



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

A THREAT TO CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY: NATIONAL SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE CANADA-PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

**Interim Report of the Special Committee on the Canada-
People's Republic of China Relationship**

Ken Hardie, Chair

**MAY 2023
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Standing Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website
at the following address: www.ourcommons.ca

**A THREAT TO CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY:
NATIONAL SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE
CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
RELATIONSHIP**

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

**Ken Hardie
Chair**

MAY 2023

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

To assist the reader:

A glossary of terms used in this report is available on page xi

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

CHAIR

Ken Hardie

VICE-CHAIRS

Hon. Michael D. Chong

Heather McPherson

Denis Trudel

MEMBERS

Serge Cormier

Raquel Dancho

Emmanuel Dubourg

Peter Fragiskatos

Tom Kmiec

Hon. Robert Oliphant

Kyle Seeback

Jean Yip

OTHER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO PARTICIPATED

Shafqat Ali

Mel Arnold

Jenica Atwin

Stéphane Bergeron

Terry Dowdall

Ali Ehsassi

Hon. Ed Fast

Angelo Iacono

Majid Jowhari

Jenny Kwan

Dan Mazier

Hon. John McKay
Christine Normandin
Sonia Sidhu

CLERKS OF THE COMMITTEE

Christine Holke
Nancy Vohl

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services

Brendan Naef
Marie Dumont

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

43rd PARLIAMENT – 2nd SESSION

CHAIR

Hon. Geoff Regan

VICE-CHAIRS

Garnett Genuis

Stéphane Bergeron

Jack Harris

MEMBERS

Hon. Michael D. Chong

Emmanuel Dubourg

Peter Fragiskatos

Robert Oliphant

Pierre Paul-Hus

John Williamson

Jean Yip

Lenore Zann

OTHER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO PARTICIPATED

Chandra Arya

James Bezan

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe

Kenny Chiu

Jenny Kwan

Joël Lightbound

Christine Normandin

Francesco Sorbara

Shannon Stubbs

Arnold Viersen

Sameer Zuberi

CLERK OF THE COMMITTEE

Marie-France Lafleur

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services

Brendan Naef

Holly Porteous

**THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
RELATIONSHIP**

has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Pursuant to Order of Reference of Monday, May 16, 2022, the committee has studied the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relations and has agreed to report the following:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY.....	XI
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	1
A THREAT TO CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY: NATIONAL SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP	9
Introduction.....	9
Context of the Study	10
Drawing a Distinction Between the Activities of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese People	11
Broad Scope of the Interim Report.....	13
Structure of the Report	14
Chapter 1: Close to Home: Domestic Targets of Foreign Interference	14
Foreign Interference	14
The Targeting of Individuals and Communities	17
Diaspora.....	17
Dissidents and Human Rights Defenders.....	19
Interference with Canadian Institutions	26
Universities.....	26
Increasing the Awareness of Threats while Finding a Balance.....	28
Influence and Intimidation on University Campuses.....	31
Intelligence and Security Agencies on Campus	31
Government Responses	33
Confucius Institutes.....	34
Interference with Democratic Institutions and Elections	38
Political Interference Operations.....	39
Measures to Combat Interference with Elections	41
Media.....	44

Cyber-Threats and Protection of Critical Infrastructure	53
The People’s Republic of China and Cyber-Related Threats	53
Cyber-Security Issues Related to Canada.....	55
Social Media.....	58
Canada’s Position	59
Organized Crime	63
Chapter 2: International Concerns and Domestic Implications	65
Health-Related Threats and the COVID-19 Pandemic	65
Global Health Governance and International Responses to Infectious Disease Outbreaks.....	66
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Research Security and Other National Security Issues	67
Influence in Multilateral Institutions.....	71
Arbitrary Detention of Canadians Abroad.....	73
The People’s Republic of China’s Ambitions in the Arctic and Canadian Arctic Sovereignty	76
Working with Our Allies	79
Conclusion	81
APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES	83
APPENDIX B LIST OF WITNESSES	85
APPENDIX C LIST OF BRIEFS.....	89
REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE	91
SUPPLEMENTARY OPINION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA	93

GLOSSARY

ACHK	Alliance Canada Hong Kong
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AUKUS	Trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America
CCFV	Canadian Center for Vaccinology
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CI	Confucius Institutes
CSE	Communications Security Establishment
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
DND	Department of National Defence
G7	Group of Seven
GSPIA	Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCFIC	National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator (Australia)
NML	National Microbiology Laboratory
NSICOP	National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
PRC	People's Republic of China
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism

RT	Russia Today
SITE Task Force	Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force
U.S.	United States of America
UF	United Front
UFW	United Front Work
UFWD	United Front Work Department
WHO	World Health Organization
5G	fifth generation network
6G	sixth generation network

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada convey, to the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Canada, that any interference with the rights and freedoms of people in Canada is unacceptable, will not be tolerated, will result in serious consequences for those responsible, and will damage the bilateral relationship between Canada and the People’s Republic of China. 25

Recommendation 2

That, in light of the allegations of threats and intimidation against people in Canada, the Government of Canada continue to ensure that all accredited diplomatic personnel of the People's Republic of China continue to act within the strict confines of their official responsibilities. 25

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada work with provinces and territories to establish measures supporting individuals or groups in Canada who are the target of state-backed harassment and intimidation. The measures should include the establishment of a widely disseminated and single point of contact to which people can report incidents. The measures should also include coordination mechanisms with other orders of government to ensure that all incidents requiring investigation are addressed in a consistent and timely manner so that state-backed harassment and intimidation are effectively deterred and countered. 25

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada make clear that attempts by the People’s Republic of China to apply the National Security Law in an extraterritorial manner is unacceptable..... 25

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada advise provincial governments, as well as Canadian universities and research institutions, about the threats from the People’s Republic of China to national security and intellectual property. The advice should include explicit guidance against research partnerships and collaboration with universities, entities, and researchers from the People’s Republic of China in the five sensitive areas identified by CSIS (artificial intelligence, quantum technology, 5G, biopharma, clean tech). The Government of Canada should also conduct ongoing outreach and provide resources to assist universities and research institutions in developing robust mechanisms to protect national security and intellectual property, while respecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy. 37

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, through a ministerial policy directive, ban the federal granting councils from funding research connected with universities, entities, and researchers from the PRC in the five sensitive areas identified by CSIS. 37

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada explore the possibility of issuing security clearances for key individuals in the non-profit sector, private sector, universities, and research institutions to allow them to receive comprehensive briefings from Canada’s security and intelligence agencies so that they can take appropriate steps to protect their intellectual property. 37

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada undertake a review of its national security legislation, prioritizing the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, with the objective of ensuring Canada’s security and intelligence agencies can engage more effectively with universities and research institutions in furthering the protection of Canada’s national security and intellectual property..... 38

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada work with provincial governments to encourage Canadian education institutions to be fully transparent about their agreements with Confucius Institutes. 38

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada implement the four recommendations of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians to improve the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol, as listed in paragraph 14 of its 2020 Annual Report:

- **the Protocol's mandate should capture all forms of foreign interference, from cyber interference to more traditional methods;**
- **the membership of the Protocol's Panel should be composed of non-partisan individuals, including prominent Canadians, who may carry more weight in the highly politicized context of an election;**
- **the government should engage frequently and substantively with political parties on the Protocol's purpose and operation to ensure the widest understanding of the Panel's nonpartisan role and the process for intervention; and**
- **further thought should be given to how the Panel would inform Canadians of an incident of foreign interference, including issues of attribution. 43**

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada in its engagement with political parties provide information of specific application, including information about foreign interference regarding specific candidates and donors, rather than just information of a general nature, allowing political parties to take measures to counter foreign interference..... 43

Recommendation 12

That the Department of Canadian Heritage take measures to counter the prevalence of People's Republic of China-influenced media in Canadian diaspora communities. Such measures could include, but are not limited to:

- Enacting initiatives to counter misinformation and disinformation disseminated by actors associated with the Government of the People’s Republic of China and targeted at Chinese diaspora communities in Canada, including the funding of projects through the Digital Citizen Initiative;
- Identifying the ownership of media organizations related to the PRC in Canada and their activities in Canada, including but not limited to misinformation campaigns, censorship, and intimidation;
- Exploring ways to flag and address misinformation and censorship on Chinese state-controlled social media apps such as WeChat and TikTok; and
- Exploring ways to reduce/eliminate Chinese state-controlled social media’s presence in Canada. 48

Recommendation 13

That the Minister of Canadian Heritage issue an order under Section 7 of the *Broadcasting Act* to direct the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to a new broadcasting policy of general application that authoritarian state-controlled broadcasters not be on the *List of non-Canadian programming services and stations authorized for distribution*. 49

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada introduce legislation to establish a foreign agents registry that would require any individual or entity, including former public office holders, to publicly declare any contracts or remuneration with a hostile state, as determined by the Government of Canada, or any entity affiliated with that hostile state. 52

Recommendation 15

That Public Safety Canada report regularly to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security detailing the extent, targets, methods and objectives of the People’s Republic of China’s interference activities in Canada, and that the Government of Canada, through its national security and diplomatic architecture, take immediate steps to counteract any interference that is taking place. 53

Recommendation 16

That, as part of a whole-of-government plan to counter foreign interference, the Government of Canada establish a national counter foreign interference coordinator to oversee a comprehensive response to foreign interference. This office should work with Canada’s security and intelligence agencies to develop threat assessments, coordinate outreach with communities at risk of foreign interference, and increase public awareness of – and resilience to – foreign interference activities..... 53

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada adopt a policy whereby no foreign single foreign vendor’s products compose over 30% of the equipment in a private telecommunications vendor’s network..... 62

Recommendation 18

That the Government of Canada prohibit state-owned enterprises, partial state-owned enterprises, and technology companies of the People’s Republic of China from obtaining federal contracts or sub-contracts related to information and communication technology or security equipment or services. 62

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada explore how it could require social media platforms operating in Canada that are connected to the People’s Republic of China to disclose their practices with respect to the collection, use and transfer of user data, as well as their moderation or restriction of any user content. 62

Recommendation 20

That the government examine the establishment of criteria for the federal procurement of Information Technology equipment, whereby the Communications Security Establishment would automatically be called upon to conduct supply chain cybersecurity risk assessments and/or supply chain integrity assessments if certain conditions are met, including equipment application and country of origin. 62

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, major national security agencies, and federal departments involved to improve our resilience to cyber-attacks. 62

Recommendation 22

That Public Safety Canada report regularly to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on the extent and impact of organized crime, drug trafficking and concealing beneficial ownership information in Canada. 65

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada explore ways to target organized crime groups and prevent them from entering Canada and expanding or forming alliances in Canada. 65

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada expand its proposed beneficial ownership registry to include real estate and entities incorporated under provincial law. 65

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada explore ways to increase access to information regarding infectious disease outbreaks in the People’s Republic of China through international entities like the World Health Organization..... 71

Recommendation 26

That Health Canada, through the Public Health Agency of Canada, study Taiwan’s pandemic response and explore ways to increase information sharing with public health agencies in Taiwan..... 71

Recommendation 27

That Global Affairs Canada designate an individual to serve as a dedicated advocate for Canadians, regardless of where they were born and Canadians who hold dual citizenship, who are arbitrarily detained abroad, whose responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- **Working with countries and multilateral organizations to promote the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations to more jurisdictions.**
- **Assisting with consular affairs regarding Canadians who are arbitrarily detained abroad.**
- **Exploring ways to protect Canadians from the practice of arbitrary detentions, more particularly in state-to-state relations. 75**

Recommendation 28

That, as a part of a whole-of-government plan to protect Canada’s interest and sovereignty in the Arctic, the Government of Canada increase investment in scientific research and the security of waterways, energy resources, mineral deposits, and critical technologies. 78

Recommendation 29

That the Government of Canada recognize the threat to Canadian Arctic sovereignty posed by the PRC in a renewed defence policy and commit the necessary resources to protect Canada’s Arctic sovereignty. 78

Recommendation 30

That the Government of Canada expand its work with Indigenous communities in the Arctic to respect Indigenous rights while ensuring the security of Indigenous groups and Canadian sovereignty. 78

Recommendation 31

That the Government of Canada work with like-minded Arctic states to promote multilateral cooperation, information sharing and collective security/defence. 78

Recommendation 32

That the Government of Canada explore ways to reduce non-Arctic states' influence on/ participation in resource exploration and exploitation, fishing, and scientific research in the Arctic..... 79

Recommendation 33

That the Government of Canada explore ways to increase security cooperation and cooperation on artificial intelligence, critical technologies and infrastructure with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region and multilateral organizations..... 81

Recommendation 34

That the Government of Canada undertake a comprehensive national security review that culminates in the publication of a national security policy. The review should include an assessment of the effectiveness of the current national security approach, laws, and practices that identifies areas where improvements can be made; an assessment of the role and mandate of key national security agencies; and an examination of the role played by international cooperation in Canada's national security approach and opportunities for enhanced cooperation. 82



A THREAT TO CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY: NATIONAL SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The House of Commons Special Committee on Canada-China Relations (Special Committee) was formed in January 2020 with a mandate to study all aspects of Canada’s relationship with the People’s Republic of China (PRC).¹ In October 2020, the Special Committee agreed to study the national security dimensions of the relationship, “including but not limited to: cybersecurity and the threat of foreign influence.”² Following its dissolution due to a federal election in 2021, it was reconstituted as the Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship in June 2022. Upon its reconstitution, the Special Committee prioritized the completion of this unfinished study.

Over the course of two parliamentary sessions, the Special Committee heard from over 50 witnesses during 16 meetings. Witnesses included cyber-security experts, national security experts, human rights defenders, academics, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The Special Committee also heard from the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Health, as well as officials from the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

The Special Committee’s work would not have been possible without the important insights shared by the witnesses who testified and those who submitted written briefs. In particular, the Special Committee wishes to thank the individuals who shared their personal stories of intimidation and harassment to help the Special Committee better understand the situation facing the Chinese diaspora in Canada.

1 House of Commons, *Journals*, 10 December 2019; House of Commons, *Journals*, 16 May 2022.

2 House of Commons, Special Committee on Canada-China Relations (CACN), *Minutes of Proceedings*, 26 October 2020.



Context of the Study

As the Special Committee began its national security focus, Canada's security and intelligence organizations were issuing warnings about various national security threats emanating from the PRC.³ The Special Committee's first meeting on the topic was held 809 days into the PRC's arbitrary detention of two Canadians, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, and seven months following the PRC's imposition of sweeping national security legislation – with extraterritorial reach – on Hong Kong.⁴

The Special Committee's initial meetings also occurred throughout the second and third waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, which exacerbated existing national security threats and saw the emergence of new ones.⁵ At the time, CSE and CSIS had already released a joint statement noting that the uncertain environment created by the pandemic was "ripe for exploitation by threat actors seeking to advance their own interests."⁶

In July 2021, shortly after the Special Committee's final meeting preceding the 2021 federal election, CSIS published its report on *Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process*.⁷ Without naming the PRC, the report warned of "persistent and sophisticated state-sponsored threat activity targeting elections for many years now," and indicated that CSIS was seeing a rise in the frequency and sophistication of election interference.⁸ The report also warned that social media was

3 The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians' (NSICOP) annual report for 2018 noted that the People's Republic of China (PRC) was among "a handful of states" conducting espionage and foreign influence activities in Canada, including state-sponsored cyber threats targeting Canada. See NSICOP, [Annual Report 2018](#), p. 26. On 20 December 2018, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) published a warning regarding PRC involvement in cyber attacks on Managed Service Providers. See CSE, [Canada and Allies Identify China as Responsible for Cyber-Compromise](#), 20 December 2018. Furthermore, in a 9 February 2021 speech, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Director David Vigneault stated that the PRC "is pursuing a strategy for geopolitical advantage on all fronts – economic, technological, political, and military – and using all elements of state power to carry out activities that are a direct threat to our national security and sovereignty." See CSIS, [Remarks by Director David Vigneault to the Centre for International Governance Innovation](#), 9 February 2021.

4 Officially the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (National Security Law).

5 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1930 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

6 Ibid.; CSE and CSIS, [Joint CSE and CSIS Statement – May 14, 2020](#).

7 CSIS, [Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process](#), July 2021.

8 Ibid., p. 6.

being leveraged to spread disinformation, divide public opinion, or interfere in public debates.

For a brief period, while the Special Committee was paused, signs pointed to a potential reduction of tensions between Canada and the PRC. On 25 September 2021 – hours after Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou was released from house arrest in Vancouver further to a deferred prosecution agreement with the United States (U.S.) Justice Department – Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor returned to Canada.⁹ In the spring of 2022, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke with the PRC’s Minister of Foreign Affairs for the first time since 2020. Additionally, on 18 May 2022, the PRC removed import restrictions on canola seed shipments from two Canadian exporters.

However, as the Special Committee’s national security focus restarted later in 2022, witnesses warned about being overly optimistic that the relationship had changed. An official from Global Affairs Canada told the Special Committee that “China’s efforts to shape the rules-based international order in ways contrary to Canada’s interests have only accelerated” since the Special Committee had last met.¹⁰ Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, described the current Canada-PRC relationship as “very cool” and “characterized by minimal engagement despite the importance of the issues in play.”¹¹ Moreover, government representatives and Canadian security and intelligence agencies have increasingly felt the need to single out various PRC operations as leading national security threats to Canada.

Drawing a Distinction Between the Activities of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese People

The House of Commons motion recreating the Special Committee in 2022 highlighted the immeasurable contributions that Canadians of Chinese descent have made to Canada. It further affirmed the need to distinguish between the people of China and the Chinese state, as embodied by the Communist Party of China (CCP) and the government

9 At the outset of the Special Committee’s work, Dominic Barton, Canada’s then Ambassador to China, conveyed that Canada’s relationship with China “fundamentally changed” in December 2018 with the arbitrary detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. He said, “The chill is real.” See CACN, *Evidence*, 1st session, 43rd Parliament, 5 February 2020, 1735 (Dominic Barton, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Canada to the People’s Republic of China).

10 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 4 October 2022, 1835 (Paul Thoppil, Assistant Deputy Minister, Asia Pacific, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

11 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 4 October 2022, 2015 (Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual).



of the PRC.¹² Witnesses concurred with this distinction.¹³ Several witnesses also emphasized the diversity of the Chinese diaspora in Canada and counselled the Special Committee to avoid seeing it as a homogeneous community, with one set of views.¹⁴

Witnesses also emphasized that responses to national security threats must avoid stigmatizing individuals of Chinese descent in Canada who already feel targeted by anti-China sentiment.¹⁵ Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong (ACHK), argued that, considering geopolitical tensions and anti-Asian racism, policy responses need to be centered on the needs of Chinese dissident communities. In her words: “we’re the ones who have been bearing the brunt of these kinds of attacks, harassment and influence.”¹⁶

While acknowledging the challenges involved in managing a complex and multifaceted relationship with a more aggressive PRC, Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, stressed the importance of being “surgical in the words we use.”¹⁷ In a similar vein, Gordon Houlden highlighted the need for a nuanced approach that distinguishes between criticizing the PRC government’s conduct “without criticizing the 20% of the world that is Chinese.”¹⁸

12 House of Commons, *Journals*, 16 May 2022.

13 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1840 (Rukiye Turdush, Research Director, Uyghur Research Institute); CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chairman, United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

14 For example, CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

15 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1940 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual).

16 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2025 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).

17 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1955 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual); See also CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2025 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong); CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chairman, United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

18 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1955 (Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual).

Broad Scope of the Interim Report

Threats to national security encompass a broad range of evolving issues and, as they proliferate, become increasingly difficult to define.¹⁹ In its description of threats to the security of Canada, the 1985 *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act (CSIS Act)* includes acts of espionage or sabotage detrimental to the interests of Canada; foreign influenced activities; violence with the purpose of achieving political, religious or ideological objectives; and activities that undermine the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.²⁰ In a May 2022 report on national security – a copy of which was provided to the Special Committee – the Task Force on National Security of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa (University of Ottawa Task Force) adopted a more modern definition. Stating that threats to national security must be defined on a case-by-case basis, the University of Ottawa Task Force report defined national security as dealing with “threats to the people, democratic values and institutions, economy, society, and sovereignty of Canada on a scale that demands a national response.”²¹ The Special Committee agrees with this definition, the broadness of which provides it with the latitude to consider all the concerns raised by witnesses. However, as the University of Ottawa Task Force report suggests, “not every problem is a matter of national security,” and some issues are better addressed outside of the national security framework.²² As such, while the Special Committee viewed national security in a broad manner, some of its recommendations to address issues raised by witnesses fall outside of the security and intelligence realm. Indeed, this approach is consistent with requests from witnesses that issues addressed in the report require whole-of-government solutions, and even whole-of-society solutions that engage the public, the private sector, and civil society.²³

19 Task Force on National Security of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), University of Ottawa, [A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment](#), Report, May 2022, p. 3.

20 *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. C-23, section 2.

21 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment](#), Report, May 2022, p. 3.

22 Ibid.

23 See CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2100 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians); CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1835 (Richard Fadden, Former Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an individual); CACN, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 2100 (Thomas Juneau, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).



Structure of the Report

This report is divided into two chapters. Chapter One addresses various national security threats that fall under the umbrella of foreign interference, including measures targeting individuals in Canada, measures targeting Canadian institutions, and cyber-threats. Chapter Two discusses national security threats occurring outside of Canada that nevertheless impact Canada, as well as witness testimony related to the use of alliances to counter PRC aggression.

CHAPTER 1: CLOSE TO HOME: DOMESTIC TARGETS OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

The activities addressed in this chapter are presented primarily in relation to whom or what they attempt to influence or disrupt, be they individuals, communities, institutions, or critical infrastructure. While some of these activities are hidden, others are plainly visible. Their variety reflects the real and perceived depth and complexity of the PRC's foreign interference campaign. Public Safety Canada confirmed that all forms of foreign interference pose a significant danger to Canada's sovereignty, as well as to individual Canadians.²⁴

Foreign Interference

Several witnesses discussed foreign interference by first differentiating it from foreign influence. For example, The Honourable Bill Blair, then-Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, noted, "the activity of every country to influence other countries is pretty routine diplomatic activity."²⁵ However, influence activities become unacceptable when they aim to "interfere with our democratic institutions, interfere with the lawful activities of our citizens, [and] interfere with our elections."²⁶ In a January 2021 letter addressed to Members of Parliament, Minister Blair described the elements of foreign interference as:

... hostile activity undertaken by foreign states that is purposely covert, malign, clandestine and deceptive. It can include threats, harassment and intimidation. These activities can be directed at Canadians, or residents of Canada, or against Canadian

24 CACN, *Follow Up Responses for the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations Appearance of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and Senior Officials*, 25 February 2021.

25 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1850 (Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

26 Ibid.

institutions to advance their strategic interests at the expense of our national interest and values. Hostile foreign states cross a line anytime they go beyond standard diplomacy to conduct activities against Canada that attempt to threaten our citizens, compromise our way of life, undermine our democratic processes, or damage our economic prosperity.²⁷

He highlighted the complexity of modern foreign interference while noting its potential impact:

It poses a significant threat to the integrity of our political system, democratic institutions, social cohesion, academic freedom, economy and long-term prosperity as well as fundamental rights and freedoms. It can also affect the safety of our citizens and those who live here.²⁸

David Vigneault, Director, CSIS specified that once activities have coercive and covert characteristics, CSIS can intervene and investigate them as threats to national security.²⁹ However, Lynette Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, observed that distinguishing between foreign influence and interference can be challenging and that the two exist along a continuum rather than in binary terms.³⁰ Some witnesses spoke of a resulting “gray area.”³¹

Cherie Wong stated that many of the activities undertaken by the PRC are carried out precisely in areas where the lines between foreign influence and foreign interference are blurred.³² Consequently, measures designed solely to ban or criminalize certain behavior risk being largely ineffective.³³ As examples, she highlighted that harassment or

27 Public Safety Canada, [Response to the December 18, 2020 motion on Foreign Interference](#).

28 Ibid.

29 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1900 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

30 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

31 See CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1935 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong); CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1940 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

32 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1935 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong); See also Alliance Canada Hong Kong (ACHK), [In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#), 31 May 2021, p. 4.

33 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1935 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).



inappropriate foreign investment could fall outside of what would be considered prohibited activities under existing legislation.³⁴

In addition to these definitional complexities, Professor Ong argued that the covert nature of many forms of interference make fair and impartial assessments more challenging.³⁵ She added that various PRC-based organizations³⁶ fall under the umbrella of United Front work,³⁷ which the CCP seeks to use “to shape the narrative and extend its influence overseas.”³⁸ Nevertheless, she also cautioned that “being part of the United Front networks does not automatically imply that individuals or organizations are the CCP’s local agents to carry out foreign interference, even though they are part of the umbrella.”³⁹

Several witnesses highlighted the need for increased understanding of how the PRC may be interfering in Canadian society, as well as the tools, methods and actors it is using to do so.⁴⁰ Moreover, Minister Blair noted that both parliamentarians and the general public need to be provided with a deeper understanding of the threat environment that

34 Ibid., [1955](#).

35 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

36 Lynette Ong identified the following as “key United Front groups”: the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the China Overseas Friendship Association, the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, Chinese students and scholars associations, “and numerous overseas Chinese friendship and hometown associations.” CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

37 Established in 1979, the United Front Work Department (UFWD) is a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) body that has been significantly revitalized and reorganized under President Xi Jinping. The UFWD is the main CCP body responsible for coordinating the implementation of influence operations, or what the Chinese refer to as United Front work (UFW). UFW is conducted both at home and abroad. These operations aim to acquire Western technologies and knowhow – sometimes through espionage –and to shape the international information environment so that PRC-friendly narratives can flow freely through PRC-controlled human and digital networks. See ACHK, [In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#), 31 May 2021, p. 26.

38 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.; CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1955 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury); CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1935 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

currently exists in Canada in relation to such interference.⁴¹ The following sections provide a foundation for such understanding.

The Targeting of Individuals and Communities

Witnesses informed the Special Committee about the PRC’s attempts to “mobilize and weaponize” the Chinese diaspora in Canada through influence, surveillance, and intimidation.⁴² Several witnesses also commented on the threats and intimidation that they and others have personally experienced in Canada as a result of their personal connections and work related to the PRC.

Diaspora

Witnesses told the Special Committee that, through its United Front work, the PRC government attempts to co-opt ethnic Chinese individuals and communities living outside of the PRC, as well as Chinese organizations based overseas.⁴³ Noting that the CCP regards the diaspora as a resource and a tool for promoting foreign policy, Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, described the targeting of diaspora as one of the most difficult challenges New Zealand has faced.⁴⁴

Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair, United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, stated that much of the co-opting occurs through the control of overseas Chinese media, addressed below, and through United Front Work Department (UFWD) affiliated professional and academic associations. She added that Chinese students and scholars associations, Confucius Institutes (CI) and professional organizations offer benefits and support to Chinese students on university and college campuses. In return, “students are expected to rebut any criticism of the CCP and to encourage support for CCP’s global rise.”⁴⁵

41 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1850 (Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

42 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 21 June 2021, 1845 (Honourable Dominic Cardy, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, As an individual).

43 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1830 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual); CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

44 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

45 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).



In a 2021 report provided to the Special Committee, ACHK described some of the methods the UFWD uses to interfere with diaspora in Canada:

In Canada, a mix of grassroots and media strategies is used by the UFWD to control public opinion regarding China. The United Front [UF] has created and mobilized shell groups, registered [non-governmental organizations], and civil societies in Canada. These groups are designed to mimic legitimate community programs and activities in democratic societies, or to promote “Chinese” culture. They purport as non-partisan and non-political entities while aggressively spreading pro-Beijing message and party lines, whether in praising Hong Kong’s national security law or condemning dissent against the Beijing Olympics ... UF groups also give weight to CCP narratives by giving statements and media interviews, often presenting themselves as representatives of the Chinese community. This “astroturfing” creates a false perception that these groups are grassroots and community-based, when in fact their operations are coordinated by the Consulates and the Embassy’s liaisons.⁴⁶

According to ACHK, the UFWD closely monitors – and attempts to exercise a degree of control over – diaspora communities, through digital surveillance and through networks of community groups, private businesses, and individuals. Often, diaspora members are “expected to demonstrate their loyalty by donating, volunteering, and supporting the [United Front] activities.”⁴⁷ Cherie Wong provided an example of how UFWD coercion is carried out, through the mobilization of pro-Beijing counter protestors:

Many individuals are coerced into participating in these pro-Beijing rallies as well. If they don't show up, their families will be threatened. If they don't show up, their scholarships will be pulled. I want to present that very human side, that CSSAs are mobilizing these activities. There are other United Front groups mobilizing these activities, but not all participants are really supporters of the regime; they are forced.⁴⁸

Accordingly, Anne-Marie Brady emphasized the importance of better supporting Chinese diasporas and showing that they “are not all as much under the control of the CCP as [the CCP] would wish.”⁴⁹

46 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 26.

47 Ibid., p. 27.

48 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2000 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong). CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 43rd Parliament, 13 August 2020, 1130 (Cheuk Kwan, immediate past chair, Toronto Association for Democracy in China) provided examples of the “united-front strategy that Chinese consulates and their proxies have carried out” in Canada. As one example related to events in Hong Kong, he spoke about Chinese international students who were “compelled” to “demonstrate against pro-Hong Kong rallies” after threats had been made “to withhold their government scholarships or harm their families back home if they [did not] comply.”

49 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

Dissidents and Human Rights Defenders

In 2020, the Special Committee conducted a related study of the PRC government’s imposition of national security legislation on Hong Kong, which has significantly curtailed the high degree of autonomy that the Special Administrative Region was promised by treaty. The resulting report included a dedicated section on the protection of rights and freedoms in Canada.⁵⁰ The report recounted threats and intimidation faced by individuals with personal connections or work related to the PRC at the hands of PRC state actors and their proxies. Among other things, witnesses spoke of:

- Attempts to limit freedom of expression through threatening phone calls or emails, cyber-hacking and physical confrontation;
- The coordinated use of counter-protesters, Chinese international students, and pro-Beijing United Front organizations to block and intimidate peaceful demonstrations in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver and Ottawa;
- The publication of private information online to intimidate protest participants.⁵¹

During the study, some witnesses alleged the harassment they experienced had been encouraged or instigated by PRC diplomats.⁵² The Special Committee therefore recommended that the Government of Canada convey, to the Ambassador of the PRC in Canada, that any interference with the rights and freedoms of people in Canada would result in serious consequences. It also recommended that the Government of Canada carefully review accredited diplomatic personnel in the People’s Republic of China’s diplomatic missions to Canada.⁵³

During the current study, the Special Committee heard from additional community activists who experienced threats from PRC proxies. Chemi Lhamo, Community Health Lead, Parkdale People’s Economy, told the Special Committee that when she ran in

50 CACN, [*The Breach of Hong Kong’s High Degree of Autonomy: A Situation of International Concern*](#) Second report, February 2021.

51 Ibid.

52 See CACN, [*Evidence*](#), 1st Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 August 2020, 1110 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong); CACN, [*Evidence*](#), 1st Session, 43rd Parliament, 13 August 2020, 1130 (Cheuk Kwan, Immediate Past Chair, Toronto Association for Democracy in China).

53 CACN, [*The Breach of Hong Kong’s High Degree of Autonomy: A Situation of International Concern*](#), Second report, February 2021, p. 43.



student elections at the University of Toronto Scarborough in 2019, she received thousands of harassing comments on social media, including rape and death threats, because of her Tibetan identity. She said that the threats continued during her term as student president and that she was even followed on campus. Shortly after the election, she added, a petition with 10,000 signatures appeared, contesting her presidency because of her views as a Tibetan person.⁵⁴ Ms. Lhamo voiced surprise that a petition could have gained that number of signatures so quickly. In her view, “there was some sort of connection to the Chinese embassy.”⁵⁵

Ms. Lhamo further alleged that the CCP coerces Chinese international students into following CCP party lines and protesting initiatives that are seen as threatening PRC interests. She remarked that Chinese international students have anonymously contacted their student unions voicing concern that organizations like the Canadian Chinese Students and Scholars Association are reporting activities on Canadian campuses to the PRC government.

Rukiye Turdush, Research Director, Uyghur Research Institute, told the Special Committee about harassment she faced after being invited to speak to the McMaster University’s Muslim Students’ Association about the plight of Uyghurs in February 2019. She stated that the McMaster Chinese Students’ Association reported the event to the PRC embassy and published a statement condemning the presentation. She added that the PRC embassy in Ottawa later praised students who had protested her talk for their patriotism. She maintained that the CCP encourages large numbers of Chinese international students to “export their propaganda and China’s autocratic values to our Canadian soil.”⁵⁶

Witnesses also described tactics that the PRC uses to threaten individuals in Canada from afar. Ms. Turdush stated that Uyghur students are harassed through video calls from the PRC, where they are asked for personal information such as their school address and their status in Canada. Additionally, she spoke of pressure exerted by PRC officials on relatives and friends in the PRC, leading some students to sever legal ties with their parents to protect them. In Ms. Turdush’s case, she stopped communicating with her grandmother in the PRC in 2009, and her cousins and friends cut connections

54 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1900 (Chemi Lhamo, Community Health Lead, Parkdale People’s Economy).

55 Ibid.

56 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1835 (Rukiye Turdush, Research Director, Uyghur Rights Advocate, Uyghur Research Institute).

with her due to her activism.⁵⁷ ACHK noted that these intimidation tactics are often coordinated and sophisticated, and are sometimes combined with campaigns that aim to damage an individual's reputation:

Intimidation abroad works in tandem with threats against family members of those who dare to speak out. Chinese authorities coordinate intimidation operations and use families who are in PRC-controlled regions as bargaining chips. Threats and harassment are sometimes paired with Chinese and foreign media campaigns to smear activists and researchers, indicating a high-level coordination.⁵⁸

Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, also discussed the use of families in the PRC as a tool to intimidate and silence human rights defenders in Canada. He mentioned instances of PRC authorities detaining and threatening the relatives of Uyghur Canadian activists, as well as Tibetan Canadians who have been forced to sign forms renouncing the Dalai Lama in order to obtain visas to visit their family members in the PRC.⁵⁹

The PRC recently demonstrated another method of intimidating overseas individuals – one with potential implications for anyone, in any place, who advocates for democracy in Hong Kong. In July 2022, Victor Ho, a resident of Vancouver and previous witness before the Special Committee, held a news conference with other Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates in Toronto to announce the formation of an unofficial virtual parliament in exile that would be elected by Hong Kong's diaspora.⁶⁰ On 3 August 2022, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region issued a news release that “severely condemned” Mr. Ho and two other pro-democracy advocates, indicating that they were “suspected of contravening the offence of subversion under Article 22 of the National Security Law.”⁶¹ The news release also highlighted that, pursuant to Article 37 of the law, “[p]olice shall spare no efforts in pursuing the cases in accordance with the law in order to bring the suspected offenders to justice.”⁶² Noting that the Government of Canada should speak very forcefully against attempts to apply the National Security Law in an extraterritorial manner, Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and former Ambassador to the

57 Ibid., 1845.

58 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 10.

59 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1945 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa).

60 Bernice Chan, “[Canadian accused of subverting Hong Kong's government wants Ottawa to take action on threats](#),” *CBC News*, 24 August 2022.

61 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, [Suspected breach of law condemned](#), News release, 3 August 2022.

62 Ibid.



PRC, warned that Canadians critical of the PRC could easily be found guilty under the legislation. He also warned that the PRC may be tempted to use its extradition treaties with other countries, to have individuals that have been charged under the law arrested and extradited to the PRC.⁶³

While expressing frustration about not knowing which Canadian authorities to contact about harassment and threats, Ms. Lhamo said that she called the Toronto Police, RCMP, and CSIS, only to be pointed from one direction to the other.⁶⁴ Cherie Wong, who experienced similar challenges when trying to report incidences of intimidation, added, “[o]ur community doesn’t have trust in the policing agencies, because so many times we have reached out for help and they have let us down every single time.”⁶⁵ Mr. Neve also mentioned that the confusion about where and to whom to report incidents, coupled with the frustration from previous unsuccessful reporting attempts, has led activists to refrain from reporting incidents.⁶⁶

David Vigneault noted that CSIS has mechanisms for outreach to affected communities, as well as a 1-800 number “where we are referring people to contact CSIS directly, anonymously, to be able to report the activities.”⁶⁷ In a response communicated to the Special Committee, Public Safety Canada indicated that individuals may also report foreign interference activities to CSIS on its web page under “Reporting National Security Information.”⁶⁸ Brenda Lucki, Commissioner, RCMP, said that individuals should report incidents to their local police and should contact 911 for immediate and grievous threats. She added that the RCMP also has a tip line – 1-800-420-5805 – that is displayed on both the main RCMP webpage and the national security website. According to the commissioner, the tip line offers the option of reporting incidents anonymously and has

63 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1915 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

64 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1845 (Chemi Lhamo, Community Health Lead, Parkdale People’s Economy).

65 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1950 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).

66 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1945 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa).

67 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1850 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service). The phone numbers to report foreign interference activities to CSIS are 613-993-7620 or 1-800-267-7685. CACN, *Follow Up Responses for the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations Appearance of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and Senior Officials*, 25 February 2021.

68 CACN, *Follow Up Responses for the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations Appearance of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and Senior Officials*, 25 February 2021.

been fairly effective, receiving on average 120 tips per day.⁶⁹ She acknowledged, however, “we have to do better communication so that the people who feel threatened know that this number exists and they don’t get the runaround.”⁷⁰ She stated, “[u]nfortunately, there’s no one-stop shopping. We always encourage people to go to the police of jurisdiction, because they are the ones who should be investigating any intimidation or coercion.”⁷¹

For Alex Neve, Canada must do more to directly confront the harassment of human rights defenders in Canada emanating from the PRC government and its agents. Recent reports of the establishment of PRC police service stations in Canada, he argued, underscore the urgent nature of this situation.⁷² Jonathan Manthorpe, former foreign correspondent and author of *Claws of the Panda*, agreed. He urged that the most immediate steps to counter foreign interference include the defense of Canadians of Chinese, Uyghur and Tibetan heritage from attacks by the PRC and its proxies in Canada.⁷³

Ms. Lhamo and Mr. Neve informed the Special Committee about two reports prepared by Amnesty International on behalf of the Canadian Coalition for Human Rights in 2017 and 2020. They detail harassment and intimidation of various Chinese diaspora communities in Canada, as well as human rights defenders. The reports – which were shared with the Special Committee – call for the establishment of a centralized focal point within government to act as a primary contact for all individuals and groups facing harassment, intimidation, and interference in Canada due to advocacy related to the PRC.⁷⁴ Mr. Neve suggested that the office could “coordinate the efforts of departments and agencies that all have a piece of this pie, because right now it is scattered and

69 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1845 (Brenda Lucki, Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

70 Ibid., 1935.

71 Ibid.

72 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1945 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa).

73 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1845 (Jonathan Manthorpe, former foreign correspondent and author of *Claws of the Panda*).

74 Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China and Amnesty International, *Harassment and Intimidation of Individuals in Canada Working on China-related Human Rights Concerns, An Update as of March 2020*, p. 5; CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1850 (Chemi Lhamo, Community Health Lead, Parkdale People’s Economy); CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2000 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa).



ineffective.”⁷⁵ Emphasizing the negative impacts the dissident community has experienced from the lack of support, Cherie Wong also called for, “a federal policy in a centralized place to address all forms of foreign influence.”⁷⁶

While acknowledging that it is difficult for advocates to speak out against the PRC while they have family in PRC-controlled areas, Richard Fadden, former Director, CSIS, stated, “[w]e have to find a way,” to ensure that individuals who have been targets of harassment, intimidation and interference feel more comfortable coming forward and testifying.⁷⁷ He told the Special Committee that Canada should be concerned about the positions of PRC diplomats in Canada rather than their total number. He specified that an embassy official who deals with consular issues is not a problem, but that the number of members of the PRC ministry of public security in Canada should be reduced. Mr. Fadden also stated that while defensive intelligence and security measures may have sufficed in the past, “the global digital environment is so dynamic and dangerous that we need tools to actively counter the threat. This requires a clear legislative and regulatory framework.”⁷⁸ He added that additional resources need to be provided to national security agencies in Canada to allow them to exercise their broad mandates.

Gordon Houlden suggested some specific steps that could be taken against those perpetrating the harassment, intimidation, and coercion. He stated:

[W]hen there is pressure on Canadian citizens, landed immigrants and even PRC nationals extending to tracking their political views, pressuring any of these persons to change their behaviour or taking actions that are illegitimate, this must be countered by Canada where detected. In some instances, a simple warning to desist conveyed by Global Affairs Canada to Chinese officials may suffice ... In extreme cases it could mean that individuals in Chinese missions might be expelled or prosecution undertaken against individuals who engaged in threats or other illegal acts and who do not have diplomatic or consular status.⁷⁹

The Special Committee is concerned by reports of the PRC's influence, monitoring, and coercion of diaspora communities, as well as the intimidation and harassment of

75 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2000 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa).

76 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2005 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).

77 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1900 (Richard Fadden, Former Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an individual).

78 *Ibid.*, 1845.

79 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1935 (Gordon Houlden (Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual).

dissidents and human rights defenders. These actions run counter to the fundamental rights and freedoms that are essential to Canadian democracy, and the Government of Canada must take action to defend these values. As previously noted in the Committee's interim report on the situation in Hong Kong, such behavior is unacceptable and must be addressed. Consequently, the Special Committee reaffirms Recommendations 11 and 12 from its February 2021 interim report, *The Breach of Hong Kong’s High Degree of Autonomy: A Situation of International Concern*:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada convey, to the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Canada, that any interference with the rights and freedoms of people in Canada is unacceptable, will not be tolerated, will result in serious consequences for those responsible, and will damage the bilateral relationship between Canada and the People’s Republic of China.

Recommendation 2

That, in light of the allegations of threats and intimidation against people in Canada, the Government of Canada continue to ensure that all accredited diplomatic personnel of the People’s Republic of China continue to act within the strict confines of their official responsibilities.

The Special Committee also recommends the following:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada work with provinces and territories to establish measures supporting individuals or groups in Canada who are the target of state-backed harassment and intimidation. The measures should include the establishment of a widely disseminated and single point of contact to which people can report incidents. The measures should also include coordination mechanisms with other orders of government to ensure that all incidents requiring investigation are addressed in a consistent and timely manner so that state-backed harassment and intimidation are effectively deterred and countered.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada make clear that attempts by the People’s Republic of China to apply the National Security Law in an extraterritorial manner is unacceptable.



Interference with Canadian Institutions

Universities

Witnesses informed the Special Committee of PRC interference attempts at Canadian universities and research institutions, including the potential transfer of sensitive technology, intimidation and harassment of students and professors, and the influencing of discourse about the PRC. Describing Canadian universities as the foundation of engagement between Canada and the PRC, Paul Evans underscored their importance to the Canada-PRC relationship. He noted that roughly 140,000 foreign students from the PRC are registered at post-secondary institutions in Canada and that hundreds of student exchanges and training programs have been established between Canadian and PRC universities. Moreover, hundreds of research collaborations are funded from a combination of Canadian and PRC sources. Professor Evans recognized, however, that campus-related connections that flourished over the past 40 years are now under increasing scrutiny in Canada. He singled out concerns of security and intelligence agencies related to “cybersecurity, leakage of intellectual property, and transfer of technology and ideas that are seen as benefiting the Chinese military and other state institutions involved in violation of human rights.”⁸⁰

While speaking about research partnerships and the risks of diversion of intellectual property from Canada, David Vigneault pointed out that participants may conceal affiliations to other state entities or military organizations and transfer knowledge developed in Canada out of the country. He added that this could occur “in a way that would likely be a threat to Canada in the future, especially when we look at high-end technology that may have dual-use purposes for both civilian and military applications.”⁸¹ The University of Ottawa Task Force report raises similar issues while warning of the risks associated to research partnerships between Canadian and PRC scientists. The report states:

We have seen strategic investments in sensitive sectors in Canada by companies who obfuscate their state ties. We have also seen the theft of intellectual property to

80 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1940 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual).

81 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1955 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

advance the interests of foreign states and state-backed companies at the expense of the legitimate owners of that technology and Canada’s economic security.⁸²

In response to a question about whether significant PRC funding to researchers in Canada could influence them to transfer information to the PRC, Mr. Vigneault stated, “[w]e have seen indications of that.”⁸³ He also recognized that funding may be targeted “to push research in an area that will not be contrary to another country’s interests. Sometimes it’s about protecting the reputation of a country.”⁸⁴

The University of Ottawa Task Force report provides a stern warning of how PRC legislation, frequent collaborations between Canadian universities and PRC military universities, and the development of new technologies combine to render Canadian researchers attractive targets for unwanted technology transfer:

Legislation in China, which combines domestic controls with extraterritorial provisions, obliges Chinese individuals and institutions to support, assist, and co-operate with the Chinese intelligence apparatus. This means that Canadians with Chinese partners could see their innovations supporting, without their knowledge, China’s military. This includes partnerships researching artificial intelligence, biotechnology, photonics (the physical science of light waves), quantum computing, and genomics. This is a real risk: Canada’s top research universities have some of the most frequent collaborations with China’s military universities among institutions worldwide.⁸⁵

Finally, Clive Hamilton, Professor of Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University, Canberra Campus, argued that the PRC has had considerable success at influencing the discourse about China in Canadian universities by engaging with universities through research projects, academic exchanges, student flows and CIs.⁸⁶ He is of the opinion that, “[s]ome of the best-informed scholars are effectively silenced because they risk annoying their employers if they are critical of the CCP.”⁸⁷ As addressed in the previous section, Chemi Lhamo and Rukiye Turdush shared with the Special Committee the intimidation and harassment they experienced at their university campuses.

82 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 9.

83 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1955 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

84 Ibid.

85 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 9.

86 Clive Hamilton, *Speaking Notes*, 25 October 2022.

87 Ibid.



Noting that discussions with universities are ongoing, Mr. Vigneault stated, “[w]e are realizing, like everybody else, that there is a new intent in the regime in China.”⁸⁸

Increasing the Awareness of Threats while Finding a Balance

Christian Leuprecht Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, warned the Special Committee that while university chief information officers are becoming aware of threats posed by the PRC, there is almost no recognition of the threat among university researchers. His conclusion is that “[a] cultural shift is really needed.”⁸⁹ Similarly, Professor Houlden acknowledged that university professors and administrators do not always understand the potential consequences and security risks of a particular subject. He maintained that universities must continue to be informed of security risks with respect to intellectual property and characterized the joint Government of Canada–Universities Working Group as an important step.⁹⁰ Established in 2018, the group allows Canadian universities to meet regularly with government departments, the federal granting councils, and national security agencies to advance both collaborative research and research security.⁹¹ Among other initiatives, the group contributed to the development of the Safeguarding Your Research Portal, a public resource that provides researchers with guidance and best-practices to identify and mitigate potential security risks, including espionage and foreign interference.⁹² Scott Halperin, Professor, Dalhousie University and Director, Canada Center for Vaccinology, informed the Special Committee that Dalhousie University screens all his laboratory’s studies before they begin and that all his research is approved by the vice-president of research. He stated that he was aware of state actors and of particular countries that have been of concern.⁹³ He added

88 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1845 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

89 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2055 (Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada).

90 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2000 (Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual). See Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, *About the Government of Canada – Universities Working Group*.

91 The Working Group includes representatives of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Global Affairs Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the National Research Council, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Public Safety Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities, Universities Canada, and the university Vice-Presidents of Research.

92 See Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, *Safeguarding Your Research*.

93 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2005 (Scott Halperin, Professor, Dalhousie University and Director, Canada Center for Vaccinology, As an individual).

that, during his interactions with study sponsors, he was careful that his research was not being taken advantage of and that sensitive information was not being lost. However, he stated that, to his knowledge, the preventative measures he takes are not part of a formal process.

Professor Houlden argued that while national security issues and interference by the PRC will continue to pose challenges to Canadian sovereignty, there needs to be a sophisticated Canadian strategy to balance risks and the opportunities of partnering with PRC universities and scientists. He recommended that the Government of Canada provide greater clarity to Canadian universities regarding the criteria of federal assessments of potential cooperation with PRC universities and scientists. He agreed that national standards related to national security and research collaboration could be useful, as long as those standards “involve back-and-forth between the universities and are not just a diktat from the federal government to an autonomous institution.”⁹⁴ In a similar vein, he warned that any government intrusion into the policies of Canadian universities must be carefully calibrated and justified and that he was uncomfortable with the possibility of “upending the long tradition of academic freedom and university autonomy without a strong rationale.”⁹⁵

Professor Evans noted that the Government of Canada, Canadian universities, and funding agencies have established mechanisms that aim to sensitize university communities towards risks they face, “particularly in the domains of cybersecurity and protection of intellectual property.”⁹⁶ Also characterizing these measures as first steps, he further noted that guidelines on research hygiene and on safeguarding scientific integrity are now being disseminated across Canada.⁹⁷ He added that priority measures to be taken by universities against foreign interference include “improving awareness of risks, building mechanisms for vigilance and instituting proactive measures to monitor and maintain a respectful atmosphere on our campuses.”⁹⁸ He added that universities need to revisit and revise many existing agreements with Chinese partners to maximize transparency and highlight their academic values.⁹⁹

94 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2015 (Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual).

95 Ibid. 1935.

96 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1940 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual).

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.



Professor Evans also called for a policy statement from the government on how and why academic, business and other people-to-people engagements with the PRC matter. He highlighted the importance of precisely defining areas of research that are considered sensitive, as well as the criteria for determining what partners are inappropriate. He acknowledged that identifying and restricting foreign involvement in certain activities is challenging. As an example, he stated that the U.S. is demanding regularly that Canada expand the areas of restricted involvement into biomedical work, extending restrictions beyond dual-use military items to areas that are providing the PRC with certain commercial advantages in high-tech sectors.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, he asserted, “to keep the doors open to a dynamic range of interactions and collaborations with China, we need to install some new screens and close some windows.”¹⁰¹

The Honourable David McGuinty, Chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), noted that a challenge that NSICOP identified in its analysis of foreign interference, addressed in further detail below, is that many representatives of organizations meeting with CSIS are not allowed to see or receive classified briefings because they do not have the necessary security clearance. He added that this also applies with respect to universities.¹⁰² He stated, “[m]easures [to limit foreign interference at universities] have recently been announced in Alberta and many administrators, academics and university presidents are scratching their heads wondering what exactly is going on.”¹⁰³

Despite the challenges, Lynette Ong warned that severing relations between the PRC and Canadian universities would be a grave mistake. In her opinion, the university sector benefits greatly from exchanges and interaction with Chinese partners, and the solution lies in becoming more educated about the risks and being more prepared.¹⁰⁴ Richard Fadden agreed: “we need to have as many exchanges with the Chinese as we can possibly generate.”¹⁰⁵ He specified, however, that exchanges should not occur in sectors of activity in which Canada’s national security, as well as the national security of Canada’s allies, would be at risk. He recommended legislation outlining that “no foreign

100 Ibid., [2030](#).

101 Ibid., [1945](#).

102 See NSICOP, [Annual Report 2019](#), p. 97.

103 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2100 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

104 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1905 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

105 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1920 (Richard Fadden, Former Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an individual).

power, as indicated by the Governor in Council, may provide grants or contributions of any sort to a Canadian academic institution for the purposes of working in these very limited number of fields.”¹⁰⁶

For her part, Rukiye Turdush argued that universities should be required to report all co-operation with PRC research institutes and companies operating in fields such as “artificial intelligence, big data, smart policing and smart cities, biotech and others.”¹⁰⁷

Influence and Intimidation on University Campuses

In addition to the on-campus incidents of harassment and intimidation described previously by Rukiye Turdush and Chami Lhamo, Kyle Matthews, Executive Director at the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, described an incident of interference that occurred at his institution. He stated that in March 2019, while preparing to host Dolkun Isa, leader of the World Uyghur Congress for a conference, the PRC consul general in Montreal had pressured the mayor of Montreal to cancel the event. The event was nevertheless held, and Mr. Matthews followed-up with Canadian officials, Global Affairs Canada and CSIS.¹⁰⁸ He noted that the incident “follows other examples in Canada and around the world where the Chinese government has purposefully attempted to curtail academic freedom.”¹⁰⁹

Gordon Houlden suggested that a web portal run by a Canadian security agency be established through which students or professors could report attempts at influencing by an individual or foreign government. He noted that CSIS would be a key player in that regard.¹¹⁰

Intelligence and Security Agencies on Campus

Mr. Vigneault described some of the work of Canadian intelligence and security agencies on university campuses:

106 Ibid.

107 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1835 (Rukiye Turdush, Research Director, Uyghur Rights Advocate, Uyghur Research Institute).

108 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1940 (Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies).

109 Ibid.

110 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, , 3 May 2021, 2020 (Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta, As an individual).



CSIS and also our partners in the national security community are quite involved with universities to provide them with advice. We are also working closely with them not just on the protection of research, but also on the potential interference on campuses in terms of academic freedom and potential threats that the students coming from abroad may feel from different countries.¹¹¹

In addition to discussions about the diversion of research, interference with academic freedom, and threats to foreign students, CSIS, in collaboration with CSE, warns universities about cyber-threats. Mr. Vigneault stressed that the goal is not to discourage universities from foreign partnerships, but to ensure that “people do it with their eyes wide open.”¹¹²

Mr. Vigneault acknowledged that section 19 of the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act* restricts CSIS from sharing classified information. Nevertheless, CSIS “can suggest avenues of reflection and mention areas of risk to be mitigated, particularly with regard to hiring, cybersecurity measures, and measures to be taken with regard to contracts.”¹¹³ Mr. Vigneault commented that while CSIS and universities maintain a close dialogue, CSIS has been “asking for several years to be able to engage in much more intense dialogue.”¹¹⁴

Further to preventative warnings to academics, Mr. Vigneault highlighted that CSIS can act on matters through its national security investigations. He stated, “[a]t that point, we would either be using threat reduction measures to mitigate the threat or, if the information reaches a level that warrants it, sharing the information with law enforcement and the RCMP to look at a potential criminal investigation.”¹¹⁵ Mr. Vigneault concluded by acknowledging that the current work with universities could be improved:

It is, if you will, an ecosystem that is quite important to manage. We are careful about how we engage on campuses and in universities. We need to manage academic freedom, but at the same time we have a unique mandate, a unique aperture on the

111 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1845 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

112 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1955 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

113 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1835 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

114 Ibid.

115 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 2005 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

threat, to provide this information to academics. To be very candid with you, though, I would suggest that more remains to be done and better engagement is required.¹¹⁶

Government Responses

Minister Blair affirmed that the Government of Canada is aware of attempts by the PRC to target cutting-edge Canadian research and development efforts.¹¹⁷ He informed the Special Committee that, through the Safeguarding Science initiative,¹¹⁸ government departments are working with universities, federal labs and private companies to ensure that Canadian research and proprietary information remain safe. The initiative was established to promote awareness across academic communities of the potential misuse by individuals or foreign entities of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear research, as well as the potential for dual-use proliferation of products, knowledge or technologies. Minister Blair added that Public Safety Canada leads the initiative with the support and collaboration of 10 federal departments and agencies.¹¹⁹

The Honourable Marc Garneau, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed the Special Committee that in March 2021, the minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the minister of Innovation, Science and Industry announced the development of risk guidelines to integrate national security considerations into the evaluation and funding of research partnerships.¹²⁰ He added, “we will be taking additional steps to better integrate national security considerations into the evaluation of federally funded research partnerships.”¹²¹ He also highlighted the work of the previously mentioned joint Government of Canada-Universities Working Group, which contributed to the development of the new guidelines.¹²²

116 Ibid., 2010.

117 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1910 (Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

118 Public Safety Canada, [Safeguarding Science](#).

119 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1910 (Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

120 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1840 (Honourable Marc Garneau, PC, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

121 Ibid. See also Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [Government of Canada takes action to protect Canadian research and intellectual property](#), News release, 12 July 2021.

122 See Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships](#).



Confucius Institutes

Several witnesses raised the issue of collaboration between Canadian education institutions and Confucius Institutes (CIs) – centers funded by the PRC government with the stated goal of promoting Chinese language training and culture overseas.¹²³

Justin Li, Director of the National Capital Confucius Institute for Culture, Language and Business at Carleton University, informed the Special Committee about the CI he leads. While noting that he could not speak for other CIs in Canada, Mr. Li stated that his focuses on Chinese language training, organizing cultural events, and assisting visiting scholars from the PRC. Its activities are solely offered to Carleton University students and adult learners. While the Carleton University CI’s funding comes from the CI head office in Beijing, Mr. Li said that the funds go to a Carleton University finance account that is managed completely by the university.¹²⁴ Mr. Li stated that the Carleton CI does not report its ongoing operations to entities in the PRC. He added that visiting scholars from the PRC follow Carleton’s policies and “are guided by academic freedom, human rights and freedom of expression.”¹²⁵ He stated that the CI at Carleton, “strictly follows the policies and procedures of Carleton University” and that Carleton curriculum content is taught.¹²⁶ In response to whether Falun Gong practitioners can register at the Carleton University CI, Mr. Li responded that the credit course run by the School of Linguistics and Language Studies is open to everyone.¹²⁷ Mr. Li denied that the CI at Carleton University is a platform for espionage in Canada.

Mr. Li told the Special Committee that when Carleton University requires Chinese language instructors, he connects the university with the CI's network of Chinese language instructors from the PRC. Prospective instructors are then interviewed and selected through “the normal Carleton process” and successful candidates “must go

123 Justin Li, Director of the [National Capital Confucius Institute for Culture, Language and Business at Carleton University](#), described the goal of the Confucius Institute at Carleton University as “to promote understanding, share knowledge and strengthen the human bonds between the people of Canada and the people of China.” CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2035 (Justin Li, Director, National Capital Confucius Institute for Culture, Language and Business, Carleton University, As an individual).

124 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2050, (Justin Li, Director, National Capital Confucius Institute for Culture, Language and Business, Carleton University, As an individual).

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid., [2120](#).

127 Ibid.

through Canada’s immigration process, which includes both health and security checks.”¹²⁸

Since 2013, the Institute has organized tours for students to the PRC. Mr. Li noted that each tour is accompanied by a Carleton faculty or staff member as a chaperone and supervisor and that “[w]e always inform the Canadian embassy in Beijing of our China tours.”¹²⁹

While other countries operate worldwide cultural associations, Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission, argued that CIs “play a role that the Goethe-Institut or the Alliance française do not.”¹³⁰ She warned that CIs are being used as a tool by the PRC to spread the PRC world view, to control Chinese students on university campuses, and that they serve as platforms for espionage.¹³¹ She also warned of the existence of CI elementary school language programs that teach CCP ideology.

The Honourable Dominic Cardy, then-Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, related New Brunswick’s experience with CIs to the Special Committee. Minister Cardy began by noting that the CI established itself in New Brunswick at both the primary and high school levels in the late 2000s and that, by 2016, the institute was operating in 28 schools. Two months after Minister Cardy’s government was elected to power in September 2018, it began the process of eliminating the CI from New Brunswick public schools. At the time of his testimony, Minister Cardy stated that the number of institutions hosting CI programs “was down to two or three at the high school level, with language-only classes.”¹³²

Minister Cardy stated that the Institute’s programs in New Brunswick involved overt political propaganda, including the denial of the Tiananmen Square massacre. He told the Special Committee that both Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians complained to him about the Institute’s operations. The complaints included the prevalence of

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., 2035.

130 The Goethe-Institut is a German cultural association that promotes the study of German language and encourages cultural exchanges. The Alliance française encourages the learning of French language and knowledge of Francophone cultures. CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1915 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

131 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1915 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

132 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 21 June 2021, 1855 (Honourable Dominic Cardy, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, As an individual).



misinformation, the censoring of topics, and the presence of material that was not supposed to be covered by the courses that CI and the New Brunswick government had agreed upon. He stated that members of the New Brunswick Chinese community felt the need to reach out to him because they were afraid of being surveilled.¹³³ Some indicated that they had registered new email addresses specifically for the purpose of communicating with him.¹³⁴ Minister Cardy added that the individuals expressed concerns about the potential impact on family in the PRC if they spoke openly about their concerns with the Institute’s programming.

Minister Cardy subsequently spoke of lobbying efforts that occurred when, upon becoming minister at the end of 2018, his government began to take steps to end the Institute’s programs in New Brunswick. He described the efforts of a former politician “working as a lobbyist for [PRC] interests,” as well as pressure received during a visit from the consul general of the PRC from Montreal.¹³⁵ Minister Cardy stated that the consul general’s threats included potential economic retaliation by the PRC against the province of New Brunswick.

Finally, Minister Cardy noted that, as an alternative to the CI, his government had been working with representatives from Taiwan, “who have an astonishingly high-quality educational exchange program that I’d encourage everyone to look into.”¹³⁶

Lynette Ong noted that the operations of CIs and their consequences on host countries vary significantly from one place to another. She remarked that, in some instances, individuals in charge of CIs may self-censor. She added that they may refrain from inviting people to speak about, for example, issues related to Uyghurs or Taiwan, for the fear of offending their funders. However, Professor Ong stated that she’s also aware of CIs doing no more than teaching Chinese languages and cultures.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, she recognized the potential risk of undue influence, and that it could lead to foreign interference. She highlighted the need to question why there is a demand for CI programs.

Paul Evans indicated that the University of British Columbia’s decision to not partner with CIs was due to its view that CIs are “too connected to the propaganda side of the

133 Ibid., [1845](#).

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid., [1835](#).

136 Ibid., [1915](#).

137 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1930 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

Chinese government, but it was also because we teach Chinese language in a different way.”¹³⁸ In contrast to Ms. Bartholomew’s view, he believed that most of the studies done on CIs suggest that what they do is “pretty innocuous.”¹³⁹ He added, “[t]hey don’t influence people’s political views.”¹⁴⁰ While Han nationalism in the CI curriculum should be scrutinized, he argued, “[t]hey are not an outreach location for deep subversion.”¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, Professor Evans suggested that institutions wishing to engage with CIs should provide complete transparency.

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada advise provincial governments, as well as Canadian universities and research institutions, about the threats from the People’s Republic of China to national security and intellectual property. The advice should include explicit guidance against research partnerships and collaboration with universities, entities, and researchers from the People’s Republic of China in the five sensitive areas identified by CSIS (artificial intelligence, quantum technology, 5G, biopharma, clean tech). The Government of Canada should also conduct ongoing outreach and provide resources to assist universities and research institutions in developing robust mechanisms to protect national security and intellectual property, while respecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, through a ministerial policy directive, ban the federal granting councils from funding research connected with universities, entities, and researchers from the PRC in the five sensitive areas identified by CSIS.

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada explore the possibility of issuing security clearances for key individuals in the non-profit sector, private sector, universities, and research institutions to allow them to receive comprehensive briefings from Canada’s security and intelligence agencies so that they can take appropriate steps to protect their intellectual property.

138 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2005 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual).

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.



Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada undertake a review of its national security legislation, prioritizing the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, with the objective of ensuring Canada’s security and intelligence agencies can engage more effectively with universities and research institutions in furthering the protection of Canada’s national security and intellectual property.

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada work with provincial governments to encourage Canadian education institutions to be fully transparent about their agreements with Confucius Institutes.

Interference with Democratic Institutions and Elections

Witnesses also warned the Special Committee of interference tactics that target Canada’s democratic institutions and elections. They spoke of interference targeting individuals involved in democratic processes; the placement of PRC proxies in positions of authority; and measures to influence voters during election campaigns.

Witnesses insisted that no political party is immune to political interference; operations target all political parties, across all orders of government and have been observed in all regions.¹⁴² Furthermore, political interference can occur at any time. For example, Mr. McGuinty highlighted interference during constituency nominations to promote one candidate or undermine another.¹⁴³ Describing political interference measures as delicately intertwined, ACHK warned that the CCP’s operations in Canada and allied countries have “largely gone unnoticed, if not ignored, by politicians, oversight bodies, the media, and the public.”¹⁴⁴

142 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 6; CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2045 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP (Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians). The ACHK report notes, however, that political influence campaigns more frequently target politicians at the provincial and municipal levels. It explains, “[l]ocal politicians are less likely to be concerned with foreign affairs matters” and provincial, territorial, and municipal actors are particularly vulnerable to inflated financial deals.

143 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2045 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

144 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 6.

Political Interference Operations

Economic Incentives

Witnesses described various forms of economic incentives employed by the PRC to influence individuals close to democratic processes. Anne-Marie Brady addressed the matter while informing the Special Committee about election assessments undertaken by New Zealand’s Parliament. The assessments revealed that CCP proxy groups or individuals had given donations to local and central government politicians. While highlighting the importance of educating members about foreign interference, she clarified that “our MPs and our mayors were not willingly receiving money from the CCP. They did not understand who their partners were. They do understand it better now.”¹⁴⁵

Michel Juneau-Katsuya, National Security and Intelligence Specialist, endorsed Professor Brady’s comments, stating, “as [Professor Brady] described, we observed it from the Chinese government right here in Canada in previous elections as well.”¹⁴⁶ He added, “the Chinese government’s ploy is to gain influence, either by buying goodwill or by recruiting people to become agents of influence.”¹⁴⁷ Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret'd), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence and Cybersecurity Specialist, characterized Canada’s democratic institutions as a commodity to the PRC, stating, “they can invest into the political system and then work their way around and even modify laws to their advantage.”¹⁴⁸

Other witnesses highlighted the use of investments by PRC-affiliated entities to sway political actors. ACHK warned that political decision makers “are incentivized through offers of lucrative investment projects and business deals that would greatly benefit local communities.”¹⁴⁹ The organization specified that, for many provinces and territories, “Chinese party-state affiliated actors’ investments into the region have

145 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

146 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2010 (Michel Juneau-Katsuya, Expert in National Security and Intelligence, As an individual).

147 Ibid.

148 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2125 (Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret'd), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence and Cybersecurity Specialist, As an individual).

149 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 6.



resulted in reliance, which enables state actors to sway political actors into compliance in exchange for continued investments and funding.”¹⁵⁰

Proxies in Position of Influence

Clive Hamilton stated that Canada has a particular problem with diaspora affiliated to the CCP joining political parties and running for municipal, provincial and federal legislatures.¹⁵¹ He noted that CCP proxies have campaigned against political candidates who displease Beijing and that this has been combined with the silencing of Chinese-Canadian critics of the CCP, sometimes through violence and threats of violence. Professor Hamilton emphasized the chilling effect this has on democratic participation.

Co-opting Chinese-language Media

While recounting New Zealand’s experience with Chinese-language media during elections, Professor Brady informed the Special Committee of attempts by Chinese-language media in New Zealand “to get the Chinese public to bloc-vote for a certain party that had a candidate who was very much a CCP proxy.”¹⁵² This, she stated, was in addition to disinformation about the elections within Chinese-language media and disguised political advertising, which violated New Zealand election laws. The Honourable David McGuinty also warned that spreading hate or inflaming partisan differences are among the measure states use to interfere with Canada's electoral processes.¹⁵³

The University of Ottawa Task Force report identified the PRC as one of the countries that has attempted to interfere in Canadian elections by targeting, through social media, those who speak out against their interests.¹⁵⁴ The report specifically highlighted interference by the PRC in a recent election over the WeChat social media platform.¹⁵⁵ ACHK stated that politicians’ WeChat campaign groups are often unknowingly co-opted by people with ties to the UFWD. The organization added, “[m]any Canadian political actors genuinely believe that they are interacting with community organizers and

150 Ibid.

151 Clive Hamilton, *Speaking Notes*, 25 October 2022.

152 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

153 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2045 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

154 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 5.

155 Ibid., p. 17.

grassroots organizations, when in fact they are interacting with actors that have close connections with the Chinese consulates or the Embassy.”¹⁵⁶

Measures to Combat Interference with Elections

The Honourable David McGuinty informed the Special Committee about the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol, a process established by a July 2019 Cabinet directive to inform Canadians of threats to the integrity of a general election.¹⁵⁷ Administered by a panel of five senior Canadian public servants, the protocol outlines the procedure for informing Canadians of threats to elections and the criteria used to determine when notifications should be made to the public. Mr. McGuinty noted that, upon its constitution, the protocol’s focus was limited to cyber interference activities during a federal election. After studying the matter, NSICOP recommended that the government re-establish the protocol and extend its mandate. Mr. McGuinty stated:

The committee supported recommendations to re-establish the public protocol well in advance of the next federal election and to extend this mandate to the pre-writ period. The committee also believed that the government should consider ensuring that the mandate of the protocol include all forms of foreign interference, consider including prominent Canadians as members of the panel, ensure that all parties understand the purpose of the protocol and the process for raising a potential issue, and consider how the panel would inform Canadians about an incident of foreign interference.¹⁵⁸

Mr. McGuinty highlighted the importance of NSICOP’s recommendations by pointing out that “China likely launched cyber-attacks on the Australian Parliament and three largest political parties before its last general election.”¹⁵⁹

David Vigneault spoke of the work of the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force, established to help government assess and respond to foreign threats to the electoral process. Comprised of officials from the RCMP, Global Affairs Canada, CSE and CSIS, he stated that SITE enables agencies to “share real-time intelligence and analysis and provide concrete advice to the government.”¹⁶⁰ The various agencies within

156 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 6.

157 Government of Canada, *Cabinet Directive on the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol*; See also Government of Canada, *Critical Election Incident Public Protocol*.

158 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2045 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

159 *Ibid.*, 2055.

160 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1940 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).



SITE have specific roles related to safeguarding Canada's electoral processes. For example, CSIS provides threat briefings, intelligence reporting, and assessments of hostile state activities to Elections Canada, the Commissioner of Canada Elections, and government decision-makers. The RCMP investigates criminal activity related to interference or influence in electoral processes. CSE provides intelligence and cyber-assessments on foreign threat actors, while Global Affairs Canada conducts research on disinformation campaigns targeting Canada by foreign actors.¹⁶¹

Minister Garneau noted the work of the Group of Seven (G7) Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), explaining that the mechanism aims to strengthen coordination across the G7 in identifying, preventing and responding to foreign state-sponsored disinformation threats that target democratic institutions.¹⁶² RRM Canada, located at Global Affairs Canada, leads the G7 RRM and monitors open-source data for foreign state-sponsored disinformation, including by observing content shared through social media.¹⁶³ In doing so, it also acts as an early warning system for SITE during general election cycles. A Global Affairs Canada official told the Special Committee that the G7 RRM is very successful.¹⁶⁴ While explaining that the tactics of Canada's adversaries are constantly changing and are very complex, the official specified, "[w]e would certainly like to continue to improve [the mechanism], and it is very important to do so because we are increasingly faced with misinformation."¹⁶⁵ With respect to collaboration with other countries to counter impacts of threats to democracy, Mr. McGuinty stated, "there's a significant amount of cooperation going on."¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, he added that substantial improvements to co-operation between the federal, provincial and municipal orders of government are needed: "[w]e believe there's much more progress to make from a whole-of-government perspective in the Canadian context."¹⁶⁷

161 The Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force has provided intelligence updates to the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol panel. See Government of Canada, [Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections \(SITE\) Task Force](#).

162 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1835 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

163 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment](#), Report, May 2022, p. 16; See also Global Affairs Canada, [Rapid Response Mechanism Canada: Global Affairs Canada](#).

164 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 2010 (Daniel Costello, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

165 Ibid.

166 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2055 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

167 Ibid.

While acknowledging the work of the RRM, the University of Ottawa Task Force emphasized the significance of increasing and normalizing the use of open-source intelligence. The Task Force recommended allocating more resources to open-source intelligence and clarifying the mandates of intelligence and law enforcement agencies concerning its use, while also ensuring the protection of fundamental human rights and privacy. The Task Force also cautioned that, without clear guidelines on who should be responsible for collecting open-source data in Canada, “vulnerable people – such as Chinese-Canadians – remain victims, and threats go unaddressed,” citing the previously mentioned example of foreign interference on WeChat.¹⁶⁸

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada implement the four recommendations of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians to improve the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol, as listed in paragraph 14 of its 2020 Annual Report:

- **the Protocol's mandate should capture all forms of foreign interference, from cyber interference to more traditional methods;**
- **the membership of the Protocol’s Panel should be composed of non-partisan individuals, including prominent Canadians, who may carry more weight in the highly politicized context of an election;**
- **the government should engage frequently and substantively with political parties on the Protocol's purpose and operation to ensure the widest understanding of the Panel's nonpartisan role and the process for intervention; and**
- **further thought should be given to how the Panel would inform Canadians of an incident of foreign interference, including issues of attribution.**

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada in its engagement with political parties provide information of specific application, including information about foreign interference

168 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 17.



regarding specific candidates and donors, rather than just information of a general nature, allowing political parties to take measures to counter foreign interference.

Media

The ability of journalists to report freely on matters of public interest and of citizens to seek and receive information are essential components of healthy democracies. Witnesses voiced concern that the state of Canadian Mandarin and Cantonese-language media is being compromised by the PRC. Their concerns were primarily based on PRC acquisitions of Chinese Canadian traditional media and the use of PRC-controlled social media applications to spread disinformation.

The views presented to the Special Committee on this matter were unequivocal: if the PRC does not yet control all Chinese-language media in Canada, it will soon do so. The Honourable David McGuinty informed the Special Committee that, among other core aspects of interference, NSICOP had studied media interference for its 2019 report.¹⁶⁹ That report warned that the PRC’s attempts to control international Chinese-language media and harmonize it with its domestic media would undermine free and independent media in Canada.¹⁷⁰ While the PRC already has a voice in Canada through its bureaus of party-state media, such as *People’s Daily* and *Xinhua*, Cherie Wong contended that CCP-linked entities are attempting to silence competing information from community news sources by systemically buying up Chinese ethnic media.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Carolyn Bartholomew described diaspora Chinese-language media entities as lucrative targets for the United Front “to co-opt or outright control,” ensuring authority over the flow of information available to Chinese speakers.¹⁷² Canada is not the only

169 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2115 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians). Anne-Marie Brady includes “efforts to control the overseas Chinese communities and their media in our society and use them as agents of Chinese foreign policy” as one of the four vectors of Chinese Communist Party “active measures.” CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1945 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

170 NSICOP, *Annual Report 2019*, p. 68.

171 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2010 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong). Cherie Wong also notes that China Global Television Network (CGTN), a state-run English-language news channel based in Beijing, China is available on cable TV1. The NSICOP 2019 report indicates that several PRC-owned media outlets operated in Canada, including *Xinhua News*, *People’s Daily* and the *China News Service*. NSICOP, *Annual Report 2019*, p. 68; Clive Hamilton also stated, “[the] PRC has made sure that its proxies control the Chinese-language media in Canada.” Clive Hamilton, *Speaking Notes*, 25 October 2022.

172 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

country in which this is occurring. Jonathan Manthorpe noted, “[t]he United Front has also taken effective control of almost all Chinese language media in Canada, as it has in all other countries in the 50-million-strong ethnic Chinese diaspora.”¹⁷³

In addition to outright media ownership, harassment and intimidation of remaining Chinese-language media in Canada have led to a chilling effect in which independent journalists refrain from covering certain topics. Cherie Wong specified that many journalists have families or friends who are still in the PRC or PRC-controlled regions, whom they fear endangering if they speak out.¹⁷⁴ ACHK evoked a stark status quo for Chinese-Canadian journalists in Canada that includes job losses, death threats, online threats, and threats to relatives in the PRC for unfavourable coverage of the PRC government.¹⁷⁵

ACHK is of the opinion that the impact of PRC-controlled media in Canada is heightened due to the lack of penetration of mainstream Canadian media in the diaspora community and the significant control the CCP has over Chinese social media applications.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, Lynette Ong maintained that many within Canada’s Chinese community rely on news and information from PRC sources because they do not read English.¹⁷⁷

Disinformation and influence campaigns designed to divide public opinion and interfere with public debate are increasingly being spread through social media.¹⁷⁸ WeChat and other social media applications monitored by the PRC provide a powerful tool for the PRC to censor information, manipulate public sentiment, and to monitor and intimidate

173 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1840 (Jonathan Manthorpe, former foreign correspondent and author of *Claws of the Panda*).

174 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2020 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).

175 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 15. As examples, ACHK lists, “the firing of Kenneth Yau by Fairchild Radio’s AM1430 station over his criticisms of Beijing, the firing of Lei Jin after writing about the death of Chinese human rights advocate Liu Xiaobo in a Chinese prison, and Anita Lee, who appeared to have been let go after expressing support for protesters in Hong Kong.”

176 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

177 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1905 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

178 Public Safety Canada, *Remarks by Director David Vigneault to the Centre for International Governance Innovation*, 9 February 2021.



diaspora.¹⁷⁹ For example, Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate at Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, stated his organization’s determination that WeChat has previously placed Canadians’ communications under political surveillance to subsequently develop censor lists that are applied to China-registered WeChat accounts.¹⁸⁰ This is especially troubling given that Chinese and diaspora communities access information and communicate primarily through these PRC-controlled applications.¹⁸¹

During the Special Committee’s study on the situation in Hong Kong, Victor Ho, retired Editor-in-Chief, *Sing Tao Daily*, British Columbia edition, stated that the PRC’s consulates in Canada play a role in implementing the CCP’s strategy. The Special Committee’s previous report noted:

[Victor Ho] provided the example of a half-hour “radio speech” by China’s Consul General in Vancouver on 23 July 2020. According to Mr. Ho, during the speech, which was “programmed in newscast airtime,” the Consul General asked Chinese Canadians to support the National Security Law while also suggesting that there were “very few people in Canada trying to slander” the law and “attempting to cause trouble overseas as well.” In Mr. Ho’s view, the Consul General “treats Chinese Canadians as Chinese nationals, when of course they are not.”¹⁸²

Harry Ho-jen Tseng, Representative, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada spoke to the Special Committee about how Taiwan has addressed the issue of disinformation. Characterizing it as “part of our life,” he remarked that disinformation, mostly from the PRC, is something Taiwan deals with daily.¹⁸³ He indicated that Taiwan’s comprehensive strategy to counterbalance disinformation includes “bring[ing] in the government spokesman system, as well as our intelligence-gathering systems, to discern what fake

179 Clive Hamilton, *Speaking Notes*, 25 October 2022; ACHK, [In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#), 31 May 2021, p. 11.

180 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1950 (Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, As an individual).

181 ACHK, [In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#), 31 May 2021, p. 16.

182 CACN, [The Breach of Hong Kong’s High Degree of Autonomy: A Situation of International Concern](#), Second report, February 2021.

183 CACN, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 1 November 2022, 1910 (Harry Ho-jen Tseng, Representative, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada).

news is going on in social media in real time.”¹⁸⁴ He warned, “If you let fake news go viral for 10 minutes, it’s already too late. We’ve learned from our experiences.”¹⁸⁵

He further noted that countering disinformation is a process of socialization, and that Taiwan provides education that informs citizens on how to scrutinize information. Mr. Tseng also spoke of government-endorsed 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.¹⁸⁶

Struck by the extent to which Canadian media publishing in Mandarin reflected the views expressed in Beijing during the Meng Wanzhou affair, Guy Saint-Jacques argued that Canada must start by paying more attention to what is said on Chinese social media.¹⁸⁷ Kyle Matthews also called for more attention to be paid towards minority-language media in Canada: “[We need] to see the ownership and what global narratives are trying to be framed or controlled.”¹⁸⁸ In addition to transparency with regard to Chinese-language media, Stephen Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald Laurier Institute, also called for:

[U]nderstanding and creating much more Chinese literacy in the ethnic Chinese community within Canada and in the Canadian community in general about the kinds of operations that the United Front Work Department is deploying in Canada to shape our political choices and shape our relations with China.¹⁸⁹

According to Cherie Wong, there is a very simple solution to ensure that diaspora communities have access to free press and to build community resilience against

184 Ibid., [1855](#).

185 Ibid.

186 Ibid., [1910](#).

187 CACN, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1910 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

188 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2010 (Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies).

189 CACN, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1940 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald Laurier Institute, As an individual).



misinformation: “fund ethnic media.”¹⁹⁰ She argued that increasing funding of Chinese language media in Canada, combined with outreach programs to grassroots Chinese communities would reduce their reliance on Chinese-language media sources for news and information coming from the PRC. Lynette Ong also called for more government outreach to grassroots Chinese communities in Canada for the same reason.¹⁹¹

Asked whether he believes that licences of state-controlled broadcasters from the PRC operating in Canada should be revoked as has been done for Russia Today (RT), Alex Neve stressed the need for consistency. He argued, “[t]here were very clear, compelling and cogent reasons for the decision to revoke [RT’s] licence.”¹⁹² The same “concerns, approach, standards and principles,” he argued, should be applied to Chinese state-owned media as well.¹⁹³ He added that Canada should be scrutinizing concerns with respect to how any state-controlled broadcasters are propagating, advancing, or promoting human rights violations.

Recommendation 12

That the Department of Canadian Heritage take measures to counter the prevalence of People’s Republic of China-influenced media in Canadian diaspora communities. Such measures could include, but are not limited to:

- **Enacting initiatives to counter misinformation and disinformation disseminated by actors associated with the Government of the People’s Republic of China and targeted at Chinese diaspora communities in Canada, including the funding of projects through the Digital Citizen Initiative;**
- **Identifying the ownership of media organizations related to the PRC in Canada and their activities in Canada, including but not limited to misinformation campaigns, censorship, and intimidation;**

190 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2020 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).

191 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1905 (Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor, University of Toronto, As an individual).

192 CACN, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1955 (Alex Neve, [Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual](#)).

193 Ibid.

- **Exploring ways to flag and address misinformation and censorship on Chinese state-controlled social media apps such as WeChat and TikTok; and**
- **Exploring ways to reduce/eliminate Chinese state-controlled social media’s presence in Canada.**

Recommendation 13

That the Minister of Canadian Heritage issue an order under Section 7 of the *Broadcasting Act* to direct the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to a new broadcasting policy of general application that authoritarian state-controlled broadcasters not be on the *List of non-Canadian programming services and stations authorized for distribution*.

In addition to the specific recommendations discussed in the preceding sections, witnesses also suggested measures to address foreign interference as a whole. Some witnesses spoke of the potential benefits of a foreign agent registry, which would include the names of individuals and entities that undertake certain activities on behalf of foreign principals.¹⁹⁴ Anne-Marie Brady and Cherie Wong noted that the increased transparency provided by the registries would enable both the public and companies to make informed decisions about whom they are partnering with.¹⁹⁵ Ms. Wong emphasized the potential usefulness of this approach for various entities, such as municipal actors, school boards, and Members of Parliament. As an example, she noted that during election campaigns, candidates may not have detailed information about the backgrounds of all volunteers and that a list could help identify any potential foreign actors. As noted previously, Professor Brady indicated that election assessments undertaken by New Zealand’s Parliament found that some candidates had been unaware

194 The United States and Australia have foreign agent registries that require those acting on behalf of a foreign state to register their activities. See Public Safety Canada, [Foreign Interference – Foreign Agent Registry](#). Australia enacted its [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018](#) in December 2018. Individuals are liable to register under the act if they undertake registrable activities on behalf of a foreign principal – for example, parliamentary lobbying or general political lobbying – or if they are a former Cabinet Minister or a “recent designated position holder” who undertakes an activity on behalf of a foreign principal. Individuals required to register can be penalized for failing to do so, with penalties ranging from fines to prison terms of six months to five years. See also Attorney-General’s Department, Australian Government, [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme](#).

195 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual); CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2025 (Cherie Wong, Executive Director, Alliance Canada Hong Kong).



that they had received donations from CCP proxy groups.¹⁹⁶ Among other benefits, ACHK highlighted that a public registry could provide a deterrent for foreign actors, who may wish to avoid having their activities exposed to the public's view.¹⁹⁷ Carolyn Bartholomew told the Special Committee that to address concerns about PRC government influence of media, the U.S.-China Commission recommended that the U.S. Congress amend the *Foreign Agents Registration Act* to require the registration of all staff of PRC state-run media entities.¹⁹⁸ Finally, Jonathan Manthorpe characterized foreign agent registries as a necessary first step in combating foreign interference in Canada.¹⁹⁹

Clive Hamilton informed the Special Committee that, along with other Australian legislation, the passage of the *National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Act 2018* “was a landmark event in Australia’s pushback against China’s influence and interference activities.”²⁰⁰ The act added offences to the Australia’s *Criminal Code* in relation to espionage and foreign interference and amendments were made to other offences, including treason and treachery. Mr. Hamilton noted that “[t]he new law seemed to have had an immediate chilling effect on United Front activity in Australia ... Suddenly, grey-zone activities that had not been unlawful now carried heavy penalties.”²⁰¹

Witnesses also emphasized the importance of comprehensive whole-of-government solutions. Characterizing the government’s response to foreign interference as ad hoc, the Honourable David McGuinty noted that the federal government’s engagement with other levels of government and the Canadian public has been limited. He highlighted NSICOP’s resulting recommendation that the government develop a comprehensive strategy to counter foreign interference and build institutional and public resiliency.²⁰²

196 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2005 (Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury, As an individual).

197 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 29.

198 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1835 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

199 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1925 (Jonathan Manthorpe, former foreign correspondent and author of *Claws of the Panda*).

200 Clive Hamilton, *Responses to questions from Committee members*, 25 October 2022.

201 Ibid.

202 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2045 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

Noting that, in his view, successive governments in Canada have tended to neglect national security issues, Thomas Juneau, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa warned that Canada is unprepared to face a growing range of threats that include an increasingly aggressive PRC. He emphasized the need for a whole-of-society response to the threats from the PRC.²⁰³ He stated:

The intelligence community cannot respond on its own to most of the challenges I just mentioned. Of course, it has a central role to play, but it needs to work with other partners in the federal government—economic departments and so on—and with provincial and municipal governments, the private sector—think about economic espionage—and civil society—think about, in particular, foreign interference with the Chinese-Canadian diaspora.²⁰⁴

He further noted that this would include improvements in the coordinating and sharing of intelligence on security threats, as well as advice on how to address them. He also highlighted the need to eliminate obstacles to information-sharing that impede Canada’s ability to respond to national security threats within the national security agencies, as well as within other government departments.

Professor Juneau also spoke of the importance of transparency and the related issue of societal resilience in countering national security threats.²⁰⁵ He stated, “[t]he target of these threats is not, in most cases, the federal government itself” and that, consequently, it is essential for the national security community to increase transparency and public engagement.²⁰⁶ The University of Ottawa Task Force report, which was written by Professor Juneau and Vincent Rigby, visiting professor, Max Bell school of public policy, McGill University, stresses that lack of transparency from government leads to an erosion of trust, which, in turn, allows for misinformation and disinformation to take hold.²⁰⁷

Both the Honourable David McGuinty and the University of Ottawa Task Force report drew attention to the steps Australia has taken to create a more centralized system and provide a coordinated response – specifically, the creation of a national counter foreign

203 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October, 2100 (Thomas Juneau, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid. See also, Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 25.

207 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 25.



interference coordinator.²⁰⁸ Mr. McGuinty stated that the main recommendation to the government in NSICOP's 2019 report included specific reference to Australia's approach.²⁰⁹ The recommendation called for the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter foreign interference and build institutional and public resiliency, and that the strategy be sustained through central leadership and coordination:

As an example of a centralized coordinating entity to address foreign interference, the Committee refers to the appointment and mandate of the Australian National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator.²¹⁰

The University of Ottawa Task Force report, for its part, recommended that Canada “[e]xplore the creation of a National Counter Foreign Interference coordinator, as the Australians have done.”²¹¹

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada introduce legislation to establish a foreign agents registry that would require any individual or entity, including former public office holders, to publicly declare any contracts or remuneration with a hostile state, as determined by the Government of Canada, or any entity affiliated with that hostile state.

208 Australia's National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator (NCFIC), first appointed in 2018, is tasked with managing the country's efforts to respond to acts of foreign interference by:

- engaging with the Australian national intelligence community in developing assessments of the threat, vulnerabilities and consequences of foreign interference;
- administering Australia's current Counter Foreign Interference Strategy “to create an integrated and coordinated domestic and international program that responds to foreign interference activities;”
- coordinating outreach efforts and advice to sectors and systems at risk from foreign interference; and
- enhancing engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to strengthen their ability to challenge manipulation and coercion from foreign actors.

The NCFIC also develops approaches to deter and prevent foreign interference in Australia and engages with like-minded countries and regional partners to enhance “domestic and global resilience to foreign interference.” See Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, [National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator](#).

209 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2050 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

210 NSICOP, [Annual Report 2019](#), p. 109.

211 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment](#), Report, May 2022, p. 21.

Recommendation 15

That Public Safety Canada report regularly to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security detailing the extent, targets, methods and objectives of the People’s Republic of China’s interference activities in Canada, and that the Government of Canada, through its national security and diplomatic architecture, take immediate steps to counteract any interference that is taking place.

Recommendation 16

That, as part of a whole-of-government plan to counter foreign interference, the Government of Canada establish a national counter foreign interference coordinator to oversee a comprehensive response to foreign interference. This office should work with Canada’s security and intelligence agencies to develop threat assessments, coordinate outreach with communities at risk of foreign interference, and increase public awareness of – and resilience to – foreign interference activities.

Cyber-Threats and Protection of Critical Infrastructure

Witnesses informed the Special Committee that cyber-threats are a pervasive and evolving threat to Canada. The threats are becoming increasingly complex, and Canada’s advanced technology and communications networks are lucrative targets for state-sponsored espionage.²¹² Cyber-threats in Canada may target government, critical infrastructure, the intellectual property of Canadian organizations, diaspora and human rights defenders, as well as online spaces.²¹³ The following section addresses aspects of these issues, with a focus on threats from the PRC.

The People’s Republic of China and Cyber-Related Threats

The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, P.C., then-Minister of National Defence, informed the Special Committee that the PRC and Russia lead the Department of National Defence’s cyber-threat concerns.²¹⁴ Similarly, the Honourable David McGuinty – who chairs

212 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1840 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

213 Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, *National Cyber Threat Assessment 2023-2024*.

214 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 1845 (Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, P.C., Minister of National Defence).



NSICOP, which released a report on Canada’s cyber-attack defences in August 2021²¹⁵ – also identified Russia and the PRC as Canada’s most significant state-sponsored cyber-threats.²¹⁶ For his part, David Vigneault acknowledged that the PRC is among the states with sophisticated tools, both technical and human, for espionage and interference.²¹⁷ He also noted that it figures among the states that use “every tool at their disposal to come after Canada’s secrets and those that relate to our modern economy.”²¹⁸ While commenting on the sophistication of the threats, Mr. Vigneault stated, “[t]he measures we take must be one hundred per cent effective. We must always block everything. It is a constant battle, a constant struggle.”²¹⁹ Steve Waterhouse cited reports of the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security²²⁰ and the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence to point out that security agencies in both countries agree that the PRC poses a “major cyber-risk.”²²¹

Janis Sarts, Director at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia, observed that the PRC’s increasing use of cyber activities include hacking and espionage, as well as mass data collection and emerging technologies. Mr. Sarts added that the PRC sees data and artificial intelligence (AI) “as very critical future technologies where they would want to have strong leverage, not only within China but also outside.”²²² Carolyn Bartholomew cited concern over other countries using PRC surveillance and communication technology given the access it could provide to critical infrastructure. She warned, “I understand the desire for local governments to increase their efficiency, but they’re allowing the Chinese government access, directly or indirectly, to things like controlling traffic and water supplies, which

215 See NSICOP, *Special Report on the Government of Canada’s Framework and Activities to Defend its Systems and Networks from Cyber Attack*, 11 August 2021.

216 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2040 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

217 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1840 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

218 Ibid.

219 Ibid.

220 The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, or Cyber Centre, is part of the Communications Security Establishment and lead Canada’s federal response to cyber security events. See Government of Canada, *Canadian Centre for Cyber Security*.

221 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2035 (Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret’d), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence, As an individual). See also Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, *National Cyber Threat Assessment 2020*; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *2021 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, 9 April, 2021.

222 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1945 (Janis Sarts, Director at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence).

could all be used against them.”²²³ As a cautionary tale, several witnesses spoke about a vulnerability in the Dutch telecommunications network that allegedly allowed the PRC to eavesdrop on the communications of the Dutch prime minister.²²⁴

Cyber-Security Issues Related to Canada

Noting that the PRC has spent the past 20 years closing a technology gap with the West, Mr. Waterhouse listed several industrial espionage and cyberattack cases in Canada, which he attributed to agents of the PRC. These included the theft of manufacturing patents, strategic plans and other intellectual property from the telecommunications company Nortel, a data breach at the electric utility company Telvent, and a data breach at the National Research Council’s Ottawa and London offices. In his view, the issue is less a problem with declining security infrastructure, and more one related to failing technology, and that “several key applications for our society are not up to date.”²²⁵ He also warned of an overreliance in Canada on corrective measures to address programming flaws and stated that Canada must undergo a thorough review of its cyber vulnerabilities.

Mr. Parsons described how vulnerabilities within digital systems could render Canada vulnerable to cyber-threats. The complexity of digital systems, he stated, means that software and hardware errors are accidentally included into these systems, or purposely concealed in them. He added that:

[N]ation-states can compel organizations to inject vulnerabilities into hardware or software. In the past, equipment has been interdicted and modified before final delivery, encryption protocols weakened and propagated by standards bodies, and software deliberately modified to enable unauthorized activities. Just as Western governments have undertaken each of the aforementioned activities, there are fears that the Chinese government might use either its National Intelligence Law or Counter-

223 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1840 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair of the United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

224 Ibid.; CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2035 (Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret’d), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence, As an individual); CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1940 (Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies).

225 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2130 (Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret’d), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence, As an individual).



Espionage Law to compel Chinese vendors to similarly modify products which are produced or manufactured in China before being delivered to foreign customers.²²⁶

To counter this, Mr. Parsons recommended that organizations involved in critical infrastructure be required to produce a software bill of materials – also referred to as SBOM -- that would help reveal whether vulnerable codes are present in any given product.²²⁷

He also suggested that the Government of Canada disclose vulnerabilities discovered in telecommunications equipment, other critical infrastructure and electronic devices significantly used in Canada to appropriate vendors and communities to patch them, “as opposed to potentially secretly hoarding them for signals intelligence or cyber-operations.”²²⁸ He noted that CSE presently uses an Equities Management Framework²²⁹ to determine whether to retain vulnerabilities for its foreign intelligence, government assistance, and cyber operations or whether to disclose vulnerabilities.

Mr. Parsons, also warned about the extent to which Canadian companies, such as telecom companies, could become dependent on products made by PRC companies. He highlighted that when a single technology company dominates a Canadian organization’s infrastructure, the possibility for foreign governments to leverage the dependency to apply pressure in diplomatic, trade or defence negotiations arises. Mr. Parsons noted that this could be partly mitigated by requiring diversity in Canadian telecommunications companies’ networks. He suggested that “the government of Canada adopt a policy whereby no single vendor’s products can compose an overwhelming majority of the equipment in a private telecommunications vendors’ network.”²³⁰ Relatedly, Stephen Nagy highlighted the importance of selective diversification away from China in supply chains that are critical, with semi- conductors and pharmaceuticals as two primary

226 Christopher Parsons, *Special Committee on Canada-China Relations*, Brief submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, 2021, p. 5.

227 Ibid., p. 6. For information on software bill of materials, see United States Department of Commerce, *National Telecommunications and Information Administration*.

228 Christopher Parsons, *Special Committee on Canada-China Relations*, Brief submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, 2021, p. 5; CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1950 (Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, As an individual).

229 Communications Security Establishment, *CSE’s Equities Management Framework*.

230 Ibid., p. 3.

examples.²³¹ Speaking about trade dependencies more generally, Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Director and Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Program, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, also supported diversification, highlighting the potential of a dedicated mechanism amongst democratic countries to support one another when authoritarian states resort to economic coercion.²³²

While addressing potential threats associated to mass data collection, Mr. Sarts highlighted future risks related to fifth generation (5G) mobile networks. He told the Special Committee that 5G associated risks are not limited to its infrastructure, but also the significant value of the data that will flow through the 5G system. He maintained that access to 5G data along with capacities provided by AI could allow state actors to sway behaviours in other societies.²³³

Mr. Parsons stated that while there has been a great deal of attention focused on the vulnerabilities in Huawei equipment, there is an equal need to look at how other companies that may serve Canada's 5G infrastructure operate. Indeed, he suggested that policies to address cyber-threats should be applied in a vendor- and country-agnostic manner to broadly improve trust in digital systems.²³⁴ Ward Elcock, former Director, CSIS, agreed:

The issue of 5G and Huawei is not simply an issue of Huawei. The reality of the new 5G system is that it is potentially attackable by a wide variety of intelligence agencies and others around the world. If Huawei is not part of the system, it does not mean that there is no potential for an attack on your 5G system. That goes without saying. No matter what system is put in place or who manages it, it will require care, it will require inspection and it will require certainty as to the suppliers. The issue with Huawei is simply the question of having a company that is a Chinese company, and while it's not directly controlled by the Chinese state, it is a company within the control of the Chinese state.²³⁵

231 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2030 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald Laurier Institute, As an individual).

232 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2110 (Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Director and Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Program, Macdonald-Laurier Institute).

233 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2020 (Janis Sarts, Director at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence).

234 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1950 (Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, As an individual).

235 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2125 (Ward Elcock, As an individual).



While Mr. Elcock warned about overfocusing on Huawei, the University of Ottawa Task Force cautioned about overlooking other important security threats while focusing on 5G:

Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, including machine learning, as well as new weapons systems and quantum computing, deepen threats posed by hostile states or criminals. Much of the debate in Canada has focussed on 5G and the use of Huawei technology, leaving threats posed by these other powerful new technologies often unexamined.²³⁶

Finally, Christopher Parsons raised concern over insufficient involvement by Canada and its allies with respect to standards setting for various technologies and Internet governance. He recommended that Canada explore ways of ensuring that Canadian interests are better represented during the sixth generation (6G) network standards-setting processes. He also emphasized that Canada needs to assess efforts being undertaken at various international standards bodies by Huawei and the PRC to advance New IP, an Internet protocol that risks enabling heightened surveillance and control of data.²³⁷

Social Media

When asked whether Canadians should be wary of using social media owned by PRC companies like WeChat, Weibo or TikTok, Minister Blair recognized that “there is a legitimate concern that sometimes the information that's publicly available on those platforms can be used by the hostile activities of state actors, and some caution should be exercised.”²³⁸ The earlier section of this report on Media also noted that WeChat and other social media applications monitored by the PRC provide tools for it to censor information, manipulate sentiments, and monitor and intimidate individuals.²³⁹ In addition, Mr. Sarts spoke of profound change in the information environment, noting that social media companies have discovered how to monetize information by promoting information that is biased and by creating echo chambers or information

236 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 9.

237 Christopher Parsons, [*Special Committee on Canada-China Relations*](#), Brief submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, 2021, p. 5.

238 CACN, [*Evidence*](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1855 (Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

239 Clive Hamilton, [*Speaking Notes*](#), 25 October 2022; ACHK, [*In Plain Sight: Beijing's Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada*](#), 31 May 2021, p. 11.

bubbles.²⁴⁰ He cautioned that hostile actors could exacerbate these societal divisions and stated, “we have to make sure that the rules and laws we have in a normal democratic discourse would be applied to the [information environment].”²⁴¹ He added that transparency of social media algorithms “is a must,” and that once transparency is achieved, steps could be taken to keep algorithms from exacerbating divisions in society and undermining democratic processes.²⁴²

With respect to threats related to PRC social media specifically, Mr. Parsons noted that, among other concerns, for some platforms, even international users registering accounts outside of the PRC can have their content subject to surveillance. Echoing Mr. Sarts, he also recommended that companies be required to publish more information on their activities to enhance trust, including any information on engagement in monitoring and censoring behaviours and how they interact with government agencies.²⁴³ Specifically, he stated that social media companies should be required to publish their content moderation guidelines, to divulge the ways in which their platforms are subject to state-mandated surveillance and to make their algorithms available to government audits.

Canada's Position

Despite the threats described above, the University of Ottawa Task Force report describes Canada's cyber-defences as strong and indicates that the CSE “has the appropriate authorities, world-class capabilities, and a growing ability and willingness to use them.” It states that:²⁴⁴

Canada's 2010 cyber-strategy helped make Canadian government systems some of the most effective in the world against cyber-attacks. The government continued to improve our cyber-defences in the immediate years following the strategy, including by applying lessons learned from incidents like the 2014 Chinese cyber-attack on the National Research Council.²⁴⁵

240 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2025 (Janis Sarts, Director at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence).

241 Ibid.

242 Ibid.

243 Christopher Parsons, *Special Committee on Canada-China Relations*, Brief submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, 2021, p. 9.

244 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 18.

245 Ibid.



Minister Sajjan highlighted that, pursuant to the *Communications Security Establishment Act*, CSE has the authority to take appropriate defensive cyber operations “when we see an attack coming.” He added that CSE also has “the ability to do offensive cyber-action as well” (referred to as active cyber operations²⁴⁶) and emphasized the value of strong deterrents.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Mr. Parsons maintained that there “seems to be an ongoing incoherence to the way that Canada has developed its cybersecurity strategy” and that the federal policy “is somewhat out of date.”²⁴⁸ The University of Ottawa Task Force report also notes that many departments still have a poor understanding of CSE’s mandate and capabilities, or are reluctant to recognize its work.²⁴⁹ For example, in a written response to the Special Committee, CSE indicated that it had not been asked to evaluate the PRC company NucTech – a supplier and manufacturer of security inspection systems – as part of a Global Affairs Canada standing offer, even though NucTech products had previously been assessed by the CSE for the RCMP and for the Canada Border Services Agency.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, according to an official from Public Safety Canada, the original contract between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the contractor VFS Global – a company operating a visa application centre in Beijing – was negotiated with the advice of Public Services and Procurement Canada, but without the advice of the various agencies that deal with national intelligence and security.²⁵¹

In addition to the recommendations mentioned above, witnesses proposed several other measures to strengthen Canada’s resilience in the face of cyber-threats. Among the University of Ottawa Task Force report’s recommendations is that steps be taken to create “mandatory minimum standards of cyber-defence” to ensure that the cyber-systems underpinning critical infrastructure, including federally regulated sectors such as

246 See *Communications Security Establishment Act*, SC 2019, section 19.

247 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 1845 (Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, P.C., Minister of National Defence); See also Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 18.

248 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 22 May 2021, 2000 (Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, As an individual).

249 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 18.

250 CACN, *Follow Up Responses for the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations Appearance of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and Senior Officials*, 25 February 2021.

251 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1950 (Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister, Public Safety Canada).

telecommunications, finance, transport and energy, remain safe and reliable.²⁵² The report also recommends the development of a cyber-strategy to support small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as updating legislation, authorities, and programs across all orders of government, including provinces, territories and municipalities, to improve the whole-of-Canada ability to respond to cyber-threats. Finally, the report recommends that all departments and agencies understand and make use of the skills and tools provided by CSE.

While Mr. Waterhouse also highlighted the importance of disseminating information, he focused on the need to provide education about cyber-defences and good practices more generally. He acknowledged that the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security currently provides information about cybersecurity literacy on its website, but noted that it is not being actively disseminated. He added that the more actively the government shares this knowledge, the more directly it will help the public.²⁵³

In his brief to the Special Committee, Mr. Parsons provided several additional recommendations. Among them, he proposed that “formal assessment frameworks and processes be created, preferably in tandem with friendly or allied nations, for classes of systems which compose Canadian critical infrastructure.”²⁵⁴ He added that Canada should coordinate critical infrastructure assessments with its allies, and that the assessments should be made public. He also recommended that social media organizations be required to disclose whether, under what conditions, and how they share information about users or content on their platform with their headquarters or regional offices, especially when these are based in jurisdictions with poor human rights records or poor privacy protection laws.

As noted earlier, the Honourable David McGuinty also pointed out that Canada faces a wide range of threats from malicious cyber activity emanating from the PRC. He noted that the NSICOP 2020 Annual Report outlines the risks inherent to Canada’s critical infrastructure. He added that the NSICOP 2019 Annual Report also contains a number of prescriptions for how to address threats to critical infrastructure, including the need for

252 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 19.

253 CACN, [*Evidence*](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 2130 (Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret’d), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence, As an individual).

254 Christopher Parsons, [*Special Committee on Canada-China Relations*](#), Brief submitted to the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, 2021, p. 6.



“a central, coordinated, pan-Canadian approach to dealing with the question of foreign interference and we need to get it now.”²⁵⁵

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada adopt a policy whereby no foreign single foreign vendor’s products compose over 30% of the equipment in a private telecommunications vendor’s network.

Recommendation 18

That the Government of Canada prohibit state-owned enterprises, partial state-owned enterprises, and technology companies of the People’s Republic of China from obtaining federal contracts or sub-contracts related to information and communication technology or security equipment or services.

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada explore how it could require social media platforms operating in Canada that are connected to the People’s Republic of China to disclose their practices with respect to the collection, use and transfer of user data, as well as their moderation or restriction of any user content.

Recommendation 20

That the government examine the establishment of criteria for the federal procurement of Information Technology equipment, whereby the Communications Security Establishment would automatically be called upon to conduct supply chain cybersecurity risk assessments and/or supply chain integrity assessments if certain conditions are met, including equipment application and country of origin.

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, major national security agencies, and federal departments involved to improve our resilience to cyber-attacks.

255 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 2050 (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

Organized Crime

The Honourable David McGuinty informed the Special Committee that Canada’s security and intelligence organizations identify organized crime as one of five main threats to Canada’s national security.²⁵⁶ The NSICOP 2018 Annual Report characterized the impact of organized crime on Canada as significant and insidious, noting that “it undermines public safety, corrupts our legal and political systems, and threatens the integrity of our economy and financial systems.”²⁵⁷

Peter M. German, Barrister and solicitor, spoke to the Special Committee about two reports he authored for British Columbia’s Attorney General in 2018 and 2019, relating to organized crime and money laundering in casinos, the luxury car market, real estate and other sectors.²⁵⁸ Mr. German’s first report outlined how underground bankers in Canada and the PRC facilitate capital outflow from the PRC in violation of currency controls and launder the proceeds of crime in Canada. He stated, “[h]igh-worth individuals would deposit money with an underground banker in China, fly to Vancouver and be given a bag of cash on arrival.”²⁵⁹ He added that the money the individuals were given upon arrival was primarily the proceeds of domestic and international drug trafficking and that the process became known as the Vancouver model.²⁶⁰ Mr. German noted that while the PRC is known to take severe measures against domestic drug trafficking, Chinese organized crime groups operate around the world outside of the PRC and use family connections and networks to distribute drugs manufactured in Guangdong Province and elsewhere. He informed the Special Committee that all groups in Canada have their own organized crime elements and that – due to familiarity with language and culture – they “tend to prey on people within their own community.”²⁶¹

256 Ibid., [2040](#).

257 NSICOP, *Annual Report 2018*, p. 28.

258 Peter M. German, *Dirty Money: An Independent Review of Money Laundering in Lower Mainland Casinos Conducted for the Attorney General of British Columbia*, 31 March 2018; Peter M. German, *Dirty Money - Part 2: Turning the Tide - An Independent Review of Money Laundering in B.C. Real Estate, Luxury Vehicle Sales & Horse Racing*, 31 March 2019; Mr. German’s reports were part of four independent reviews that led to the 2019 Commission of Inquiry into Money Laundering in British Columbia.

259 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 2040 (Peter M. German, Q.C., Barrister and Solicitor, As an Individual).

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid., [2055](#).



Emphasizing that “[t]his is not about one ethnicity,” he added that organized crime groups often form alliances with groups from different backgrounds.²⁶²

According to Michel Juneau-Katsuya, there is evidence that there have been cases where the PRC government “is to some extent colluding with organized criminals to carry out certain activities.”²⁶³ As an example, he alleged that transnational organized crime groups based in the PRC – known as triads – were engaged by the PRC to ensure that the 1997 handover of Hong Kong occurred smoothly. Mr. German, however, was more hesitant to draw a link between organized crime and the PRC government. He stated, “I can’t personally say that I knew of a connection, but I wouldn’t expect that I, as an individual, would necessarily stumble upon that.”²⁶⁴ He acknowledged a long history of triads in the PRC, noting, “there’s the issue of the extent to which they have been allowed to exist.”²⁶⁵ He nevertheless added that speaking to the role of triads internationally and their relationship with the PRC government “would be total conjecture on my part.”²⁶⁶

Mr. German argued that a combination of events may have contributed to the RCMP overlooking organized crime files from 2013 onwards:

The RCMP made a conscious decision to abolish the proceeds of crime unit in 2013, as well as the commercial crime unit and the drug squad—a number of commodity-based units that had been around for many years—in favour of a new organized crime model. No sooner was that established than they also had to deal with the terrorism issue. On top of that, there’s the issue of resourcing, of federal resources.²⁶⁷

While pointing out that “[t]here’s no question that there was a gap,” Mr. German noted that he believed the RCMP had been provided additional money in recent budgets and that “[t]hey’re essentially redeveloping their financial crime program.”²⁶⁸

Mr. German suggested that measures to counter money laundering should target the practice of concealing beneficial ownership information. He noted that the measures

262 Ibid.

263 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2000 (Michel Juneau-Katsuya, Expert in National Security and Intelligence, As an individual).

264 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 2105 (Peter M. German, Q.C., Barrister and Solicitor, As an Individual).

265 Ibid., [2100](#).

266 Ibid.

267 Ibid., [2105](#).

268 Ibid.

could include beneficial ownership registries for land ownership at the provincial level and registries for corporations at the federal level.

Recommendation 22

That Public Safety Canada report regularly to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on the extent and impact of organized crime, drug trafficking and concealing beneficial ownership information in Canada.

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada explore ways to target organized crime groups and prevent them from entering Canada and expanding or forming alliances in Canada.

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada expand its proposed beneficial ownership registry to include real estate and entities incorporated under provincial law.

CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS AND DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS

The sections below address security threats with international dimensions. Some of the concerns affect Canadians abroad, while others have direct implications for domestic security. Still others relate more closely to Canada’s long-term strategic objectives. The chapter addresses global health threats, the PRC’s co-opting of international institutions, its arbitrary detention of Canadians, and its interest in the Arctic. It concludes with witness testimony about the importance for Canada of working with allies in countering threats emanating from the PRC.

Health-Related Threats and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that global health threats have no borders. While global health issues, such as pandemics, are primarily a concern for public health, they can also have significant implications for national security, including by exacerbating existing vulnerabilities that state and non-state actors may try to exploit. The importance of fully incorporating the PRC into global health governance, a potential role for Canada in helping this occur, and witness testimony on protecting Canadian health institutions and research laboratories are discussed below.



Global Health Governance and International Responses to Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Jeremy Youde, the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota Duluth, spoke to the Special Committee about global health governance and international responses to infectious disease outbreaks. While explaining that cooperation between countries on health issues is more important than ever, he warned that resistance to engaging in these processes is also at an all-time high. He pointed out that cooperation between the global health governance system and the PRC has been hindered by several challenges, including Taiwan-related issues and the PRC's general wariness towards global governance systems. He added that global health reforms currently underway would have significant gaps that will "put us in danger" without the participation of the PRC.²⁶⁹ The importance of PRC involvement is related to more than its status as a major geopolitical player. Because of geography, he observed, the PRC and surrounding regions have historically been linked to the origin of various epidemics, such as COVID-19, SARS, and influenza. He specified that the PRC's large and mobile population create specific challenges with respect to controlling the spread of infectious diseases. Additionally, the country's high level of human-animal interactions increases the probability for zoonotic diseases to emerge.²⁷⁰

Consequently, he argued that it is crucial that the world has access to information regarding outbreaks in the PRC and surrounding regions. By receiving information during the early stages of outbreaks, he noted, "we can address the concerns more effectively and more quickly and we can get the World Health Organization [(WHO)] and the other organizations involved."²⁷¹ An example of the repercussions of resistance towards international collaboration was provided to the Special Committee by a Global Affairs Canada official who pointed out that the PRC had restricted access to full data for the experts engaged in the WHO's final report on the origins of COVID-19, leading them to indicate that their findings were inconclusive.²⁷²

According to Professor Youde, Canada has long been a leader in both health governance and in the type of multilateral diplomacy needed for advancements in the field of global health. This places it in a unique position, along with other middle powers, to contribute

269 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1905 (Jeremy Youde, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, University of Minnesota Duluth).

270 Ibid., 1835.

271 Ibid., 1930.

272 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 2020 (Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

toward a global health system that includes the PRC and the U.S. Professor Youde stated that while it is currently difficult to engage in dialogue with the PRC due to its inward-looking approach, Canada – despite current tensions with the PRC – should make overtures and show a good-faith effort to engage. He also suggested that Canada could work with countries that have strong relationships with the PRC and engage with the PRC’s regional partners to be effective. While highlighting that continued efforts are crucial to making progress, he stressed the importance of striking a balance between taking stern measures with the PRC, but not so stern that the country completely closes off, as “[t]hat would put all of us at further risk.”²⁷³

According to Professor Youde, the inclusion of Taiwan in the WHO is important as its non-participation affects global efforts to prevent potential pandemics. He noted that during the SARS pandemic, Taiwan had the second-highest number of cases and had to go through the PRC government to engage with the WHO, causing a significant delay. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan’s expertise and knowledge in epidemiology could have been valuable in reducing the spread of the disease. He reiterated that it is essential to have insights from all parts of the world to effectively stop future pandemics.²⁷⁴

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Research Security and Other National Security Issues

As of 25 April 2023, 51,921 Canadians have died from COVID-19.²⁷⁵ In addition to this direct impact, the University of Ottawa Task Force report states that the pandemic has contributed to, among other things, increased social and political tensions domestically and heightened geopolitical competition internationally. It has also made the Canadian pharmaceutical sector more vulnerable to espionage by hostile states.²⁷⁶ Witness testimony communicated both the importance of cooperating with the PRC during the pandemic and the need to protect Canada’s institutions from hostile actors taking advantage of COVID-19.

While speaking about the importance of collaboration during the global response to COVID-19, Professor Halperin, pointed out, “[t]here’s an incredible amount of data

273 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1930 (Jeremy Youde, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, University of Minnesota Duluth).

274 Ibid.

275 Health Canada, *COVID-19 epidemiology update*, 28 November 2022.

276 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, *A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*, Report, May 2022, p. 7.



sharing and material sharing around the world that we didn't see 10 or 20 years ago with previous pandemics."²⁷⁷ He added that the collaboration is "incredibly important" to ensure that early warnings of viruses are received so that effective interventions can be developed.²⁷⁸ Guillaume Poliquin, Acting Vice-President at the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML), provided an illustration of international collaboration that occurred during the early stages of the pandemic. Dr. Poliquin recounted that the sharing of virus sequence data from the PRC on the weekend of 10 January 2020 allowed the NML to develop its first-generation test for COVID-19 over a period of five days.²⁷⁹

Witnesses warned that, alongside these collaborations, the pandemic was being exploited by state actors to undermine Canadian institutions. David Vigneault told the Special Committee that the pandemic had taken its toll on CSIS, but that the organization had found innovative ways to address new and emerging threats.²⁸⁰ The response from CSIS included reaching out to Canadian biopharma companies and laboratories that were subjected to new threats because of the pandemic. He highlighted that, for the first time, CSIS and CSE released a joint statement warning of the threat. The joint statement warned that it was near certain that state sponsored actors had shifted their focus during the pandemic to Canadian intellectual property; that Canadian health organizations involved in the COVID-19 response faced elevated cyber security risks; and that Canada faced increased risks of foreign interference and espionage.²⁸¹ Iain Stewart, then President, Public Health Agency of Canada, noted that the Minister of Health, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness had jointly issued a policy statement on research security and COVID-19 in September 2020, encouraging members of the research community to take precautions to protect the security of COVID-19-related research, intellectual property and knowledge development.²⁸²

Professor Halperin provided an example of the risks of collaborating with a PRC-based company through the experience of the Canadian Center for Vaccinology's (CCFV)

277 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1940 (Scott Halperin, Professor, Dalhousie University, and Director, Canada Center for Vaccinology, As an individual).

278 Ibid.

279 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 22 March 2021, 1935 (Guillaume Poliquin, Acting Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory).

280 CACN, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 25 February 2021, 1930 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

281 CSE and CSIS, [Joint CSE and CSIS Statement – May 14, 2020](#).

282 See Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [Policy Statement on Research Security and COVID-19](#), 14 September 2020.

collaboration with CanSino Biologics, a PRC-based manufacturer of a candidate COVID-19 vaccine. In March 2020, the CCFV agreed to undertake a phase one clinical trial in Canada for CanSino Biologics’ COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The agreement included the eventual manufacturing of the vaccine in Canada – if it were found to be effective – by the National Research Council. With the protocol for the trial approved on 15 May 2020, arrangements were made to ship the vaccine from the PRC to Halifax. CanSino was subsequently unable to get an export agreement from PRC customs to send the designated batches to Canada for the trial. Professor Halperin told the Special Committee that it was not until August 2020, and upon learning that the vaccine had been cleared to be shipped out of the PRC to Russia, Pakistan, Mexico, Chile and Argentina for trials, that “it became clear that it was political and that this was not something that was going to be solved by more paperwork.”²⁸³

Outside of the context of the pandemic, Mr. Stewart informed the Special Committee that Canada and the PRC share a long-standing relationship in health, dating back to a memorandum of understanding signed in 1995 that called for regular dialogue on health-related issues. He also highlighted the existence of a Canada–PRC policy dialogue on health that has led to formal bilateral engagement, including four ministerial dialogues between 2009 and 2014. In addition, he referenced a January 2007 science and technology cooperation agreement that launched a sustained effort to boost collaborative research and development in fields like life sciences.²⁸⁴

In response to questions from Special Committee members, Mr. Stewart and Dr. Poliquin spoke about security measures taken at the NML with respect to research collaborations with foreign nationals, the transfer of viruses between laboratories, and cases of foreign nationals working on the NML campus.²⁸⁵ Mr. Stewart stated that PHAC views involvement in foreign talent recruitment programs – programs funded by a foreign government to recruit science and technology professionals – as a conflict of interest. He added, “[i]f you’re an employee of the Government of Canada, we expect that you would not also be involved in another government’s programs in that way.”²⁸⁶ With respect to foreign nationals working at the NML, Dr. Poliquin indicated that an official

283 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 11 March 2021, 1950 (Scott Halperin, Professor, Dalhousie University and Director, Canadian Center for Vaccinology, As an individual).

284 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 22 March 2021, 1835 (Iain Stewart, President, Public Health Agency of Canada).

285 The National Microbiology Laboratory is a maximum containment laboratory (often referred to as Biosafety Level 4 or BSL-4) that conducts research on high-risk pathogens.

286 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 22 March 2021, 1935 (Iain Stewart, President, Public Health Agency of Canada).



agreement is required prior to working at the laboratory that includes stipulations covering intellectual property rights and access to the NML facilities. Visitors must also obtain secret level security clearance prior to starting work. Dr. Poliquin added, “we are an organization of continual improvement and the latest iteration of the working official policy is under [review].”²⁸⁷

On 31 March 2021, the Special Committee adopted a motion seeking the communication of documents from PHAC relating to the termination of the employment of two employees of the NML, Xiangguo Qiu and Keding Cheng, and the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March of 2019.²⁸⁸ Mr. Stewart acknowledged to the Special Committee that the individuals named in the motion no longer work for the NML.²⁸⁹ He also confirmed that an administrative investigation related to their departure had occurred, but that he could not discuss the nature of the investigation, its scope, or its findings. He noted that there is also an ongoing RCMP investigation and that he could not comment further on the matter.²⁹⁰

On 2 June 2021, the House of Commons issued an order for the production of the unredacted version of all documents produced by PHAC in response to the 31 March 2021 motion and a subsequent motion on 10 May 2021.²⁹¹ The order required that the unredacted documents be deposited with the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel in both official languages within 48 hours of the adoption of the order. On 4 June 2021, documents containing redactions were deposited by PHAC with the Law Clerk. On 1 November 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding to Create an Ad Hoc Committee of Parliamentarians to review the case of the two scientists and the transfer of viruses from the NML to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was tabled in the House of Commons.²⁹²

287 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 22 March 2021, 1935 (Guillaume Poliquin, Acting Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory).

288 CACN, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 31 March 2021.

289 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 10 May 2021, 1840 (Iain Stewart, President, Public Health Agency of Canada).

290 Ibid.

291 House of Commons, *Journals*, 2 June 2021.

292 House of Commons, *Journals*, 1 November 2022.

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada explore ways to increase access to information regarding infectious disease outbreaks in the People’s Republic of China through international entities like the World Health Organization.

Recommendation 26

That Health Canada, through the Public Health Agency of Canada, study Taiwan’s pandemic response and explore ways to increase information sharing with public health agencies in Taiwan.

Influence in Multilateral Institutions

Witnesses highlighted the significant role that Canada played in facilitating the PRC’s entry into the UN and other multilateral institutions, as well as the current challenges the PRC is now posing within those systems.²⁹³ Paul Evans noted that the initial challenge of integrating the PRC into multilateral institutions has evolved into one of finding effective ways to cooperate. He emphasized that this is especially the case for complex issues where the PRC has become a multilateral player with other countries.²⁹⁴ With regard to the PRC’s aggressive behaviour in multilateral institutions, he remarked, “[w]e don’t teach the [PRC] to play the game; they are designing the rules for the game.”²⁹⁵ Scott Simon, Professor at the University of Ottawa and Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, added that any assumption that the PRC’s entry into the UN would promote world peace has been disproven by the country’s aggressive actions.²⁹⁶ Accordingly, he argued that Canada should continue to emphasize to the PRC that any aggression is of serious concern to Canada.

Other witnesses emphasized that the PRC’s approach is calculated and strategic. In ACHK’s view, the PRC joins established global institutions, including the UN and WHO, to ultimately undermine and reshape them.²⁹⁷ According to Alex Neve, the PRC’s attempts

293 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2015 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual); CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 1 November 2022, 2020 (Scott Simon, Professor, University of Ottawa, and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an individual).

294 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 2015 (Paul Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, As an individual).

295 Ibid.

296 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 1 November 2022, 2020 (Scott Simon, Professor, University of Ottawa, and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an individual).

297 ACHK, *In Plain Sight: Beijing’s unrestricted network of foreign influence in Canada*, 31 May 2021, p. 4.



to weaken international institutions and redefine understandings of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law figure among the critical issues in Canada–PRC relations. While noting its ability to escape scrutiny and consequences for its human rights record, he added that the PRC has persuaded and threatened other governments “into voting against the very few attempted UN-level resolutions that have come forward over the years.”²⁹⁸ Kyle Matthews characterized the PRC’s disregard for human rights and the exporting of its views as a significant problem and a threat to democracy. He warned that the PRC is using its “deep pockets” to influence countries, with significant success at the UN.²⁹⁹ He noted delays in the investigation of COVID-19 as an example of the PRC’s sway. Similarly, Mr. Saint-Jacques suggested that the PRC has been using investment and development assistance “to rally support, mostly from developing countries, to good effect.”³⁰⁰ He added that Canada should work with allies to show developing countries that their interests are better served through well-functioning multilateral organizations.

Several witnesses highlighted the 6 October 2022 defeat of a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council calling for debate on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report on human rights violations against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. Citing it as an example of the PRC’s strength and willingness to undermine the institution, Mr. Neve noted that only 17 members, or just over one-third, voted in favour of the resolution.³⁰¹ For Mr. Saint-Jacques, the UN Human Rights Council vote is a sign of the PRC’s increasing influence, where it is not only trying to control the debate, but also trying to change norms to its advantage. Consequently, Mr. Saint-Jacques called for the reinforcement of multilateral institutions, noting that, as a “small country when we look at it from an international perspective,” Canada needs well-functioning international organizations. He added, “[f]rom my perspective, it should be easy for Ottawa to conclude that China has become a strategic rival and competitor, and that we have to align very closely with our friends and allies.”³⁰²

Echoing Mr. Saint-Jacques, Professor Nagy also highlighted the importance of a healthy international system for the protection of middle powers like Canada in the face of “a

298 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1950 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

299 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 31 May 2021, 1950 (Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies).

300 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1905 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

301 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1950 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

302 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1855 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

might-is-right approach to foreign policy.”³⁰³ He emphasized the importance of working with like-minded countries to strengthen the rules-based international order, indicating that this should be done through the UN, the International Monetary Fund and the WHO. Mr. Neve added that a corresponding strategy needs to be developed collaboratively with several partners, and not just the U.S., Western Europe and Australia. He highlighted the importance of encouraging other countries that are “willing to come to the table and be part of saying the right thing.”³⁰⁴ He stated, “We really need to start to think about relationships and who can perhaps be brought on board. We need to have a larger constituency of countries than the usual suspects who have been coming together so far.”³⁰⁵

Finally, Ms. Bartholomew suggested that Canada and its allies can start by being more observant of the multilateral institutions that the PRC is focusing on.³⁰⁶

Arbitrary Detention of Canadians Abroad

As described above, the Special Committee’s national security study occurred during the PRC’s arbitrary detention and later release of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. While cases were highly publicized, witnesses drew attention to other cases where the PRC has arbitrarily detained Canadians, or people with links to Canada. Describing the issue, Minister Garneau stated:

It is certainly not acceptable to arbitrarily detain innocent civilians from another country because you have a difference of opinion on a particular issue with that country. Sure, we can have differences of opinion with China, but you don’t resolve those by imprisoning citizens from the other country. China is not the only country that is guilty of that, but it is an example.³⁰⁷

303 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1940 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University, and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an individual).

304 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2015 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

305 Ibid.

306 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 1845 (Carolyn Bartholomew, Chair, United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission).

307 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1930 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).



Concerning the PRC, Alex Neve stated, “we could quickly compile a long list of all the Canadian citizens and permanent residents over the last 20 years who have found themselves unjustly detained.”³⁰⁸

Mr. Neve discussed the case of Huseyin Celil, a Uyghur Canadian who has been detained for more than 16 years and whose family that lives in Burlington, Ontario, has heard no news of him for five years.³⁰⁹ Concerning Mr. Celil, Minister Garneau stated, “China does not recognize his Canadian citizenship. It has not been possible for us yet to have a consular visit, although we keep trying.”³¹⁰ He added that the Canadian government has been pressing the PRC to allow Canada to have consular access to Mr. Celil and other Canadian citizens who are detained in the PRC.³¹¹ In 2019, there were approximately 120 Canadians in custody in the PRC.³¹²

Other Canadian citizens in the PRC include Sun Qian, a Falun Gong practitioner, who has been imprisoned since 2017 and was sentenced to eight more years in 2020. Mr. Neve noted that “[s]upposedly voluntarily, she has renounced her Canadian citizenship,” and that “there has been no news of her for the last two years.”³¹³ Mr. Neve also drew the Special Committee’s attention to three Uyghur men: Ayoub Mohammed, Salahidin Abdulahad and Khalil Mamut, who all are married to Canadian citizens or permanent residents and have Canadian children but have been “blocked at every turn” when seeking reunification with their families. As Mr. Neve described, the three men:

were turned over to U.S. forces in Afghanistan by bounty hunters and ended up in Guantanamo Bay. After several years of that dystopian injustice, they were cleared by the U.S. government and resettled over a decade ago, through absurd diplomatic deals, to Bermuda and Albania.³¹⁴

308 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2035 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

309 Ibid., 1945.

310 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1845 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

311 Ibid.

312 Government of Canada, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs appearance before the House of Commons Special Committee on Canada-China Relations (CACN)*.

313 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1945 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).

314 Ibid.

Minister Garneau also highlighted the case of Robert Schellenberg, who faces the death penalty in the PRC. The Government of Canada is seeking clemency for his sentence and all other Canadians facing the death penalty.³¹⁵

To address the issue of arbitrary detention, the Government of Canada launched the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations in February 2021, which aims to enhance international cooperation concerning arbitrary arrests, detentions or sentencing which are used to exercise leverage over foreign governments.³¹⁶ As of 27 April 2023, 71 jurisdictions had endorsed this declaration.³¹⁷ Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Marta Morgan stressed the importance of multilateralism to condemn actions by states that go against the rules-based international system, noting Canada’s collaboration with the G7, the United Nations Human Rights Committee and Five Eyes partners.³¹⁸ Minister Garneau stated his belief that if Canada acts multilaterally, it can send a stronger message to the PRC.³¹⁹

Putting forward an additional suggestion, Alex Neve noted that civil society groups and Mr. Celil’s family have advocated for a special envoy or special representative who could be a dedicated advocate for those who are arbitrarily detained. He stated that it would not necessarily have to be a public role, but someone with expertise who could work in diplomatic channels and could build on existing relationships.³²⁰

Recommendation 27

That Global Affairs Canada designate an individual to serve as a dedicated advocate for Canadians, regardless of where they were born and Canadians who hold dual citizenship, who are arbitrarily detained abroad, whose responsibilities include but are not limited to:

315 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1835 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

316 Government of Canada, *Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations*.

317 Government of Canada, *Arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations*.

318 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1945 (Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

319 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1930 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

320 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2035 (Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an individual).



- **Working with countries and multilateral organizations to promote the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations to more jurisdictions.**
- **Assisting with consular affairs regarding Canadians who are arbitrarily detained abroad.**
- **Exploring ways to protect Canadians from the practice of arbitrary detentions, more particularly in state-to-state relations.**

The People’s Republic of China’s Ambitions in the Arctic and Canadian Arctic Sovereignty

A number of witnesses discussed the PRC’s ambitions in the Arctic and their potential impact on Canada. In 2013, the PRC became an accredited observer of the Arctic Council and, in 2018, it first self-identified as “an important stakeholder in Arctic affairs” and as a “Near-Arctic State” while outlining its policy goals for the Arctic in a white paper.³²¹ The policy asserted the following rights for states outside of the Arctic region:

States from outside the Arctic region do not have territorial sovereignty in the Arctic, but they do have rights in respect of scientific research, navigation, overflight, fishing, laying of submarine cables and pipelines in the high seas and other relevant sea areas in the Arctic Ocean, and rights to resource exploration and exploitation in the Area, pursuant to treaties such as [the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea] and general international law.³²²

Outlining the implications of the changing Arctic environment for Canada, the University of Ottawa Task Force on National Security report explains that as the ice in the Arctic recedes, Canada’s security will be increasingly threatened by competition over navigable waterways, energy resources, and mineral deposits. The report further explains that, along with Russia, the PRC has been investing in Arctic capabilities and will increasingly engage in the theft of intellectual property of critical technologies to adapt to climate change.³²³ Similarly, Guy Saint-Jacques reminded the Special Committee that the effects of global warming will make certain resources, including fish and minerals, and shipping

321 The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, [Full text: China’s Arctic Policy](#), 26 January 2018.

322 Ibid.

323 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment](#), Report, May 2022, p. 7.

routes increasingly available in the North.³²⁴ Finally, the report also notes that the U.S. stance on the Northwest Passage as an international waterway works in the favour of countries like China and Russia, who can exploit this opening.

Christian Leuprecht pointed out that because of new weapons available to Russia and the PRC, Canada itself has become a target and as such, Canada’s Arctic can be characterized as a geostrategic issue.³²⁵ Guy Saint-Jacques stressed that Canada should invest more in the Canadian Arctic from a defence perspective.³²⁶ For his part, Minister Sajjan noted that Canada takes its sovereignty very seriously. He highlighted that Arctic sovereignty was included in Canada’s defence policy, Canada has a strong presence in the area, and the government has made investments, for example, in Arctic-operative patrol ships. He pointed out that to protect Arctic sovereignty, the focus cannot only be from a defence perspective, but from a whole-of-government approach.³²⁷

Stéphanie Martel, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, acknowledged that fears of a growing PRC presence in the Arctic are legitimate. Noting the PRC’s interest in developing access to strategic resources in the Arctic and freer access to international waters, Professor Martel nevertheless highlighted that the PRC has been clear about its intentions – at least on paper. In her assessment, it is “healthy and constructive to look at what China is promoting. It isn’t hiding its intentions.”³²⁸ Minister Garneau outlined Canada’s approach to the PRC’s intentions in the Arctic, stating that, “[w]e are adopting the same approach with all countries that want to navigate in the Canadian Arctic. If they are to do so, they must respect our sovereignty and comply with the environmental requirements we will impose on all countries.”³²⁹

Stephen Nagy argued from a different perspective that it is not yet clear whether the PRC is proactive in the region, mainly due to a lack of resources and expertise. He said

324 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1910 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

325 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 19 April 2021, 2055 (Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada, As an individual).

326 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1905 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

327 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 1850 (Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence).

328 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1955 (Stéphanie Martel, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, As an individual).

329 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1910 (Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs).



that he does not “think the evidence suggests that [the PRC is] intent on deploying military resources; rather, they’re in a premature stage of developing the expertise to exploit resources.”³³⁰ He noted that, to do so, the PRC would most likely cooperate with Russia, an alignment that he assessed would create more complications.³³¹

Finally, Stéphanie Martel noted that she does not agree with the analogy that the PRC has similar motivations in the Arctic as it does in the South China Sea. Rather, she added that the PRC would not be claiming sovereignty over territories in the Arctic anytime soon.³³²

Recommendation 28

That, as a part of a whole-of-government plan to protect Canada’s interest and sovereignty in the Arctic, the Government of Canada increase investment in scientific research and the security of waterways, energy resources, mineral deposits, and critical technologies.

Recommendation 29

That the Government of Canada recognize the threat to Canadian Arctic sovereignty posed by the PRC in a renewed defence policy and commit the necessary resources to protect Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.

Recommendation 30

That the Government of Canada expand its work with Indigenous communities in the Arctic to respect Indigenous rights while ensuring the security of Indigenous groups and Canadian sovereignty.

Recommendation 31

That the Government of Canada work with like-minded Arctic states to promote multilateral cooperation, information sharing and collective security/defence.

330 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2015 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University, and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an individual).

331 Ibid.

332 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1955 (Stéphanie Martel, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, As an individual).

Recommendation 32

That the Government of Canada explore ways to reduce non-Arctic states’ influence on/ participation in resource exploration and exploitation, fishing, and scientific research in the Arctic.

Working with Our Allies

Witnesses emphasized the importance for Canada to coordinate its action with allies regarding the PRC. As stated by Richard Fadden concerning Canada’s role,

I think we need to be realistic. China is the second most powerful country on the planet. We’re a middle power among many. Except when our sovereignty is directly impacted, I’m not sure there’s a great deal we can do alone to affect how the Chinese are going to treat their objectives and how they are going to carry out their objectives. If we are to have an impact on the Chinese, we must use every multilateral tool at our disposal. If the UN doesn’t work, we should try the Five Eyes, the G7 and the margins of NATO. They all provide many opportunities for ministers and officials to exchange views and coordinate action.³³³

When asked about the importance of multilateralism with respect to Canada–PRC relations, Jody Thomas, then-Deputy Minister at the Department of National Defence (DND), stated that Canada’s activities are always in a coalition and that Canada is a country that believes in multilateralism.³³⁴ Ms. Thomas noted that while NATO – Canada’s primary defence relationship – has an interest in the PRC, its focus remains the Atlantic and the North Atlantic. For Indo-Pacific interests, she highlighted the importance of the Five Eyes partnership and noted the significance of being invited as an observer to the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus, known as ADMM-Plus. She added that Canada relies on and works with its allies for all the activities that the DND and the Canadian Armed Forces undertake. With respect to coalitions, she stated, “I don’t think there’s a ranking or a difference. It depends on the focus and the need.”³³⁵

Further emphasizing the importance of alliances, Stephen Nagy, stressed the importance of Canada’s interest in working with like-minded countries, including the United States, Japan, Australia and South Korea. With such partners, he recommended that Canada “engage in what we call ‘transit operations’, ensuring that maritime domain awareness is

333 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 May 2021, 1835 (Richard Fadden, Former Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, As an individual).

334 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 12 April 2021, 1940 (Jody Thomas, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence).

335 Ibid.



robust and identifies the challenges that the Chinese are making in terms of grey zone operations, lawfare operations, and of course the use of force.”³³⁶

Other countries, including Canada’s allies, have entered alliances that Canada is not officially a member of. The trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. known as AUKUS, announced in September 2021, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. (the Quad) that was re-established in 2017 are examples of such alliances. When asked, witnesses shared their views on Canada’s position relative to such alliances.

Concerning AUKUS, Guy Saint-Jacques commented, “[t]he fact that we haven’t been invited to join the AUKUS alliance or other recently created forums may indicate that we’re paying the price after years of neglect.”³³⁷

With a focus on Australia, Clive Hamilton referred to democratic alliances such as AUKUS and the Quad as a way to become less dependent on the U.S. as the only “big friend.”³³⁸ As a consequence of those alliances and the shifting geo-politics of the Indo-Pacific, he said that Australia, “is seen as a major power in the Indo-Pacific region, strong enough to stand up to China and not back down.” Concerning Canada, he stated that these alliances are a signal that “[a] new club is forming. Canada appears to be a natural member but so far has chosen to stand to the side.”³³⁹ He suggested that:

A much more robust resistance to PRC intimidation and a systematic program of building defences against Beijing’s influence and interference operations, coupled with an active campaign to build stronger alliances with democratic nations, would similarly elevate Canada’s place in the world.³⁴⁰

Providing a different perspective, Professor Nagy emphasized that Canada should not only focus on cooperation concerning defence.³⁴¹ He noted that for both AUKUS and the Quad, Canada should co-operate in areas such as technical support, infrastructure and

336 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 1940 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald Laurier Institute, As an individual).

337 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 18 October 2022, 1905 (Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director, As an individual).

338 Clive Hamilton, *Responses to questions from Committee members*, 25 October 2022.

339 Ibid.

340 Ibid.

341 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2025 (Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, Macdonald Laurier Institute, As an individual).

connectivity development, artificial intelligence and quantum computing in an ad hoc, functional way, which can add value to both of those alliances. He stated,

Defence is important, but there are many other partners within the region that can help us engage with the Indo-Pacific and also with China, and it doesn’t necessarily need to revolve strictly around defence.³⁴²

Recommendation 33

That the Government of Canada explore ways to increase security cooperation and cooperation on artificial intelligence, critical technologies and infrastructure with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region and multilateral organizations.

CONCLUSION

The chapters above shed light on the complexity of national security threats, their often-covert characteristics, and their widespread impact. While each of the threats above pose distinct concerns to Canada, Professor Rigby indicated they collectively "undermine our democratic institutions, our fundamental rights and freedoms, our social cohesion and our long-term prosperity."³⁴³ Witnesses also emphasized the need to consider the threats in the context of an increasingly assertive PRC. Accordingly, Minister Garneau stated that various countries, including Canada, are reassessing their relationship with the PRC in light of its authoritarian and coercive actions.³⁴⁴ Jonathan Berkshire Miller stressed the urgency for this reassessment, "both in national security terms and, importantly, in tandem with its partners."³⁴⁵ As Professor Rigby pointed out, the need for a comprehensive national security review in Canada is particularly pressing given that it has not conducted one since 2004. He remarked that this is a notable difference from Canada's Five Eyes partners, who regularly conduct such reviews. Indeed, the University of Ottawa Task Force report states that Canada’s peers, including Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the U.S., "are revamping policies, identifying new tools and authorities, reforming institutions, devoting new resources to security, and seeking new

342 Ibid.

343 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2105 (Vincent Rigby, Visiting Professor, Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University, As an Individual).

344 CACN, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 7 June 2021, 1835 (Honourable Marc Garneau, PC, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs).

345 CACN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2115 (Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Director and Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Program, Macdonald-Laurier Institute).



partnerships,” in order to address threats to national security.³⁴⁶ Consequently, Professor Rigby called for “a new national security strategy that brings together all the government's assets, from intelligence to defence to diplomacy and international development, in an integrated and coherent way to counter the national security threats of the 21st century, including state actors.”³⁴⁷

Considering Professor Rigby’s comments and considering the content of this report, the Special Committee recognizes that efforts to increase Canada’s resilience in the face of national security threats must involve collaboration across all levels of government, and across a range of departments and agencies. Moreover, solutions must also involve educating and engaging individuals, diaspora communities, researchers, and the private sector. While effectively broaching all national security threats is not a small endeavor, this report outlines a range of recommendations that can help Canada better identify, anticipate, and mitigate these threats. An updated national security strategy, however, would ensure that the recommendations in this report form part of a greater policy that comprehensively addresses the topic of national security.

Recommendation 34

That the Government of Canada undertake a comprehensive national security review that culminates in the publication of a national security policy. The review should include an assessment of the effectiveness of the current national security approach, laws, and practices that identifies areas where improvements can be made; an assessment of the role and mandate of key national security agencies; and an examination of the role played by international cooperation in Canada's national security approach and opportunities for enhanced cooperation.

346 Task Force on National Security of the GSPIA, University of Ottawa, [*A national security strategy for the 2020s – How Canada can adapt to a deteriorating security environment*](#), Report, May 2022, p. 1.

347 CACN, [*Evidence*](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament, 25 October 2022, 2105 (Vincent Rigby, Visiting Professor, Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University, As an Individual).

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta</p>	2022/10/04	3
<p>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</p> <p>Paul Thoppil, Assistant Deputy Minister, Asia Pacific</p>	2022/10/04	3
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Dr. David Curtis Wright, Associate Professor of History, University of Calgary</p> <p>Dr. Thomas Juneau, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa</p> <p>Dr. Stéphanie Martel, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University</p> <p>Vincent Rigby, Visiting Professor, Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University</p> <p>Guy Saint-Jacques, Consultant and Director</p>	2022/10/18	4
<p>Macdonald-Laurier Institute</p> <p>Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Director and Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Program</p>	2022/10/18	4

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Clive Hamilton, Professor of Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University, Canberra Campus</p> <p>Jonathan Manthorpe, Former Foreign Correspondent and Author of Claws of the Panda</p> <p>Stephen R. Nagy, Senior Associate Professor, International Christian University and Senior Research Fellow, MacDonald Laurier Institute</p> <p>Alex Neve, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa</p> <p>Jeremy Youde, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, University of Minnesota Duluth</p>	2022/10/25	5
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Scott Simon, Professor, University of Ottawa and Senior Fellow, MacDonald Laurier Institute</p>	2022/11/01	6
<p>Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada</p> <p>Harry Ho-Jen Tseng, Representative</p>	2022/11/01	6

APPENDIX B LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

43rd Parliament – 2nd Session

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canada Border Services Agency John Ossowski, President	2021/02/25	18
Canadian Security Intelligence Service David Vigneault, Director	2021/02/25	18
Communications Security Establishment Shelly Bruce, Chief	2021/02/25	18
Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Hon. Bill Blair, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	2021/02/25	18
Public Safety Canada Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister	2021/02/25	18
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Brenda Lucki, Commissioner	2021/02/25	18
As an individual Dr. Scott Halperin, Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology & Immunology, Dalhousie University and Director, Canadian Center for Vaccinology	2021/03/11	19
Canada Border Services Agency John Ossowski, President	2021/03/11	19
Canadian Security Intelligence Service David Vigneault, Director	2021/03/11	19

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Communications Security Establishment Shelly Bruce, Chief Scott Jones, Head, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security	2021/03/11	19
Public Safety Canada Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister	2021/03/11	19
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Brenda Lucki, Commissioner	2021/03/11	19
As an individual Christopher Parsons, Senior Research Associate, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto	2021/03/22	20
NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Janis Sarts, Director	2021/03/22	20
Public Health Agency of Canada Dr. Guillaume Poliquin, Acting Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory Iain Stewart, President	2021/03/22	20
Communications Security Establishment Shelly Bruce, Chief Scott Jones, Head, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security	2021/04/12	22
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Daniel Costello, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security Weldon Epp, Director General, North Asia and Oceania Bureau	2021/04/12	22

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of National Defence</p> <p>RAdm Scott Bishop, Commander of the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command and Chief of Defence Intelligence</p> <p>MGen Trevor Cadieu, Director of Staff, Strategic Joint Staff</p> <p>Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence</p> <p>Jody Thomas, Deputy Minister</p>	2021/04/12	22
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Anne-Marie Brady, Professor, University of Canterbury</p> <p>Michel Juneau-Katsuya, Expert in National Security and Intelligence</p> <p>Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada</p> <p>Steve Waterhouse, Captain (ret'd), Former Information Systems Security Officer, Department of National Defence and Cybersecurity Specialist</p>	2021/04/19	23
<p>United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission</p> <p>Carolyn Bartholomew, Chairman</p>	2021/04/19	23
<p>House of Commons</p> <p>Michel Bédard, Deputy Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel</p> <p>Philippe Dufresne, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel</p>	2021/04/26	24
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Ward P.D. Elcock</p> <p>Paul Evans, Professor, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, University of British Columbia</p> <p>Richard B. Fadden</p> <p>Gordon Houlden, Director Emeritus, China Institute, University of Alberta</p> <p>Justin Li, Director, National Capital Confucius Institute for Culture, Language and Business, Carleton University</p> <p>Lynette H. Ong, Associate Professor of Political Science, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto</p>	2021/05/03	25

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
As an individual Chemi Lhamo, Community Health Lead	2021/05/31	27
Alliance Canada Hong Kong Cherie Wong, Executive Director	2021/05/31	27
Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies Kyle Matthews, Executive Director	2021/05/31	27
National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Sean Jorgensen, Director of Operations, Secretariat of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Hon. David J. McGuinty, P.C., M.P., Chair	2021/05/31	27
Uyghur Research Institute Rukiye Turdush, Research Director, Uyghur Rights Advocate	2021/05/31	27
As an individual Dr. Peter M. German, Q.C., Barrister and Solicitor	2021/06/07	28
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Daniel Costello, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security Weldon Epp, Director General, North Asia and Oceania Bureau Hon. Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs	2021/06/07	28
Public Health Agency of Canada Hon. Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health Dr. Guillaume Poliquin, Acting Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory Iain Stewart, President	2021/06/14	29
As an individual Hon. Dominic Cardy, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick	2021/06/21	30

APPENDIX C LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

43rd Parliament – 2nd Session

China Policy Centre

Naud, Léonce

The Citizen Lab

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 4, 5, 11, 14 and 16-19](#)) from the 44th Parliament, 1st Session and ([Meetings Nos. 18-20, 22-25 and 27-30](#)) from the 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Hardie
Chair

Supplement to the report titled, “A Threat to Canadian Sovereignty: National Security Dimensions of the Canada-People’s Republic of China Relationship”

Conservative members of the Special Committee on the Canada-People’s Republic of China Relationship support the report and its recommendations. We would, however, like to include additional comments not included in the report.

With respect to Recommendation 9, we believe the Government of Canada should clearly advise provinces and education institutions of higher learning against entering into agreements with Confucius Institutes. Evidence provided to the committee indicated that Confucius Institutes serve as a platform for the PRC to spread CCP ideology, to control Chinese international students on university campuses and to serve as a platform for espionage. Additionally, Confucius Institute funding comes from the Institute’s head office in Beijing.

With respect to Recommendation 10, we believe an additional recommendation is necessary. The Critical Election Incident Public Protocol should be amended so that the decision to release information during a general election is made by an authority independent of the Prime Minister. Currently, the decision to release information during an election is made by individuals who are appointed by and accountable to the Prime Minister. This creates an inherent conflict of interest during a federal election where a decision regarding the release of information is required – information that may be advantageous or injurious to the various political parties and candidates.

With respect to recommendation 24, we fully support this recommendation, but would like to provide additional detail in support. We believe the Government of Canada should create a single national beneficial ownership registry under federal criminal law power which would include not only corporations created under the *Canada Business Corporations Act (CBCA)*, but also corporations created under provincial statutes and real estate. This would ensure that all corporations and all real estate in Canada are captured by the registry. The government's proposed registry would only mandate that entities incorporated under the CBCA be included. This would only capture about 10 percent of the approximately 4.3 million businesses that exist in Canada. Furthermore, not all provinces have put in place registries clearly listing ownership in corporations created under provincial legislation. Thus, as it currently stands, there are gaps in the federal government's approach to a registry that could be exploited by corporations and individuals.

