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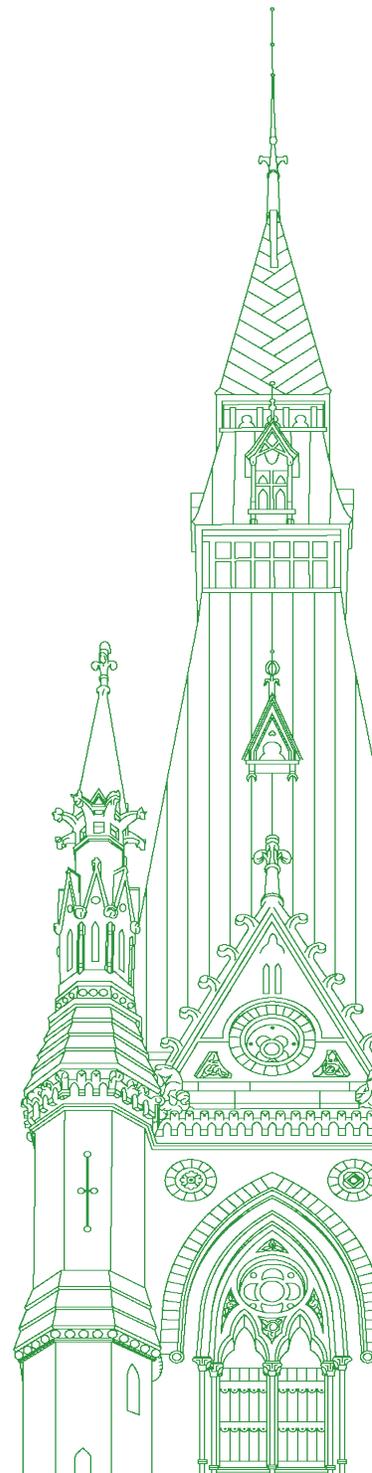
Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship

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Tuesday, November 1, 2022



Chair: Mr. Ken Hardie

Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship

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• (1835)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.)):
Good evening, everyone.

I call the meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number six of the House of Commons Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship.

Pursuant to the order of reference of May 16, 2022, the committee is meeting for its study of the Canada–People’s Republic of China relations with a focus on Canada–Taiwan relations.

Today’s meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

I would like to offer the following comments as we get into tonight’s session.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. Please mute yourself when you’re not speaking.

For interpretation for those on Zoom, you have the choice at the bottom of your screen—that little planet icon—of floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I’ll remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

Committee members, we will have a very short business session at the end of our testimony tonight. We just have one item of note on the calendar that we may have to make an adjustment for.

I’d now like to welcome our witnesses for the first section.

From the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada, we have Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng, representative; Bryan Chiao-Lu Ping, executive director; and Ethan Han-Ming Chen, executive assistant director.

Mr. Tseng, you have five minutes for your opening statement. Welcome to the Canada–China committee.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng (Representative, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada): Thank you.

Honourable Chair, vice-chairs and members of the special committee, good evening.

It is my great pleasure to be invited to attend today’s hearing. In my view, there can be no better timing for such a hearing, especially in the wake of the CCP’s 20th party congress, which concluded less than two weeks ago. The political report delivered by Mr. Xi Jinping on October 16 has sent a chilling message to all of us in the like-minded group, and I would like to explain why closer ties between Taiwan and Canada will now be more important than ever.

The CCP has seen Xi as a paramount leader for his third term and beyond. The new Politburo standing committee makeup has killed all hopes for economic prospects for China and the world. The reaffirmed zero-COVID policy remains a major risk for growth, there is no hope of loosening regulations on Internet platforms and the real estate industry sees no policy U-turn. In short, Xi’s idea of common prosperity will push China further away from the world market. While there are still debates over what is the best strategy to deal with China—decoupling or engagement—I think the answer is getting more and more clear.

For years China has set ambitious targets for its economic growth, but as the congress concluded, its spokesman said that growth figures would no longer be important from now on. The CCP has instead stressed equality over prosperity. Effectively, it spells a return to a communism not unlike the era under Mao, and thus, China is accelerating its self-initiated decoupling in the name of self-sufficiency and self-dependency. Canada, like any other country in the world, should beware of what awaits in the future.

Taiwan and Canada are like-minded partners. We share the same values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Our shared values and beliefs are the pillars of our comprehensive ties and are manifested in various aspects of our bilateral relations, including our actions to support Ukraine in its fight for freedom.

As you know, peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait have been challenged recently. China used the visit of U.S. House Speaker Pelosi as a pretext to launch a large-scale military exercise to intimidate Taiwan. In this critical moment, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, Defence Minister Anita Anand and Trade Minister Mary Ng stood up respectively to urge China to refrain from escalating its military threats. We appreciate such timely gestures from Canada, alongside those of other like-minded countries, and we believe that Canada should do more.

For one thing, it's mutually beneficial to promote trade and investment between Canada and Taiwan and to jointly build a resilient supply chain among democracies. Our two-way trade surpassed \$10 billion Canadian in 2021, a growth of 39% from 2020. Taiwan ranks as Canada's fifth-largest trading partner in Asia, and it is Canada's sixteenth-largest export market globally. Therefore, Taiwan's CPTPP membership and foreign investment promotion and protection agreements, or FIPAs, with Canada will no doubt bring our economic relations to a new height and reinforce our supply chain resilience.

To deter authoritarian states from taking any irresponsible actions, Canada can reiterate and demonstrate its staunch commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. I hereby urge the Canadian government to stand with Taiwan and support our position as follows.

• (1840)

Number one, Taiwan stresses that preserving peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific is of substantial interest to countries in the region. It urges Canada to continue supporting the development of peaceful relations across the Taiwan Strait through constructive bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

Number two, Taiwan insists that all disputes in the Indo-Pacific should be settled by peaceful means on the basis of international law, and no country should take unilateral action to change the status quo. It calls on Canada to urge the PRC to refrain from further military action across the Taiwan Strait.

The Chair: Mr. Tseng, that will conclude your time. It's actually a bit more than the five minutes for your opening statement. If you have further points to make, you will be able to work them in—

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Chair, on a point of order, could I get unanimous consent for the representative to finish his statement?

The Chair: Are we good with that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Tseng, please continue.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you.

Number three, Taiwan aspires to participate meaningfully in relevant international organizations and activities to make its due contributions. It urges Canada to continue assisting Taiwan in that regard and to help promote cross-trade dialogue that is conducive to the region's peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you all. I'll be glad to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Tseng.

As we get into our first round of questioning, I'd like to welcome Mr. Kurek to the committee this evening. You're here for a good time, not a long time, I understand. That's fine. I hope we show you a good time tonight.

For our first six minutes, we'll go to Mr. Chong.

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

Thank you, Representative Ho-jen Tseng, for appearing before our committee.

You mentioned in your opening remarks that there's a debate going on about decoupling versus engagement on the part of democracies with the People's Republic of China, and that the answer is becoming more and more clear.

Do you believe it's time for democracies like Canada and Taiwan to decouple economically from the People's Republic of China, particularly in the five sensitive areas of critical minerals, semiconductors, biotechnology, telecommunications and artificial intelligence?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: In my view, decoupling is happening, like it or not, and some of it is coming from China, as indicated very clearly in the 20th party congress political report. Even though it has been going on for a few years, the step is ongoing.

I think it is only wise to be prepared for economic decoupling to come closer and come more quickly.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you. I appreciate that answer.

On October 15, in an interview with the Toronto Star, you warned that global leaders should be careful about lending credibility to the narrative being pushed by the People's Republic of China that recent visits to Taiwan by foreign legislators, previously treated as routine, are now provocative.

In what ways have government leaders been lending credibility to the PRC's narrative that visits by legislators, such as those from the Canadian House of Commons, are intended to provoke the PRC?

• (1845)

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: The way I see it is that visits by parliamentary members to Taiwan—whether they come from Canada or from other countries—have been a matter of fact for many years. They only stopped because of the pandemic and because the border control regulations made it difficult for such a routine to happen. As most countries around the world decide to live with the virus and lift border control regulations, I think we'll see more parliamentary delegations coming to Taiwan to show their support for Taiwan.

Of course, the visit of Canadian parliamentary members just a few weeks ago turned out to be a great success. The way I see it, in the media here and in Taiwan it's all very positive, except for some official responses from the Chinese embassy here. I think it's very clear that their purpose is to promote trade and investment with Taiwan. The program they went through in Taiwan very much demonstrated our purpose.

Hon. Michael Chong: Do you believe these visits are reducing the chance of a war between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, in the sense that they increase the cost to China of starting such a war?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I do think so. I think the visits of foreign dignitaries or politicians to Taiwan to show their support are, I'm sorry to say, something that the PRC doesn't like to see. The reason they want to stop these kinds of visits is that they don't want the world to show their support for Taiwan. Their explanation is that more support for Taiwan will perhaps encourage Taiwan to go for independence.

That is totally not respecting the fact of what is going on in Taiwan. It's not the policy of the current government, and it wasn't even the policy of the previous government, that Taiwan wants to seek de jure independence. That is not our policy.

Hon. Michael Chong: I have a final question.

You've said recently that President Xi, who has just secured a precedent-breaking third five-year term, will now use this third term of his to force Taiwan, through military means, to come to the table. As you know, Canada promised exploratory talks with Taiwan on a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement last January, 10 months ago, but has yet to say whether it's ready to start those talks. You've called on Ottawa to begin negotiations on free trade with Taiwan as a demonstration of support for Taiwan.

Can you tell us how important it is that these two things begin—that is, negotiations on a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement and free trade talks—not just for the mutual economic benefit of our two countries but also in the view that they increase the cost to the People's Republic of China of invading Taiwan?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I think there are two pillars in Taiwan supporting Taiwan's continuous development: economic development and national development as a whole. This is about our economic growth. Robust economic growth is very important to Taiwan, because that will support us to better build our self-defence capabilities. This is why we emphasize so much that the FIPA between our two countries, and the CPTPP among the trans-Pacific partners, would be very important for Taiwan. We have been working pretty much on our own to develop robust economic growth, but we are coming into a new age where doing it on our own will be more and more difficult. We need to work with partners, especially like-minded partners.

The FIPA, which stands for “foreign investment promotion and protection agreement”, is, in a way, a free trade agreement under a different name. It's very clearly important for us. This is self-evident. There's also the CPTPP. We applied to join the CPTPP in September of last year. This has a high standard for a trading bloc, higher than that set by the World Trade Organization—

• (1850)

The Chair: Mr. Tseng, I have to interrupt you there. Mr. Chong is out of time for his portion of the questioning.

We'll now go to Mr. Fragiskatos for six minutes or less.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Sir, it seemed like you were at the tail end of your answer. If there was more to your response and you want to finish it, you can go ahead and do so.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: No. That's okay.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Okay.

In your opening remarks you talked about resilient supply chains between democracies. I think that's a very important and compelling point that's being made.

I wonder if you could expand on that with reference to how Canada-Taiwan relations, particularly economic relations, would fit in, what it might look like to intertwine supply chains more and where we can see that happening in the relationship between our two countries.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I am not an economist, but from what I understand, Minister Champagne mentioned just a few days ago the building of an economic belt from New York to Montreal. I believe he's seen the strength of Montreal as an AI designing centre. This new economic belt, perhaps, is looking at electric vehicles.

I came to understand only recently that the traditional cars we drive with fossil fuels need just 18 chips, but every electric vehicle, or EV, needs 250 chips. That requirement for chips is 13 times more than it is for a traditional car.

You are very good at AI ecology, combining different AIs in a very nice design. We are very good at making chips. I think the potential for co-operation is high. If we can work together by using the strengths of Taiwan's chipmaking and your strengths in AI design, we can bring our economic relations to a new height.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: That's a very interesting point, and it relates to my second question, which is on the second track of diplomacy, as it is sometimes called, or the people-to-people ties that can sometimes strengthen relations.

Can you talk about that, and the linkages that exist in education and business? I also understand there's engagement happening between Canada and Taiwan on indigenous issues. I wonder if you could highlight that and give your view. To what extent could it help boost the intertwining of supply chains? You had a specific example there, but I think the second track of diplomacy is always helpful in advancing major goals.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: It's very inspiring to me. I think people-to-people diplomacy, or what you call the second track of diplomacy, is the backbone of relations. You cannot have a political relation without people-to-people relations. It would be so weak and vacuous.

This people-to-people diplomacy or engagement has somehow been affected by the pandemic. If we look back only two or three years, you would be confused about exactly how much our people-to-people contact has changed. If we go back to before the pandemic, you would see that the number of tourists coming from Taiwan to Canada and vice versa was growing. This is a country that is so welcome and well-received in Taiwan. In Taiwan, it is very common for you to find that any family will have one member or friend of the family who has some connections in Canada. They have a relative, friend or classmate in Canada.

This is perhaps why even during the pandemic we had two ministers visiting Canada this year. One is our overseas community affairs minister. The other is our aboriginal affairs minister. Both of them deal with people-to-people relations, or popular affairs. It is not so much about talking about the issues of security or trade I mentioned. It's one indication telling you that people-to-people relations between our two countries are indeed very comprehensive and deep.

• (1855)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Our chair is giving me that look. I don't think I have more time.

If I did, I would ask you about disinformation and the way that materializes in Taiwan as a result of China's efforts. What can Canada do to help Taiwan with disinformation? Perhaps there will be an opportunity to raise that in the meeting, or perhaps other colleagues want to put it on the table.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: We did give a fair bit of latitude to Mr. Chong, so Mr. Tseng, if you would like to answer that fairly briefly, that would be fine.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Disinformation is something we are encountering on a daily basis. Disinformation in Taiwan mostly comes from China. It's becoming so easy for disinformation to spread because of social media, and everyone has a cellphone now.

We've developed a strategy to counterbalance the negative effect of disinformation. It's a very comprehensive way to tackle it. I don't think I have enough time, but we bring in the government spokesman system, as well as our intelligence-gathering systems, to discern what fake news is going on in social media in real time. If you let fake news go viral for 10 minutes, it's already too late. We've learned from our experiences.

This is the area that we think we can share with you and with countries in the EU, for example, in the—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tseng. We will have time. There's extra questioning time for all committee members this evening. That sounds like a fascinating area that you may wish to spend a little more time on as we proceed.

Mr. Bergeron, I'll say you have six minutes or less, but if you have a good question, we'll let you have a little extra time too.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no doubt that I will have questions that my colleagues will find fascinating.

First, thank you very much for being with us tonight. We are very grateful to you. I think that, so far, you have been able to sense from my colleagues' comments how much solidarity we feel with Taiwan and its people.

In an article published in *The Globe and Mail* on October 25, you said that part of your job as Taiwan's representative at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada is to prevent war by convincing western countries to raise the costs inflicted on the People's Republic of China if it tries to take the island. You added that if we want to help Taiwan, we need to talk less and act more.

As an introduction to my question, I would like to tell you about some exchanges I had with Ukrainians a few days before the February invasion. At that time, even people in Ukraine considered an attack from Russia to be absolutely unlikely, believing that the cost for it would be too high. We can see that this is indeed the case. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Vladimir Putin from invading Ukraine. Indeed, what appears to us to be reasonable is not necessarily logical to an individual like Vladimir Putin.

Similarly, how high could the price be to prevent an individual like the president of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, from doing exactly the same thing?

When you ask us to talk less and act more, what do you expect from Canada?

• (1900)

[*English*]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: You are right. It is really very difficult to predict what a dictator would do. It's very unpredictable, the mindset of a dictator. It applies to Mr. Putin. It looks like China is becoming more and more under one man's control as a result of the 20th party congress. It would be very difficult to predict what Xi Jinping is going to do.

My job here is not to let a war happen, as you said. That's very true. However, for decision-makers in Taiwan, we have to prepare for that worst kind of scenario. So it is not a question of if, but of when. It was written in their political report not only this time, but also five years ago at their 19th party congress, that they would like to have reunification with Taiwan and would consider that as the rejuvenation of a great Chinese nation. This is already in their road map, and it is not a question of if; it's only a question of when, so we need to get prepared in Taiwan.

As to how we would like Canada to help Taiwan, we are pragmatic people and know where your policy stands now. The three points I mentioned in the concluding part of my remarks are what we are asking of you. We know that we cannot expect you to do what the U.S. is doing with us, but I think if you take some time to look at the three points in the conclusion of my opening remarks, I think those things are pretty much within your current policy.

When I say less talk and more action, I hope that is not mistaken by our friends here. I don't mean to criticize the Canadian government, but I think there is more that can be done. When I say less talk and more action, I'm actually referring to trade, to the FIPA. We have been talking a lot about the FIPA. We probably need to sit down and really talk about the nitty-gritty, the issues and negotiations and the give and take, as with any serious trade negotiation. That's what I'm talking about. I'm not referring to security issues in saying that.

However, there is one thing that Canada is doing a lot of. At least once a year, your naval ships go on free passage exercises, including high seas passage of the Taiwan Strait. Given the high tensions between China and Taiwan right now, I think it would be very welcome if you could continue to do those free passages of the high seas there. If you could increase the number of times you do that kind of naval exercise, it would be very much appreciated by our side because it would mean that you are demonstrating your commitment to keeping peace and stability in this part of the world.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

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

According to The Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index, Taiwan ranks eighth in the list of democracies, four places ahead of Canada.

During her recent speech in Washington, the Deputy Prime Minister insisted, according to CBC, that we should stop supporting autocracies such as Russia and China and focus on trade and investment in our democratic allies' countries.

As it happens, Taiwan has expectations of Canada regarding the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Arrangements.

In your view, are the negotiations proceeding at a satisfactory pace to reach a desired conclusion soon?

[*English*]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I think the FIPA is going in a positive direction. What we need is the political will of both sides to sit down and talk. We are hopeful that some major steps can be demonstrated on both sides. There is momentum there, and I have hope that with the current momentum from both sides, we can really push the FIPA forward.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Now we will go to Ms. McPherson for six minutes or a little more.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the representatives for being here today.

Of course, it's lovely to see you all again. I wish I could be there in person.

Thank you, as always, for informing this group of parliamentarians and for making yourself available for meetings with me regularly. Thank you so much for that.

We see Taiwan as a strong democracy and as a democracy that shares many values with Canada, such as support for indigenous reconciliation, environmental care, democracy and support for women. The work that Taiwan is doing on the sustainable development goals is admirable. I think I've expressed to you before that I wish we were as far along on SDGs in Canada as you are in Taiwan.

I would like to get some more clarity on one thing. We all watched with some trepidation what was happening in China during the 20th National Congress. You speak today about a chilling message you received from that.

I wonder if you could talk about your thoughts on what we heard from the national congress. What does it mean for Taiwan? What did you hear from it? What does it mean for the rest of the world and for Canada in particular?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I think what is happening in China now is going to affect every country in the world. I think it indicates that China as a market is getting more uncertain. It's getting riskier for Canada and for other countries because we will be trading with someone who lays stress not on profit but on political control. This is really very worrying for us.

We continue to see that the zero-COVID policy was very firm in the Chinese Communist Party's policy. Chinese leaders are very adamant on this point. It is not doing any good for the Chinese economy, and I think that is something we need to be very much aware of.

I think for Taiwan it carries something further. That something may not be strongly felt here in Canada, but I hope it can be better appreciated as time goes by. It is the security issue.

Many people have already read the report. This time in the political report, Xi Jinping used the term "security" more than 75 times. The internal pressure seems to come from external intervention, and that is a security concern for them. The more China stresses security, the more it will look inward and the tighter the political control will be. This is already showing an effect in China. I think that message should be taken up by all of us so we can be better prepared for any kind of possible consequences.

• (1910)

Ms. Heather McPherson: We are seeing that. Recently, representatives from CSIS were at the procedure and House affairs committee talking about how they are increasingly concerned. You speak of China's influence within China being more internal, but the influence of China is spreading. The disinformation campaigns we are seeing, the reports of police stations, electoral influence, impacts on our media and threats toward Canadian Chinese people are all things that are happening.

Do you have any comments on what Canada should be doing to ensure that those threats are mitigated?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Again, I think this disinformation campaign you feel in Canada is perhaps only one part of the Chinese effort to expand its influence abroad. The way China does its control abroad is by extending its judicial powers into a third country. That is very concerning to us. As a matter of fact, in Taiwan we are facing a similar kind of challenge. The disinformation campaign in Taiwan, as I said just now, is part of our life because this is the way China has tried to infiltrate our society.

Even today, as we have seen what has come out of the 20th party congress, China, in the minds of its political leaders, thinks that taking away Taiwan without fighting with bullets is the cheapest way to do it. The way for that to become a reality is to use all kinds of cyber-attacks, grey-zone tactics, hybrid threats and all kinds of possible approaches, including disinformation campaigns.

Fortunately, this is a process of socialization. There is social education in Taiwan to tell our people to be better concerned with the news. When it comes up, you probably need to find out if it is not true. How are we able to do that? It is because there is a government policy to set up so-called fact check centres.

If you are suspicious of certain news on social media and consider that it may be malign and suspicious, you can just throw the news into that fact check centre. It is only an IP address. You check and then it will come back to you immediately to tell you which part of the news report or which part of the story is untrue. It can come back very quickly because chances are that many people will have the same suspicion. When the same news is thrown into this fact check centre, it learns to get the facts by itself. We learned to do that. This is something we can share with other countries.

All in all, I think what China is doing is against the norms and rules of the international community. No matter if it is a police station in a third country or a disinformation campaign of any kind, I think it only goes against good governance.

I hope we can work together.

• (1915)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tseng.

We will pause now and turn it over to Mr. Seeback for six minutes.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Tseng, you have talked about the FIPA. You say there needs to be a strong political will. I know this is a delicate subject. It

seems to me that you have the political will and that you want this to move forward expeditiously.

Is there a lack of urgency on the part of Canada to get that agreement done?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you, sir.

I think before I answer this question, I must report to you, ladies and gentlemen, that the relations between our two countries are moving in the right direction. There is an increasing improvement between our two countries, including in the relations on the economic and investment issues.

We understand that the FIPA and the CPTPP are very complicated issues. We are talking to each other in very good faith. Beginning in January this year, we have already conducted three exploratory discussions. Both sides are very happy about the result.

We are waiting to move on to the next phase, and that is why we think there must be some kind of determination to come for this to go through. I understand that trade matters need to go through different sectoral consent and that you want to make sure you're not signing some agreement at the expense of your business community. We understand that. However, if you don't talk, you cannot achieve the goal of not sacrificing your people.

What we are asking as Taiwan is that we sit down and have a real talk, not the prior talks before the real talk, and never fear to negotiate.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Would you like to see more substantive talks on the FIPA, then?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: That's right.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: I know for some of these questions you don't want to talk in a negative way about some of your work on the agreement, but this committee has to make recommendations, so I am asking some questions that may be a little uncomfortable.

With respect to the CPTPP, all countries involved would have to agree with your accession to the agreement. That's my understanding. China has also applied for the CPTPP very close in time with you.

What can Canada do to move your application forward? Are there other particular countries we should be speaking with to try to help get unanimous consent for that application to move forward?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I think both sides know that very well. The CPTPP is a multilateral platform, so as I am talking to you, all of my other colleagues in different missions are talking to their counterparts as well.

To get the multilateral support, we start with bilateral support. I am asking the Canadian government to show at least the positive gesture of welcoming Taiwan to apply for the CPTPP. Then the CPTPP would, at the right time, set up the working group to discuss our accession issue.

Right now, of course, the only issue under discussion is the U.K.'s accession issue. We understand all that, but what we are asking for with the CPTPP is for you to understand and support the fact that we are able to meet all the high requirements and high standards of the CPTPP. It's up to our trade people to decide whether we are up to the standard already. There has to be that kind of conversation and that kind of consultation before you decide that Taiwan is up to the job or not. We are asking for a fair chance.

● (1920)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Do you know if Canada is supporting your application? Has Canada made their position clear on your application to the CPTPP?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: We get very polite responses from Canada. We understand, as I said, that all 11 members of the CPTPP are devoting their time to the U.K.'s accession issue, and that all the other issues, including China's application, have been put on the shelf.

We hope there will be something forthcoming in terms of our application. Our application should not be regarded side by side with China's. It should be on a credit basis that we can join. Then we can join on our own merit.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Briefly, as I have very little time, how can Canada help with the pressure that's being put on nations to not have formal recognition with Taiwan? Lithuania, for example, is under some trade sanctions from China as a result of their bilateral relations with you. How can Canada help with that?

The Chair: Please, sir, give a very brief answer.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Lithuania's relations with Taiwan are very unique. They continue to talk to Taiwan, and we helped them to weather through their difficulties when China used economic coercion as a retaliation for their receiving Taiwan's new office in Vilnius.

I think that is not the case we are facing between Canada and Taiwan.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we will go to Ms. Yip for six minutes.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Thank you for coming this evening.

Canada has consistently supported Taiwan's meaningful participation in global discussions where Taiwan's absence is noted. Global health and civil aviation are two recent examples where Canada has advocated for Taiwan's participation.

Can you provide us with an overview of the role Canada plays to support Taiwan in this regard? How important is it for Taiwan's voice to be heard globally?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: As a matter of fact, Canada has played a very important role in support of Taiwan's international participa-

tion, and you are the people behind that support. I am referring to the three motions passed in this Parliament. This year, three motions from different committees have passed in support of Taiwan's international participation, and one motion is from the House.

You probably don't know that each and every passage of these motions has been widely reported in Taiwan. It is much cherished and embraced by all people to know that Taiwan does not stand alone and we have support from Canada.

Please don't belittle these efforts that you are putting into your parliamentary work, because this kind of morale for a country like Taiwan is really important. This is why, when the recent parliamentary delegation visited Taiwan, they received our gratitude and appreciation in different meetings we had. There was a very strong feeling that Parliament is really doing something to help Taiwan.

Ms. Jean Yip: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but for our viewers at home, can you tell us what the three motions are?

● (1925)

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: The motions passed in different committees are mostly in support of Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization.

Ms. Jean Yip: Thank you.

Sorry, were you going to say more on this issue?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: The most important message I am trying to convey is that Canada has played a very important role, and we hope there will be more supportive gestures to come out of Parliament. I appreciate the assistance from individual members, including many who are here tonight.

Ms. Jean Yip: Thank you.

In your opening statement, you talked about peace and stability in the region. What can Canada do to ensure that peace is maintained across the Taiwan Strait?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Again, just as in the CPTPP, Canada cannot do it alone. In maintaining peace and stability in our part of the world, Canada is a very important country for making a contribution, but you are not making it by yourself. I think we have mentioned like-minded countries a lot, including in my opening remarks.

A like-minded country is a very loose concept. It needs leadership. I think the leadership most logically comes from the G7 countries. Canada, the U.S. and Japan are representing some areas of like-minded countries. The other four out of the G7 come from Europe. They are leading the like-minded countries in that part of the world.

It's very important that Canada voiced its support and concern in the G7 foreign ministers' statement and the G7 summit by saying that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are of utmost importance to the world. The more you reiterate that kind of position, the more China will think twice, because they know that they are defying the international aspiration for peace and stability in that part of the world.

Ms. Jean Yip: As already mentioned by my colleague Mr. Fragiskatos, Canada is ranked fourth among study destinations. What are some of the challenges you see for Taiwanese students in Canada and Canadian students in Taiwan?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Indeed, Canada is one of the most favoured countries as a destination for our young people, who come over for a higher degree and for broader study. That has been interrupted by the pandemic. The exchange programs between the universities had to suspend for three years in some cases, not only for two years. I very much hope that these kinds of exchange programs can resume as quickly as possible.

From the government's point of view, I think we would like to facilitate getting the students from Canada to go to Taiwan to study and likewise from Taiwan to Canada. There are also other vehicles, other projects, that can help this kind of studying to increase. I'm talking about the working holiday program. We have a working holiday program between us that is working very well, although I'm talking about before the pandemic.

Hopefully, now, in the postpandemic era, the situation will resume like before. This is a project allowing young people of the two countries between 18 and 35 years old to travel to each other's country without needing a work permit. They can work in the working holiday program. Because these kinds of friendships are nurtured when people are young, they tend to carry on the friendships for the rest of their lives. It's very good, and it will facilitate more young people to come to each other's countries for higher study.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tseng.

Thank you, Ms. Yip. That's your time.

In the second round, Mr. Bergeron and Ms. McPherson will each have five minutes.

Your five minutes start now, Mr. Bergeron.

[Translation]

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

In the columns of the newspaper *Le Devoir* of October 17, you stated: "From Taiwan's point of view, we would certainly like to see senior members of Canada's cabinet visit Taiwan at the appropriate time."

The last time a Canadian minister visited Taiwan was in 1998, when John Manley, then Liberal Minister of Industry, made such a visit.

In your opinion, why would a ministerial visit be important for Taiwan?

• (1930)

[English]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you, sir, for the question.

Why is the minister's visit important to Taiwan? I think it's because a minister's meeting doesn't come about easily.

For any minister to visit a country, they would probably get some lower-ranking officers to visit, and usually there's some concrete re-

sult out of the minister's meeting. In our foreign service, a minister's meeting has something that cannot be replaced by a visit of lower-ranking officials. This is why it is not really symbolic in a sense. A minister's meeting will always carry out something concrete, something useful for bilateral relations, and this is why a ministerial visit is very much welcomed by Taiwan.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Do you believe that one of the reasons why no minister has gone to Taiwan since 1998 is because of the fear of reprisals from the People's Republic of China?

What kind of retaliation would Canada face, should any minister decide to visit Taiwan?

[English]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: The response or retaliation from China with regard to a potential... We are talking about a hypothetical situation. I think that would include a strong *démarche* from the Chinese embassy here. Some officials at GAC would have a hard time receiving a very harsh response from Chinese officials here. That is perhaps most commonly seen.

That other thing that I can think of off the cuff is maybe the cancellation of a potential Canadian visit to China that is on the schedule. That is a possibility, to the best of my knowledge.

Again, this needs some courage. It doesn't come lightly, but it will be an important decision for you to make. From Taiwan's perspective, we certainly will welcome this kind of ministerial visit.

To be honest with you, we can be very creative. We can receive your ministers like we did with the visit of Minister John Manley in 1998. His visit didn't cause any serious repercussions. As a matter of fact, he came back to Canada to tell his friends that he didn't feel any pressure as a result of his visit to Taiwan. The pressure was maybe more before he went than after he came back.

I hope we won't be scared by our own concern, because we stand up to our moral courage. That is what I see.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: If the main retaliation that Canada could face is the cancellation or delay of already scheduled visits between Canada and the People's Republic of China, I think it is exposing itself to little. As far as I know, there are very few visits planned on either side for a number of months now.

Let's get out of the hypothetical sphere—

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bergeron, you are out of time, unfortunately. Five minutes goes twice as fast as two and half, it seems.

• (1935)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: All right, thank you.

[English]

The Chair: You had five minutes, but you will get another opportunity, so hold that question.

Ms. McPherson, you are next, for five minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

These are very interesting questions on ministers travelling to Taiwan. As you know, we are looking forward to the Indo-Pacific strategy being released, and getting more information about that.

Mr. Tseng, I wonder how you would feel if this committee were to go to Taiwan as part of a visit of the Indo-Pacific region. If we were able to visit countries within the region, would you welcome members of this committee going to Taiwan for a visit?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Without a doubt, the visit of the special committee with the members here would be more than welcome in Taiwan. I believe it would be conducive to the final draft of the Indo-Pacific strategy.

Ms. Heather McPherson: You were very, very clear on the three things you asked Canada to do. Thank you for that clarity.

I would like to have a little more understanding of how the Canadian government has responded to that to date. I know you talked a bit about some of the places where you would like them to move a little further, and some of the areas where I think you can say the government has done a good job and we can be grateful for the work that all parliamentarians have done in supporting Taiwan. However, in terms of the Canadian government's response to those three asks, is there anything else you'd like to flag for us that the government could be doing more of on those specific things?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: To be honest, when we dropped the three points in the opening remarks, I hadn't had prior consultation with your officials. The way I see it, they are consistent with our existing policies because, as you can see, what is stressed here is to preserve peace, stability and prosperity. This is about advocating for multilateral assistance so peace and stability can be maintained in that part of the world. We are asking you to help maintain the status quo and are calling for countries to watch very closely. No country should take unilateral action to change the status quo.

All this, I think, falls very well under your current policy. In no way do I think it is contradictory to your policy on regional security in our part of the world.

The third point of the statement was about the meaningful participation of Taiwan in relevant international organizations. You have clearly shown your support in this regard. As I said, motions have been passed in the committee and in the House in that regard.

I hope we can reach an agreement on the points I have raised here. If there are more actions that we can take together, those would be more than welcome.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I think this is one reason we want to see Taiwan at these international fora, because, of course, there's much we can learn from Taiwan. The response to COVID-19 in Taiwan was so strong, and the World Health Organization can learn from that. With the way you have dealt with the sustainable development goals in your international development efforts, you should be able to bring those lessons to the United Nations so they can be shared with other democracies around the world.

In terms of how Canada can support peaceful relations and peaceful dispute resolution, do you feel that the Canadian govern-

ment has been strong enough in their language on those two things? Do you feel that the government has taken the opportunity to raise their voice enough at this point?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: I have discerned increasing improvement in our bilateral relations, and I know that it will take time for a policy to shift, but I think that is happening. There is more that can be done in our bilateral relations, and I think we will keep our minds open. We would like to take up any possible opportunities to talk to the officials in charge, to talk to the decision-makers and to talk to members of Parliament. That is something we are doing, sometimes quietly, with you. The environment in the world is changing very rapidly. For something we used to do slowly but surely, perhaps we need to speed up a bit. I hope we can have some consensus in that regard and then move things along in a faster manner.

• (1940)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have time for one more round of five minutes each for the Conservatives and the Liberals and two and a half minutes each for the Bloc and the NDP.

Mr. Kmiec, go ahead for five minutes.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

You spoke about people-to-people relationships. Are you aware of any cases where visitors coming to Canada from Taiwan are being intimidated or persecuted by representatives of the PRC, agents of the PRC or individuals working for the United Front Work Department?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you, sir.

From the information I have access to, we still don't have any Taiwanese nationals or Taiwanese Canadians living in Canada being intimidated by Chinese diplomats or Chinese nationals working in Canada, but we hear a lot about it. It's been reported that people from Hong Kong have been under that kind of threat a lot. There is a target. The people they want to nail down from China are the dissidents. The Chinese Communist Party would not be happy about what they've been doing because it's seen as a threat.

Even though Taiwanese nationals in Canada have not faced this kind of intimidation, just a few years ago there were Taiwanese nationals advocating for some ideas of democracy. One man in Taiwan was using his computer as a platform to spread the idea of democracy, but when he travelled to China, he was taken into custody and was sentenced to five years. His name is Lee Ming-che, and he was released only about a little more than a year ago.

It is not happening in Canada. If it was, I would certainly share with our friends in Parliament to let you know.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Thank you.

I'm going to ask you, then, about the so-called police stations. You've probably heard these stories. I believe it's Fujian province that calls them "service stations".

Does your government allow the operation of such police service stations on your territory?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: It's unheard of and totally out of the question for this kind of service station. It's actually in the name of an association, but it's semi-official because it carries some functions that only a government branch can do. In Taiwan, it's totally impossible for this kind of police station or service station to be set up, especially by Chinese nationals.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: How would your government react if you found such police stations operating on your territory? What would your recommendation be to the Government of Canada?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: As far as I know, these police or service stations have existed in 24 countries—52 stations in 24 countries—and none of them were found in Taiwan. With the way we do things, I think we will be very vigilant, if I may put it that way.

The reason we've fought the pandemic in a very efficient way is that we have been vigilant from day one, and we have to be vigilant all the time for actions done under camouflage. It would be put under the name of some kind of association or society, something like that, so we have to pay attention to actions that do not conform to our legal system.

● (1945)

The Chair: Mr. Kmiec, I'm sorry, but you are out of time. Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Dubourg for five minutes.

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

It's my turn to welcome our witnesses from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada.

Mr. Tseng, I was so pleased to hear your introductory speech, especially at the end, because in your conclusion you talked a lot about peace. You said, "peaceful relations across the Taiwan Strait" and "peaceful means on the basis of international law" and so on. Thank you for that.

The Chair: Mr. Dubourg, I'm sorry, but I have to interrupt you briefly. It doesn't sound like the microphone on your headset is the one that's connected to your feed.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Is it okay right now?

The Chair: Now it's better, I think. Thank you.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: As I was saying, Mr. Tseng, I was so pleased to read your statement, especially your conclusion, because you talk a lot about "peaceful means on the basis of international law", "peaceful relations across the Taiwan Strait" and so on. Thank you for that.

In your speech, you also talked about the CCP's 20th party congress. You said that the report delivered on October 16 "has sent a chilling message" to all of us in the democratic camp. Would you elaborate on that, please?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: In my opening remarks, I elaborated on what I meant by "chilling message to all of us in the like-minded group". As I pointed out, the economic message coming out of the 20th party congress is not very rosy at all, and I have given you the reasons I said that. It's because in the political report, the zero-COVID policy has been reaffirmed, and there is no hope of loosening control on the Internet platforms. It's all those things.

I am looking at it only from the economic perspective, but I also mentioned, when answering one of the questions, that the security concern out of this 20th party congress is something we need to pay close attention to, because a lot of the responses—including from the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Antony Blinken—say that the Chinese threat to Taiwan has been moved forward in terms of its timeline.

We are trying to alert people here in Canada as well as people in the like-minded countries that we shouldn't take the message of the 20th party congress lightly. We need to prepare so that we are not harmed in the near future.

● (1950)

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Thank you so much.

In your statement, in the third paragraph, you say that the CCP has "instead stressed equality over prosperity" and that by doing so, "China is accelerating its self-initiated decoupling". At the end, you say Canada should "beware of what awaits in the future".

Do you have specific problems or threats in mind that you refer to that we should beware of?

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Obviously China is a very important market for Canada. It is the third-biggest market, lagging behind the U.S. and the EU, so I think what is happening in China, especially in the Chinese economy, is something of great concern for you.

I said they stress equality over prosperity, but I am only describing the message from the 20th party congress, where Mr. Xi emphasized that common prosperity is the utmost objective of their government policy. Common prosperity does not talk only about taxing people's income and redistributing wealth to individuals. Even if in China this is done by taxation, I must say that in a political system that emphasizes political control so much and has no transparency—no checks and balances—the system could only come to a situation where this redistribution of wealth becomes a source of corruption.

It happened when Xi Jinping came to power 10 years ago. He actually used the first 10 years to purge a lot of political enemies by using a slogan of anti-corruption. Now they're closing up their economy and trying to redistribute the wealth of the people, and I don't think it's going to make anyone feel good, including their own people.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tseng and Mr. Dubourg.

Now for two and a half minutes, we have Mr. Bergeron.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to go back to the exchange we had earlier. You rightly pointed out that I had asked you a hypothetical question. Let's now get out of the hypothetical sphere and get to the facts.

Have there been several ministerial visits to Taiwan from western countries in recent years? If the answer is yes, which countries were involved?

[*English*]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you, sir.

There are actually not many ministerial visits to Taiwan. Most remarkably, with regard to visits by ministers from the United States, the last was in the year 2020. Their Secretary of Health visited Taiwan. There are a lot of visits to Taiwan by ministers or even prime ministers who have just stepped down from their offices, but when we talk about ministerial meetings, these are not happening very often in Taiwan. That is true. Also, it is not that Canada is the only country not sending its ministers to Taiwan. That should be made clear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Very well.

On August 3, the G7 foreign ministers issued a statement on maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The statement called on the People's Republic of China to resolve cross-strait disputes through peaceful means. It stated:

There is no change in the respective one-China policies... and basic positions on Taiwan of the G7 members.

How useful does this kind of statement appear to you?

● (1955)

[*English*]

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: The statement by the G7 countries carries a lot of weight. As a matter of fact, this was perhaps the first time that the peace, security and stability of the Taiwan Strait was included in a G7 joint statement. In fact, it appeared for the first time last year, in 2021. That was a foreign ministers meeting and the G7 summit meeting in London.

Since this was first mentioned, it has stayed in the statements. It has become part of the G7's position, and we appreciate that very much. We hope this message will always be reiterated whenever there is a G7 meeting, because the fact is that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait continue to be important.

We would welcome the G7's touching on this position every time they meet.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tseng and Mr. Bergeron.

Now for our final two and a half minutes, we have Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank our guests today. This has been wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Tseng.

We've talked about diplomacy. We've talked about trade. We've talked about what Canada can do more of, what Canada has done and security. We are finding ourselves in a very changing world. What is happening in Ukraine has implications for Taiwan. What has happened with COVID as we come out of the COVID pandemic has implications for how China is responding and the reality of what this looks like on the ground.

Knowing that I have the last two and a half minutes, I wonder if I could just pass it back to you, Mr Tseng, and ask if there is anything else you'd like to tell this committee, or anything else you would like to get into Hansard and onto the record in the final few moments.

Dr. Harry Ho-jen Tseng: Thank you so much. Those are very kind words.

I appreciate this opportunity to appear before this special committee. I know this committee is set up for a special purpose. The fact that you invited me to be one of the witnesses tells me how much concern you have and the importance you attach to relations between Canada and Taiwan. I really hope that the story I shared with you tonight is that things are going on and situations are evolving.

I look forward to future opportunities to engage with every single member—all of you who are here and who are participating online. I honestly think this is a historical juncture. Like-minded countries should work with each other so we can come back with a kind of synergy, because the challenge facing us now is different from before.

Not many people appreciate that the assertive foreign policies of China are going to change a lot of what we have experienced in the past, say, five or 10 years, but this is going to be the case. For example, in Taiwan, we think that over the next five years under Xi Jinping's watch—his third term—he'll probably be pressing further on Taiwan in ways unseen before.

The large exercise in the wake of Nancy Pelosi's visit may come back. As a matter of fact, that exercise, even though it was not declared, is still there. Every day we have dozens of sorties, sometimes close to 100, coming to our ADIZ, the air defence identification zone, intimidating Taiwan. They're flying across the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an imaginary median line, and intimidating Taiwan on a daily basis.

I hope this kind of situation will be paid attention to by our Canadian friends, because it won't stop at Taiwan. Taiwan is not a Chinese domestic issue; Taiwan is an international issue. When it comes to Taiwan, we all have to suffer.

I'm not even mentioning Taiwan's chipmaking capacity. We provide most of the chips to important industries in the world. I'm not even talking about that. Of course, that is a very important part, but the fact is that if Taiwan falls, democracy falls, and that will be the ultimate concern of all of us.

● (2000)

The Chair: Sir, I really appreciate your attendance tonight, as do our committee members.

Mr. Ping, Mr. Tseng and Mr. Chen, thank you again for being here with us tonight.

Go ahead, Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chair, I was wondering if there would be unanimous consent from the members of the committee to take a photograph with the Taiwanese representatives.

[English]

The Chair: We will take a break while we get the next panel set up, so I believe that will provide an opportunity, if you wish.

We'll break—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Can you include those of us who are on screen?

The Chair: Maybe we can pose in front of the screen, Ms. McPherson. I don't know, but we'll do our best with who we have here.

We will now take a break.

• (2000) _____ (Pause) _____

• (2010)

The Chair: We're back for our second panel.

I'm pleased to welcome Scott Simon, professor at the University of Ottawa and senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

For this round, committee members, we will do more of the standard: six minutes each for the first round and, in the second round, five minutes for the Liberals, five minutes for the Conservatives and two and half minutes each for the Bloc and the NDP, after which we will break and then go into a brief committee business session.

We would like to welcome you, sir. Is it Mr. Simon or Dr. Simon?

Dr. Scott Simon (Professor, University of Ottawa and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an Individual): It's Dr. Simon.

The Chair: Dr. Simon, thank you for being here in person. That does eliminate problems with some of the technical challenges we've had. We appreciate you being with us this evening.

We'd like you to take five minutes and give your opening statement.

Dr. Scott Simon: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm the coholder of the chair of Taiwan studies at the University of Ottawa. I've lived in Taiwan for over 10 years, which has included five years of research in indigenous communities, where people are very grateful for 150 years of Canada-Taiwan relations that brought them Presbyterian and Catholic missions.

The so-called Taiwan issue began with the postwar disposition of Japanese territories in the 1951 San Francisco peace treaty, when Japan declared the end of war and renounced all claims to Taiwan without specifying a recipient. At the time, foreign minister Lester Pearson said, "I hope possibly in that eventual solution some people who are overlooked in this matter, I mean the people of Formosa themselves, might be given some consideration."

In a way, democratization means that the Taiwanese people now exercise self-determination in every single election. Although the Republic of China brought an authoritarian state to Taiwan, democratization eventually allowed the Taiwanese to remake it in their own image. Taiwan is now a leader in such areas as LGBT rights

and indigenous rights, yet Chinese threats to invade and annex the island country prevent them from living free of fear. This is already a human rights issue. When China coerces Canada to marginalize Taiwan, it is also a violation of our sovereignty.

Canadians often self-censor when it comes to Taiwan, but when we recognized the PRC in 1970 as the sole government of China, the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau kept our options open with an agreement to neither endorse nor challenge the Chinese government's position on the status of Taiwan. We therefore need to avoid even the appearance of endorsing China's claim over Taiwan, even in little things like the drop-down menus on some government websites.

As a trading nation, Canada's first interest is a peaceful, free and open Indo-Pacific. I think we have already covered the security and defence issues and the FIPA, the CPTPP and the international organizations, but I would like to say that the Indo-Pacific is also inclusive and sustainable.

One of the areas we have in common with Taiwan is indigenous issues. I just spent the last two days with a delegation from the Taipei indigenous affairs bureau. Also, this year we signed an agreement called IPETCA with Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, so there are things going on there, and we once had an MOU with Taiwan on indigenous affairs.

It is also a global good that some countries still have relations with Taiwan as the Republic of China. We can reinforce the peaceful status quo by co-operating with Taiwan on joint projects in such countries. Some of them might seem far away to most Canadians, such as Palau, but others, such as Haiti, are very important to us and also need our help. We can help with Taiwan. We could, for example, create joint projects with Taiwan in development assistance or even in military or coast guard co-operation like peacekeeping, disaster relief and search and rescue operations.

Canada's policy is to neither challenge nor endorse China's claims to Taiwan. We cannot endorse them because they are political goals rather than descriptions of reality on the ground. We chose not to challenge because silence was needed to establish diplomatic relations with China, but that decision was based on assumptions that China and Taiwan would seek a peaceful resolution. Now, as one side gets increasingly aggressive, we need to emphasize that we do not endorse China's coercion. We may someday consider legislation like the Taiwan Relations Act of the U.S. to provide guidance to Canadians on Canada-Taiwan relations, and I would say that even the universities need some guidance.

In a worst-case scenario, Chinese aggression could even lead us to us to formally recognize Taiwan, just as we had to do with Kosovo, despite Russian and Serbian opposition, to make sure that it's an international issue. Historically, especially during Pearson's time, we have looked at this as an international issue.

We have to do whatever we can do to prevent any conflict. I think we're doing very well by consistently making the argument that we want to keep the peaceful status quo. We have to signal to China that we are serious about keeping the peaceful status quo and that our silence about Taiwan was conditional on them refraining from aggression. Those days seem past. We also need to assure our democratic allies and partners that we stand with them—that means Japan, the U.S. and others—and that Taiwan is a shared security issue.

I think we need to work hard for peace because the alternative is unimaginable, and the costs to Canada would be very high.

• (2015)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Simon.

Before we start our first round of questioning, I believe Ms. Rempel Garner is lurking somewhere on Zoom. There she is. Good evening and welcome.

We'll go to Mr. Chong for six minutes.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Dr. Simon, for appearing in front of us today.

You wrote a paper in which you said that Canada should update its Taiwan strategy. In particular, you said there could be situations in which international recognition of Taiwan would become the best strategy to deter war and that Canada should lead the way.

Do you think it's time for Canada to recognize Taiwan diplomatically? If not, then at what point before a war between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, which seems imminent, and in what situation between now and that war, would it be appropriate for Canada to recognize Taiwan diplomatically?

Dr. Scott Simon: Obviously that's a very difficult question to answer. It will take a lot of discussion in Canada about that.

I hope I'm not being too hopeful. I think that it would be premature right now to do that. I think even those military exercises in August were not so threatening that we would need to do that yet.

I think there has to be some kind of a red line. We have to be prepared. We have to know what that is, and it is going to take some

discussion. Would it be flights directly over the island of Taiwan, for example? Would that be sufficient?

In spite of the fact that we have relations with Ukraine and Ukraine has been in the UN for a long time, that didn't stop Russia from invading. Having that relationship would not necessarily prevent a war, but I think we would raise the costs to China of having a war if we let them know that we're serious about Taiwan and we're willing as a global community to defend Taiwan.

Hon. Michael Chong: Another recommendation you've made is that Parliament could enhance its role, so I assume that means you're also supportive of MPs going to Taiwan on these legislative exchanges. Is that correct?

• (2020)

Dr. Scott Simon: That's absolutely correct. We've been sending these delegations to Taiwan since the 1970s, and many, many countries send these delegations to Taiwan. They're quite routine. I think we have to continue doing that.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you for that.

What is your assessment of when China is going to invade Taiwan?

Dr. Scott Simon: I don't have a when. Recently the U.S. government has been saying some things. They used to say 2049. Then it was 2027. Now they're saying maybe 2023 or maybe later this year. I don't think it's really my place to try to figure out when they're going to do that.

I think what we need to do instead of trying to think about when they're going to do that is try to make sure we can keep them pushing that back as much as we can.

Hon. Michael Chong: I know there was a bit of disbelief when the Biden administration suggested late last year that Russia was on the verge of invading Ukraine. None of us wanted to believe that was going to happen. Unfortunately, it did happen on February 24. I take a bit more seriously now the analysis coming out of Washington about this potential. I think we as parliamentarians have a job to do to game out various potential scenarios that could be taking place.

Do you share the Taiwanese representative's view that by more closely engaging with Taiwan—both informally through legislator-to-legislator links and more formally through the negotiation of foreign investment promotion and protection agreements as well as free trade agreements—we increase the cost to Beijing of invading Taiwan?

Dr. Scott Simon: Basically, we're making the world that we live in with the agreements we make, so I definitely agree with him about having closer relations with Taiwan all across the board—with FIPAs, with people-to-people relations, with relations between universities in Taiwan and other universities and even with the work of the Presbyterian church in Taiwan or the United Church of Canada. All of these things are really important for our ties. They're important for really influencing the role that Taiwan plays in the world and for making sure that it's stronger. That's good for democracy.

Hon. Michael Chong: One thing you've stated in the past is that Canada has long assumed, as have other democracies, that Beijing's participation in international affairs has fostered peace. Increasingly it is clear, though, that the People's Republic of China is willing to use military force and military coercion even against Canada in order to get its way.

Do you think the Canadian government should be more explicit with Beijing about this problem? In other words, should our government be saying to Beijing more directly that the assumptions we long held about them being a peaceful actor in the world are quickly eroding and therefore we are going to reset our policy in the Indo-Pacific region based on that new reality?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think Canada was instrumental in getting China into the United Nations system. A big part of that was the argument that excluding them from things is a threat to world peace. We brought them into it with the assumption that having them join the world system would lead to world peace and there would be a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Strait issues.

That's clearly not happening. It's not just because of the threats against Taiwan. It's not just because of the threats against Canada, which are happening. It's also the genocide that's happening in Xinjiang and the threats against India and Japan.

I think we have to make it very clear to China that any of their aggression is of serious and grave concern to Canada. I think we have to be educating Canadians about that as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Simon and Mr. Chong.

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

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Dr. Simon, for being here with us tonight.

You said in your remarks—and I think you're correct in your understanding—that “Canada's first interest is a peaceful, free and open Indo-Pacific.” I think that would be our goal. You also talked about ways to “reinforce”—or perhaps re-establish, unfortunately—“the peaceful status quo”. That goal is in your remarks and is the Canadian goal as well.

A recent witness at our committee, David Wright from the University of Calgary, said, “[S]ome of the steps that democratic countries”—and I would add some opposition party members—“wish to take towards protecting Taiwan's democracy may in fact achieve just the opposite result.” He added, “Maybe doing the right thing is more a matter of not doing the wrong thing.”

I want you to work with me a bit on that because we've had this system where we've attempted to neither endorse nor challenge the

People's Republic of China's attitudes or actions with respect to Taiwan. They're pushing us. Some people have a response to push back. I worry at times that this could cause more danger for the people of Taiwan. Finding that balance of pushing without endangering would be my goal.

Could you help me a bit with that?

● (2025)

Dr. Scott Simon: I think this conversation has been going on for a while. What often gets overlooked is that we have decided.... Actually, when the secretary for external affairs Mitchell Sharp negotiated with China, the Chinese agreed to this framework of neither endorsing nor challenging.

Sometimes I think we don't have to always do it publicly, but we have to remind the Chinese that we don't endorse their claims over Taiwan. We have never accepted their claim. We took note, but we never accepted it.

When it comes to concrete steps, some things could be overly provocative, but frankly, I think Canada should be less concerned about that than the United States, for example. China tends to perceive the United States as being an enemy country in many ways. Canada is not really the same threat to China, so I think there are a lot of things we could do that the Americans can't do and I think we should be exploring that.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: We're talking about the recognition of Taiwan in international fora as being important. That does push back, but we have been strong about encouraging their participation in places where they can add value. We keep strengthening trading relationships and people-to-people ties. I am very open to understanding more about where else we could push without slamming the people of Taiwan because we have an ego need there.

I would echo Mr. Pearson's comment about the people of Formosa. They're the ones who need to be engaged on this question. It's about the people of Taiwan. I don't want to hurt them. I want to push, but not hurt. How do we do that?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think the way we do that is by engaging them wherever we can, and often by working on things where we have values in common—on the indigenous issues, for example. Both countries have same-sex marriage and LGBT rights. There's a woman president and there's a high percentage of women legislators, so on feminist issues, our feminist foreign policy should have something there. There are some things on sustainable development too.

Maybe this could be about working with Taiwan on some of their development projects in other countries, such as in Haiti or Oceania, and reinforcing them in ways that are below the radar screen for China, in many ways, but that are still helpful.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: I'm fond of reminding people that former president Ma, as mayor of Taipei, was the first Asian mayor to establish a gay pride festival.

It's something we value in Canada, so we will encourage that and will find ways to do that. I never mind irking China, but protecting Taiwan at the same time would be the balance that we would try to find there.

I'm also glad you mentioned Mitchell Sharp, my first political mentor. I think that concept of not accepting the concept that China holds about Taiwan, but finding ways to challenge it appropriately, would be the other thing.

With respect to the peaceful status quo, do you think we have a peaceful status quo? Do we have an unpeaceful status quo? Or do we have a dangerously precarious status quo?

● (2030)

Dr. Scott Simon: I think we have a very precarious peace right now.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: It's a precarious peace.

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes. I say that because peace is the absence of war. There are, of course, grey-zone tactics going on just short of war. I think those exercises in August were a good example of that. I think they are trying to get the world accustomed to that.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: What about the placing of a Canadian frigate through the strait at that time?

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes. I think that's a signal to China that we're very concerned.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: We did that.

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Oliphant.

We will now go to Mr. Bergeron for six minutes or less.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Simon, my questions will be along the same lines as those of my colleague Mr. Oliphant.

Last February, the director general for North Asia at Global Affairs Canada, Mr. Weldon Epp, appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. He reiterated Canada's position that Canada does not support China's claims to Taiwan, but neither does it dispute them. It's all a matter of nuance, but you said a few moments ago that you don't dispute them, but you've never accepted them.

In your mind, what is the difference between not disputing China's claims on Taiwan and not accepting them?

Dr. Scott Simon: In my opinion, there is a big difference between the two.

In order to build relations with China, China has asked for recognition that Taiwan is an integral part of China. Mr. Mitchell Sharp said this was impossible, because Taiwan is not part of China.

The fact that China is asking Canada to recognize this is already evidence. China has not asked Canada to recognize that Shandong is part of China and Canada has not asked China to recognize that Alberta is part of Canada.

If one does not dispute the claims, it is because one wants to have a relationship with China. If one does not accept the recommendations, it is because it is an established fact that Taiwan is not part of China. So one cannot support China's position.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I am sorry to insist, but this seems to me extremely important.

When one does not accept a state of affairs, is it not, de facto, a way of challenging that state of affairs?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think that's a very diplomatic formula.

This very clearly challenges China's claim that Taiwan belongs to the People's Republic of China. This diplomatic convention was necessary, in 1970, to have a diplomatic relationship with China.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: If I understand what you are telling us correctly, in effect, Canada is challenging China's claims on Taiwan, but pretending not to.

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes, this is fiction. Even the Quebec Superior Court, about 18 years ago, in François Parent's action against Singapore Airlines Limited, the Civil Aeronautics Administration of Taiwan, said that it was diplomatic fiction and that the courts were not required to maintain it.

Our entire society does not need to maintain it.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: What you are telling us is very interesting, once again, Mr. Simon.

In what way did the Quebec Superior Court challenge this fiction?

Dr. Scott Simon: The court said it only applied to this very particular case, because a plane had crashed at Taipei airport. Mr. François Parent had sued the Taiwan Civil Aeronautics Administration.

The Quebec Superior Court was obliged to decide whether Taiwan was a state or not. It did in fact decide and hold that, in this context, Taiwan was a state.

● (2035)

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: That's very interesting.

Last October, you published an article entitled "Navigating Canada-Taiwan Relations — Why Canada needs a renewed strategy to help safeguard peace in the Taiwan Strait". In it, you call for Canada to update its strategy towards Taiwan, including direct discussions between Canadian and Taiwanese government officials and former diplomats, academics and think tanks.

As my colleague said, Parliament can also strengthen its role, perhaps by following Japan's example and initiating a bilateral dialogue on Taiwan's security.

How can Japan's example inspire Canada?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think the relationship between Japan and Taiwan could inspire Canada in many ways.

In this report, I gave an example of a dialogue held between political parties on security and defence. It is not a state-to-state dialogue, between departments of Defence and so on, but between the parties in power. So it would be possible to start such a process between the Liberal Party and the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan. This is the proposed model.

There is one other thing I would like to add. When Ms. Sgro went to Taiwan with the delegation, there was a parade. The members of the Japanese Parliament participated in this parade to celebrate the National Day of the Republic of China in Taiwan. So it was quite public. They contributed to the parade.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Did Canadian parliamentarians participate in the parade?

Dr. Scott Simon: They were spectators.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Are you suggesting that Canadian parliamentarians should have taken part in the parade?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think it might be a good idea to do this in the future.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: All right. Let me know if...

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bergeron, I'm sorry, but you are out of time.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I'll come back.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Ms. McPherson, go ahead for six minutes or less.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What a fascinating conversation we're having. Thank you very much, Dr. Simon, for being here and sharing this with us.

I think all of us are trying to find ways to do what we can to ensure there is peace in Taiwan. This is everybody's goal, I think. You talked about things such as working on sustainable development goals, or ways we can work with them on development assistance. Those things are, of course, music to my ears. I know you are a specialist in indigenous relations in Taiwan.

What does it mean that Taiwan is not able to participate in the United Nations? What do we lose when we can't learn from Taiwan at the United Nations regarding things like UNDRIP or indigenous relations?

Dr. Scott Simon: There's so much we're losing because we don't have Taiwan in the UN. I think the representative talked a bit about that regarding the WHO and so forth.

In addition to that, as we're talking about indigenous issues, there are issues of indigenous rights in Taiwan that are unresolved, such as the rights of indigenous people to hunt according to their tradi-

tions. In many cases, hunting has been criminalized. Because they're not a part of the UN, the citizens—the people of Taiwan, including the indigenous peoples—don't have access to the special rapporteur for indigenous rights. They don't have full access to the permanent forum. When they go to it—and they go to it every year—they're in the side events. It would be an advantage to the indigenous peoples if they could actually have full access to United Nations proceedings on indigenous rights.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

You also talked about universities and their needing more guidance, and that piqued my attention.

What did you mean by that, and what kind of guidance do they require?

Dr. Scott Simon: What I was thinking about there—and I was hoping that somebody would ask about it—is that with our chair of Taiwan studies, we have generally had no problem at all and no pressure from China at all, but something did happen once. That was in the year 2015 when we had a guest speaker, Dr. Andrew Young, a political scientist and sociologist who came to talk about the role of the Republic of China in World War II.

An assistant put the flag of the Republic of China on the website as part of the advertisement, and the embassy actually contacted the university and just bombarded the administration all the way up to the president of the university with emails and phone calls about this. The university was quite concerned that they would cancel a signing ceremony event that was coming up with the Academy of Sciences. I was actually told by one of our vice-deans that in the future we should avoid using any language or symbol that would upset the embassy of the People's Republic of China.

That's what I was thinking about. We really need guidance from the government, in fact, that would tell the universities that they don't take orders from foreign embassies.

● (2040)

Ms. Heather McPherson: That is, of course, difficult to do when the government is trying not to say anything at all sometimes.

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: You did talk a bit about development assistance and that one thing Canada could do is work with Taiwan on support for Haiti. Of course, that's a subject we're studying in the foreign affairs committee right now. Obviously, with what's happening in Haiti, they are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Can you tell me a bit about other ways that Canada could work with Taiwan with regard to international development? What are Taiwan's priorities, and could you perhaps point out a bit about where Taiwan's level of development assistance support is at? How do they play a role in the world, and can Canada learn from them?

Dr. Scott Simon: Yes, they do have international development assistance, and it's focused, of course, on the countries that have diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. These countries actually do recognize the government in Taipei as being the Government of China, which is a bit anachronistic in itself in some ways, but it's still useful because that means Taiwan doesn't have to declare independence from the Republic of China.

Getting back to the development aspect, there are so many places in Africa. They are now down to one country in Africa, Eswatini. I think it would be very useful to work with them on development projects—and Haiti is a good example of that—and remind other countries such as Haiti that they're doing this and that they're very happy they have relations with the Republic of China.

That's part of the precarious peace we have there. There are still some countries that recognize the ROC as the Government of China.

I was at a conference and there was a professor from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who was asked, "What would happen if China poached away all of the allies of Taiwan?" The professor said, "We can't let that happen because if that did happen, then Taiwan would have no other choice but to declare independence."

I think this strange situation in which a handful of countries recognize them as the Government of China is actually a stabilizing force, and we can shore that up by working with Haiti, Palau, Nauru and all of these small countries on that.

Do you see the—

The Chair: Ms. McPherson, I'm sorry, but you are out of time.

We'll go to our second round, with Mr. Kmiec, for five minutes.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to go to the university question because you said you needed some guidance. You didn't really go very much into what type of guidance that would be.

Can you just expand on that? Is it just instructions of how to deal with foreign embassies, or is there anything more to it?

• (2045)

Dr. Scott Simon: I think it should be a bit more than that. It's the universities, but it's the whole research ecology we live in.

I mentioned drop-down menus, because when you talk about cooperating with other countries on the SSHRC application form, the drop-down menu says "Taiwan-Province of China". It makes it appear as if the Government of Canada endorses China's claim over Taiwan.

I think we should have some guidelines so that universities, other educational institutions and the whole research network we have fall in line with Canada's policy and don't appear to fall in line with China's policy.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Recently, in August this year, the Alberta government loosened some of the restrictions it had introduced on Alberta-based universities—we call them polytechnics—and how they could interact with the Chinese government. However, it left certain restrictions in place, such as signing new agreements involving visiting researchers and post-doctoral fellows, as well as arrangements for research commercialization technology transfers and intellectual property. In those situations, the universities are prohibited from signing new agreements or continuing agreements that were there before.

Is that the type of guidance that should be given to universities all across Canada—to watch the types of relationships they're

building long term with institutions based in mainland China—or should they favour relationships with Taiwanese universities?

Dr. Scott Simon: I'm in agreement with the fact that there needs to be guidance on relations with China as well, but I think universities are sometimes very hesitant about relations with Taiwan.

I've been working on that at the University of Ottawa for 20 years. We've been very successful. We have MOUs with many universities in Taiwan, but it took a lot of work to get that done.

Taiwan is one of the priority countries for the University of Ottawa, but there are universities that are very timid about it, because they're afraid it would endanger their co-operation with China. Our experience at the University of Ottawa is that it does not endanger our relations with China. We can have relations with both sides.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Would it be helpful, then, for Canada to pass a simple framework legislation—as certain parties like to call it—that would be like a Canada-Taiwan official relations act? It would lay out and give a signal to the universities in Canada. It would be a more positive signal, rather than the negative signal of "don't do this". We could positively say we would like them to pursue closer relationships with universities, polytechnics and colleges in Taiwan, and this would be beneficial for the people-to-people relationship between Canadians and the people of Taiwan.

Is that something that would help us?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think legislation on Canada-Taiwan relations would be very helpful. It's important to be very clear that this is for creating guidelines for Canadians within the protocol we already have.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Do you think this type of legislation needs to be very in-depth, or could it be like a value statement framework with just general pieces? I know that the U.S. Taiwan Relations Act is very in-depth. It goes into the military-security relationship. Should ours do so as well, or should it keep itself to the more civilian aspects of our relationship?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think that's something we're going to have to discuss in the years to come. It should be rather detailed and in-depth and should be about various aspects of our relations with Taiwan across society. That would, of course, include defence.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You have 50 seconds.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: That's perfect.

On the people-to-people relationship, I asked a representative here before a question on the intimidation happening in Canada. It's something I've been asking at almost every meeting that I can.

Are you aware of any intimidation of citizens, visitors to Canada or people who are trying to do business here on behalf of Taiwanese companies to reach a deal with a Canadian university? Is there interference from a foreign source, namely the People's Republic of China's embassies or the consulates?

Dr. Scott Simon: Our students are from Hong Kong and Taiwan. We have Uighur students. We have Tibetan students. They report that there is interference and there are threats against them.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Simon and Mr. Kmicc.

Now we'll go to Mr. Cormier for five minutes or less.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Simon, thank you for being with us this evening. Our discussions are very interesting.

Some of the questions have already been asked by my colleagues, but your comments on indigenous rights have piqued my interest. In fact, I think you are doing some research on this topic.

Earlier, I read a note that said some indigenous groups were excluded from the Taiwan process.

Are there any similarities between what the indigenous peoples of Canada have experienced and what the people of Taiwan are experiencing? What is the big problem that you see with that?

This is an interesting topic.

Dr. Scott Simon: I just finished a book on this issue. It's the second book I've written on indigenous peoples.

There are indeed some similarities in our histories, including the loss of territory and the difficulty indigenous peoples have in gaining recognition for their sovereignty. Many of the issues are very similar.

In some respects, I think Taiwan scores higher than Canada. For example, all indigenous communities in Taiwan have access to electricity and clean water, which is not the case in Canada.

Mr. Serge Cormier: My question was also about the fact that some groups are excluded from the Council of Indigenous Peoples. If I am not mistaken, there are 10 or 12 groups.

Why are these groups excluded?

● (2050)

Dr. Scott Simon: There are permanent indigenous bodies at the UN. Taiwan is excluded from all UN bodies. In fact, this is in contradiction with the objective of a permanent forum on indigenous issues at the UN. Normally, indigenous peoples should have direct access to the UN, without interference from states. This principle is not respected in the case of Taiwan.

Mr. Serge Cormier: I see.

You also said that we should do everything we can to prevent conflict or war. What I'm very interested in in this committee is anything to do with our trade relations and our country's economy, including the global economy, which could suffer greatly.

What do you think would be the biggest threat to the Canadian economy, if a conflict arises between China and Taiwan?

Dr. Scott Simon: It would really be an economic disaster for Canada and for the world. If there were ever a conflict—I'm not even talking about an invasion—like an embargo against Taiwan, we would lose access to the port of Taiwan and China. It would block shipping, and we would risk losing our investments in China, and imports from Taiwan and China.

Mr. Serge Cormier: I see.

I think all members of the committee agree that human rights must be the top priority.

I often ask the witnesses the question: do you think, from an economic point of view, Canada can do without China as a trading partner eventually?

Dr. Scott Simon: China is a huge country, with a large population. We see that there is now a trend in China to disconnect from the global economy. It is China that is doing this, not the west.

China needs the whole world, and the whole world also needs China. In the long run, I think it is very important that China is integrated with the world.

Mr. Serge Cormier: If you had any recommendations for this committee as to what Canada could do better or differently for Taiwan, what would those recommendations be?

Can you summarize that in one or two points?

Dr. Scott Simon: Canada needs to do more to support Taiwan, but with the co-operation of other states in the region. It could improve its relationship with Japan, because the Taiwan issue is very important to Japan. It should work more closely with Japan on issues related to peace and security in the region.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cormier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Thank you, Mr. Simon.

By the way, I wanted to congratulate you on your excellent French.

[*English*]

The Chair: Now we'll go to Mr. Bergeron for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I support my colleague Mr. Cormier's comment.

I thank you very much, Mr. Simon, for expressing yourself and answering in impeccable French the questions that are put to you in the language of Molière.

I would like to return to the question of Japan.

We talk about a bilateral security dialogue. You mentioned the relations between political parties, but, in concrete terms, what does this bilateral security dialogue mean, and what results does it achieve?

Dr. Scott Simon: This bilateral dialogue has just begun in Japan. It is the beginning of a dialogue.

The most important effect is to highlight the situation in the region in public discourse. This demonstrates the importance of Japan with regard to the situation in the Taiwan Strait. It also involves Japanese islands right next to Taiwan.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: In your opinion, what can results can we expect from this bilateral dialogue on the specific issue of security?

• (2055)

Dr. Scott Simon: This dialogue demonstrates to the world, and to China as well, that we are willing to work with Taiwan for its protection. The United States and Japan are certainly ahead of Canada, but I think Canada could also lead.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: What do you think Canada could do?

Dr. Scott Simon: It wouldn't necessarily be the same joint initiatives that we are already engaged in with Japan, but we could start with small initiatives. For example, we could do initiatives with the Coast Guard in collaboration with Haiti.

We could start by discussing small projects like that together.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: In your opinion...

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bergeron, I'm sorry, but you are out of time.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: We will have other opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Simon.

[English]

The Chair: The cleanup batter is at the plate. The winning run is on base.

Ms. McPherson, you have the final two and a half minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I always get to play that role, don't I, Mr. Chair?

I will finish by following up on some of the questions Mr. Bergeron was asking.

We know that the Indo-Pacific strategy is coming. We've been told that time and time again. I assume that it will come at some point.

What would you like to see in it? With regard to Taiwan, what would you say is a successful Indo-Pacific strategy for Taiwan when we do see it? What advice would you give, if you could, to our foreign minister?

Dr. Scott Simon: It's important to be very specific in it and say that we support peace and security in the Taiwan Strait and no unilateral aggression. I hope the Indo-Pacific strategy shows clear support for Taiwan.

Ms. Heather McPherson: You spoke about our relations and the fact that Japan has an important role to play in that. You spoke about how Japan has taken a sort of leadership role on this. What other countries should we be predominantly working with to continue that work, in addition to Japan, of course?

Dr. Scott Simon: I think there are other countries in the area where we have a large diaspora—for example, the Philippines and Vietnam. I think those countries should be priorities.

Another area where we have a special role to play would be in Oceania. Because of our French and English heritage, we can communicate with the people in those countries.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Do you have any other comments before we conclude this evening?

Dr. Scott Simon: No. Thank you very much. I think it's very important to recognize that we already have a relationship with Taiwan that's independent of our relationship with the People's Republic of China, and we have to keep working with that in mind.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thanks for coming today and sharing all of these perspectives with us.

Dr. Scott Simon: Thank you.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, that's all for me.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

Dr. Simon, thank you very much for attending this evening. It's getting late, and we appreciate your time very much.

We will now pause, and for people on Zoom, there's a link being sent right now. We will be back in a couple of minutes for a brief in camera session.

Yes, Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: I have a point of order. At the beginning of the meeting, our witness, Dr. Medeiros, was supposed to appear but couldn't. It seems there was a miscommunication between the technicians who tested his equipment earlier and what was required for this committee. I just want to make sure that the inconsistency is not there next time so we don't have to deny a witness their time.

The Chair: Yes, in that respect, Mr. Chong, we were pushing the boundaries of what was acceptable audio from Dr. Medeiros. We did a test early. It was marginal, but we consulted with our interpreters and decided, especially given the risks they are facing, that it would be better to ensure that Dr. Medeiros had the proper gear. We'll invite him back.

• (2100)

Hon. Michael Chong: Can I just make a suggestion? We should make it the default rule for all witnesses that they have the proper gear.

The Chair: It is the default rule. Again, given some difficulties we spoke about before with getting witnesses to appear at our committee at this time of the day, we thought we could do it, but at the end of the day, we could not, which is why Dr. Simon had to carry the panel all by himself.

I appreciate your intervention on that. I think our lesson is learned that without the proper gear, the person will not attend.

The Chair: We will take a break, and we'll be back in camera in just a moment.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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