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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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● (0945)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP)): We'll resume the session on our study of the economics of policing.

This morning I'd like to welcome Christian Leuprecht, professor, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada.

We usually ask our witnesses to start with a 10-minute statement. If you're ready, we'll welcome that statement from you

Prof. Christian Leuprecht (Professor, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada, As an Individual): Thank you, and thank you for having me this morning.

Let me preface my remarks by saying I know that on the one hand, by virtue of working at the Royal Military College of Canada, I'm a civil servant, but I also have the privilege of academic freedom. The remark is important in the sense that what I say this morning is in no way to be construed as partisan, but rather, I trust that all my remarks are soundly supported by evidence and by research, both from within Canada and comparatively. In that sense, I hope these are remarks around which the committee can rally. These are matters that I think, with a little bit of action, can make substantial improvements for Canadians.

I'd also like to remark that this is an area in which we all have a common interest. We are all taxpayers but we are all consumers of security. In that sense, ultimately, if we follow Thomas Hobbes, security is the ultimate public good that a modern state provides. In that sense, if I may say so, we all have a dog in this race together.

[*Translation*]

You can ask your questions in French, as I am bilingual. I will respond in the official language of your choice.

[*English*]

There are four remarks I would like to make at the start with regard to this particular issue, as to where I see opportunities for the federal government to act. One is at a national level. The second is at the federal level. The third is at the level of intergovernmental affairs. The fourth is at the level of the RCMP, the RCMP as the federal police force, with opportunities there for both improvement and also for benchmarking and trendsetting for police forces throughout the country.

From a national perspective, one of the concerns I have is that policing has become a little like calling Ghostbusters. When we have a problem these days, the ultimate default position is to call 911 and a police officer will show up. We've seen a substantial ever-growing enlargement of policing services and what we make police responsible for. This is not necessarily by choice of the police forces themselves. Rather on the one hand, it is by mandates we have imposed upon them. On the other hand, by having installed a default mentality that when we need someone to solve a dispute or when we have a raucous kid somewhere in the neighbourhood, we call our police force. This has led, over the last 130 or 140 years, to a substantial and continuous expansion of police services.

The most recent expansion has been in the areas of mental health. One of the concerns here is that as the federal government and particularly provincial and municipal governments, which are largely responsible for the delivery of social programs and the supports that go along with them, look to balance their books, we will see cuts in precisely those types of support services. We will likely see an enlarged call volume for non-traditional policing-type services.

This is the same with child protection and child welfare. My wife is a social worker for the Children's Aid Society and there are increasing demands. When couples split up, we now have a police officer standing by, if there has been violence, to monitor the person moving out of the house. These ever-enlarging duties mean that we have a sort of iceberg problem, if you will. The more we impose duties on police services that are non-traditional, non-conventional policing services, the less of the tip of the iceberg we actually see in terms of people who are out in patrol cars and people who are out on the roads. So it's no surprise that people can say they can drive from Ottawa to Toronto without ever passing a police cruiser.

My plea on this particular account is that we need a national discussion on what actually constitutes core policing duties. I don't necessarily have a direct and clear answer for that. As Canadians, we need to decide what are policing functions and what are functions that in many cases are carried out, not only more effectively but more cheaply and more professionally, by other agencies. I'm sure you've talked to plenty of police officers, as part of the committee work, who have told you that they are not mental health workers. When they show up, their training has not really prepared them for that particular situation.

● (0950)

First, we need a national discussion on what constitutes core policing duties. What are duties that police officers are doing—administratively but also on the intervention side—that would be better done by other agencies, or in cooperation with them? Calgary police and Durham police have some models in that regard. That's the first element.

The second element pertains to the federal level. What specifically does the federal government need to do? I'm happy to discuss this more during questions, but in particular, we need a national records management system. Every police force currently has its own digital records management system. These systems, in most cases, don't even talk to one another. So it is very difficult to exchange information. When police talk about paperwork, they mean paperwork. While we have digitized processes within police forces, we don't have a very effective way of sharing information amongst police forces. We also don't have a particularly effective way of sharing this information with the crown, or with the defence, for instance.

You have all seen the television pictures of large police investigations where police officers are trucking out box-loads of paperwork because they have no other method of sharing this documentation. We need a national electronic records management system—a system that doesn't just connect police forces to one another but also connects courts and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, so that the crown can have access to this. This is not just a matter of cost savings. This is a matter of making our justice system a whole lot more efficient. When we currently schedule police officers, for instance, it is all done on paper. Miscommunication and missed dates cost our courts system and the police uncountable amounts of money.

The other advantage of a national records management system is that when we have large investigations, the police officer would have something known as the advisory crown. This is usually a crown that will help with issues such as warrants. What the advisory crown should really be helping with is the entire investigation and the entire investigative process—to point out to the police officers when there may be pieces of evidence that they still need to gather for the crown to prosecute the case successfully.

With the exception of warrants, what we currently have is a situation where the crown is often confronted with the evidence after the fact. The crown then discovers that there is certain evidence missing, or certain evidence that perhaps was collected in a fashion that makes it difficult to present in a court of law. It's not just about the cost savings. It's about making the entire system more efficient and it's about making sure that in these increasingly complex cases.... Just about every case is becoming more complex, even the simple defences. The defence has an interest in making cases complex, and I will explain in a moment why.

We have colleges for physicians and various professions in this country, but we don't have a police college standard, per se. The country needs a professional standard for police officers. It would cover everything from the way we do tactical training to professional expectations, to professional ethics to the leadership training we expect. If we want to treat policing as a profession, we need to recognize this through a college. Ultimately, we probably don't want the civilian authority to interfere too much in the autonomy of our various police forces, because we want them to get on with their jobs. The way to do this is to make sure that we treat them as a profession.

The third element that I might point out is intergovernmental affairs and intergovernmental relations. In the aftermath of 9/11, we saw substantial emphasis on trying to get lower-level forces, municipal and provincial, to prosecute cases that are national security cases, or cases that are ultimately in the federal government's interest rather than the local interest. As local and provincial governments and forces look to balance their budgets, they inherently retrench to the priorities that are the most important for their particular level of government, and for the people to whom they are ultimately accountable. That means, for most municipal and provincial forces, primarily issues such as organized crime as opposed to issues of national security, for instance.

● (0955)

I have two quick final remarks with regard to the RCMP. The way it is structured with its paramilitary heritage, it looks unique in the western democratic world and the western policing world in the sense that here we have officers who one day are writing liquor tickets and breaking up domestic disputes and the next day are promoted to the white-collar crime force in Toronto because they have done their stint up in the North.

I think the RCMP needs to have three tiers: one that looks after client-based services, namely provincial policing and a few other services; one that looks after federal investigations; and a separate civilian tier that looks after things such as human resources, finances, and policy.

To this effect, I will submit to the committee “Organization and Accountability”, a document from 1999 that explains the way the Department of National Defence is organized to have a civilian part and a uniformed part. While there's crossover between the two, it is important that we separate these functions and that we have separate recruitment streams.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): Thank you very much, Professor Leuprecht.

We'll begin now with a seven-minute round of questions. I will just give everybody a slight warning that there is a chance this morning's session may be disrupted by bells. If so, we will probably have to adjourn the session.

We'll start with Ms. Bergen for seven minutes.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Dr. Leuprecht, for being here today.

You gave us a lot of information, so I want to go back, because I actually didn't even have a chance to write some of it down. I'm going to go to the most recent point about the RCMP and the three-tiered system.

Can you just go through your suggestions and take a couple more moments to explain those three tiers you were suggesting?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: If we want to achieve not just functional efficiencies—performing tasks better—but also cost savings.... Currently uniformed members are performing tasks for which they really do not have a comparative advantage or particular training, nor are they particularly well prepared to carry them out. In particular, we have a deputy commissioner who looks after financial accountability, and we have a deputy commissioner who looks after human resources. Those are ultimately tasks that in just about every department, including the Department of National Defence, are, by and large, carried out by civilians who are professionalized in those particular areas.

I think the RCMP would benefit from being able to invest its resources and its attention into the core function of policing—both the provincial policing part and the federal policing task that it carries out—rather than being distracted by a whole bunch of other tasks that are really purely administrative. I've noticed in the last couple of years that the organization has civilianized a couple of these particular functions. But ultimately, I would envisage an organization that has—and I think the initial spirit of the idea was correct—essentially a civilian commissioner just the way the Department of National Defence has a deputy minister, and a uniformed cadre that looks specifically after the policing functions of the organization.

I also think we have considerable inefficiencies in the way the organization is divided. We don't have clear boundaries, in terms of the human resources side, between the federal investigative functions and the provincial policing functions. In just about every other country we can think of, the functions that the RCMP performs in one organization are performed by separate organizations. We don't necessarily need to stand up a whole separate bureaucracy, but we do need to essentially provide some firewalls within the organization to designate one to look after the provincial policing tasks, and another that recruits directly and has direct-entry opportunities for everybody from lawyers to accountants into the federal investigative branch of the organization.

While there are problems with the FBI and I don't think we can transfer the FBI model to Canada, basically we need an FBI type of organization for Canada that is not tied in to the RCMP's traditional and conventional recruitment and training type of system through Depot. It's highly unattractive to many people who have professional degrees to enter a system that doesn't value people for the professions they have.

It is baffling to me how many people with master's degrees, with law degrees, and with Ph.D.s are out there in the organization, writing traffic tickets because the organization says they don't have enough time in and they need to work their way up through the hierarchy. In other federal investigative policing organizations such as the FBI and the German Bundeskriminalamt, there are direct-entry positions for people who are simply looking after federal investigations per se.

I'll submit this document. I've written on this particular subject matter, and I'll submit that also for the committee's reference.

● (1000)

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you.

I also want to go back to one of your other recommendations, the federal national records management system.

Can you compare that...? I know we have CPIC, which, as long as police organizations enter into it, is accessible across the country. What's the difference? You're actually talking about evidence. Can you explain how, if we were to do this federally, we could set it up so it would end up being a cost savings, and not just another level of bureaucracy, another area where police organizations would have to pay in, and some larger ones would see a huge benefit, but maybe not some smaller ones?

That would be my concern.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: The national records management system is intended for all investigations and all the evidence that is collected as part of those investigations. CPIC just has a very small.... It's simply to reference certain types of offences with regard to offenders.

This idea here is that police forces currently collect, even on these complex, multi-jurisdictional investigations, their own pieces of evidence. They don't have an electronic system to collate this, so they literally exchange—in most cases, not all of the cases—paperwork.

The PRIME and the PROS servers that the RCMP have don't have enough capacity, for instance, to upload large files with regard to pictures, JPEGs, records, and whatnot. So we don't have an effective way, in these increasingly complex investigations, of actually keeping track of all the material that is being collected. When we end up sharing that material, it stays within that one particular police force that is running the investigation or in a sharing mechanism that a couple of the organizations might have worked out for that particular investigation.

We don't have an opportunity for multi-jurisdictional investigations where every police force can enter its records—evidence as it gathers it, its pictures, whatever seizures it might have—into the same records management system that is then accessible to all the police forces working on that particular file, and is also immediately electronically accessible to the crown, to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. It also makes it possible to release all those records to the courts, and possibly also to the defence, because this way we won't have issues with regard to disclosure, for instance, when we find something at the bottom of some box that we perhaps forgot and that then compromises the investigation. We have one electronic mechanism of keeping records.

While this might not be as important when we're trying to prosecute burglaries at the local level, when we're trying to have national security investigations, when we're trying to prosecute organized crime across multiple provinces, across municipal, provincial, federal police forces, we need a mechanism to keep all that evidence electronically in one place rather than having disparate pieces and then trying to share paper among all these organizations—let alone trying to bring that paper into a courtroom to disclose it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): Thank you very much, Professor Leuprecht.

[*Translation*]

We now go to the official opposition.

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor.

Ms. Élaine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Leuprecht, for your presentation. It was very thorough and informative.

We recently had an opportunity to visit different places to see how they did things. We went to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and Calgary, Alberta, among other places. You may have heard about the policing approaches those municipalities use, HUB and COR. They require the cooperation of communities and social stakeholders. I was wondering whether you had looked at those types of approaches in your research and whether you could comment on their effectiveness.

If not, did your research identify any tangible reductions in the demand for services or methods used to redirect police interventions, in cities other than the ones mentioned? As you said earlier, this is a serious problem for our police forces. I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

● (1005)

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Since it's a fairly complex question, I would like to answer in English, if you don't mind, to avoid any ambiguity.

[*English*]

There's ample opportunity within our police services for a division of labour among the functions that police services perform, particularly with regard to the use of special constables. We currently have police officers doing everything from running background checks on people—and of course we're running a lot more background checks—to doing medical training and education and training at Depot and at our police academies, even on matters of criminal law, on things where arguably those officers are hardly the people who are the best qualified to instruct our officers.

I think there's ample opportunity in things like court services, community policing, and public affairs to specialize those functions with either civilian positions or special constables. I point in particular to the British approach, where even traffic police and traffic flows have been outsourced.

I want to differentiate here between outsourcing and privatization versus the civilianization of certain functions. There are pilot projects in the United States that have been highly successful in interventions that are not high-risk interventions. We now send civilian members of the force to do the investigation after burglaries. These members will even bring the insurance adjuster along so you can do all the paperwork there in one go. One of the challenges when we have police officers is that they inherently get called away for other types of functions that they then need to perform.

The one function where I would be reticent to have it performed by civilians or to have it outsourced is actual traffic stops, because these are the actual areas where we lose.... The greatest number of deaths of police officers is as a result of traffic stops, because it's a hazardous work environment, on the one hand, and it's also dangerous in the sense that if you're pulling over someone who might have a record or whatnot, you might put yourself at risk. This is one area where we need the accountability and the high level of training.

But you are absolutely correct. I think we need to think much more judiciously about what functions we can actually have performed by members who may indeed be sworn members, even perhaps including mental health or child protection workers, who might also be sworn members but who don't intervene in a crisis situation with a gun at their side, because ultimately that is unlikely to de-escalate particular circumstances.

So indeed, in the division of labour and the specialization of functions, we have a one-size-fits-all system. It's the iceberg problem, where if we don't think about what tasks we can actually have other elements within organizations perform, we're going to see an ever-smaller tip of that iceberg actually out there and being able to perform the core policing functions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Élaine Michaud: Thank you for your answer.

You mentioned auxiliary officers. That is one component. On our trip, we were able to attend a meeting of stakeholders who were following the HUB approach. It was in Prince Albert. Representatives from aboriginal communities, social services, health services and corrections, as well as probation officers were together at the table. They discussed specific cases affecting the community and then came up with an intervention action plan fairly quickly, sometimes even the same day.

I was wondering whether, in your research, you had come across similar models elsewhere. If not, could you comment on this specific approach to police work within communities?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I know there is a pilot project in Calgary, Durham and Toronto. People there are also trying to adopt a more coordinated approach. Financial savings are not necessarily the main focus.

● (1010)

[*English*]

One of the challenges we have had is that we have securitized many police interventions by virtue of calling police officers to them. I think the greatest benefit of this approach is that we de-securitize certain types of interventions and we recognize them for what they are, which is that these are relationship problems, mental health problems, or public health problems. These are not ultimately functions we want to securitize. When we send a police offer and we securitize them, we have a much greater chance of these individuals ending up in the justice system. In the justice system they're usually not particularly well served, plus it's also the single most expensive way of solving any one particular approach.

I'm not sure, for instance, that sending a social worker with a police officer necessarily generates cost savings per se, especially if you have to call out the social worker, who then works on time-and-a-half or double-time pay or whatnot. Overall, you can provide a much more effective service to the individual, and you can have a much greater chance of keeping that individual out of the security and justice system by having a coordinated intervention that is based on professionals as well as the community.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): There's very little time remaining, so I think we'll go to Mr. Norlock on the government side.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and through you to the witness, thank you for appearing today.

As I'm listening to you, I go through some 30 years of policing and come up with a couple of suggestions.

The citizens of this country are the consumers of public safety, and to me you have to look for a model out there that serves their customers best and find out how they do it. A lot of it comes down to some of the examples you used.

I use the example of Walmart. Go to a Walmart store now and you can get your prescription filled, or you can get your photographs done. You buy your groceries, buy your clothes, or buy your electronics. It's one stop.

I think if we look at it, you're basically selling a one stop when it comes down to records management. When it comes down to records management everybody wants somebody else to pay for it, and I'm talking about different levels of government. How I would sell it is that I'm prepared—at least I think I'm prepared—to look at that as a central location for records. But the people who currently pay for that, in other words, municipalities pay for their large, city police forces to have this records management....

You should sit down with the people who want you to manage their records system, and they're going to pay for a share of that. So it shouldn't be the big federal government paying for everything. It should be currently you incur certain costs so you will incur the percentage of costs on the amount of data you put into this database, which is a records management system. I say this because we have different people who want to push in different directions, and it should be that the users of that system pay.

When you talk about how policemen shouldn't do everything, the customer will decide what they want the police to do. I'll give you an example.

In the OPP, we decided to reduce the number of officer calls. Mrs. Jones or Mr. Jones has their car stolen, and after the telephone triage of the incident, the OPP say, why do we send an officer to go to that door 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 kilometres away, just to verify there's no car in the driveway? Mr. Jones has never called the police in his life for anything. He pays his municipal, provincial, and federal taxes, and the one time he needs a police officer to come and at least share in his disappointment, we're not sending somebody. So there's an expectation that the provider of the service has to accommodate.

I wonder if you would make some comments on what I have just said.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: With regard to the OPP, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario just made available its records to OPP officers. This is in regard to drivers' licence suspensions and whatnot, as a particularly useful tool.

But the problem is that the MTO has also now downloaded the inputting of certain types of offences onto the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police forces for those particular types of records. One of the challenges that now poses is that courts still expect an agent of the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario to provide those records to the courts, usually with a certain type of sworn statement.

One of the challenges we have is indeed that the devil is in the details, with how we work out the user-pay system, and also with making sure that when we provide more digitization to our police forces, we don't then download, on top of that, ever greater tasks in terms of digitization.

As you well know, having served, one of the challenges these days is transcripts for videotaped statements and interviews, which the police have to essentially transcribe, even though it might be the crown that requests them. Why is it that we cannot have a stenographer or whoever transcribe it, for instance? Because there are no resources within the system.

One of the challenges is indeed that we can have a user-pay system, but we also need to make sure that as part of the user-pay system we don't then increase the burden on police officers to input, or to provide data and digitized data that previously they didn't have to provide. I think this is one of the challenges with being called out to certain types of calls. When you would have started your career, a domestic dispute would have been a 30-minute call. Now if there is a domestic dispute, this takes an officer out for the full eight hours or more of his shift, because of all the paperwork and documentation that is required.

I think there is an equilibrium needed here between what serves the taxpayer and the individual who is calling the police force, and the burden it imposes on the police force. This is especially true in times when, for instance, the particular force or that particular shift might already be stretched because an officer is off on court duty, for which he had just been scheduled but for which the police force doesn't have any overtime resources to schedule someone else on that shift, so that particular shift is now down an officer. Weighing these challenges, I think, is much more complex than it appears.

In that regard, I think one of the greatest challenges is the way our court system operates, and the way people systematically—particularly on the defence side—abuse our court system, to continually push out trials for completely dubious and spurious reasons, claiming there wasn't full disclosure, or claiming that somebody needs a translator, an interpreter, or whatnot. So we push out these trials for a couple of years and then eventually, as in Kingston—where a reasonably mid-sized human-smuggling case was recently dropped from the system because it was essentially overdue—they are turfed.

I think there could be a major efficiency here. If we want our police officers to be able to respond to the calls that you've just laid out for us, and if we want them to be there for the taxpayer when his or her car is stolen, we need to make sure they don't get tied up in call after call to the courts, for the same case, in order to then have to defend those who say they need this piece or they need that piece, and we continue to have trials pushed out.

I propose a system where a change in the way the law is written... that both sides have an opportunity to make a full submission to the court, and whatever is not requested in that submission.... It's like walking into the ER, where you need to have someone at the front and a sort of triage person who decides that, okay, everybody has made their full submission, you want an interpreter, or you think there hasn't been full disclosure, and they pass that on to the crown and make sure that the crown checks that they have rightful disclosure. But when you come in front of the judge, this is your one shot at actually coming in front of the judge, so there is no continuously pushing things out.

● (1015)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): We'll have to stop there.

It's now over to Mr. Scarpaleggia, for seven minutes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): You've brought a lot of insight and information into our discussion. You brought a new perspective. As you alluded to in your opening remarks, we've been mostly meeting police chiefs and front-line officers and so on. It's good to have a bit more of a theoretical perspective.

I'm still trying to get a handle on the idea of civilianization. For example, I understand the concept that we can get civilians to be doing things that police officers would normally have done. One example that was brought up was the example from Ontario that Mr. Norlock discussed. I believe it was the idea—and correct me if I'm wrong—that in Ontario if you get your car stolen they could send a non-civilian...no, that's just an idea. You gave another example where there's more civilianization happening.

But let's just take that example. We have one objection, which of course is a valid one to that model. That is, people have their cars stolen, they rarely deal with the police, if ever, and they expect that a police officer will come by because it's a law and order issue. It's a good idea, but then there's some pushback there.

Then we say we could use civilianization for traffic violations. For example, in Montreal, there are special units that only deal with traffic. They're in police cars and they can't deal with anything else but traffic violations, speeding and so on. They may be manned by cadets, but I'm not sure—or maybe not cadets but perhaps a different level of officer, I'm not sure. Then you said that pulling people over on the service road of a highway is potentially dangerous. It's a potentially dangerous manoeuvre. In fact, that's where sometimes police officers get injured and so on. That kind of argues against civilianization. Then we get to if it's a domestic dispute, maybe we don't need to send a police officer. Maybe we need to send someone else because there's so much paperwork involved and statements to be taken. On the other hand, if ever there was a situation where you might like to see a police officer at the door, it would be in the context of conjugal violence.

So I'm having trouble. I understand the concept of civilianization, but everywhere you turn there seems to be a reason why you can't civilianize necessarily or to the extent that one would like.

● (1020)

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Let me give you a concrete example.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Yes, please do.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: The Tournament of Hearts in Kingston: it's a curling tournament. There are four RCMP officers on overtime pay doing red serge duty.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Doing what?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Doing red serge duty.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'm not familiar with curling. What's that?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Okay. This is just to say that the challenge is this. We send four RCMP officers on their regular pay out to do essentially what is a symbolic duty, standing there with the red serge, the boots, and whatnot. This is a function that a retired officer would be happy to do if we paid this individual a per diem, paid them their meals. Why do we need somebody there on the full dime?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Absolutely. You're right.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: These red serge duties are particularly ironic in Ontario because Ontario is all federal policing. Technically, these are all plainclothes officers. The logic behind the plainclothes officers is that we don't make them public. Yet we send them out on red serge duty for these types of events. That's a simple example of a case where—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I would submit that's not how we're going to control police costs in Canada—

Mr. Rick Norlock: I would submit that it is.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: —just on one example of red serge duty.

Anyway, I'll move on to another point, which is the digital records management system. We understand the idea behind it and its utility.

Are there other countries that have achieved this and have a good centralized digital records management system that includes all the evidence that is required in court cases and so on? Or is this still something that is aspirational at this point?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I can't comment on the technicalities, but I'm happy to get back to the committee on that matter. I can tell you one of the pushbacks on that is always security and how many people might actually see all the evidence that's being collected.

I would submit that if Xythos and if this type of record-keeping is good enough for the U.S. Special Forces and for the U.S. military to coordinate its missions—some of its most highly sensitive missions abroad.... Because they have so many players across the world, moving paper around is not an option. In many cases it's far less secure than actually keeping everything on a cloud where you actually have a considerable measure of security and you can track everyone's access to that particular documentation.

So I think the pushback that often comes is on the security side and I would submit that this system is more secure and more efficient, let alone the costs that some of the current paper systems generate.

● (1025)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: What I found though is—and I'm not arguing with the idea, it's obviously a good idea—that often when you get into IT systems, the costs just skyrocket. Budgets are surpassed. Whether it's the public sector or the private sector, you start with a great notion and a good plan for an IT upgrade or a new system and the thing gets away from everybody. That's why I was wondering if there were examples in other countries where systems like this had been economically implemented and on time and so on and so forth. I think that would be something to look at.

On the notion of a police college, you're talking about a national police college that would do certification and some parts of training or all training?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): It's time for a very brief answer on this.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Do you think Quebec would go along with that?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I'll give a very quick answer. One example is Frontex. The private data on over 300 million European citizens shared among the law enforcement agencies of 27 European Union countries. Their system works terrifically. I'd be happy to provide you with lots of examples.

Police college.... I think whether Quebec goes along with it or not, we have lots of opportunity for symmetry in this country. If Quebec wants to have its own police college, that's perfectly fine and acceptable. If other provinces want to come along and we want to have a national standard.... Whether we have a national college or 10 different colleges that ultimately—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): We'll have to return to this, perhaps in another question.

Now it's time for a second round of five-minute questions.

We'll go to Mr. Rafferty.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, professor, for being here today.

One of the things you didn't touch on in your opening statement, and I wonder if you would like to make some comments on it, is the idea that when we're talking about the economics of policing, if you want to save some money ultimately, you might have to spend some money on things like prevention, for example.

It just makes sense that if there's less crime it costs less to have a police service in place, because you did talk about lessening the expansion of police services. You mentioned collaboration as one, but I wonder if you could talk about prevention specifically.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I think one of the biggest challenges in our system—in particular the way we train our officers—is that it's all about catching bad guys. It's about the how but it's not about the why. Ultimately, good policing services should be about crime prevention, not primarily about “there are always bad guys out there” but ultimately about a police officer who knows this community.

But the challenge is that the way we currently train officers, that's not happening. Because all we teach officers—whether it's at the police college in Ontario or whether it's at Depot—is about how we do all the tactical things in terms of arresting people. If we want to get to a prevention-based policing model, we need a leadership and ethics concept that asks not just how we do policing, but why we do policing. What is the relationship between the police and their society? It requires a much different approach to embedding a police officer and educating a police officer within their society.

One example is in Switzerland where it's a year-long course in order to be a police officer. Half the year is spent on tactical things as we do here. The other half is based on things such as history, leadership, ethics, basic norms and values, explaining how government works. Many police officers I have met can't really tell you exactly why the outcomes in traffic court and criminal court are different. Why is it that in traffic court, so often, it doesn't go the police officer's way? It's because, chances are, you won't go to jail in traffic court, but in criminal court you are. Obviously the standard of evidence is going to be higher.

I'm absolutely on line with that, but it requires a complete shift in how we train and educate our police officers.

Mr. John Rafferty: You talked about core policing functions and about getting to the point where that's clear, where there aren't so many blurred lines. Again, you talked about collaboration, but in municipalities right across Canada, for example, you have paramedics, you have the fire service, and you have the police service. They're all first responders. A lot of the calls they get are from seniors in distress and that sort of thing.

Do all three have to show up at the doorstep? Are there ways to make this safe, to continue to make it as efficient and safe as it is, but without using all those resources? That's just one example that comes to mind. I wonder if you could expand a little more on core police functions.

● (1030)

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Well, as a student of federalism, I would submit that by and large this is a municipal coordination problem in most cases. There's considerable variation across this province, for instance, as to who gets called out and when. In principle, I entirely concur with you that it's hardly a good use of taxpayer resources to call the ambulance, the $350,000 fire truck with eight people on board, and the police cruiser when grandma, as tragic as it is, breaks her leg walking down the stairs.

But ultimately I think we need to make sure that we stay within our areas of jurisdiction, and I'm not sure the federal government can provide a whole lot of leadership, because, as Mr. Norlock pointed out, for instance, this would be a local community decision, and different types of communities have different types of needs in that regard. But in principle, I concur.

Mr. John Rafferty: I'd like to go back to my first question just briefly. I have just one minute left.

In Ontario, there's a police foundations course, which you're probably very familiar with at the college. I don't know what the rest of the provinces do with regard to this, but when you talk about changing the way that's done, I wonder if you could comment. This is not to cast the police foundations course in Ontario, for example, in a bad light with regard to the course and how it's taught now.

But what sorts of things would you concentrate on if you were to change that course to reflect, for example, that emphasis on prevention?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: What I would change is the entire way you get promoted. The way you currently get posted into Depot, because it's the quickest and easiest way to get promoted, is that you go into the applied police science program and you teach in that program, and this is sort of your path to promotion.

Teaching at a police college should not be a path for promotion. Teaching at police colleges should be done by professionals, by those who are professionals in matters of criminal law, for instance, and whatnot.

I would encourage you, sir, to sit in on a course. You will see that people literally read PowerPoint decks, people who don't entirely really understand what it is that they are actually teaching about. It becomes a check mark sort of approach to training individuals, as opposed to having professors who can help people paint a much bigger picture.

I always compare it this way. One of the challenges is that we teach them all the tactics, but the problem is that the tactics can bring down the government tomorrow. Somebody might make the right tactical decision on the ground, but it might be a decision that would never be accepted by Canadian society in regard to the way that particular decision, while tactically correct, was actually carried out. I think this is the understanding that's missing—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): Thank you very much, Mr. Leuprecht. We're out of time again.

We'll go to the government side for five minutes.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for coming. It's an important study that we're doing and you gave us some very interesting information. I found the thoughts you had for us extremely inclusive.

We have heard from a number of different organizations, such as police forces and so on, that the cost of policing is going up. In fact, one of my colleagues here has suggested that the policing costs for some of the communities here in Ontario are going to be somewhere near 50% of the municipal budget, which is huge. I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts on that.

You did talk a bit about auxiliary police officers and some of the alternate duties they could perform. Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to give us on that?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: My concern is that we focus too much on the actual cost of what we pay police officers and not enough on what we actually want these officers to do. Then we have them do all sorts of functions that ultimately aren't in their particular field of expertise. I think it is important not to demonize police officers who are putting their lives on the line for duty, and in many cases, are absolutely terrific. Some of the best people I know are police officers. I'm happy as a taxpayer to pay them what they are worth.

This is partially due also to the legislator and what the legislator expects with regard to accountability and to what citizens expect, for instance, in terms of response time in a domestic dispute, which is normally a two-car call on every dispute. We've imposed a whole bunch of requirements on police officers that they didn't choose for themselves, that we made them comply with.

At the same time, investigations and the carrying out of police work has become much more complex over the last 30 years. The amount of paperwork, the amount of investigation, the amount of evidence that is required to be collected for a prosecution, even for a simple traffic issue, for instance.... If you're appearing in traffic court and you have 10 cases that are up, you need to write a separate brief for each one of them, but then the same police officer also has to provide the driver's licence background record to the defence for that particular case. Now, there's an easy function that could readily be performed by a civilian at a cost proposition.... You want the driving record of that particular individual. Why should we be having the police force...?

I think the challenge in the cost of policing is that policing is an easy profession in which to push off the cost, because for the courts, it doesn't cost anything to have the police officer write the transcript. It doesn't cost MTO anything to make MTO enter additional data. It doesn't cost the defence anything to request the driving record.

So we essentially externalize. So many other agencies have externalized what are essentially their tasks onto the police. In part it's that the police have a tradition of not pushing back, of not standing up, but rather as good civil servants saying, sure, whatever you ask us to do, that's what we'll do.

● (1035)

Mr. LaVar Payne: You make a good point on that. We visited a number of police stations on our study.

You talked about the training they should be getting. What we've seen in a number of institutions—the Calgary police force, the Prince Albert police force, the L.A. police force, the San Diego police force—is that every one of those police forces has changed the type of officer that they're trying to hire. Instead of hiring someone just for enforcement, they're looking at opportunities for these individuals to look for better uses of their time, to better help those individuals, whether it goes to social services or health services.

We see a number of those types of things happening. I think you'd probably support the process that's happening in a number of different communities across North America.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I support the process, but I think there are different types of models to try to achieve those particular outcomes. I think we're still doing too much experimentation and we haven't really had the type of leadership that we need ultimately to arrive at a more comprehensive model.

One example is the difference between the provincial and the federal levels. With the OPP, and with most municipal forces in Ontario, for that matter, if you don't have a university degree now, or a minimum of a college policing justice degree, you're virtually not going to get into the organization. One of my concerns is that while there are some absolutely terrific people in leadership at the RCMP, there are still too many positions that are "minimum qualification at entry", which means a high school degree and no criminal record.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): Thank you very much, Professor Leuprecht.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rousseau now has the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I listened to you, Mr. Leuprecht, I realized that, when it comes to matters of public safety and national security, we do not instinctively turn to academic organizations like yours when looking for ways to improve our policing system.

Your input today is showing us, however, just how much we can learn from you about those matters. Numerous solutions need to be considered, but no such work has been done. It could be something along the lines of assessing a police officer's routine task, from beginning to end, to identify where the weak links are and where efficiencies could be gained.

With that in mind, I'd like to ask you what you consider to be a front-line police officer's typical duties? Investigations are another component. You said there were many professionals that were not being used effectively in this environment.

I'd like to hear your thoughts on those questions.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: The federal government could conduct a study on all the costs and requirements imposed on police forces, whether it is the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec or other provincial or municipal bodies. The idea would be to determine which costs and which requirements they are responsible for, which ones they should really be responsible for and which ones should be paid for by the courts, the defence or civilians.

● (1040)

[*English*]

Criminal record checks—there's no need for civilians to carry out those checks, let alone for a person in uniform to carry out those checks or to file all those records.

[*Translation*]

I think a fairly comprehensive study on all the costs imposed on our police forces and networks could be carried out. It would give us the basis for a discussion on which duties could be funded in other ways. It could also help free up funds, allowing police forces to spend that money on activities that are, first and foremost, truly policing duties, instead of on administrative tasks and so forth.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: You mentioned the RCMP. I get the sense that it has always been the model that all the other police forces were supposed to look to. Obviously, it is also important to address the different cultures we have across Canada. There are first nations police forces and, as you said, provincial and municipal forces.

Should the RCMP not be looked upon as a model in terms of how to perform tasks? Indeed, should it not serve as a testing ground?

[*English*]

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: The RCMP is a structured force that looks very different from the provincial police forces in Ontario and Quebec and any municipal force in this country. This comes out of its paramilitary heritage. We see this in the type of esprit de corps within the RCMP. We see it in the values for leadership and promotion as opposed to other police forces in this country.

I think the RCMP is globally considered a leader in many aspects, but I think the RCMP also has considerable challenges, particularly on the human resources side.

For instance, I would submit as a recent challenge the individual in Alberta who was reprimanded for activities with two teenage girls and whatnot. While this individual was reprimanded, how did this individual get into the force, and how did this individual ever get promoted? Those are questions we ultimately need to ask supervisors. I think those questions point to a challenge in institutional culture within the RCMP.

Turning the RCMP from the vestiges of a paramilitary force into a police service remains an ongoing challenge. I think some of the issues with regard to treatment of women, a culture of bullying that continues to be pervasive in the organization, a culture of promotion whereby whom you know and who champions you largely determines whether you're going to get to the top. Under Commissioner Zaccardelli, it was not by accident that three pairs of brothers, when senior leadership positions for a $4 billion a year organization....

I would submit perhaps there is still some opportunity to continue with reform in the organization.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: I think so too.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): There is time for one very brief question and answer.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Could I take one quick moment? Professor, after your previous comments I think you would agree that Bill C-42 is needed to modernize the RCMP in terms of human resources.

I don't know if you're familiar with the bill and have had a chance, but could you comment on the bill, not only what it provides in modernizing human resources management but even oversight because we can't let that.... I think we all recognize that, but we're moving in the direction to give the RCMP the tools they need to change that culture, and the Liberals supported it as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): There is time for a very brief answer.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Certainly an organization that until now had offered unlimited sick days to its membership offers no incentive to ever take long-term disability. Why would you take a 30% cut in pay when you can take unlimited sick leave? Indeed, reform is necessary.

At the same time, *suite à votre question*, I would encourage the committee to provide more opportunity for researchers to gather data and to study our security organizations, which are often very closed organizations that are very reticent to have anybody from the outside study them. I think there is the opportunity to generate much more research here and provide helpful answers to the questions you are posing.

● (1045)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Randall Garrison): Thank you very much for your testimony today. The committee will stand adjourned until Thursday morning.

Meeting adjourned.