

• (1250) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1255)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, I leave the room for two minutes and we've solved some problems. It's becoming quite obvious I'm the issue here.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** I understand there have been conversations among colleagues and the parties about suspending until our next scheduled meeting, which would be Thursday. I'm looking around the room for agreement on this.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, thank you.

It's a pleasure to join you, and I look forward to continuing.

The meeting is suspended.

[The meeting was suspended at 12:58 p.m., Tuesday, May 7]

[The meeting resumed at 11:02 a.m., Thursday, May 9]

• (5900)

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

Welcome back to meeting number 114 of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I do want to remind colleagues of something. I don't think I'm going to read the entire script again, but I will remind members that there are some new provisions in place for our translation devices to avoid audio feedback. Please make sure, most importantly, that when you are not using your earpiece, it's placed face down on the sticker that has been provided in front of you on the table. This is to help ensure that our translators who work very hard on our behalf and do incredibly important work have the ability to do so in a safe environment.

At our last meeting, colleagues, we were considering a sub-amendment put forward by MP Cooper, which was in relation to an amendment from MP Mathyssen, which was in relation to a motion

that was moved by MP Romanado. We are going to, in a moment, go back to our conversation about that sub-amendment. Currently, colleagues, on the list, I have simply Madame Gaudreau, who would like to speak to this. Mr. Cooper, I'll add your name.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I believe I was on the list.

**The Chair:** I perhaps have failed to put it down, but I'm happy to add it now.

Mr. Cooper, can I add him first?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** It would be Blaine and then me.

**The Chair:** That's not a problem. I definitely have Madame Gaudreau first, but then we'll go to you, Mr. Calkins, and then we'll go to Mr. Cooper.

I will remind you that we also have a fairly comprehensive second list, and when I refer to the second list, it is simply the list that, should we get back to the debate on the amendment, we will respect the list of names that were there, and it turns out, Madame Gaudreau, that is you as well.

Then with no further ado, the floor is yours, Madame.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to congratulate you for this first meeting. I think we will be increasingly constructive. That is my hope.

I feel compelled to provide an overview so you can all understand where I stand. I will speak slowly for the benefit of the interpreters.

As to the motion on harassment, I think it's important for us to be concerned about this issue, because it is ultimately about safeguarding our democracy. Harassment leads us to censor ourselves. It's exactly like foreign interference. We must keep that in mind.

I would also like to talk about our values. I think the other parties want to preserve Canadian unity. I myself can take the liberty of saying certain things, because I'm not grappling with partisan interests. As you know, we are in favour of what is good for Quebec and we are opposed to what is not.

I would like to raise awareness. You will no doubt recall the 70 meetings we held on foreign interference, more specifically on Beijing. For those who were not here, let me point out that we were able to ensure that there was an independent public inquiry. Then the process was launched.

That takes time. I can well understand that some people want to hear everything that's being said and offered up in dribs and drabs as a result of the proceedings of the Commission on Foreign Interference chaired by Justice Hogue. However, I think we have to respect what we—I'm talking about all the parties here—have managed to achieve. Remember that, during the summer, we adopted the whole process, and we achieved that together.

Obviously, any topic can bring out complementary aspects, but if we feel trust and respect for the Commission on Foreign Interference, we must restrain ourselves. We have to give it a chance and show some respect. I understand that some might be tempted to act in parallel or to meddle in things that are not up to us. I have to tell you, however, that I heartily disagree with that parallel approach. I agree that we would all like things to move more quickly. That is what I wanted to say.

As for our motion on harassment, I am grateful that we took the time to conduct an analysis. I asked myself a lot of questions, and as a result, I have answers before I can even vote or judge anything. Let me explain.

That harassment policy comes up every five years, I think. So it is now being reviewed. The motion to ensure that there is no vacuum when it comes to harassment between members was moved two years ago, I believe. It is very important that this policy and this rule truly reflect our reality. I understand that. It will also have a very positive impact on relations between parliamentarians.

• (5905)

Before we try to adopt anything, however, I'd like us to get some information from the analysts, the Sergeant-at-Arms or the clerk. As suggested by my colleague Ms. Mathysen, we have to ask ourselves whether it's really here, in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, that we should be doing this important analysis. As you know, the Board of Internal Economy adopts a lot of regulations.

I don't know if you've spoken to your whips. For my part, I've spoken to my whip, and I have a lot of questions. I'm not wondering about the study as such, but rather about its scope; indeed, it will require six meetings. That's a very broad scope. Basically, we need to know what our weaknesses are so that we can adopt a policy which, I hope, will enable us to change our way of doing things a little. I'm telling you, we're going off the rails.

We're all adults. Last Tuesday, I received a visit from 38 high school students during which I had to answer questions for half an hour. You know what high school students are like; they ask the essential questions, so I had to give them essential answers.

I don't know where you stand on this, but, for my part, I was really ashamed. If our job is to restore confidence and make sure there are no flaws in our democracy, I can tell you that we are going off the rails. That's what's happening. We're right in the middle of it, and it's very embarrassing. Let's not forget that.

Today, I want to say that something is happening in the House. We have to be constructive and efficient. I know that not many people are watching us, but we're being watched all the same. Call your fellow citizens, and they'll ask you where you're going with your skis. I don't know how the interpreters will translate that.

We're being judged. Maybe you like being judged. We are being criticized. People wonder what this institution is all about, what all these slip-ups are. People are faced with concrete difficulties and they wonder what we're doing with their money. We mustn't forget them.

It's normal for partisan strategies to take up space in debates. However, if the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs doesn't act with dignity, respect for democracy and the issues we face, seriously, we'd better stop, go do our homework and come back next session.

Before continuing the discussion on the subamendment, I need some clarification. What has been done? What needs to be done? What do we need to do here in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to achieve the objective of Ms. Romanado's main motion?

I'll stop here, but it felt good to vent my feelings. We often forget to do that.

I can't wait to hear what my colleagues have to say.

• (5910)

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

[*English*]

Mr. Calkins, we'll go to you.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc.

I'll be very brief. I'll also mention, while I have the microphone, Mr. Chair, that the previous chair managed to get us room 025-B on a regular basis—I'm just teasing. The room below us is the one we normally have. Anyway, we'll see. You're two for two here, but we'll see afterward how you do on that front. I'm just giving you a bit of a jab in good nature.

I agree with my Conservative colleagues at the table that we need to pursue foreign interference. I think we're about to find out about foreign interference.

My understanding is that the House has made its decision and a question of privilege has been adopted. I imagine we'll be discussing this in the context of these other two choices before us. We actually have three choices, given that two of those three choices will be on foreign interference. There are a litany of other reasons that I think we should pursue foreign interference, notwithstanding the timelines. My primary rationale is the timelines between now and the next federal election—whether it's on October 20 or October 27, 2025—if we're going to make meaningful recommendations. This would give the government an opportunity to respond to those recommendations with a legislative change and get through the legislative process. I feel this would be of paramount importance and a priority for the committee.

I'm not in any way suggesting that the original intention of the motion moved by Mrs. Romanado is not important. We're simply triaging what I believe to be the issues before us. From my perspective, it's dealing with the issue of the sanctity of not only our electoral institutions but also the institution of Parliament itself. We need to pursue this as a matter of priority.

I believe my colleague Mr. Cooper is next, Mr. Chair, so I'll cede the floor back to you.

● (5915)

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Mr. Calkins. You are indeed correct.

Mr. Cooper, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I echo the comments of my colleague Mr. Calkins about the need for this committee to prioritize foreign interference. That is underscored by the Speaker's ruling last evening, which found a prima facie question of privilege with respect to the failure of the government to inform 18 members of Parliament that they were the targets and subjects of a cyber-attack by the Beijing-based Communist regime.

There have been developments with respect to that ruling. There was a motion moved in the House last evening following the Speaker's ruling to refer that prima facie question of privilege to the procedure and House affairs committee. Moments ago, the House gave unanimous consent to that motion to refer the prima facie question of privilege to this committee.

With that, at this time I would like to give notice of my intention to move the following motion. I will read the motion into the record. I hope there will be consent thereafter for members to adjourn debate on the subamendment I moved on Ms. Mathysen's amendment of Mrs. Romanado's motion.

Clearly, in light of the Speaker's ruling—

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper.

Go ahead, Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I'm sorry. I need clarity.

The member can't give notice of a motion and move a motion to adjourn debate at the same time. There's also no debate on a motion to adjourn debate.

Could the member be clear on what he's trying to accomplish?

**The Chair:** You are not incorrect, Ms. O'Connell.

For clarity, Mr. Cooper, I want to understand this. For the benefit of the committee, you are not currently moving your motion, but simply giving notice of introduction. Is that correct?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Precisely.

**The Chair:** Ms. O'Connell, does that—

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I'm sorry. Is he also adjourning debate? If so, there's no debate on that, because that's dilatory.

**The Chair:** You are correct.

Colleagues, we will not be able to enter into debate on the motion that Mr. Cooper intends to introduce. If he were to move that motion, it could not be debated until the current motion—Ms. Romanado's—is dealt with. That would have to be dealt with in the form of either an adjournment or a vote.

I'm going to allow Mr. Cooper to continue with the introduction, but of course, he knows very well—and you're not wrong, Ms. O'Connell—that we can't begin debate on that motion until we have dealt with these affairs.

Mr. Cooper, it goes back to you.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** That is well understood, Mr. Chair.

I now will give notice to the committee of the following motion. It reads as follows:

That, in relation to its order of reference of Thursday, May 9, 2024, regarding the prima facie contempt concerning the People's Republic of China's cyber-attack against members of Parliament, the committee

(a) make use, for the purposes of this study, of

(i) the evidence received during its study on foreign election interference,

(ii) the evidence received during its study of the prima facie contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by Wei Zhao against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other members, and

(iii) the evidence received by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics during its study on foreign interference, provided that it shall not limit the witnesses who may appear before the committee or the questions which may be asked of them;

(b) deem the evidence, including testimony and documents, received by, and publicly available on the website of, the public inquiry into foreign interference in federal electoral processes and democratic institutions to have been received by this committee, and that this evidence may be used in its reports, provided that it shall not limit the witnesses who may appear before the committee or the questions that may be asked of them or the documents that the committee may request or order to be produced;

(c) invite the following witnesses to appear:

(i) the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, by himself, for two hours;

(ii) the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence and former minister of public safety and emergency preparedness, by himself, for two hours;

(iii) the Honourable Marco Mendicino, former minister of public safety, by himself, for one hour;

(iv) the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, former minister of national defence, by himself, for one hour;

(v) the Honourable Anita Anand, former minister of national defence;

(vi) panels of impacted Canadian members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China who wish to appear, provided that no more than three members shall appear on each panel, for one hour per panel;

(vii) Eric Janse, the Clerk of the House of Commons, by himself, for one hour, to discuss parliamentary privilege considerations;

(viii) Michel Bédard, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons, by himself, for one hour, to discuss parliamentary privilege considerations and the production of documents;

(ix) officials of the House of Commons administration, by themselves, for two hours, to discuss IT and cybersecurity considerations, provided that one hour shall be in camera;

(x) officials of the Communications Security Establishment, by themselves, for two hours—

● (5920)

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'm going to interrupt you for one minute, and I apologize. Because you're reading it in officially here, on my copy it says officials of “the Canadian Security Intelligence Service”, and you said “Establishment”. Can you just clarify for us which one it is, please?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** I'm reading “officials of the Communications Security Establishment, by themselves, for two hours.”

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. I was one ahead of you.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** I'll continue:

(xi) officials of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, by themselves, for two hours;

(xii) Nathalie Drouin, deputy clerk of the Privy Council and national security and intelligence advisor to the Prime Minister, by herself, for one hour;

(xiii) Vincent Rigby, former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, by himself, for one hour;

(xiv) David Morrison, former acting national security and intelligence advisor to the Prime Minister, by himself, for one hour;

(xv) Jody Thomas, former national security and intelligence advisor to the Prime Minister;

(xvi) officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, by themselves, for one hour;

(xvii) officials of the secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, by themselves, for one hour; and

(xviii) academics, IT and cybersecurity experts, and other witnesses requested by the committee, provided that the parties shall file their preliminary lists of witnesses within 10 days of the adoption of this motion;

(d) order the production of all memoranda, briefing notes, emails, records of conversations, and any other relevant documents, including any drafts that are in the possession of any government department or agency, including the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections task force, the Critical Election Incident Protocol Panel, any minister's office, the Prime Minister's Office or the House of Commons administration, containing information concerning cyber-attacks and efforts to conduct cyber-attacks against members of the House of Commons by Advanced Persistent Threat 31 (APT 31) and related entities, provided that

(i) these documents be deposited without redaction with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in both official languages, within one month of the adoption of this order;

(ii) a copy of the documents shall also be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in both official languages, within one month of the adoption of this order, with any proposed redaction of information which, in the government's opinion, could reasonably be expected to compromise the identities of employees or sources or intelligence-collecting methods of Canadian or allied intelligence agencies;

(iii) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly notify the committee whether he is satisfied that the documents were produced as ordered, and, if not, the chair shall be instructed to present forthwith, on behalf of the committee, a report to the House outlining the material facts of the situation;

(iv) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall assess the redactions proposed by the government, pursuant to subparagraph (ii), to determine whether he agrees that the proposed redactions conform with the criteria set out in subparagraph (ii); and,

(A) if he agrees, he shall provide the documents, as redacted by the government pursuant to subparagraph (ii), to the clerk of the committee; or,

(B) if he disagrees with some or all of the proposed redactions, he shall provide a copy of the documents, redacted in the manner he determines would conform with the criteria set out in subparagraph (ii), together with a report indicating the number, extent and nature of the government's proposed redactions with which he disagreed, to the clerk of the committee; and

(v) the clerk of the committee shall cause the documents provided by the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel pursuant to subparagraph (iv) to be distributed to the members of the committee forthwith upon receipt.

That is the motion that I have now put on notice.

With that, I would like to now adjourn debate on the motion on the table.

• (5925)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we have a motion to adjourn the motion put forward by Madam Romanado at the subamendment stage.

That's if I understand correctly the motion that you're putting forward, Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** It's on the entire piece.

**The Chair:** Yes, it's on the entire piece.

Give me one moment to check with the clerk.

I'm sorry. This is an adjournment of debate on the entirety of the motion.

This will go to a vote right away, colleagues.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** [*Inaudible—Editor*] I seek recognition afterward.

**The Chair:** Okay.

In a moment, colleagues, I will ask the clerk to call the vote on the adjournment of this particular motion.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Ms. O'Connell, go ahead.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** There's a motion that has been moved and accepted. There is no debate. The vote must be called.

**The Chair:** You are correct.

Colleagues, for clarity here, I'll repeat one more time that we are voting on Mr. Cooper's motion, which calls to adjourn debate on Ms. Romanado's motion. This is not debatable. We are voting immediately.

I have asked the clerk to begin the roll call on that vote, and that is what he will do right away.

We have a tie. Colleagues, traditionally at this point in time, the chair will vote to uphold the status quo. I will be casting my vote as no.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

**The Chair:** We will have a continuation of the debate on this motion. Mr. Cooper has asked for the floor again.

Mr. Calkins, is it a point of order?

• (5930)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** No, I'm just asking to be put on the list.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. There's no problem.

Just for clarity, folks, I'm going to respect Mr. Cooper's continuation because he had presented it. Then Mr. Duncan, Mr. Calkins, and Madam Mathyssen would be our speaking order.

Mr. Cooper, the floor is yours.

Colleagues, I would remind you that we are still in debate on Ms. Romanado's motion, on the subamendment.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It is extremely disappointing to once again see the Liberals, with their cover-up coalition ally the NDP, blocking the work of this committee to get to the bottom of a matter that is about as serious as it gets and that must take priority. That is the prima facie question of privilege involving 18 members of Parliament.

Mr. Chair, for two years 18 members of Parliament were kept in the dark that Beijing had launched a cyber-attack against them—a progressive reconnaissance attack.

There is only one reason that they found out, and they found out notwithstanding that for two years the government had that information; they found out because the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China had seen an unsealed indictment from the U.S. Department of Justice in March of this year. That prompted IPAC to ask questions of the Department of Justice, as well as the FBI, as to why members of Parliament—not only the Canadian members of Parliament, but parliamentarians around the world and members of Congress who were targeted as part of a cyber attack—were not informed.

The answer provided by the secretary of IPAC is that with respect to parliamentarians outside of the United States, they had not directly been informed by the FBI or the Department of Justice due to jurisdictional issues. The FBI indicated to the IPAC secretariat that in early 2022, that information had been passed along to each of the governments of those countries that those members of Parliament were from. That included the Government of Canada being informed by the FBI in the early part of 2022. It was more specifically the Communications Security Establishment that had received the information that 18 sitting members of Parliament had been targeted, all of whom were members of IPAC.

That resulted in IPAC then briefing certain Canadian members of Parliament that they had been the target of this cyber-attack and that the Government of Canada had not informed them of that fact. It was subsequent to this that there was a report in *The Globe and Mail* a few weeks ago.

What we have is a situation of the government knowing for two years that members of Parliament were the target of foreign interference by the Beijing-based Communist regime. Those members—unacceptably—found out about it either through IPAC, as a result of an unsealed indictment of the U.S. Department of Justice, or they read about it for the first time in *The Globe and Mail*.

This is part of a pattern. We on this committee just completed a study on another prima facie question of privilege that was reported to this House almost exactly a year ago, involving the member of Parliament and our colleague Michael Chong, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Just as these 18 members of Parliament were kept in the dark that they were being targeted by the Beijing Communist regime, Michael Chong was kept in the dark. Just like these 18 members of Parliament, he was kept in the dark for two years.

• (5935)

Just like these 18 members of Parliament, Mr. Chong did not find out by way of a briefing or as a result of any transparency on the part of this government to alert him that he and his family were be-

ing threatened by none other than an accredited Beijing diplomat at Beijing's Toronto consulate, one who had been accredited and continued to be accredited by these Liberals across the way and their government. No, he found out about it by speaking with Steven Chase or Robert Fife on the eve of a report that they wrote for *The Globe and Mail*.

What we have seen in this instance—just like with what happened to Michael Chong—was this Liberal government and this Prime Minister refusing to accept responsibility. They're the government, but somehow they're never responsible. They're never responsible for anything, according to them. They blame. They always talk about lessons learned—

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper.

Ms. O'Connell, go ahead on a point of order.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I'm sorry.

Mr. Cooper is speaking about a motion we are not on. I would suggest that he get back to the topic of the motion at hand, which is about harassment.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** I am speaking—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper. Wait one moment. I'll address that.

Thank you, Ms. O'Connell.

Mr. Cooper, I think we went through this in the last meeting. I'm sure you're getting to things that are relevant to this. I'll turn the floor back to you.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** It is relevant to the motion because it's relevant to the issue of prioritization. That is the heart of the sub-amendment I put forward to Ms. Mathysen's amendment.

As I was saying, this government, in this instance, with respect to their failure to inform members of Parliament and to what happened to Mr. Chong... The response from these Liberals is that they're not responsible, even though they are the government. It's always someone else's fault.

In the case of Mr. Chong, it was asserted that it was CSIS's fault. In fact, the Prime Minister even went so far as to claim he had no idea until he saw it in *The Globe and Mail*. He first said he learned about it in *The Globe and Mail* and doubled down on that, saying that CSIS had made a decision not to brief him on it because CSIS deemed it not important enough to bring up to the Prime Minister. That turned out to be false, because it was then revealed that CSIS had provided the warning that MP Chong and his family were being targeted by the Beijing-based Communist regime to the Prime Minister's department, the PCO.

Of course, we later learned that CSIS had sent an earlier IMU, an issues management note, to the Minister of Public Safety, his chief of staff and the deputy minister of public safety, the current Minister of National Defence, Bill Blair. Then the Prime Minister actually tried to blame Michael Chong himself, falsely claiming that Michael Chong had been briefed when he had not been briefed. The briefings Michael Chong received from CSIS were of a general nature.

As far as I know, there has never been an acknowledgement by the Prime Minister or Bill Blair that there was a failure on their part in terms of intelligence warnings from CSIS, which were about as serious as they get and ought to have taken priority. This was supported by the testimony of the director of CSIS, David Vigneault, who said that when CSIS sends an IMU, it's because it is a matter of high importance. They send it because it's a matter they want them to have on their desk. It's something they need to see.

Well, in the case of MP Chong and his family being targeted, I can see why CSIS would have prioritized that—

● (5940)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper; wait one minute.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor, Ms. Fortier.

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** We're getting so far away from examining Mr. Cooper's subamendment, the topic at hand, that I can't even remember what that subamendment is.

Would it be possible to remind us so I can understand it?

I think we're getting really far off topic.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Calkins, do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

Notwithstanding the fact I just heard instructions given to Mr. Duguid from the Liberal Party whip to call points of order to try to move my colleague off of his game, I will say this: The issue that's before us is the work plan of the committee. This is committee business.

We're basically talking about what this committee ought to be studying, whether on the main motion, the amendment, or the subamendment. Great latitude is always given for members of Parliament to discuss any of the priorities in a work plan that this committee would have.

I think my colleague Mr. Cooper is completely in order in his discussion, not only within the context of his subamendment but the broader overall agenda of the work plan of this committee. Frankly, I'm not going to fault anybody for using whatever strategies or tactics they want to use, as long as everybody is following the rules. You're doing an excellent job so far, Mr. Chair, in administering the rules, given that we're in our second meeting.

I would hope that colleagues would have enough respect for the general traditions and practices of this place, within the context of the rules, that we can talk during committee business about the scheduling and planning of this committee. This would include any of the motions, generally speaking, that would be a priority as we try to triage our way forward and come to a solution as to what this committee will study next.

I think everything is fair game in that context, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Cooper, if you're willing to oblige, I think I heard Madame Fortier asking if you could repeat what your subamendment was for the purposes of clarity on the part of the committee. If you're open to that, Mr. Cooper, perhaps it would be helpful, and it will help us move along.

Of course, you maintain the floor and you can continue to talk on this as you wish.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Members should have my subamendment before them, because it has been distributed through the clerk to all members.

It would amend Ms. Mathysen's amendment to Ms. Romanado's motion in two ways. First, it would prioritize this committee's study on foreign election interference before taking up the study proposed in Ms. Romanado's motion. Second, it would remove the requirement that the study proposed by Ms. Romanado be completed and reported back to the House by October 31, 2024. It would remove that date.

That is what my subamendment provides for, yet with regard to the subamendment and to the broader issue of prioritization, what happened last evening and what has happened in the House moments ago would also have to be part of the discussion in order to appropriately deal with the motion before us, the subamendment. More broadly, it would deal with the motion put forward by Ms. Romanado from the standpoint of prioritization.

In that regard, I would note that in the case of MP Chong, there was a study by this committee, and we did find that Mr. Chong's privileges had been breached.

● (5945)

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'll ask you to pause for a moment.

Colleagues, I'm trying to focus on what Mr. Cooper is saying, and that's difficult with conversation happening across the table. I would ask that members simply meet in person while someone is speaking and has the floor. It would be very helpful for me as the chair, as well for the person speaking and the interpreters. If we can please have those conversations in person, away from the microphones, it would be helpful.

Madame Fortier and Madame Gaudreau, I'm trying to make the point that we don't do this, please. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just as the Prime Minister and these Liberals refused to take responsibility of any kind for what this committee in its report determined was in fact a breach of the privileges of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, Mr. Chong, we see the same posture from this Liberal government in respect of the failure of this Liberal government to inform the 18 members of Parliament, even as the Speaker has now found a prima facie question of privilege in regard to that failure.

The position taken by the Liberals since it came to light that these MPs were targeted is that this was something that was referred to the House of Commons administration. Therefore, it was a failure of the House of Commons administration that these 18 members of Parliament were not informed. That is a completely unacceptable response. That does not excuse the Liberals at all from this failure. It is fine and well that the House of Commons administration was informed about this progressive reconnaissance attack targeting these 18 MPs, but it's not up to the House of Commons administration and it's not up to the IT department in the House of Commons to brief MPs that they are the target of a hostile foreign state. It is the responsibility of the Liberal government.

That didn't happen. That is a significant failure. It would never have happened but for the fact that there was an unsealed indictment of the Department of Justice and a report in *The Globe and Mail*. Otherwise, those members of Parliament would continue to be kept in the dark.

Why is it important that they be informed? I would submit that members of Parliament should be informed when they are the target of a hostile foreign state and when their own government has that information. Members of Parliament need to know. It has or could have a serious impact on our ability and the ability of our colleagues to do our jobs. It could impact our safety, and not only our safety. It could impact the safety of our families, our staff, our constituents and others we interact with, including human rights activists and members of diaspora communities who have been targeted, intimidated and threatened by hostile foreign states like the Beijing-based Communist regime.

Given the nature of the cyber-attack, it was a fairly low-level attack, but it was one that was designed to get key information about the 18 members. It was progressive in nature. If members had been informed, they could have taken steps to work with the government and to work with the security and intelligence establishment to take measures to protect themselves, their families and so on. But that didn't happen. They had no idea.

The second excuse offered as to why they were not briefed, after blaming the House of Commons administration, was that the attack was not successful.

• (5950)

With respect, Mr. Chair, that ought not to be the standard: that the attack was not successful. Again, all members ought to know whether they are being targeted by a hostile foreign state or any foreign state when our government has that information. It's good that the attack wasn't successful, but that doesn't in any way negate or limit the rights of those members to be made aware.

I would make the observation that, if a member knew that they were the target of a cyber-attack by the Beijing-based Communist regime, one that wasn't ultimately successful, it certainly would cause me, if I were one of those members, to take extra vigilance, recognizing that clearly I had a target on my back by the Beijing-based Communist regime.

I would want to know that, because if they had targeted me once, it would be quite logical that they would target me again and quite logical that they would target those members again. That begs the question. If this is the approach this government has taken—to keep members in the dark, blame everyone else when they get caught keeping members in the dark and then say, by the way, it wasn't fully successful so therefore we can wash our hands clean of any responsibility—it begs the question: How many other cyber-attacks by hostile foreign states, such as the Beijing-based regime, such as the Iranian regime, have been targeted at members of Parliament and maybe members in this committee room?

**The Chair:** Mr. Cooper, I'm sorry to interrupt.

I think I alluded at the last meeting to the fact that I'm a big believer in health breaks and the necessity for people to stretch their legs. Of course, you don't lose your slot on the floor should you or whoever else still be speaking in five minutes. May I suspend just for five minutes to let people stretch their legs? We will absolutely resume debate with whoever has the floor at that point.

I apologize for the interruption. I just wanted to give you a heads-up on that. At about 12 o'clock, I'll do a health break. Is that okay?

• (5955)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Okay. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** How many members have been targeted, whether it be by way of a cyber-attack or in other ways? We know that, ever since President Xi took office in Beijing, there has been a significant escalation in cyber-attacks, in the targeting of diaspora communities, of interference activities and, in broader terms, in the aggressive posture taken towards Canada, the United States and our allies.

In that context, it is also troubling that members were kept in the dark, in light of the nature of the regime that we are dealing with here. It's a regime that interfered in our elections and illegally set up police stations that violated our sovereignty and threatened the safety and security of Chinese Canadians. It's a regime that infiltrated Canada's highest security lab in Winnipeg, which resulted in the transfer of sensitive materials to Beijing-based institutions, including the transfer of two of the most deadly pathogens: Ebola and Henipah. It's a regime that arbitrarily arrested two Canadians—the two Michaels—Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, a regime that threatened the safety and security of 300,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong and a regime that imposed a series of punitive trade measures against Canada.



Not to mention, it's also a regime that is committing genocide against its own people, including Uyghur Muslims, and that has, for more than 20 years, targeted Falun Dafa practitioners because they dare to stand for the principles of compassion, tolerance and forbearance. I could go on, Mr. Chair, but I think it is important to highlight these things to capture the significant threat posed by the Beijing regime. It is a regime that poses a threat to our democracy, our sovereignty and the safety and security of our people.

In the face of that, and with the government being fully aware of that, how is it that 18 members of Parliament were kept in the dark? How is it possible that the 18 members of Parliament were kept in the dark, notwithstanding the cabinet directive, issued in May 2023, that members of Parliament be informed? Why were they not informed, at the very least, following the issuance of that directive?

We know the Liberals issued that directive only after they got caught keeping Michael Chong in the dark, for two years, that he and his family were being targeted by the Beijing regime, including by an accredited diplomat—a diplomat who remained accredited for two years, intimidating Chinese-Canadians, when this government knew of his activities. It was damage control, and it raises the question of whether the directive is just a piece of paper. What good is a directive if it isn't followed and implemented? It seems that the directive wasn't implemented.

• (6000)

When we speak about prioritization, which is the heart of the subamendment, I find it astounding that the NDP would join the Liberals this morning—after the House referred this *prima facie* question of privilege to our committee and after the member for Vancouver East, who herself was targeted, gave an impassioned speech in the House an hour ago—in blocking this committee from prioritizing and taking up that *prima facie* question of privilege.

I spoke in the House last evening around 11 o'clock. The member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski asked me and the member for Calgary Shepard, Mr. Kmiec, who was one of the 18 members targeted, whether we would just end the debate in the House, so that we could get it over to PROC, so that PROC could get down to work and commence a study.

Mr. Chair, I know you want to have a health break. If I may just conclude, I will continue my remarks after the break.

That happened this morning. The House voted unanimously to refer it to the procedures and House affairs committee. I attempted, at the first opportunity upon the motion being referred to this committee, to do what the NDP asked last night, which was for this committee to prioritize and immediately take up the motion that had been referred to this committee.

What did the NDP do? They voted against that. They joined the Liberals, who have every intention of covering up this massive failure that occurred under their watch. It's absolutely shameful. It demonstrates that the NDP is all talk and no action. At the end of the day, they are complicit in the cover-up efforts of this government. It's just disgraceful. They're going to have to answer for that in the next election and for the number of times that they have worked to collaborate with this government, which is causing enormous damage to this country.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cooper. I recognize that you will maintain the floor.

Colleagues, as mentioned seven minutes ago now, and as we're reminded by my watch, it's time to stretch.

We're going to take a quick break for everybody's mental and physical health. We're going to suspend briefly. We'll come back in five minutes.

• (6000)

(Pause)

• (6010)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we're going to resume.

Before I turn the floor over to Mr. Cooper to resume his debate on the motion, I just want to point out that, as members, we have the luxury of being able to stand up, walk around and talk in the hall if we need to. Not all of the House administration staff have the privilege of doing that. They have to stay in their seats and be attentive to what's happening. The health break is in part for them as well. I think it's important that we are mindful of the fact that there are not just members in the room but others as well. This will be something that is not uncommon if we end up in long periods of time without breaks.

With that, Mr. Cooper, the floor resumes for you.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

What we're seeing this morning is part of what we have seen for the past year and a half on this committee. It is obstruction by the Liberals to thwart the ability of this committee to get to the bottom of the failures of this Liberal government with respect to foreign interference, which has attacked our democracy and our elections, and has targeted our colleagues—whether it be Mr. Chong or the 18 members we now know were the subject of a cyber-attack.

What we see from these Liberals is that they say they're very concerned about this. They even went along with giving unanimous consent to send this over to the procedure and House affairs committee.

All I wanted to do this morning was, in light of that, to have this committee get to work and schedule hearings. What did the Liberals, with the NDP, do when they had an opportunity to do that? Suddenly it's not a priority. Suddenly it's all about them again. They want to make it a priority about them, not about the failure that occurred or the breach of the privileges of other colleagues.

I want to see that there is accountability, because there needs to be accountability. We need to know who was aware of the information that was provided by the FBI to the Communications Security Establishment, and why those members, following that information being provided, were kept in the dark. We need to know why it took a foreign government, an unsealed indictment from the U.S. justice department, and a report in *The Globe and Mail* for this to come to light.

The Prime Minister famously said that “Sunshine is the best disinfectant”. When it comes to Beijing's interference in our democracy and in our sovereignty, the Prime Minister's record has been anything but transparent. Canadians deserve better, and frankly our colleagues—all of us—deserve better insofar as this could happen to any one of us. For all we know, one or more of us has been the subject of these types of attacks and was kept in the dark. In order to address that broader concern, we need to get to the bottom of what happened in this particular instance involving these 18 MPs.

I will have more to say, Mr. Chair. I'd ask to be put at the bottom of the list. However, I will leave it at that for now as I look forward to the comments of my other colleagues.

• (6015)

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

Colleagues, I did this the other day. Some time has passed since we last talked about the list. I'll just remind colleagues of where we're at. It will be Mr. Duncan, followed by Monsieur Berthold, Mr. Calkins, Ms. Mathysen and Mr. Cooper again.

Mr. Duncan, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I take this opportunity to build on what my colleague Mr. Cooper said. We are increasingly seeing, not just in the House but in several committees, including multiple times here at the House and procedural affairs committee, a record of the NDP, frankly, saying one thing but when it comes to a vote doing the opposite.

I want to read into the record.... Actually, I want to give a bit of background to what's happened so far today. Mr. Cooper gave a notice of motion regarding the question of privilege, which was just passed within the last hour or so by the House of Commons and referred to PROC, to study another question of privilege around the issue of foreign interference. This time it is not just one specific member but 18 members of Parliament from many different political parties who are affected by the issue.

Mr. Cooper asked to adjourn the debate that we are currently undertaking—the subamendment that Mr. Cooper has on the amendment by Ms. Mathysen to Mrs. Romanado's main motion. It seems like the NDP complained, saying it would defeat the motion. For those Canadians who are watching, adjourning debate on a motion does not defeat it. It puts it back in the proverbial parking lot and allows another issue to come forward, particularly the notice of motion that Mr. Cooper has, which the House was just seized with for several hours this morning and last night. The NDP refused to adjourn the debate to allow discussion about the question of privilege and to move forward on the study. Let's make it very clear what happened there.

I want to take a moment. I have the transcripts from last night, particularly of what the NDP was saying on the floor of the House of Commons about the priority and importance of moving forward with this question of privilege and studying it.

The Speaker took the floor last night at about 8.20 p.m. and ruled on the question of privilege raised on April 29, 2024, by the member from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I'll fast-forward to different colleagues in the chamber making comments. I will read

into the record what NDP House leader Mr. Julian, in one of his first interventions, said in the House of Commons:

...I always listen attentively to my colleague. I think, in this case, it is very clear, as we have seen with Justice Hogue's preliminary report, which points very clearly to some things. There is a real shortcoming in terms of how the government and past governments have dealt with the information around foreign interference. We have seen repeatedly, from the 2019 election and the 2021 election, that information was not communicated to candidates. In this case, addressed in the question of privilege, information was not communicated to members of Parliament.

There is a lack of protocols and a lack of organization, not necessarily around the obtaining of information but in actually communicating that information to people who might be impacted. This may be members of Parliament or, as we saw in election campaigns, candidates. We need to ensure that action is taken to prevent further interference of this type.

To go on, Mr. Julian got up a bit later. I quote from Mr. Julian, the NDP House leader—and it's the NDP deputy House leader who sits on this committee. Mr. Julian said last night:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that we see this matter, this question of privilege and the motion before the House of Commons as important. We will therefore support this motion so that it can be adopted as quickly as possible and this whole matter, this question of privilege can be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs as quickly as possible.

Then Mr. Julian said a few minutes later—I believe in an exchange, a back and forth—in questions and comments:

There is a systematic pattern of the government erring in how it potentially gets information to candidates during an election or to members of Parliament. That needs to change. That is why we need to refer this to [the] Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to come up with protocols and suggestions for actions.

This was just last night.

• (6020)

In response to the Bloc Québécois, in questions and comments, Mr. Julian of the NDP said the following:

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is precisely for that reason that the NDP moved the motion that led to the public inquiry....

Further on, he said:

We believe that we should act in the national interest and think first about how [we] do everything we can [do] to prevent foreign interference in our politics, in our democracy and in our elections.

He goes on to further state:

There are many things we can do and it starts tonight with referring the motion to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Then Mr. Lamoureux got up and asked a question or made a comment, and Mr. Julian of the NDP responded:

That is why I suggest to all members tonight that we need to refer this to...PROC...promptly and not take a day or two to talk about it. The time for talk is over. It needs to be referred to PROC for action. That, coupled with the Hogue commission...hopefully [gives] us all the things we need to put in place to fully protect our democracy and any future election.

He continues on again. In response to an exchange with Mrs. Kusie, Mr. Julian asks her a question:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member agree with me that this needs to be referred promptly, this evening, to procedure and House affairs to come up with recommendations?

He wasn't done yet. There's more. Mr. Julian had a lot to say, with a lot of passion, about PROC taking this up, beginning deliberations, making recommendations and studying this question of privilege.

Actually, Ms. Ashton took the floor for the NDP a couple of times last night. I'm going to quote what she said. The NDP said this last night on the floor of the House of Commons, even though the NDP blocked Mr. Cooper's motion to get the ball rolling.

Here's what Ms. Ashton said last night in the House of Commons:

Mr. Speaker, given the severity of issues like this, would the member agree to sending the matter to PROC? It is obviously the body that is best equipped to deal with it. Would the member agree that it should be sent to PROC as soon as possible?

Ms. Ashton again took the floor a little while later. She said:

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this issue merits proper examination. At this hour, we have heard from many speakers that this must be taken seriously.

Will the member agree that this should be referred to PROC as soon as possible? Obviously, we gathered here to debate C-59, which has issues of great importance to the citizens we represent. Will the member agree to—

These are her words. This is continuing the quote:

—speeding up the process and moving this to PROC as soon as possible?

Ms. Ashton took the floor again last night as a member of the NDP.

**An hon. member:** They're a broken record.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Yes, it's unbelievable, their advocacy and their passion on the floor of the House of Commons. Ms. Ashton said:

Would it not be in all of our...interests to have this dealt with by PROC as soon as possible? Will the member agree to send this matter to PROC as soon as possible, so that we can actually move on this?

It goes on. Ms. Kwan from the NDP spoke this morning very passionately in the House. The motion was unanimously adopted. It was referred here. Mr. Cooper tabled the notice of motion. He attempted to have that brought forward, and it was blocked.

Mr. Chair, at the beginning of my comments, I confirmed, to alleviate the concern of Ms. Mathysen, that adjourning the debate we are currently undertaking does not defeat it. What it would allow us to do, as Mr. Julian, Ms. Ashton, Ms. Kwan and many members of the NDP have said numerous times in recent days, is deal with this issue as soon as possible at PROC and have it dealt with by PROC. The motion was defeated, so we cannot discuss how we move forward and study this important question of privilege.

The NDP truly says one thing on the floor of the House of Commons. They have a record of saying one thing. They talk tough. They all challenge and say they're frustrated with the Liberal record on all of this. Then they vote a completely different way, deciding to cover up and form a bloc with the Liberals, many times.

• (6025)

Now that I've clarified that we are adjourning so we can bring up the issue, and now that we have clarified that we have several members of the NDP on record in the House last night when the cameras were on and people were watching us talking about this—the cameras are still on here—I move to adjourn debate in order for Mr. Cooper's motion to be brought forward, please.

I move to adjourn debate.

• (6030)

**The Chair:** Mr. Duncan, can you please repeat and clarify that for our benefit?

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** I move to adjourn the debate.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we know how this goes. We are going to vote on this immediately. This is the same vote that we held a little while back. The question is whether or not we are going to adjourn debate on Mrs. Romanado's motion.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, the debate continues.

Mr. Duncan, should you wish, the floor remains yours.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** I have another quote from the NDP last night, if I could continue with that.

We just saw the NDP block for a second time, despite what they said on the floor of the House of Commons about how, as soon as possible, this needs to be discussed and moved forward on. They're blocking the opportunity to move forward specifically on the question of privilege that was unanimously just passed on the floor of the House of Commons with the support of the NDP.

It was Ms. McPherson, the NDP whip, who raised, in her intervention, the question of privilege. She stated:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the point of privilege that was brought forward earlier today by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The New Democratic Party is very concerned about the recent news that...members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China could have been or were targets of cyber-attacks from hackers who were linked to Beijing. I am a member of IPAC, and I am deeply concerned because I do not know the details. I do not have the information I need to know whether my personal emails were hacked or whether there were cyber-attacks made against me, other members of the New Democratic Party or, indeed, any other member of the House.

I am concerned that this information came forward from the U.S. government, and our government did not provide that information to legislators. I am concerned because this is not the first time I have felt that the government has withheld information from members of Parliament, from legislators.

I think back as well to the time when the members of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights were called out and sanctioned by the Chinese government. As a member of that committee, I found all of this out on Twitter. There was no support provided to me as a parliamentarian by the government, and I find that unacceptable.

I also find it unacceptable that it seems we are repeatedly having to ask the government of the day to provide the information to parliamentarians that they need to do their work. We do not know what the Government of Canada knows. We do not know when [they] knew it, and we...do not know why it did not alert those members who have been impacted by this work.

Then she wraps up here by saying:

Legislators need to have this information. They need to be able to feel they are protected. They need to be able to feel they are safe in doing their work....

Lastly, here, she says:

I do believe this constitutes a violation of parliamentarians' privilege, and it is vitally important that we get to the bottom of this.

It is so “vitally important”, so “as quickly as possible” and so “pass it now so it can go to PROC”, Mr. Chair, that we had the NDP align with the Liberals to block it twice.

To clarify, Mr. Cooper had a great notice of motion and a great motion that talked about how we can address the question of privilege, and the NDP blocked it from even being discussed. That tells you everything you need to know about the NDP.

The Liberals, we know, want to cover it up. It makes them extremely uncomfortable to have to talk about the issue and their record on foreign interference. There are many examples of them covering up and not providing information.

I just read quotes from the NDP, within the last 24 hours, complaining about the exact same thing. Twice now, the NDP, despite their House leader advocating in the House of Commons for PROC to take this up as quickly as possible, at the first opportunity it came up, they have blocked it. This is ridiculous. The committee needs to move forward on this discussion, this question of privilege and this issue of foreign interference. This should be the issue and the number one priority that PROC deals with right now.

Mr. Chair, I'll have more to say, and I ask to be added to the bottom of the list, but I know my colleague Mr. Berthold has some comments as well.

• (6035)

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Duncan, you are correct.

Mr. Berthold, I think I got it right this time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm a little surprised at the turn of events this morning, especially since we offered all parties the opportunity to take a break to talk about the committee's agenda over the next few days. Twice since the start of today's meeting, we have proposed adjourning debate on Ms. Romanado's motion. What does it mean to adjourn a debate? It means to put it on hold, to set aside what we've done and then come back to it.

We Conservatives don't usually like to adjourn a debate. Since we don't have a majority around the committee table, we're not able to put the debate back on the agenda, because we need the agreement of a majority of the members. So that's the situation we're in

at the moment. In short, this is why we Conservatives don't like to adjourn a debate.

At the moment, the situation is rather peculiar. The adjournment of the debate has been refused by people who have the majority around this table. If the debate were adjourned, all it would take is for a member of the government party or the NDP to rise and move a motion to return to the adjourned debate, that motion would pass, and that would be the end of it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Berthold, perhaps this a good moment for me to interrupt you for one moment, and you've indicated you may talk a little more.

Colleagues, out of respect for your schedules and your schedulers, because I know that things move quickly, I want you to know that because it seems like there's still a fair amount for us to work through as a committee, I have asked for resources. We've therefore been granted resources to continue until two o'clock.

I'm interrupting Mr. Berthold right now so that you have a chance to plan your schedules. We were supposed to end the meeting at one o'clock. We will now continue until one o'clock, and then we'll re-evaluate where we are after that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor again. You may speak until 2 p.m.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's very kind of you to let me know that I'll have the opportunity to speak until 2 p.m., but I'd prefer that we come to a solution based on common sense, that is, that we adjourn the debate on this motion so that we can take advantage of some downtime to discuss the next steps and begin the study that was requested by the House of Commons following the question of privilege on the fact that 18 of our colleagues were targeted by foreign hackers.

I would very much like us to do this and not use the resources of the House unnecessarily until 2 p.m. However, unfortunately, it seems that the NDP is opposed to this, despite everything that was said in the House yesterday. This worries me a great deal, given the statements I've heard. This morning, I listened to our colleague Jenny Kwan, who gave a very thoughtful speech about how people, including herself, had been victims of foreign interference by having their email accounts hacked. For her, it was a no-brainer that this question of privilege needed to be addressed as soon as possible in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Ms. Niki Ashton, who is a member of the NDP caucus and represents the Churchill-Keewatinook Aski riding, posed the following question to my colleague Mr. Bezan:

Mr. Speaker, given the severity of issues like this, would the member agree to sending the matter to PROC? It is obviously the body that is best equipped to deal with it. Would the member agree that it should be sent to PROC as soon as possible?

This was a request made by the NDP itself, Mr. Chair, last night during the debate. This opportunity was offered as soon as the House passed the motion unanimously. This means that the Conservatives voted for the motion to refer this question of privilege to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, that the Bloc Québécois voted for the motion, that the NDP voted for the motion and that the independent members voted for the motion. Everyone agreed that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs should quickly study this issue, because it's a very important one.

We now propose to adjourn the debate so that we can move on to this very important study, but unfortunately, for some political or partisan reason I don't know, the Liberals refuse to let us do so. What's even more surprising is that the NDP refuses to adjourn the debate and set this aside for two minutes so we can talk about our schedule, our business, the witnesses and how we're going to operate over the next few weeks, so we can then talk as quickly as possible about this question of privilege.

As I was mentioning, the NDP members, who proposed amendments to a Liberal motion, can, at any time, bring the debate back to Ms. Romanado's motion, because there are quite a few of them. I know that numbers and Liberals don't always go together, but that's another story. I don't want to start another debate, Mr. Chair, because you could call me to order for any number of reasons. That said, the figures speak for themselves.

So, we could quickly return to this study. If, for example, we don't have any witnesses, or the witnesses we want to invite to talk about the question of privilege aren't available, we can start this study. There are many opportunities for us to move forward and do what is important both to the House of Commons, which has asked this committee to address this question of privilege as quickly as possible, and to the members of the committee, who would like to address other topics in a completely reasonable way.

● (6040)

We don't oppose the Liberals' motion, but like the Bloc Québécois, we may have some amendments to propose regarding the content and process. We are not fundamentally opposed to the motion, though. We were willing to undertake a dual study.

Meanwhile, since Tuesday, the Speaker of the House of Commons has ruled that the question of privilege raised by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Garnett Genuis, did constitute a prima facie case of privilege. We spent all last night debating the matter. Every parliamentarian I heard agreed that the interference in our Parliament and electoral system by the Communist regime in Beijing was an important issue.

Everyone wants the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to examine the matter as quickly as possible. The committee members have to decide how best to go about it, how quickly to do the study and which witnesses they want to hear from.

I really don't understand what the Liberals are trying to stop right now. When we are all in the House, everyone is in agreement, but when we are here as a committee to discuss the issue, the NDP-Lib-

eral coalition government emerges and opts to vote against us. Those are the facts.

Mr. Chair, the matter before us is extremely important. We found out through the FBI that Canadian parliamentarians were targeted by Chinese hackers in 2021. What's more, the FBI didn't tell us. We read it in the papers, which learned about it from the FBI.

Apparently, someone in Canada was informed. Someone in Canada means either someone in the government or someone in the House of Commons. That's why we need to conduct the study. We have to uncover who was informed and when.

Again, as we saw in Michael Chong's case during the study we just finished, which came on the heels of another question of privilege, members were the last to find out.

It is completely unacceptable that hostile foreign interests are targeting members, people elected to represent their ridings, because they expressed their views on a topic as important as foreign interference or because they stood up for diaspora communities living in Canada—Chinese, Ukrainian or whatever they may be.

In this case, we are talking about hackers, as mentioned by Mr. Genuis, who was very shocked to read in the papers that he had been the target of those hackers.

What harm was done? We don't know. What were the consequences? We don't know. Was there a breach of information? We're being told there wasn't, but I don't know because no one told me so, personally.

It is precisely the committee's role to get to the bottom of this and to ask the right people the right questions. The committee needs to get a clear understanding of what happened, and ensure that Canadian parliamentarians aren't the targets of foreign cyber-attacks and that, if they are, they are alerted at once, not just when it suits someone's interests.

● (6045)

On the issue of foreign interference, we saw that the decision to notify the parties or members wasn't made by CSIS or the RCMP. It was made by a group of individuals who were supposed to make a judgment as to the information they received, individuals who met to determine whether the situation crossed the line they had drawn to say when something was serious enough to warrant notifying the persons concerned. As a result, everything came out later rather than sooner.

The report Justice Hogue released last week clearly shows that a review of that whole process is necessary. As my fellow member rightly pointed out, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs met 70 times to discuss foreign interference. That shows how important the study was to the committee. It shows how important foreign interference was to the members of the committee. Many have been here since the beginning. Along the way, some joined the committee, while others left—70 meetings is a lot, after all.

However, we can't stop there because foreign interference has not stopped. It would have been nice if, miraculously, we could wave a magic wand and make it so that Commissioner Hogue's appointment stopped all foreign interests, including the Communist regime in Beijing, from doing what they were doing because Canadians had appointed a commissioner to examine foreign interference. That's not what happened, though, and that's not going to happen. That's why we need to better protect ourselves. That is why the government needs to make the right decisions. That is also why we're going to have to examine Bill C-70 when it's sent to committee. One of the key roles of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is ensuring that parliamentarians are protected.

Thanks to a motion in the House of Commons, we called on Justice Hogue to produce a preliminary report, and we didn't do so just to put more on her plate. We did so to find out as much as possible as soon as possible leading up to the election.

This issue also requires urgent attention because we are dealing with a so-called minority government and as long as the government is in a coalition with the NDP, there will be no election. Is it possible to know when the NDP will pull its support for the Liberal government? I can hear Liberals wishing that will never happen, but I have news for them. When the time comes and the NDP drops them, it will leave their side. The Liberals don't need to worry. Actually, they do, I should say. That's the reality. This is a minority government that has the support of the NDP, a government that currently controls, or is trying to control, what people do or don't find out about foreign interference. That is unacceptable.

I want to come back to Justice Hogue's preliminary report because it revealed many things. Justice Hogue confirmed what everyone knew, that foreign actors did interfere in the last two elections. Justice Hogue confirmed that foreign interference did not directly impact the overall result of the last election. The Conservatives said it. Everyone said it.

Most importantly, we learned something about our fellow member Kenny Chiu's claims that the Communist regime in Beijing and its disinformation campaign had a significant—perhaps even decisive—impact on his loss in the last election. We found out that his claims were founded. There was evidence showing that it certainly could have impacted the election result in his riding.

There was a reason Justice Hogue felt it necessary to share that information with parliamentarians and Canadians before her final report.

• (6050)

I'm sure she wants to prevent this from happening again during the next election. She, too, is very aware that an election could be called at any time.

The other very troubling thing is the Chinese Communist regime's interference in the candidate nomination process. On that subject, I disagree with my Bloc Québécois colleague.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

It doesn't have to do with the fact that the member is speaking about me. It has to do with the fact that we have only a few minutes left.

**The Chair:** Actually, we have over an hour because we were able to get more resources.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** To keep the meeting going, you have to check with the committee members. I, myself, wasn't consulted on whether it was feasible—

**The Chair:** I don't necessarily need to consult the committee members. It's the chair's prerogative, and I decided—

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Is it always that way?

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Gaudreau.

A half-hour ago, I decided that we would keep meeting.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Very well.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Berthold.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I was referring to the honourable member who just asked about the meeting's duration. As I was saying, I disagree with the opinion she expressed when she commented on my fellow member's subamendment and the NDP's amendment to the Liberals' motion. She said that the committee should let Justice Hogue do her job and not respond to her preliminary report.

However, that's not what the House asked for. The House asked for a preliminary report so preparations could be made in the lead-up to the next election. Justice Hogue's report revealed that the Communist regime in Beijing apparently did interfere in the nomination of a candidate, our colleague Han Dong. The Beijing regime's interference seems to have influenced the choice of the candidate who was nominated. Even before he was elected as the member of Parliament, Mr. Dong reportedly benefited from the support of citizens who were brought to the nomination meeting where he was a candidate by representatives of the Communist regime in Beijing so those citizens could vote for him.

The problem is that we are talking about a very Liberal riding, which do exist in certain parts of the country. Out west and in Quebec, we find a lot of very Conservative ridings. When by-elections are held in those kinds of ridings, the same party usually holds on to the seat. A Liberal riding will stay a Liberal riding. Why does interfering in a nomination process in a context like that matter to a regime interested in influencing a country's electoral system? It's very obvious: choosing the candidate means choosing the member of Parliament. That was addressed in Justice Hogue's report.

However, there was something Justice Hogue's report did not address. We know that Mr. Dong was notified that CSIS was investigating efforts by the Communist regime in Beijing to interfere in his favour in the nomination process in which he was a candidate during the election. It being a very partisan, a very political, issue, Justice Hogue obviously won't delve into that aspect. That means it is up to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. This committee needs to examine the nomination process as well as how it took place to find out who was told about the investigation and who shared the secret and confidential information with a candidate in order to protect them. Justice Hogue won't address that in her report because it's inside information.

It is nonetheless very important for us. It is important for Canadians to know who broke the law, potentially jeopardizing a CSIS investigation in order to help get a Liberal candidate elected.

That is why my colleague's motion calls for the committee to deal with the issue of foreign interference before beginning a new study. As I mentioned, we were willing to consider the new study Mrs. Romanado had asked for. We were having discussions so we could start holding meetings.

● (6055)

Last evening, when the Speaker of the House agreed, he told our colleague Garnett Genuis that the question of privilege he raised was very relevant, that it did indeed require the House of Commons to hold a debate. Everything stopped. It was instantaneous. The Speaker made his decision and the debate instantly turned to that matter of privilege. The debate lasted all evening and we picked it up this morning. The debate lasted for as long as MPs wanted to talk about it, until a motion was unanimously adopted to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Once people were aware of the motion, my colleague Mr. Cooper immediately asked this committee to interrupt its work in order to address it. It was just as immediate as last evening and this morning.

Unfortunately, government members, with the help of the NDP once again, wanted something else. I do not understand why there was unanimous agreement in the House, but they vote against giving the matter priority here.

I will stop here, Mr. Chair. I am concluding my remarks. I would ask you to put my name at the end of the list again please.

● (6100)

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

A new team of interpreters has to get set up, so we have to suspend for a few minutes.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Chair, may I first propose a motion to adjourn debate?

**The Chair:** If we cannot continue discussing this in both official languages, I cannot continue to chair the meeting.

We have to suspend, but we will continue in a few minutes.

● (6100)

(Pause)

● (6105)

**The Chair:** Let us now resume.

The interpretation system is working.

Mr. Berthold, please go ahead.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I am pleased to see that you are settling in quickly at the committee.

Mr. Chair, since there appears to have been some discussion between the parties, I will try once again, because I would like us to adjourn debate so we can speak amongst ourselves.

**The Chair:** Mr. Berthold, you will have to propose that clearly.

● (6110)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** That was a comment, Mr. Chair.

I move that debate on Ms. Romanado's motion be now adjourned.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Again, we will be voting on whether to adjourn debate on the motion presented by Madam Romanado. This is the same question that was dealt with previously.

I will now ask the clerk to call the vote.

(Motion negated: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Berthold, do you wish to continue?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** I can if you would like me to, but I would rather give my colleagues the chance to speak.

**The Chair:** That is up to you, Mr. Berthold.

Had you finished?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Calkins, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll just preface my comments by reiterating what I said earlier. I think we have very good options before us as a committee. I don't believe anybody is presenting any motions in bad faith or with bad intent. I believe that we have to make the best decision possible as committee members as to what this very busy, very important committee ought to be studying as a matter of priority, and triage accordingly.

We here on the Conservative side, I think, will continue making that case for as long as it takes. We believe that foreign interference is one of what I would consider to be three matters that are being discussed, notwithstanding the subamendment portion of a debate that we're in.

Two of the three matters that we could proceed with deal with foreign interference. In continuation from what happened in the discussion from last Tuesday, we now have a prima facie case on a question of privilege, which always ends up at this committee. It has now been unanimously adopted by the House by all political parties, yet here we are, unable to agree that it's the matter that we should be discussing based upon the finding in the House.

My colleagues, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Berthold, have all moved motions to adjourn the debate on the current motion so that we can proceed either to a discussion or to pursue discussing another motion to discuss the pressing matter from the House.

I just want to remind colleagues that we have spent a lot of time talking about foreign interference. We have a public inquiry, yet here we are again with new revelations in the media and new information about the PRC's continued interference. Frankly, it's what I would construe to be aggressive behaviour, not only towards the democratic institutions, such as our federal elections process, but now also in the form of what I would consider to be personal attacks against members of the House of Commons and Senate.

I presume that every member here operates in good conscience and in good faith, but to know that my emails, my personal devices, my iPad and my computer have been the target of a cyber-attack, or could have been....

So far, we know of only 18. I'll remind colleagues that when we first started hearing about foreign interference from China, we heard about potentially one or two people who might have been affected in nominations. Then it grew to 11 people who might have been unduly influenced during nomination processes, with funding bankrolled by the PRC for multiple political parties, my party included. Now we're up to 18 parliamentarians, members of the House of Commons and Senate, and anything that we have started to do doesn't appear to be dissuading the People's Republic of China.

We've been talking about this issue for quite some time. We finally have a piece of legislation dealing with what I would consider to be a portion of the broader conversation about Chinese interference in our institutions.

My opinion and advice to colleagues would be, given the fact that it is now May.... We have five more weeks after this week, once we return from the May long weekend break next week. I

wish you all safe travels, good health, rest and recuperation. We'll come back for five weeks. It will be, as we all know, a challenging and trying time, because the weather will be good, there will be other things that we'd rather go do, and we'll be feisty.

● (6115)

If the last 18 years are any indication of what's going to happen in the next five weeks, I can predict that this will be the case, and that's fine. I don't take it personally, and I don't think any of us should take these things personally. That's just the adversarial nature of our system. That's why I'm concerned. I'm not just concerned for the sake of my own colleagues, Mr. Genuis and Mr. Chong. I'm concerned for all of you. You're all my fellow citizens.

Well, Mr. Desilets, I'm not trying to impugn anything, but you might disagree with that. While we disagree or have an adversarial system, you're all my fellow citizens, and I want you all to have the same protection and be afforded the same ability to carry out your duties. Whether I agree with what you have to say or not, we all have the right to say it without intimidation and without being put in a vulnerable position because we have not done an adequate job as a Parliament or as a government of addressing what is becoming a clear pattern of a clear threat from a clear source.

We have five weeks left after the break. We'll adjourn, and then we'll come back. At best we'll have one full parliamentary cycle, because, if we do have an election in October 2025, if this Parliament goes to the end, I doubt we'll be returning in September of next year. We'll go right into the writ period.

Basically, as a committee, we have one full calendar year plus five weeks to study, make recommendations and have the government respond to those recommendations, hopefully, if necessary, through any legislative changes that might be required. Then we'll have those laws passed in both chambers and have royal assent prior to the next election for the betterment of the integrity of our elections and for the betterment of the ability of our agencies to protect us, not only as candidates but also as parliamentarians in the interim.

That's not a long timeline. The question, as I see it, is what our priority will be. Is there any bad issue before us? No. All of them are worthy of discussion and consideration—all of them.



Which one could we do the most good with, and which one is most important? I would say that the issue of significant national interest, in this case, is the ruling of the *prima facie* case of members' privileges, as determined by the Speaker and by the rest of our colleagues in the House. It's seemingly supported, as I didn't see anybody speaking against this notion from any political party in the debates that took place last night or this morning. Frankly, I'm flabbergasted that this doesn't automatically position this issue as a priority for this committee to study and examine. We're going to continue, I believe, to make that case.

On the matter of the motion, the amendment and the subamendment before us, we have many things that I believe we need to revisit in the ongoing foreign interference study and in our electoral systems. Madam Justice Hogue's interim report has given us many things that we could continue to talk about, not the least of which are numerous contradictions of evidence and testimony that this committee heard, which was contradicted by evidence and preliminary findings by Madam Justice Hogue.

We have what I believe is a fairly legitimate allegation. We have a breach in the law when it comes to the secrets that ought to have been kept for those who are entitled to secret briefings from our intelligence officials, who have allegedly passed that secret information on to a candidate for, I believe, Don Valley North.

• (6120)

I think it needs to be fleshed out to determine what exactly happened there. Many members of Parliament of this committee made vehement arguments that we as members of Parliament at this committee ought not to have access to classified or secret information. Numerous attempts for us to request documents to be scrutinized by our parliamentary law clerk and then distributed to members of this committee have been defeated time and again by the Liberal and NDP members of this committee. Now, however, we have an example of somebody who ought not to have had that information, notwithstanding that the media, which seems to still have access to more information and documents than I do as a duly elected member of Parliament in this place.... Now we have a very credible scenario in which, I guess, it's not okay for members of Parliament to request this classified information through the eyes of our parliamentary law clerk, but it's completely okay to pass this information on, if you're the governing party, to one of your candidates in an election.

It seems to be a bit of a double standard, and I think we need to get to the bottom of that. Madam Justice Hogue has written in her report that there seems to be a clear communications issue, not only among the government, the decision-makers and those who work in the bureaucracy, but also among our various departments. There certainly are a lot of questions still surrounding what the bar is, not only for alerting members of Parliament and candidates but also for when the public is notified about foreign interference. Had the government done its job and had we had the right protocols in place, I believe my former colleague Kenny Chiu might still be here as a member of Parliament in this place.

What consequence have we demonstrated to the People's Republic of China as a response? A lot of hemming and hawing, a lot of obfuscation, a lot of blocking, hiding and covering up of informa-

tion through the foreign interference and matter of privilege for Mr. Chong to date. Here we are, as Conservatives at least, wanting to continue on to discuss now the new outstanding matters in foreign interference. I can tell you that I'm here in good faith to make good recommendations, hopeful recommendations, wise recommendations to a government that I believe should be taking this issue much more seriously than it currently is.

Then, between Tuesday and today, as a matter of fact, in the time that this committee has started, since 11 o'clock this morning, moments after this committee started or continued its deliberations, the House adopted the notion and motion that there is another breach of privilege. A *prima facie* case has been made. Arguments have been made by members from all parties—all parties—that the People's Republic of China, the communist regime there, is personally going after members of the House of Commons and the Senate.

• (6125)

If you don't think that's serious, well, I know what's on my phone. I'm assuming we all know what's on our phones and what's on our computers, but if they can get to us, they can get to anybody in this country. They can get to our families. They can get to our staff. They can infiltrate our political headquarters. Their prime directive, in my opinion, is to create mistrust in electoral results and to create disunity and disharmony in the social fabric of our country. I think all of us would agree that it's something we would want to prevent and avoid, which is why I believe we should act in unity and unison in addressing this issue at this committee.

This is the committee that deals with these questions of privilege. While we are free to set our own priorities, I think it behooves us to take more seriously and as a higher matter of priority a question of a privilege that's referred to us by the House, and to remind colleagues once again of the timelines. If we're going to properly study this and discuss the witness list on the notice of motion that my colleague Mr. Cooper has put before this committee, I would love to hear about any other witnesses that my colleagues from other political parties would have, to say who ought to be summoned to the committee to testify and to find out why. Again, we're in a scenario where it took two years. It's unthinkable to me that a member of Parliament or a senator, their office staff or their family members would be subject to cyber-attacks and not be told.

I would just implore you, colleagues: This is a matter on which we have to defend each other, defend our institutions and defend our nation, frankly, from a very nefarious, very troublesome and, to this date, apparently, a very effective foreign government that's acting very adversarially and even confrontationally to our nation.

I don't know if this threat is coming right out of Beijing on a daily basis. I don't know if it's asymmetric. I don't know if there are elements of our own society here that are sympathetic. I still, to this day, am not clear, in spite of all the meetings we've had, dealing with the question of privilege for our colleague Mr. Chong and the yet unfinished broader study of foreign interference in our elections and of the depth of interference more broadly from various sources, particularly the People's Republic of China.

We have an opportunity as a committee, in a moment of unity for the sake of our country, for the sake of each other as members of Parliament, because only we—it doesn't matter what political party you get elected under the banner of—truly understand what this job is about. We have an opportunity to do the right thing, in my opinion, and not only defend our nation but defend each other and get to the bottom of how what I would consider to be an egregious scenario has happened. We need to make good and wise recommendations to the government to ensure that these things don't happen again.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll cede my time and ask to be put back on the bottom of the list.

● (6130)

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Mr. Calkins.

Ms. Mathysen, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** There's been a lot of conversation from one side alone. I am grateful for this opportunity to try to straighten out some things. There seems to be a great deal of misrepresentation by the Conservatives here at this committee, specifically against the NDP and, yes, the Liberals. I cannot speak for them, but I certainly do speak for myself and for my party, in that we absolutely have every intention of treating the issue of foreign interference seriously.

I don't understand and I am so sorry that the Conservatives on this committee think so little of me in terms of my intentions to bring forward this motion we are discussing here today, despite the fact that the majority of this has been on foreign interference instead of harassment. I am so sorry that they think so little of me in this regard. They have quoted my colleagues, and I am entirely in agreement.

I believe that we have every responsibility to study this issue thoroughly, but I've also seen so much happen within this institution and to this institution and the people who work within it, not just members of Parliament. When Conservatives say that this is only us talking about ourselves, this is not the case. This is about the people who serve this institution. This is about the people who believe in this institution and who are impacted. This is about the future generations, who will also serve this institution and, hopefully, do so better than some of us.

I brought forward this study because I was asked to, not just by members of my party, but by women, so I would like the entirety of the men who have spoken here today to think a bit about that. Maybe take that back.

We have been listening about how apparently only the Conservatives think this is such a huge issue. That is not the case. The degrada-

tions of this institution from outside and from inside are equally disturbing. Why can't we talk about both? We have 10 meetings left before the end of this session, before we rise for the summer. Why can't we do both at the same time? Why can't we show Canadians that we are capable of doing that for the sake of this institution? I would ask that we in fact study both at the same time, because I think that both impact each other in very many ways.

There have been conversations about maybe, potentially, the extension of meetings, so that we hear more before we have to break, but the issue of foreign interference isn't just going to take us the 10 meetings or so that we have left.

It's 10 meetings now, because there has been so much filibustering—it's not 11. I would like to point that out.

I came to this committee with the best of intentions to make this a mature, adult conversation that we could have to make my workplace—and the workplace for many others—better. I ask you to make it better. I would hope that the Conservatives aren't just trying to avoid the conversation on harassment. I'm going to give them the benefit of the doubt that they have not given me. I'm going to give them the benefit of the doubt that they do in fact want to make this institution better, both internally and externally.

● (6135)

I truly believe that we can do that, but we're going to have to do it together. Yes, we work in a minority parliament: Deal with it. Yes, we're going to have to get past...and I'm going to have to get past the anger that has been seething within me for the last couple of days in listening to the constant attacks. I'm going to have to deal with that. I'm going to have to go into the House and hear it yet again and try to deal with it and come to a better place on how we deal with it.

That was the purpose and point of this study. It's supposed to be the start of that conversation and what many members of Parliament, many people within the institution and many of those who support us on a daily basis, whether we see it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not, are dealing with. We have that impact on them.

That's what I wanted to accomplish today. I am so sad that we can't get past some of the partisanship to do that for the health of this institution, for our democracy, which has been railed about for the last few days over two committee meetings. I'm so sorry, but that is the case right now. I hope that whether we come back after question period or not and continue to discuss it or not, or whether we go back to our constituencies and think about what we really want to see from our institution, we can actually have both conversations at the same time so that we are truly getting to a place that we all agree upon.

I would like to remind this committee that the motion that will come to us and has been referred to PROC about foreign interference was adopted unanimously in the House. All parties spoke as to the severity and seriousness of it in the House. We all agree. Instead of this partisanship, gamesmanship and consistent rage farming attitude that we seem to have, let's get past it. Please, let's just get past it. Let's figure out a way that we can do that together. I implore you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Madam Mathysen.

Mr. Genuis, welcome to committee. You are next on our list. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I do want to start by congratulating you on becoming the chair of the procedure and House affairs committee. I wonder if it's one of those things where, when you're the new guy, you have to do the job that nobody else wants, but no, in all seriousness, congratulations.

There's some irony in where I am sitting in the room. Because we have a large number of members here, I am sitting in a seat that is normally where witnesses sit. I had anticipated that the next time I would be back at this committee might be in the role of witness, because it was my question of privilege, the prima facie case of privilege granted by the Speaker, that led to the referral to this committee on the matter of foreign interference.

I want to just briefly share with committee members what happened to provoke this case. Hopefully, it helps members to understand the importance of proceeding in the fashion proposed by my Conservative colleagues.

In 2021, 18 Canadian parliamentarians, we now know, members of Parliament and senators, faced a cyber-attack from what's known as APT31, a China-based PRC-affiliated hacking outfit that was targeting specific legislators around the world because of their affiliation with an organization called the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC.

IPAC does incredible and effective work in bringing together legislators from across the world and from different political traditions to work together on issues related to China. The IPAC model is that in every country where legislators are members, they have co-chairs from two different parties. In this case, for instance, John McKay and I serve as co-chairs, and we have been able to work very collaboratively together, including in the context of raising this issue in the House.

Mr. McKay and I, as well as 16 other parliamentarians, were subject to this cyber-attack in 2021. We were not told about it. The cyber-attack came to our attention because, a few weeks ago, an unsealed indictment in the United States revealed that there had been this global attempt by APT31 to target IPAC legislators. This was the first time that IPAC found out about it, so they followed up with the U.S. government, saying, hey, it sure would have been nice if you had told us that our members and our organization were targeted by APT31.

What ensued was some dialogue between the various organs of the U.S. government and the IPAC secretariat, in which they identified that they did become aware of this attack and they did disseminate information, but because of sovereignty concerns, it is not the policy of the FBI, for better or worse, to contact directly individuals in other countries who are subject to these kinds of attacks. Instead, it is their policy to disseminate this information through notifications to governments, and then the governments respond accordingly. In some cases, legislators were informed at the time this information was received from the U.S. government, and in some cases they were not informed.

In Canada, we were not informed. On this information, the details of which were subsequently shared with the IPAC secretariat, Mr. McKay and I were jointly briefed. This was followed by a briefing to other members of the IPAC membership who were affected. We subsequently both raised a question of privilege a week and a half ago now, which was the first Monday back from a break week during which we had received this briefing. The question of privilege was raised. There were a number of other interventions, and the Speaker granted in a ruling last night that this did constitute a prima facie case of privilege.

I presume and hope that there is an appreciation here of the seriousness of the events I've just described. What matters is the mechanism, the action and the fact that it was a cyber-attack, but what matters more, I think, is the intention, the objective, of the attack.

• (6140)

This was a pixel reconnaissance attack. What that means is that it's a kind of introductory attack, a reconnaissance attack aimed at gathering initial information, which will then be used subsequently for further attacks. Those further attacks could take the form of attempted surveillance, disruption, identifying things that were involved and perhaps identifying individuals we are corresponding with and putting some pressure on them or applying additional pressure or surveillance to those individuals.

We don't really know what all the follow-up of these initial reconnaissance attacks was. Although the House of Commons has said that the attack was unsuccessful, they can't know that, because it was not only parliamentary accounts that were targeted. In my case, my personal account was targeted, a personal email account that is not publicly available anywhere. I still don't know how APT31 hackers got this information. I was targeted in a personal, private place or context because of my parliamentary work.

The other issue is one that an MP raised in debate on this privilege motion yesterday in the House: the fact that his staff had actually been able to find in their email account that these emails were fake news emails. I'm not making an editorial comment when I say "fake news". They were actually from someone pretending to be part of a news organization when they were not. This was not in the way that we often see it happening, but in a more uncommon way, where they were identified as.... These fake news articles had pictures in them. Each of those pictures may have had one or two pixels in them that kind of opened up an access point into someone's computer and allowed them to gather more information.

The point I'm making is just that one of the members during debate yesterday pointed out that his staff had been able to find these emails still in his account, which indicated that at least the emails did get through. That raises some questions about whether or not we can be certain that there was an effective protection in the case of parliamentary accounts. In any event, that doesn't apply to personal accounts, and that doesn't change the fact that people were targeted.

This is the context. I hope members appreciate the seriousness, not only because of the nature of the attack but also because of the motivation that informs it, which is to disrupt our parliamentary work. This is why it's not just an unfortunate event but a question of parliamentary privilege, because our constitutional framework recognizes that we have critical jobs to do as members of Parliament, as part of our democracy, and those jobs were interfered with through a foreign actor. In any case where there is some interference with our ability to do our jobs, that constitutes a matter of privilege, and Parliament prioritizes dealing with that, as certainly we have.

That brings us up to where we were last night with the Speaker's ruling and the subsequent debate that occurred, in which many members made the point that it is an attack on our privilege that there was this foreign interference in our democracy happening again, and that, for the second time, the government failed to inform members of the fact that there was a threat to them or an attack on them by a foreign actor.

Members will recall that this committee studied the issue of the threats against Michael Chong's family in detail. What happened in that case was found to be a prima facie breach of privilege by the Speaker. In the context of some of the conversation around that, the government issued a ministerial directive aimed at ensuring that members would more likely be informed of threats against them, but still, in this case, that did not happen.

The events in the context of this hacking happened before the new ministerial directive was put in place, but you would still expect that the ministerial directive would reasonably be interpreted.... I would hope, if there were threats or attacks made against members that are still relevant to their lives today, that in the context of the new directive members would be informed. I think that perhaps one thing that can be looked at in this study is just getting some clarity around the fact that if there were threats the government became aware of that started prior to that new directive and that are still applicable to members of Parliament, in light of that new directive, members should certainly be informed.

• (6145)

It seems to be the case that in spite of some of the statements that were made, there are still these outstanding issues of threats that have been made that may and likely do have ongoing relevance to members, which members have not been informed about. This is the critical issue going into this discussion: what happened, why it happened, what the motivation was and how we respond.

I hope the response is for this committee to put together robust, detailed recommendations about how to ensure this never happens, to ensure that members of Parliament are informed, and to ensure that in general, when people are subject to foreign interference threats, they are informed—that there's not a hiding of information, but rather that the information is given to those who need it and who can then use that information to take steps to protect themselves.

I hope we also see action, by the way, on holding APT31 accountable. One piece is protecting ourselves and addressing the privilege issues here. Another piece is the response to APT31. I believe in and IPAC legislators across the world have called for the sanctioning of individuals affiliated with APT31 and involved in trying to attack our parliamentary institutions through hacking. We obviously should respond to those kinds of actions with strong sanctions. I speculated last night that one of the reasons the government may not have wanted members of Parliament to be aware of what was happening is that informing members of Parliament would likely have led to calls for a strong response, a strong response in particular of holding accountable those who were perpetrating this hacking.

This morning, there was an agreement in Parliament to move this issue quickly to this committee. There was a unanimous decision by the House of Commons to adopt my motion, which was in the context of the privilege question. My motion was that this matter be referred to this committee. Needless to say, that referral by the House on a matter of privilege is a very serious matter.

There are many other issues that this committee could look at that are issues of great importance, naturally, but there is a limited number of matters that have been referred to this committee by the House unanimously, by members of Parliament from all parties, saying that this is a pressing matter relating to the privileges of parliamentarians and we need PROC to provide an answer in terms of what has happened and what we can and should do going forward in response to that.

Recognizing the electoral timeline, the election.... If certain events remain on the trajectory that they are on, we'll have an election next fall. Of course, in a minority parliament, an election can always happen sooner. I would submit to you that, given the importance of this matter, it's important for our democracy that there are some critical issues of foreign interference that need to be addressed and resolved prior to the next election. One of them is the resolution of this matter of members of Parliament facing cyber-attacks and being able to receive the information related to those attacks and protect themselves in the context of those attacks.

This is why Conservatives have moved an amendment to the existing study motion to emphasize that the other study that has been proposed on an important subject matter begin after the completion of this committee's work on foreign interference. I think that respects the mandate this committee has and, actually, that all parliamentary committees have as creations of the House of Commons. When the House of Commons creates parliamentary committees, their primary responsibility is not to envision themselves as a group of independent members of Parliament doing their own thing, so to speak. They shape their own agendas, generally speaking, but the exception is when they're given direction by the House and their primary responsibility is to report to the House on the matters they study.

• (6150)

The foreign interference issue is one that the Speaker has ruled on, that the House as a whole has unanimously pronounced itself on. Therefore, it is an issue on which the committee should prioritize reporting back to the House.

I hope that, as part of this study, the various members, as well as senators, who are affected by this foreign interference issue are given an opportunity to present. Some have not indicated it publicly, but everyone impacted has been informed. We need to hear about the decision to not inform members. The justification that the government has used for not informing members is to say that it passed information along to certain officials within the House of Commons. Its argument is.... Well, I would say that it admits more than it denies. The government admitted that it received this information from the FBI regarding attacks on members and that it chose to not share it with members. It said, to paraphrase the parliamentary secretary, something to the effect that, well, because of the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative, it decided to tell parliamentary officials instead of members of Parliament.

I am not aware of any tradition of legislative-executive power separation that prohibits the executive from informing individual legislators of information that's relevant to them. Of course, the nature of our system is that we have an executive branch and a legislative branch, and those branches talk to each other. It happens every day in question period. It will happen shortly. It happens in the form of informal conversations or cases in which, if the government is working on pieces of legislation, it will inform members of certain things it's working on, certain intentions, etc.

It doesn't follow for me that somehow the separation of powers that should exist includes a prohibition on members of the executive or organs of the executive communicating with individual members of Parliament. I accept and understand, of course, that the mandate of our security agencies has generally been to report to the government, not to report outside of government. However, that makes the point all the more; it should have been a decision of a directive of government to say that this is information critical to our democracy and sharing this information allows members to protect themselves.

I'll just say that very often, when it comes to foreign interference in general, this government wants to hide information, even in cases where sharing information likely is an effective way of combating that interference. Someone once said that sunlight is the best

disinfectant. In the case of foreign interference, sometimes simply knowing that foreign interference is happening, knowing that particular messages and presentations emanate from foreign interference, and just having that information out there helps to reduce the impact of that foreign interference. However, this government looks for every possible excuse to not share information, even if the national interest would actually be more clearly and directly advanced if that information was shared.

I maintain very strongly that the government should have shared this information with us. It was disappointing to hear, during debate last night, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader again double down on basically saying, in spite of the Speaker's ruling, that he didn't think the government did anything wrong. If the parliamentary secretary's position reflects the government, then the government's position as a whole is that the government did not do anything wrong.

• (6155)

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis, I'm sorry—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** That's a big problem, because it was wrong for them to not inform us.

I cede, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt you. You'll certainly maintain your spot in the speaking order should you choose to rejoin us at PROC when we convene again.

Colleagues, we are about to be out of resources, so I am going to suspend this meeting. We will gather again when we gather again.

Thank you.

*[The meeting was suspended at 1:58 p.m., Thursday, May 9]*

*[The meeting resumed at 11:01 a.m., Tuesday, May 21]*

**The Chair:** Good morning, everybody. I'm going to call our meeting to order here.

*[Translation]*

Welcome to meeting number 114 of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

*[English]*

I hope everybody had a wonderful constituency week, reconnecting with folks in their communities and hopefully getting some time with family.

We have some new protocols in place. I have just a friendly reminder to please ensure that when your headsets are not in use, you are using the stickers beside you out of respect to the interpreters, who have a very important job to fulfill on our behalf here.

Colleagues, I have just a couple of housekeeping things. We were anticipating potentially some votes in the chamber. We will keep our eye on that. There was a little bit of business moved that may delay that vote. We'll deal with what we have to do once that moment in time is reached.

I will remind colleagues that today we continue our debate on the subamendment that was put forward to an amendment that was put forward in response to a motion from Mrs. Romanado. The speaking list is as follows: Mr. Genuis, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Calkins. However, my understanding, colleagues, is that there is a desire on the part of members from all sides to engage in some conversation about potentially getting us to a productive place in terms of some of the affairs that are before us.

I'm just quickly glancing around the room, looking for some head nods that, indeed, we feel we have reached a point where we can have some good discussions. With that, I am going to suspend to allow for those conversations to take place. Once colleagues feel that we are in a place to resume or I get the sense that it's time for us to resume, we will officially kick off again. Happy conversations.

• (34700) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (34805)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, I call this meeting to order.

We first need to deal with unanimous consent, because the bells are ringing. Do I have unanimous consent to continue this meeting until five minutes prior to the vote?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay. We will continue.

We are now back to the debate on the subamendment to Ms. Romanado's motion. Mr. Cooper, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** I would seek unanimous consent to withdraw the subamendment.

**The Chair:** I'm looking for unanimous consent for Mr. Cooper to withdraw his subamendment.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Subamendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** Madame Fortier, do you want the floor? It is yours.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Yes, please.

Thank you.

I will read out the amended motion. While I am reading it, my team is drafting the amendment that I will be sending the clerk.

The amended motion would be as follows:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee conduct a review of the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy, study occurrences and impacts of harassment within the House of Commons, Parliament Hill, Constituency Offices, and via the use of Members' social media, and make any relevant changes to ensure Members of Parliament, personnel and members of the public who participate in the day-to-day activities of the institution are protected from violence and harassment; that the committee invite:

- a) the Chief Human Resources Officer;
- b) the current and past speakers of the House of Commons;
- c) the Clerk of the house;
- d) the head clerk of committees;

e) the Sergeant-At-Arms;

f) the Interpretation Directorate;

g) anti-harassment specialists and workplace mental health and safety experts;

h) and any other witnesses as needed;

that at least three meetings prior to Friday, June 21, 2024 be devoted to witness testimony and that witness lists be submitted to the clerk within seven days upon the adoption of this motion;

and that the committee report its findings to the House.

Mr. Chair, I believe the amended motion has been distributed to members.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Mrs. Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just to reiterate, during our suspension, we had agreements among the parties, so I just want to make sure that these are reflective of the conversations that we had.

[*Translation*]

That is what we discussed earlier.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Romanado.

I am looking around the room. I'm seeing nods, so there is implied consent here. With that, would we like to call a vote on this motion, colleagues, or would we simply like to apply unanimous consent?

I'm asking for unanimous consent.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Congratulations, colleagues. That was a very productive use of time this morning.

Mr. Cooper, I believe you want the floor.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I will now move the motion that I put on notice arising from the prima facie question of privilege that has been referred to this committee by the Speaker, by the House.

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

Go ahead, Monsieur Lauzon.

[*Translation*]

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

Based on our discussions, we will indeed be proposing an amendment to Mr. Cooper's motion. I have in fact already sent it to the clerk, and each member should have a copy in both official languages. There is however one thing that has to be changed: in the second last paragraph, "September 9" should be changed to "August 9". That correction should be made before the amendment is distributed to the members. We discussed it during the negotiations, and everyone agreed.

Mr. Cooper's motion is long, but I will nevertheless take the time to read out the amended version so that we understand the changes properly:

That, in relation to its Order of Reference of Thursday, May 9, 2024, regarding the *prima facie* contempt concerning the People's Republic of China's cyber attack against members of Parliament, the committee:

a) make use, for the purposes of this study:

- (i) the evidence received during its study on foreign election interference;
- (ii) the evidence received during its study of the *prima facie* contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by Wei Zhao against the Member of Wellington-Halton Hills and other Members; and
- (iii) the evidence received by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics during its study on foreign interference, provided that it shall not limit the witnesses who may appear before the committee or the questions which may be asked of them;

b) deem the public evidence, including testimony and documents publicly available on the website of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions and pertaining to cyberattacks to have been received by this committee and may be used in its reports, provided that it shall not limit the witnesses who may appear before the committee or the questions which may be asked of them or the documents which may be requested or ordered to be produced by the committee;

c) invite the following witnesses to appear:

- (i) the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs;
- (ii) the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence and former Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness;
- (iii) the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, former Minister of National Defence;
- (iv) the Honourable Anita Anand, former Minister of National Defence;

We have removed the Honourable Marco Mendicino's name since he is a former Minister of Public Safety. Continuing now:

- (v) panels of impacted Canadian members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China who wish to appear, provided that no more than three members shall appear on each panel, for one hour per panel;
- (vi) Eric Janse, the Clerk of the House of Commons, by himself, for one hour, to discuss parliamentary privilege considerations;
- (vii) Michel Bédard, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons, by himself, for one hour, to discuss parliamentary privilege and the production of documents;
- (viii) officials of the House of Commons Administration, by themselves, for two hours, to discuss information technology and cybersecurity considerations, provided that one hour shall be in camera;
- (ix) the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons;
- (x) officials of the Communications Security Establishment, by themselves, for two hours, provided that one hour shall be in camera;
- (xi) officials of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, by themselves, for two hours, provided that one hour shall be in camera;
- (xii) Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister;
- (xiii) Vincent Rigby, former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, alone, for one hour;
- (xiv) David Morrison, former Acting National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister;

(xv) Jody Thomas, former National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister;

(xvi) officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, alone, for two hours, provided that one hour shall be in camera;

(xvii) officials of the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, by themselves, for one hour;

(xviii) academics, information technology and cybersecurity experts, and other witnesses requested by the committee, provided that the parties shall file their preliminary lists of witnesses within 10 days of the adoption of this motion;

d) order the production of all Canadian memoranda, briefing notes, e-mails, records of conversations, and any other relevant documents, including any drafts, which are in the possession of any government department or agency between January 2021 and December 2022, including the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force, the Critical Election Incident Protocol Panel, relevant minister's office, or the House of Commons Administration, containing information concerning cyberattacks and efforts to conduct cyberattacks against Members of the House of Commons by Advanced Persistent Threat 31 (APT 31) and related entities, provided that:

Here we have removed the list of documents but added the following:

- (i) the departments and agencies tasked with gathering these documents apply redactions according to the Access to Information and Privacy Act;
- (ii) these redacted documents be deposited as soon as possible, but not later than Friday, August 9, 2024, with the clerk of the committee to be distributed to all members of the committee in both official languages;
- (e) report its findings to the House not later than Friday, December 13, 2024 and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

That is the proposed amendment to Mr. Cooper's motion, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

[*English*]

Were there any other members who wanted to speak?

[*Translation*]

Please go ahead, Mr. Berthold.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Chair, if I understand correctly, the six meetings that will be held before the end of June will be devoted to this study. Is that correct?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** That's right.

We have nine meetings left, not counting today. Three of them will be devoted to our study on harassment and six will be devoted to this study. That is what we have agreed today, Mr. Chair.

As we know, the committee will be considering two private members' bills, as well as a question of privilege. So the committee has a lot of work to do, but we have agreed to focus on the two studies that I mentioned for the next nine meetings.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** I believe there was a copy that was circulated. Perhaps the clerk can clarify by reading out loud the wording that was circulated, just to make sure we have the right wording in front of us.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Romanado.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I believe all members and substitutes have received the document with the amendments. Because some people hadn't received it when it was being read out, I want to clarify that what is in the document is the proposal. For the sake of expediency, rather than having the clerk reread the amendments, could we all agree that the document that was circulated by the clerk is the version we are voting on?

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, just to summarize, there may have been a different version being worked on as Monsieur Lauzon was reading. Whether there was or not can simply be rectified by the committee agreeing that the motion that everybody has in their hands, which was circulated by the clerk, is the one we are going to be asking the committee to adopt.

I'm looking around the room. Okay. With that, we are going to move to a vote on this motion.

Do we want to have a recorded vote, or would the committee like to adopt it by unanimous consent? I'm seeing yes on all sides.

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Colleagues, I want to congratulate everybody on a collaborative and efficient use of our meeting time today. I'm very pleased that we have gotten to a point where we have some substance to dive into.

There are a few things to discuss following the meeting in terms of when we're going to get together to talk about the path forward vis-à-vis the two motions we just adopted as a committee. However, with that, I'm going to move to adjourn. There's plenty of time for everybody to get to the vote, and we will see you again on Thursday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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