



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **THE NEXUS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN CANADA: THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY IN WINNIPEG**

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

**Ken Hardie, Chair**

**NOVEMBER 2024  
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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## **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.

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

has the honour to present its

**EIGHTH INTERIM REPORT**

Pursuant to the 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:





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# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*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 ensure that security assessments and clearances are completed in an expeditious manner. .... 17**

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada explore constitutionally compliant ways to prevent those under investigation for national security breaches from leaving the country. .... 17**

## **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada establish a List of Trusted Countries for the sharing of research and intellectual property, building on the Global Health Security Action Group Laboratory Network (G7+1). .... 20**

## **Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada ensure that the transfer of highly dangerous viruses and pathogens, like Ebola and Henipah viruses are limited to laboratories located in countries on the List of Trusted Countries. .... 20**

## **Recommendation 5**

**That the Government of Canada, in cooperation with the provinces and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, make the scientific community aware of the risks of interference related to international cooperation. .... 22**

## **Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada update the country's national security policy, which has not been updated since 2004, to better reflect the threats we face from hostile state actors like the People's Republic of China. .... 22**

**Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada immediately end government research collaboration with entities and individuals in the People’s Republic of China in Canada’s *Sensitive Technology Research Areas*, such as: advanced digital infrastructure technology; advanced energy technology; advanced materials and manufacturing; advanced sensing and surveillance; advanced weapons, aerospace, space and satellite technology; artificial intelligence and big data technology; human-machine integration; life science technology; quantum science and technology; and robotics and autonomous systems. .... 22**

**Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada add the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Thousand Talents Program of the People’s Republic of China and similar programs to the list of Named Research Organizations developed by Public Safety Canada. .... 26**

**Recommendation 9**

**That the Government of Canada review security policies in departments that are outside national security organizations and are sensitive to foreign interference activities..... 26**

**Recommendation 10**

**That the Government of Canada, assign responsibility to a person within the Privy Council Office to work with a Public Health Agency of Canada’s departmental security officer to report annually to a parliamentary committee on the application of new security measures within the Public Health Agency of Canada..... 26**

**Recommendation 11**

**That the Government of Canada, mindful that the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, and all future biosafety level 4 laboratories, are designed to promote research for the health, safety and security of all Canadians, consider the security-related requirements, obligations and implications of these facilities to be an integral part of the governmental national security machinery, and study how allied countries are categorizing their level 4 laboratories in terms of national security. .... 30**

**Recommendation 12**

**That the Government of Canada study the possibility of creating a liaison position between the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Public Health Agency of Canada responsible for ensuring that scientists understand the classified information shared by CSIS..... 30**





# THE NEXUS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN CANADA: THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY IN WINNIPEG

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## INTRODUCTION

The safety and security of Canadians must be the top priority of the Government of Canada, even in science, despite it being a domain that also requires international collaboration. Canada is a world leader in scientific research, including life sciences, robotics and artificial intelligence, and these sectors are of keen interest to threat actors who seek to acquire Canada’s sensitive research and technology. As the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) government explicitly states that it seeks to develop the world’s most advanced and modern military by 2049,<sup>1</sup> its actions, including through foreign interference and espionage, have become increasingly assertive. For the PRC, talent management programs are one method of acquiring Canadian research and technology. These programs include the Thousand Talents Program, which uses incentives such as salaries, research funding and laboratory space to encourage Chinese researchers abroad to transmit knowledge to the PRC. Other methods include deceptive partnerships and the practice of covertly influencing research agendas to obtain intellectual property and access to cutting edge research. According to the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), David Vigneault, “the PRC is by far the greatest perpetrator of these activities.”<sup>2</sup>

It was during a time of growing awareness of this context that, on 5 July 2019, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and her husband, Keding Cheng, both of whom were acclaimed scientists and Canadian citizens originally from the PRC, were escorted out of the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg (Winnipeg NML facility) – a biosafety level

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1 As part of the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s military ambitions, in 2015, the country outlined a 10-year industrial manufacturing plan, “Made in China 2025” which focuses on such areas as innovation, integrating technology and industry, and restructuring its manufacturing sector, with the goal of reducing dependence on foreign technology. See The State Council The PRC, *‘Made in China 2025’ plan issued*, 19 May 2015.

2 The House of Commons Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship (CACN), *Evidence*, 8 April 2024, 1940 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)).



4 laboratory<sup>3</sup> – by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). It was alleged that Dr. Qiu’s clandestine relationships with entities in the PRC, and Mr. Cheng’s awareness of her actions, as well as his own activities with the PRC, affected their ability to safeguard proprietary government information relating to their work at the Winnipeg NML facility. Following administrative and security screening investigations into their alleged actions, their security clearances were revoked, and, accordingly, they were terminated from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in January 2021.<sup>4</sup>

On 31 March 2021, the House of Commons Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship (the Special Committee) adopted a motion ordering the release of unredacted PHAC documents relating to the dismissal of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng in January 2021.<sup>5</sup> The government failed to comply with the order, and so, the Special Committee subsequently adopted a second order for the documents on 10 May 2021. Again, the government failed to comply with the order for the production of PHAC documents. The House then adopted an order on 2 June 2021 for the production of the PHAC documents. Again, the government failed to comply with this order. On 17 June 2021, the House adopted yet another order, which required the PHAC President, Mr. Iain Stewart, to come to the bar of the House to deliver the documents in person and to be found in contempt for his previous failures to deliver the documents. On 21 June 2021, Mr. Iain Stewart, PHAC President at the time, came to the bar of the House, was found in contempt of Parliament but failed to comply with the order to deliver the documents. Subsequent to the adoption of the four orders for the production of documents which were not complied with, the government took the extraordinary step to take the Speaker to court, in June 2021 in an effort to block the release of the documents. Speaker Rota responded to the government in a strongly worded statement that said “The Speaker’s Office will defend the rights of the House. That is something I take very seriously. The legal system does not have any jurisdiction over the operations of the House. We are our own jurisdiction. That is something we will fight tooth and nail to protect, and we will continue to do that.” At the dissolution of the

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3 There are two Level 4 laboratories in Canada, both of which are at the federal government’s Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health, in Winnipeg: the National Microbiology Laboratory facility and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency’s National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease. Level 4 laboratories require the highest level of biosafety precautions because they work with aerosol-transmitted pathogens that can cause fatal disease, such as Ebola. The National Microbiology Laboratory facility is operated by the Public Health Agency of Canada and covers pathogens that threaten humans. There are three other locations of the National Microbiology Laboratory, but those locations do not have a Level 4 classification.

4 As of May 2024, Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng have reportedly moved to the PRC and the RCMP’s investigation remains ongoing. See Nathan Vanderklippe, Steven Chase and Robert Fife, “[Fired Winnipeg scientists use pseudonyms in China as RCMP probe continues](#),” *The Globe and Mail*, 20 March 2024.

5 CACN, [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 31 March 2021.



43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, the government had not produced the unredacted PHAC documents as per the orders. In the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, after more than a year of requests to obtain the unredacted documents,<sup>6</sup> on 1 November 2022, the House leaders of all recognized parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing an independent special committee of parliamentarians of the House of Commons (the Ad Hoc Committee).<sup>7</sup> The Ad Hoc Committee was charged with determining whether the information in the documents was relevant and necessary and, if so, referring the information to a panel of arbiters to determine how the information could be made public.

In November 2023, the Ad Hoc Committee sent the panel of arbiters the information deemed relevant and necessary.<sup>8</sup> On 1 February 2024, the panel of arbiters sent the redacted documents to the Ad Hoc Committee.<sup>9</sup> The documents were tabled in the House of Commons by the Minister of Health, the Honourable Mark Holland, on 28 February 2024.<sup>10</sup>

In response to the tabling of these documents, on 26 March 2024, the Special Committee agreed to

undertake a study of at least two meetings of the matters revealed in the Winnipeg lab documents together with the broader concerns they represent in relation to Canada's national security, as well as the obstacles encountered in obtaining these documents...<sup>11</sup>

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6 CACN, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 10 May 2021; House of Commons, *Journals*, 2 June 2021; House of Commons, *Journals*, 17 June 2021; House of Commons, *Debates*, 21 June 2021. It's worth noting that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics (ETHI) adopted a motion on 9 April 2024 to undertake a study of the collection and transmission of information and intelligence within the Government of Canada following these events. See, ETHI, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 9 April 2024.

7 *Memorandum of Understanding between The Honourable Mark Holland, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and The Honourable Andrew Scheer, House Leader of the Official Opposition, and Mr. Alain Therrien, House Leader of the Bloc, and Mr. Peter Julian, House Leader of the New Democratic Party*, Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-15, House of Commons, 1 November 2022; Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, *Membership of ad hoc committee and Panel of Arbiters is announced*, News release, 17 May 2023.

8 *Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service*, Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, p. 3.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–8.

10 House of Commons, *Journals*, 28 February 2024.

11 CACN, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 26 March 2024.



First, this report provides a timeline of selected events concerning Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng at the Winnipeg NML facility, and outlines witness testimony surrounding issues that relate to some of these events. Second, this report explores the nexus between science and security, considering the security enhancements made at the Winnipeg NML facility since the events, and the communication of national security risks in Canada.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- June 2003: Xiangguo Qiu began working as a research scientist for the PHAC’s Winnipeg NML facility. Her husband, Keding Cheng, began working as a biologist at the NML in 2006.<sup>12</sup>
- 2013: Keding Cheng fills out an application for the “Science and Technology Innovation Talent Program of Henan Province” that includes eligibility criteria that the applicant must “passionately love the socialist motherland [PRC]” and be a citizen of the PRC. The CSIS Security Assessment stated, “It is unclear as to whether or not Mr. Cheng ever completed or submitted this Henan Talent Program application.”<sup>13</sup>
- 2016: Dr. Qiu is nominated for an “International Cooperation Award” by an unnamed official from the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences.<sup>14</sup> The nomination made mention of collaboration with a Major-General in the People’s Liberation Army and a top virologist at the Academy of Military Medical Sciences in China (Chief 2), who is elsewhere described as “China’s chief biological weapons defense expert engaged in research related to biosafety, bio-defence, and bio-terrorism.”<sup>15</sup> Media articles suggest that the Major-General in question could be Major-General Chen Wei.<sup>16</sup> CSIS investigations reveal that Qiu and Chief 2 collaborated on multiple research projects going back to 2012. The nomination states that Dr. Qiu “used Canada’s Level 4 Biosecurity Laboratory as a base to assist

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12 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1835 (Honorable Mark Holland, Minister of Health).

13 [Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, p. 135.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 137 and 236.

16 Robert Fife and Stephen Chase, [“Chinese Major-General worked with fired scientist at Canada’s top infectious disease lab,”](#) *The Globe and Mail*, 16 September 2021.

China to improve its capability to fight highly pathogenic pathogens ... and achieved brilliant results.”<sup>17</sup>

- October 2016: Dr. Qiu publishes a paper in collaboration with Major-General Chen Wei and other individuals linked to the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences.<sup>18</sup>
- March 2017: PHAC approves Dr. Qiu’s travel to Beijing between 24 March 2017 and 8 April 2017 to present at the *1st International Symposium of Joint Prevention & Control of Imported Zoonotic Diseases*. During that visit, the service investigation reveals that on 31 March 2017, she presented at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) on 31 March on “Combatting Ebola Virus Infection: the Development and Use of Ebola Monoclonal Antibodies and Vaccines.” CSIS “is not aware of any PHAC-approved travel for [Dr.] Qiu to Wuhan during this period.” Dr. Qiu acknowledged that the WIV paid for the trip to Wuhan and that PHAC was not aware of this trip.<sup>19</sup>
- 20 September 2017 – 1 October 2017: PHAC officially approved Dr. Qiu’s travel to China to provide training at WIV. The CSIS investigation revealed that Dr. Qiu’s application for the Thousand Talents Program was discussed with senior WIV employees who believed that Dr. Qiu’s Thousand Talents Program application was “very important for [WIV]’s future development.”<sup>20</sup>
- 26 October 2017: The Chinese National Institutes for Food and Drug Control [filed](#) a patent for an inhibitor of the Ebola virus that includes Dr. Qiu as one of the contributors.
- October 2017 – January 2018: Dr. Qiu submitted an application for the PRC’s [Thousand Talents Plan](#) through the WIV.<sup>21</sup> The application stated

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17 Ibid., p. 122.

18 Ibid., pp. 32 and 96; Shipo Wu et al., “[Adenovirus Vaccine Expressing Ebola Virus Variant Makona Glycoprotein Is Efficacious in Guinea Pigs and Nonhuman Primates](#),” *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 214, No. 3, October 2016.

19 Ibid., pp. 112 and 166.

20 Ibid.

21 According to CSIS security assessment, Keding Cheng was also involved in an application for a PRC-sponsored “talent program” in 2013. See, [Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, pp. 113, 134–135.



that she had been a visiting professor at the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology of the Academy of Military Medical Sciences since April 2016. This position, along with other positions in the PRC, were omitted from her English professional public curriculum vitae that was for a Canadian audience.<sup>22</sup> As part of her work with the WIV, Dr. Qiu committed to building the PRC's "biosecurity platform for new and potent infectious disease research...in order to the top level domestically [within China] and achieve leading status internationally in the area of [biosecurity level 4] virus research."<sup>23</sup>

- 13 December 2017 – 9 January 2018: An email chain provided by PHAC to CSIS revealed that Dr. Qiu advised a Chinese research student to apply for a visitor visa as opposed to a work permit to enter Canada in a timelier manner.<sup>24</sup>
- February 2018: A senior technician at WIV ("Individual 2") is hired by PHAC via the University of Manitoba to work at the National Microbiology Lab as a visiting researcher. His application was facilitated by Dr. Qiu, under whom he worked.<sup>25</sup> He had applied for and received a secret security clearance in December 2017.<sup>26</sup>
- April 2018: Dr. Qiu makes what was described as a personal trip to China to visit family. It would later be revealed that she was "financially compensated for all her expenses related to her trip to China and back to Canada by Tianjin CanSino Biotechnology Incorporated."<sup>27</sup> She would later claim that "this side trip was for the discussion of their vaccine in Cansino."<sup>28</sup>

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22 Dr. Qiu had listed the following affiliations in her curriculum vitae destined for Chinese audiences: visiting research fellow at the National Institutes for Food and Drug Control (China) since January 2017; visiting professor at the Hebei Medical University since July 2018; visiting professor at the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology since April 2016; and visiting research scientist at the Wuhan Institute of Virology since October 2018. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 115 and 230.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

- May 2018: Dr. Qiu was awarded the 2018 Governor General’s Innovation Award, with Dr. Gary Kobinger, for discovering an Ebola virus treatment that was developed into a drug called ZMapp.
- May 2018: Mr. Cheng is sent vials of mouse protein via courier from China labeled as “kitchen utensils.”<sup>29</sup>
- August 2018: According to a document of written answers that CSIS submitted to the Special Committee, “CSIS held a briefing for personnel responsible for security at the [PHAC], including for officials from the NML. The presentation focused on foreign interference and included possible indicators of insider threat activities, as well as other security risks. Student programs were identified as being one of these possible threat vectors. Further to the presentation, PHAC flagged two scientists to CSIS, Dr. Cheng and Dr. Qiu.”<sup>30</sup>
- September 2018: Qiu is also invited to become a member of the “International Advisory Committee for Wuhan P4 Laboratory.”<sup>31</sup>
- 27 September 2018: PHAC's National Security Management Division was advised that Dr. Qiu had been listed as the inventor on a Chinese patent that may have contained scientific information produced at the Winnipeg NML facility.<sup>32</sup>
- 12 October 2018: "Individual #2" attempts to leave the NML “with 10 tubes in two bags that he explained were destined for the University of Manitoba Laboratory.”<sup>33</sup> He was accompanied by two other restricted visitors as well as a student with a security clearance. The Departmental Security Officer of PHAC is subsequently informed.<sup>34</sup>

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29 Ibid., pp. 13, 18, 25, 29, 72, 86–88 and 105.

30 CSIS written answer to M. Stephen Ellis, MP question: CACN, Evidence, 8 April 2024, 1950 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

31 Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, p. 116.

32 Ibid., p. 12.

33 Ibid., pp. 83 and 176.

34 Ibid.



- 19 October 2018: Dr. Qiu visits the Wuhan Institute of Virology.<sup>35</sup> A Thousand Talents Program application later discovered during PHAC’s investigation showed that she listed herself as a “visiting research scientist” at the WIV at this time.<sup>36</sup> She would later indicate that this was an honorary position. In a subsequent interview, she acknowledged that she met with the director of the WIV during that trip.<sup>37</sup> This trip was approved by PHAC, but Dr. Qiu’s attendance at a “biosafety presentation” at WIV took place without authorization.<sup>38</sup>
- 31 October 2018: Mr. Cheng and a restricted visitor attempted to leave the NML with two Styrofoam containers, which Mr. Cheng insisted were empty. The Departmental Security Officer of PHAC was subsequently informed.<sup>39</sup>
- October 2018–February 2019: An “increase in [restricted visitors] not being escorted” is noted by an NML security guard in when interviewed on 12 February 2019 by Presidia Consulting.<sup>40</sup>
- 11 and 12 December 2018: The President of PHAC at that time was first briefed on the allegations regarding Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng, and accordingly he approved that a fact-finding investigation take place.<sup>41</sup>
- 21 December 2018: PHAC contracted Presidia Security Consulting to conduct the fact-finding investigation into raised allegations regarding Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng.<sup>42</sup>

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35 Ibid., p. 117.

36 Ibid., p. 120.

37 Ibid., p. 167.

38 Ibid., pp. 117, 166 and 193.

39 Ibid., p. 19.

40 Ibid.

41 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) written answer to M. Michael Chong, MP question: CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1315 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

42 [Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, pp. 46 and 71.

- January 2019: Dr. Qiu accepts an invitation to become an editorial board member of the journal *Virologica Sinica*, the official organ of the Chinese Society for Microbiology.<sup>43</sup>
- 27 January 2019: Mr. Cheng enters the passcode of another employee when entering the Winnipeg NML facility, creating a security incident.<sup>44</sup>
- 23 March 2019: Presidia Security Consulting submitted its Fact-Finding Report to PHAC regarding Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng, which recommends that administrative investigations should be conducted.<sup>45</sup>
- 31 March 2019: The Winnipeg NML facility shipped live samples of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan National Biosafety Level 4 Laboratory of the WIV.<sup>46</sup>
- 10 April 2019: “First discussions” occur with the Vice President of PHAC’s Infectious Disease Prevention and Control branch over the commencement of a formal administrative investigation.<sup>47</sup>
- 24 May 2019: PHAC advises the RCMP of possible policy breaches at the Winnipeg NML facility.<sup>48</sup>
- 10 June 2019: A security screening investigation is “reopened for cause” by CSIS for “a security assessment in relation to a secret clearance” for Dr. Qiu.<sup>49</sup>
- 5 July 2019: The RCMP escorted Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng out of the Winnipeg NML facility. They were instructed by PHAC to remain home with pay during the administrative investigation process.<sup>50</sup>

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 26.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 438–439.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 316.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 374.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 39 and 41.



- 5 February 2020: Presidia Security Consulting submitted the Administrative Investigation Reports of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng to PHAC.<sup>51</sup>
- 9 April 2020: CSIS submitted its initial CSIS Act Security Assessments of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng to PHAC, concluding that if Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng should “be reinstated at the Winnipeg NML facility, because of [their] features of character, [they] may disclose, be induced to disclose or cause to be disclosed in an unauthorized way, classified information.”<sup>52</sup>
- 30 June 2020: CSIS submitted its updated CSIS Act Security Assessment of Dr. Qiu to PHAC, assessing that Dr. Qiu “has acted, may act and may be induced to act in a way that constitutes a threat to Canada’s national security” and has disclosed, may, may be induced, or may cause to be disclosed in an unauthorized way, sensitive information. CSIS found that she had given “access to the NML to at least two employees of a PRC institution whose work is not aligned with Canadian interests.” CSIS also assessed that “despite her enormous scientific knowledge and contributions, her behavior is incompatible with holding a Government of Canada security clearance.” CSIS indicated that Dr. Qiu had been deceitful during her screening interview and had told “outright lies” to her interviewer. Finally, CSIS assessed that “should [Dr. Qiu] be reinstated at the NML, Canada’s national security and the health of individuals may be put into jeopardy.”<sup>53</sup>
- 7 July 2020: CSIS submitted its updated CSIS Act Security Assessment of Mr. Cheng to PHAC, assessing that “[s]hould Mr. Cheng be reinstated at the NML (...) he may act or may be induced to act in a way that constitutes a threat to the security of Canada; or may disclose or may be induced to disclose, or may cause to be disclosed in an unauthorized way, sensitive information.”<sup>54</sup>
- 5 August 2020: Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng both filed grievances, in which they alleged that the investigative and disciplinary processes were in violation

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51 Ibid., pp. 43 and 69.

52 Ibid., pp. 101 and 108.

53 Ibid., p. 131.

54 Ibid., p. 142.



of their collective agreement and breached their rights to procedural fairness.<sup>55</sup>

- 20 August 2020: PHAC notified Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng of the suspension of their security status pending a Review for cause.<sup>56</sup>
- 29 September 2020: PHAC notified Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng that their grievances, presented on 5 August 2020, were denied.<sup>57</sup>
- 30 November 2020: PHAC submitted its reports on review for cause of security status of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng.<sup>58</sup>
- 19 January 2021: PHAC revoked the reliability status and security clearances of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng.<sup>59</sup>
- 20 January 2021: PHAC administratively terminated the employment of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng.<sup>60</sup>

Witnesses discussed several key themes relating to the timeline of events, including the timeliness of PHAC's response to the incidents, the use of a private company to conduct a fact-finding review and administrative investigations, and the transfer of Ebola and Henipah to the WIV and its implications with respect to the Winnipeg NML facility's international collaboration.

## THE TIMELINESS OF RESPONSE

Several witnesses examined the length of time that it took for PHAC to respond to the actions of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng. As is outlined in the above timeline, more than 10 months elapsed between the August 2018 routine meeting between CSIS and personnel responsible for security at the PHAC, including officials from the Winnipeg NML facility, where the initial concerns about Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng was raised, and the day on which the RCMP escorted them out of the NML in July 2019.

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55 *Ibid.*, pp. 152 and 154.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 144 and 148.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 153 and 155.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 222 and 250.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 305 and 309.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 313–314.



Witnesses evaluated and critiqued this length of time, with Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, acknowledging that it “is a timeline that needs to be looked at.”<sup>61</sup> She and David Vigneault explained that, initially, the concerns raised were related to administrative issues and it was not clear that national security was the issue.<sup>62</sup> After the fact-finding investigation and the referral of the issue to CSIS, the situation was assessed as national security related.<sup>63</sup> Noting that the scientists had full access to the Winnipeg NML facility during this period, Richard Fadden, the director of CSIS from 2009 to 2013, who appeared as an individual, shared his reaction that this timeframe “was too long.”<sup>64</sup> He recognized that protections in the system, including the labour relations system and the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) would have slowed down the process.<sup>65</sup> However, he contended that the departmental security and department heads should have restricted the scientists’ physical access to the Winnipeg NML facility earlier.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, Dr. Matthew Gilmour, the former Scientific Director General of the National Microbiology Laboratory and Laboratory of Foodborne Zoonoses from 2015 to 2020, who appeared as an individual, shared his belief that he did not consider the lab insecure during that time because there was no direction from CSIS or PHAC that Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng should have been removed from the Winnipeg NML facility.<sup>67</sup> However, he contended, “In the future, it absolutely should happen in a shorter timeframe.” Providing a different point of view on timelines, and concerning the role of CSIS in reference to that time period, Mr. Vigneault noted that his colleagues had shared their belief that “it was a fairly expeditious process.”<sup>68</sup> CSIS conducted an “extensive investigation that led PHAC to take quick administrative measures to protect the lab and Canadians.”<sup>69</sup>

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61 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1935 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

62 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1930 (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2020 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

63 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2020 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

64 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1310 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

65 Ibid., [1340](#).

66 Ibid., [1310](#).

67 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2040 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).

68 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2015 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

69 CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1930 (David Vigneault, , Director, CSIS).

Following the July 2019 removal of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng, more than 18 months elapsed before the January 2021 revocation of their security clearances and the termination of their employment at the Winnipeg NML facility. Reflecting on the overall timeline of the investigations, and commenting on the possible impact that the cases of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng could have on Chinese Canadian researchers, Heather Jeffrey, President of PHAC, stressed, “It’s for exactly this reason that the investigation processes we conducted at the time were so thorough and relied on evidence rather than allegations.”<sup>70</sup> Addressing this possible impact, Minister Holland clarified that this situation applies to two Canadian citizens who engaged in “reprehensible actions that are reflective of them and only them.”<sup>71</sup> He stressed the importance of ensuring that collective statements about the actions of the PRC are distinguished from the actions of two individuals.

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada ensure that security assessments and clearances are completed in an expeditious manner.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada explore constitutionally compliant ways to prevent those under investigation for national security breaches from leaving the country.**

## **PRESIDIA SECURITY CONSULTING**

In December 2018, PHAC’s National Security Management Division’s Investigations Unit contracted Presidia Security Consulting to conduct a fact-finding investigation into Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng’s possible contraventions of Government of Canada policy in several areas.<sup>72</sup> This fact-finding investigation started on 21 December 2018 and Presidia Security Consulting provided its fact-finding report to PHAC on 23 March 2019, and recommended

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70 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1345 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

71 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1915 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health).

72 The allegations regarding Dr. Qiu included failing to protect the Government of Canada’s information and property in scientific collaborations, disseminating information to unauthorized persons, failing to abide by policies surrounding restricted visitors and being named in a patent outside of Canada without seeking proper approval. The full list of allegations and possible contraventions of Government policies are available at [Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, p. 39. The full list of allegations regarding Mr. Cheng’s possible contraventions of Government policies are available at [Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, p. 41.



that an administrative investigation should occur.<sup>73</sup> As Dr. Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President of the Winnipeg NML facility, characterized it, “these were allegations. Further investigation was ongoing.”<sup>74</sup> Ms. Jeffrey explained that, to determine if the allegations raised in that investigation were founded, Presidia Security Consulting then conducted administrative investigations regarding Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng, which were carried out from 8 July 2019 until 5 February 2020.<sup>75</sup>

In parallel to the administrative investigations, CSIS, and later the RCMP, conducted independent national security investigations and potential criminal investigations, respectively, on the issue.<sup>76</sup> Speaking about the privately contracted investigations by Presidia Security Consulting, Mr. Vigneault and the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, clarified that these investigations were administrative in nature, and not security threat assessments or police investigations.<sup>77</sup> Mr. Vigneault highlighted that it would not be appropriate for CSIS to conduct an administrative investigation because CSIS would not be equipped to do so.<sup>78</sup> He highlighted that some private companies have expertise in such investigations, but require a government investigation to also take place.<sup>79</sup> Mr. Vigneault stressed that CSIS cannot share information, techniques or methods with those private companies.<sup>80</sup>

Accordingly, as outlined in a written response from PHAC to the Special committee explaining the decision to use Presidia Security Consulting, that company was on a National Master Standing Offers list of pre-qualified businesses, and “was chosen

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73 [\*Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service\*](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, pp. 9–38.

74 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1400 (Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory (NML), PHAC).

75 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1340 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); [\*Documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service\*](#), Sessional Paper No. 8530-441-35, House of Commons, 28 February 2024, pp. 48 and 74.

76 As several witnesses have stated, the RCMP investigation in a potential criminal context is still ongoing. See, CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1905 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1920, 1935 and 1955 (Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1435 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1925 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

77 CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1950 (Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2030 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

78 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2030 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

79 [Ibid.](#)

80 [Ibid.](#)

because of a reputation for quality and timeliness, and their ability to meet required timelines in this instance.”

## THE TRANSFER OF EBOLA AND HENIPAH TO THE WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

As is detailed in the documents tabled in Parliament, on 31 March 2019, the Winnipeg NML facility sent samples of the Ebola and Henipah viruses to the WIV on an Air Canada commercial flight. Dr. Poliquin confirmed that the carrier to transfer samples such as these, “is often commercial.”<sup>81</sup> He maintained that the transfer of these samples was instigated by Dr. Qiu, who was the primary interlocuter with the WIV.<sup>82</sup>

Minister Holland and Ms. Jeffrey stressed that PHAC and the Winnipeg NML facility had authorized the transfer of these viruses, which was done according to the relevant act and biosafety regulations.<sup>83</sup> Dr. Gilmour noted that in the research domain there is an “international expectation of benefit sharing,” and with that ethos in mind, the samples were transferred following due diligence.<sup>84</sup> In contrast, Mr. Fadden shared his opinion that the shipment “should not have happened.”<sup>85</sup>

Reflecting on the approval of the transfer, Ms. Jeffrey acknowledged that “in hindsight, given the activities of these scientists and evidence of those activities, which emerged much later in that timeline, we would obviously look at decisions that were taken around their work sooner.”<sup>86</sup>

Providing a different perspective, Dr. Gilmour informed the Special Committee that the basis of his concern with the transfer was not Dr. Qiu’s association with the transfer, but the recipient laboratory.<sup>87</sup> In working with other laboratories in allied countries, including by co-chairing the Global Health Security Action Group Laboratory Network, whose membership includes the Group of Seven (G7) plus Mexico, Dr. Gilmour stated that he was well aware of the importance of trusting the laboratories with which there is

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81 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1445 (Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, NML, PHAC).

82 Ibid., [1400](#).

83 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1840 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1315 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

84 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2050 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).

85 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1340 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

86 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1355 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

87 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2035 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).



collaboration. Given his unfamiliarity with the WIV, he stressed that due diligence and the proper following of processes be applied to this transfer.<sup>88</sup>

Speaking in general terms, Dr. Guillaume Poliquin underscored the importance of sharing samples between level 4 laboratories, as it enables scientific research to be done. He said that the work surrounding diagnostic development, applied research, and developing medical countermeasures requires access to samples of viruses.<sup>89</sup>

### Recommendation 3

**That the Government of Canada establish a List of Trusted Countries for the sharing of research and intellectual property, building on the Global Health Security Action Group Laboratory Network (G7+1).**

### Recommendation 4

**That the Government of Canada ensure that the transfer of highly dangerous viruses and pathogens, like Ebola and Henipah viruses are limited to laboratories located in countries on the List of Trusted Countries.**

## INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Ms. Jeffrey pointed out the extent of Canada's past collaboration with the PRC, including the 2007 [\*Canada-China agreement on scientific and technological cooperation\*](#). She highlighted that the approval of the collaboration with the WIV had occurred during a period of collaboration between many countries, including the United States and the PRC, which were active in addressing Ebola in western Africa.<sup>90</sup>

Mr. Vigneault maintained that the PRC has evolved in recent years, particularly since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013,<sup>91</sup> representing a major paradigm shift that has led to several initiatives with the aim of seeing the PRC dominate many key sectors. Among other notable initiatives, the PRC has institutionalized the Thousand Talents Program, implemented legislation in 2017 and 2018 that forces PRC companies and citizens to collaborate with its intelligence services, and increased its spying and interference

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88 Ibid.

89 CACN, [\*Evidence\*](#), 19 April 2024, 1420 (Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, NML, PHAC).

90 CACN, [\*Evidence\*](#), 19 April 2024, 1355 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

91 At the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China in November 2012, Xi Jinping was named the Secretary General of the Communist Party of China and became the President of the PRC in March 2013.

through the United Front Work Department.<sup>92</sup> He characterized the overall current threat environment as “probably the worst we have ever seen.”<sup>93</sup>

At present, as noted by Minister Holland and Ms. Jeffrey, Canadian laboratories do not have bilateral research collaboration with PRC scientists or its government.<sup>94</sup> While emphasizing the importance of international collaboration to protect people around the world, Minister Holland remarked that it is “deeply tragic, frankly, that the relationship with China deteriorated such that we can't collaborate on these issues any longer.”<sup>95</sup> Concerning scientific collaboration with the PRC, prior to 2018, the Minister of Health indicated that at the time there was already a risk that by sharing information, Chinese scientists might seek economic gain, but that it was unthinkable that virus transfer would be used as a weapon. About scientific research in the PRC, he stated, “There are unbelievable numbers of wonderful Chinese scientists doing incredible work for the betterment of humanity in China now.” In acknowledging the potential impact of the decision to end collaboration with the PRC on the careers and reputations of Chinese Canadian scientists, he stressed that the actions of the Chinese government must not lead to the discrimination of Chinese Canadians.<sup>96</sup>

Witnesses highlighted that Canada is not alone in its shifting relations with the PRC.<sup>97</sup> Minister LeBlanc stated that several western countries, including Canada’s Five Eyes partners, as well as provinces and territories, have been subject to increased interference by the PRC.<sup>98</sup> In response to these threats, Mr. Fadden identified that the United States and Australia had tightened up security with respect to scientific institutions.<sup>99</sup> Concerning the impact that the incidents at the Winnipeg NML facility have had on Canada’s and the laboratory’s reputation, Ms. Jeffrey shared her view that

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92 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2000 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS). The Chinese Communist Party’s United Front Work Department is the agency responsible for coordinating the PRC’s influence operations both in the PRC and abroad. See U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, [China’s Overseas United Front Work: Background and Implications for the United States](#), 24 August 2018.

93 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2025 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

94 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1915 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1405 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

95 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1845 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health).

96 *Ibid.*, [1915](#).

97 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1350 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1935 (Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1320 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

98 CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1935 (Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs).

99 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1320 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).



the science at the Winnipeg NML facility remains well respected, and pointed out that U.S. counterparts continue to accredit it to the highest biosafety and biosecurity standards.<sup>100</sup> She reported that since the incidents, security protocols have been strengthened.<sup>101</sup>

In pointing out the balance of strengthening research security while avoiding the use of onerous security requirements that discourage collaboration, Ms. Drouin stated that “[e]ngagement between research organizations and security is critical for raising awareness and building resilience.”<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Mr. Vigneault stated that the “complexity of the world’s national security and of the world of international collaboration of science sometimes will clash with each other.”<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, a sophisticated approach will be required to determine the national security needs, or collaborative requirements, depending on the issue.<sup>104</sup>

#### **Recommendation 5**

**That the Government of Canada, in cooperation with the provinces and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, make the scientific community aware of the risks of interference related to international cooperation.**

#### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada update the country’s national security policy, which has not been updated since 2004, to better reflect the threats we face from hostile state actors like the People’s Republic of China.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada immediately end government research collaboration with entities and individuals in the People’s Republic of China in Canada’s *Sensitive Technology Research Areas*, such as: advanced digital infrastructure technology; advanced energy technology; advanced materials and manufacturing; advanced sensing and surveillance; advanced weapons, aerospace, space and satellite technology; artificial**

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100 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1350 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

101 [Ibid.](#)

102 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1920 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

103 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2020 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

104 [Ibid.](#)



**intelligence and big data technology; human-machine integration; life science technology; quantum science and technology; and robotics and autonomous systems.**

## **THE NEXUS BETWEEN SECURITY AND SCIENCE**

There is a nexus between science and security, as demonstrated by the challenges linked to the necessity of international collaboration within the scientific field. During the Special Committee’s study, several witnesses commented on the interactions between science and security, particularly with regard to security enhancements at the Winnipeg NML facility and the communication of national security risk within and outside government.

### **Security Enhancements at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg**

Several witnesses said that the events that ultimately led to the dismissal of Dr. Qiu and Mr. Cheng raised awareness of the need to strengthen security at the Winnipeg NML facility and, as a result, reported on the lessons that had been learned.<sup>105</sup> In this regard, Ms. Jeffrey identified a number of areas where security enhancements were made at the laboratory:

- a) Physical security – Ms. Jeffrey said that the NML “tightened physical security screening measures[;] installed a modernized access control system[;] enhanced radio surveillance and monitoring [and has] strict protocols for delivery and shipping.”<sup>106</sup>
- b) Cybersecurity – She said, “We have improved our IMIT [information management and information technology] to guard against cyber-risks.

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105 CACN, *Evidence*, 8 April 2024, 2025 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, *Evidence*, 15 April 2024, 1935 (Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); CACN, *Evidence*, 19 April 2024, 1440 and 1450 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); and CACN, *Evidence*, 29 April 2024, 1925 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

106 CACN, *Evidence*, 19 April 2024, 1320 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC). For example, in its written answer to the Special Committee, PHAC stated that “Prior to July 2022, employees with Secret Security Clearances with approved access to the CSCAH could sign-in Restricted Visitors. Governance now requires approval by senior lab management and the security directorate of the Corporate Services Branch.” PHAC written answer to a question from Michael Cooper, MP. See, CACN, *Evidence*, 19 April 2024, 1430 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).



We have comprehensive threat risk assessments, new procedures for information and travel, and completed updates to key functions.”<sup>107</sup>

- c) Security clearances – Ms. Jeffrey said they have “a new policy on affiliations, a new updated approach to student hiring, and strict requirements and new structures for governance and approval, including a science security committee, enhanced incident response and monitoring protocols, compliance monitoring and requirements for declarations of conflicts of interest and affiliations.”<sup>108</sup> In this respect, Ms. Jeffrey noted that, to avoid these procedural changes having a negative impact on scientists of Chinese origin more generally, “[t]he processes that we have in place now to review research collaborations and affiliations are broad-based and not specific to particular individuals.”<sup>109</sup>
- d) Staff awareness, accountabilities and responsibilities – Ms. Jeffrey said that the NML has implemented “mandatory training to raise awareness and provide guidance on the security responsibilities and accountabilities of all staff and security personnel at all levels.” She added that the NML has “enhanced [its] onboarding and departure procedures” and has “clear and regular communication in writing and through town halls and other measures in terms of security and conflicts of interest, and regular updates to those processes.”<sup>110</sup>
- e) Monitoring international developments – Ms. Jeffrey told the Special Committee that PHAC has “significantly enhanced [its] policies because [it is] always looking for ways to detect and respond to such cases [like that of the two scientists] as early as possible, as well as to keep pace with evolving threats.”<sup>111</sup> She added that “[t]he protocols and procedures around the requirements for approving international collaboration agreements were subsequently reinforced.”<sup>112</sup> As an example, she said that the collaboration with the WIV in 2018 that resulted in the transfer of Ebola and Henipah in

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107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid., [1345](#). See also, CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1915 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health).

110 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1320 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).

111 Ibid., [1325](#).

112 Ibid., [1330](#).

March 2019, would now be subject to two additional layers of review before approval.<sup>113</sup>

According to Ms. Jeffrey, these security enhancements at the Winnipeg NML facility are “consistent with efforts across the Government of Canada to support innovation and research while also protecting national security.”<sup>114</sup> She gave the example of the [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships](#). Furthermore, in January 2024, the Government of Canada released the new [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern](#), which aims to further protect Canada’s research, its institutions and its intellectual property by adopting “an enhanced posture regarding Canada’s research security.” As part of this policy, the government published two lists: a list of [Sensitive Technology Research Areas](#) and a list of [Named Research Organizations](#). To date, the second list mainly comprises Chinese organizations, although the WIV is not included.<sup>115</sup>

A common element put forward by some witnesses was that efforts to strengthen security at the Winnipeg NML facility must by no means be static. Considering the changing and evolving nature of threats to national security, they said they were aware that efforts must be continued over the years.<sup>116</sup> Minister Holland said that it is “a process of continual improvement.”<sup>117</sup>

As an example of this process, Ms. Drouin told the Special Committee that she was tasked by the prime minister to conduct a review of the situation surrounding the events at the Winnipeg NML facility, which she had visited on 25 April 2024, and that she would be making recommendations to the prime minister.<sup>118</sup>

Mr. Fadden, while noting that “a lot of the protocols today are not unreasonable,” stated his belief that the problem lies in implementing the various security measures, given that

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113 Ibid., [1435](#).

114 Ibid., [1305](#). See also, CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1345 (Dr. Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister, Department of Health).

115 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2020 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

116 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1345 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1905 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1850 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health); CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2025 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1925 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

117 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1850 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health).

118 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1925 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).



“having a protocol or a policy is only as good as its operationalization. It’s only as good as its application.”<sup>119</sup> In this respect, one measure, in his opinion, that would make it possible to monitor the implementation of new policies or recommendations would be through a clear mandate entrusted to an individual – “an implementation champion” – to make sure measures are applied.<sup>120</sup>

### **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada add the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Thousand Talents Program of the People’s Republic of China and similar programs to the list of Named Research Organizations developed by Public Safety Canada.**

### **Recommendation 9**

**That the Government of Canada review security policies in departments that are outside national security organizations and are sensitive to foreign interference activities.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**That the Government of Canada, assign responsibility to a person within the Privy Council Office to work with a Public Health Agency of Canada’s departmental security officer to report annually to a parliamentary committee on the application of new security measures within the Public Health Agency of Canada.**

## **Communicating National Security Risks**

In its written answer to the Special Committee, CSIS stated that it “recognizes that national security is a whole-of-society issue that requires a whole-of-society response.”<sup>121</sup> In other words, the issue requires increased and effective communication between members of the national security community and Canadian society, whether within the federal public administration, the private sector or provincial and municipal levels of government.

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119 CACN, *Evidence*, 3 May 2024, 1320 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

120 Ibid., [1400](#).

121 CSIS written answer to a question from Mr. Yasir Naqvi, MP. See, CACN, *Evidence*, 8 April 2024, 2040 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

## Within Government

Under section 19 of the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act* (CSIS Act), under certain conditions, CSIS can disclose information obtained in the performance of its duties and functions, including with the federal public administration. Mr. Fadden said that, while CSIS has a practice for circulating information, shortcomings in the process mean that the information distributed to the various departments or agencies of the public service is not actually understood by those organizations, since CSIS has a “tendency to classify intelligence in such a way that it becomes difficult and complex to share it.”<sup>122</sup>

Mr. Fadden said that the root of this communications issue goes deeper than a silo effect within the government apparatus. In his opinion, the incident at the Winnipeg NML facility revealed a cultural issue already present elsewhere in the federal public administration, saying that “there is this broad issue of culture, and I don’t think the culture in this particular lab and in large parts of the public service had caught up with the change in facts as we understand China.”<sup>123</sup> In other words, he argued that, if there is not a strong sense in the public service that there is a significant issue, it’s very hard to change things, especially in departments that do not have a national-security-related mission.<sup>124</sup> In his opinion, this lack of concern, or at least understanding, of the risks, is present in many of these departments: “[i]n these non-national security core departments, it’s policy, operations or science that gets attention, not security.”<sup>125</sup> He added that this is especially true in the field of science and research in general.<sup>126</sup>

This gap in the understanding of risk between national security and science sectors at the federal level, particularly with regard to the threat to Canadian interests posed by actions of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the years, was illustrated in testimony before the Special Committee.

On the one hand, the Minister of Health said that “[c]ountries such as China are implicating themselves in our domestic processes in a way that would have been unimaginable just five years ago” and are “potentially willing, in this instance, to use pathogens that threaten humanity in order to advance their geopolitical agenda.”<sup>127</sup>

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122 CACN, *Evidence*, 3 May 2024, 1325 and 1330 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

123 Ibid., [1315](#).

124 Ibid., [1320](#).

125 Ibid., [1305](#).

126 Ibid.

127 CACN, *Evidence*, 8 April 2024, 1840 and 1850 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health).



Dr. Gilmour expressed a similar line of reasoning when discussing the transfer of viruses to WIV in 2019. He said that he had no concerns at the time about the PRC’s use of viruses as bacteriological weapons, but that he can “absolutely see how, in the light of 2024, there would be concerns over the transfer.”<sup>128</sup> He added, “[c]ertainly at the time, though, we were acting upon the information we had and acting under a different operational tempo where the concern ... was assurance on things like biosafety.”<sup>129</sup>

On the other hand, Mr. Vigneault, Minister LeBlanc and Mr. Fadden all said that CSIS was already aware of concerns about the PRC’s actions, since Xi Jinping’s rise to power in 2013 was, according to them, a determining factor in the institutionalization of espionage and other transnational interference techniques orchestrated by the CCP.<sup>130</sup> According to Mr. Vigneault, the disruptive nature of the PRC became all the more significant in 2016, when it refused to abide by the unanimous award issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration concerning the South China Sea, testifying to its disregard for international law.<sup>131</sup> According to Minister LeBlanc, it was a series of events that led to this awareness, including the case of the two Michaels at the end of 2018.<sup>132</sup>

Yet in 2024, before the Special Committee, witnesses from departments that did not have a national security mission said that they are fully aware of the risk posed by foreign interference techniques orchestrated by the CCP today, and recognize that the link between science and security had evolved.<sup>133</sup> While Mr. Fadden agreed that the risk is much greater today, he nonetheless felt that despite some progress in raising awareness in non-national security departments, it is not enough, because, unlike some of Canada’s

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128 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2055 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).

129 Ibid., [2100](#).

130 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2000 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1940 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1955 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); and CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 2000 (Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1350 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

131 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2000 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1940 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2015 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

132 CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 2000 (Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs).

133 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 1850 (Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health); CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1455 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC); CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1420 (Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, NML, PHAC).

close allies who consider the PRC a strategic adversary, Canada has yet to clearly state that the PRC is a “serious adversary.”<sup>134</sup>

In his opinion, this cultural change with regard to security within Canada’s scientific sector “still needs to be pursued.”<sup>135</sup> He believes it is CSIS’s duty to pass on information about threats in the international environment, especially those related to the PRC, in a “language that would enable the people at the Winnipeg lab to understand the importance of the situation, and this might have required that the security rules and the way they were enforced be changed.”<sup>136</sup>

The importance of providing clear information on potential security risks to members of the Canadian scientific community, as put forward by Mr. Fadden, was illustrated by Dr. Gilmour, who said,

[i]n terms of whether I was equipped [with the proper tools to be able to identify concerns and respond appropriately] or not, that’s a challenge to answer, but certainly, going back in time, yes, there absolutely should have been more briefing, more planning and more conversation among me, CSIS and the departmental security officer, yes.<sup>137</sup>

Following the events at the Winnipeg NML facility, Ms. Drouin told the Special Committee that “it helps other scientists to realize that these things are real and that they need to care about security.”<sup>138</sup> In the same vein, Mr. Vigneault said that CSIS will continue to work more closely with various federal organizations to increase the “connective tissue between national security and their business” with the specific aim of making these organizations more resilient and increasing their security culture.<sup>139</sup>

Lastly, although Ms. Jeffrey said that the “NML has always operated as a secured facility,”<sup>140</sup> the actual status of the Winnipeg NML facility, that is, as a health facility rather than a national security facility, was not discussed by PHAC representatives during their testimony. However, Mr. Fadden made a few comments on this subject:

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134 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1410 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

135 Ibid., [1335](#).

136 Ibid., [1325](#).

137 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2115 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).

138 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1940 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office).

139 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2020 and 2040 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

140 CACN, [Evidence](#), 19 April 2024, 1305 (Heather Jeffrey, President, PHAC).



I think some people would argue that it's a national security establishment and it should be treated as such, period. A whole bunch of other people would say it's a medical lab and everyone should get a grip: "Yes, we don't want to share with everybody in town, but it's not a national security establishment." I think the way the international environment has shifted, it has become a national security environment.<sup>141</sup>

### Recommendation 11

**That the Government of Canada, mindful that the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, and all future biosafety level 4 laboratories, are designed to promote research for the health, safety and security of all Canadians, consider the security-related requirements, obligations and implications of these facilities to be an integral part of the governmental national security machinery, and study how allied countries are categorizing their level 4 laboratories in terms of national security.**

### Recommendation 12

**That the Government of Canada study the possibility of creating a liaison position between the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Public Health Agency of Canada responsible for ensuring that scientists understand the classified information shared by CSIS.**

## Outside Government

This difficulty of sharing information with the federal public administration in a way that ensures that departments that do not work in national security understand the security risks in the international environment, is also reflected in scientific research outside government, notably in academia.

Several witnesses spoke of the need to establish in-depth dialogue and a channel for sharing information between CSIS, the private sector and other levels of government.<sup>142</sup> For example, Dr. Gilmour said that "the conversations between security and the specialized scientific institutes need to be very active and profound. This can't be

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141 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1320 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

142 CSIS written answer to a question from Mr. Yasir Naqvi, MP, CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2040 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2040 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1935 (Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2010 (Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council & National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Privy Council Office); CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1355 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).



something that’s just left as a background conversation.”<sup>143</sup> Mr. Fadden said that when he was director of CSIS, he was concerned about the limits of CSIS’s communication with the private sector, whether in academia or business.<sup>144</sup> He added that “[a]s I maintained at the time and I still maintain, it is possible to use a CSIS report, by removing the information that could compromise confidential sources, to give people a general impression of the concerns it may have.<sup>145</sup> In his opinion, generally speaking, Canada does not share enough information with the private sector.<sup>146</sup> He believes it is impossible to “have an effective national security environment in this country if we ignore the provinces, the private sector and civil society, because our adversaries are interested in all of them.”<sup>147</sup> Both Minister LeBlanc and Mr. Vigneault acknowledged this shortcoming, which stemmed at that time from a legislative limitation in the CSIS Act.<sup>148</sup>

For example, in light of the potential establishment of Canada’s first level 4 non-governmental laboratory at the University of Saskatchewan’s Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre,<sup>149</sup> the June 2024 amendments to the CSIS Act that allow CSIS to disclose classified information to persons and entities outside the federal public administration in certain circumstances, seem all the more timely. In this regard, Mr. Vigneault said that CSIS has already “had discussions, for a long time,

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143 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2100 (Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist, As an individual).

144 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1325 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., [1405](#).

147 Ibid., [1355](#).

148 At the time of testimony for the Special Committee study, the [Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act](#) (CSIS Act) contained a prohibition on the disclosure of information obtained by CSIS in the performance of its duties and functions to persons or entities other than those listed in section 19 of the Act, which basically amounts to a prohibition on the disclosure of classified information to persons outside the federal public administration. CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2000 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS); CACN, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1935 (Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs); CSIS written answer to a question from Mr. Yasir Naqvi, MP. See, CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2040 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS). Following the appearance of the Director of CSIS and the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs before the Special Committee, [Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign interference](#), was introduced by Minister LeBlanc on 6 May 2024 and received royal assent on 20 June 2024. Accordingly, the now [Countering Foreign Interference Act](#) contains legislative amendments to the CSIS Act, including the expansion of CSIS’s powers to disclose classified information under section 19 of the CSIS Act to persons and entities outside the federal public administration under the conditions set out in section 34 of the [Countering Foreign Interference Act](#).

149 Camille Cusset, “[L’Université de la Saskatchewan accueillera le 2e laboratoire de niveau 4 au Canada](#),” [Radio-Canada](#), 26 March 2024 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].



with the organization in question to enable the exchange of information and to raise awareness properly.”<sup>150</sup>

While sharing information could strengthen collaboration among the various sectors, Mr. Fadden pointed out that the problem of ensuring that shared information about international security risks is convincing to individuals not working in a national security field persists outside the federal public administration as well.<sup>151</sup> He argued, “We have to find a way—and I say “we” as a country—to share more information that’s concrete and real if the universities, civil society and the economy are going to play a part in promoting our national security.”<sup>152</sup> He said that he was not suggesting to change the role of scientists and the fundamentally collaborative nature of the field, but to get them to think in terms of security too and to convince them that there is a real risk, for example by providing them with information in a language that enables them to understand that risk.

## CONCLUSION

This report began by highlighting a number of key issues raised by witnesses regarding the events that took place between 2017 and 2021 at the Winnipeg NML facility, and PHAC’s management of the situation. It then highlighted the nexus between science and security, regarding the need to ensure the security of our research facilities in Canada, whether through enhanced physical and operational security or through dialogue between the players involved in both science and security, both inside and outside government.

The events at the Winnipeg NML facility revealed, as outlined in this report, the fundamentally open and collaborative nature of Canadian scientific research as a means of contributing to the common good, on the one hand, and, on the other, the need for a cultural shift within the scientific field in terms of its vigilance over national security risks and the need to reconsider how we collaborate with entities or states that may not share the same interests as Canada. For example, with regard to the PRC, Mr. Vigneault said that “[i]t is sometimes in our own national interest to collaborate with Chinese entities, but we need to do it with our eyes wide open and make sure that we protect our own base.”<sup>153</sup>

While international collaboration to advance scientific knowledge for the benefit of humanity is important, it does not supersede the need for the government to protect

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150 CACN, [Evidence](#), 8 April 2024, 2005 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

151 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1405 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).

152 Ibid., [1355](#).

153 CACN, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 2015 (David Vigneault, Director, CSIS).

the national security of Canada, and the safety and security of Canadians. We therefore need to strike a balance between the imperative of international collaboration to advance scientific knowledge for the benefit of all human beings, and the need for each state to protect its own national interests. For Canada, this means considering the establishment of a robust, comprehensive framework to ensure the implementation of the range of security measures suggested in the field of scientific research by the various witnesses in this study.<sup>154</sup>

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154 CACN, [Evidence](#), 3 May 2024, 1400 (Richard Fadden, As an individual).



## APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

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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
<b>Canadian Security Intelligence Service</b> Adam Fisher, Director General, Litigation and Disclosure Leonard Stern, Deputy Director General, Security Screening David Vigneault, Director	2024/04/08	36
<b>Department of Health</b> Hon. Mark Holland, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health Nadine Huggins, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Security Officer, Corporate Services Branch	2024/04/08	36
<b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b> Heather Jeffrey, President Dr. Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory	2024/04/08	36
<b>Canadian Security Intelligence Service</b> David Vigneault, Director	2024/04/15	37
<b>Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness</b> Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, National and Cyber Security Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs	2024/04/15	37

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Department of Health</b> Nadine Huggins, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Security Officer, Corporate Services Branch Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister	2024/04/19	38
<b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b> Heather Jeffrey, President Dr. Guillaume Poliquin, Vice-President, National Microbiology Laboratory Donald Sheppard, Vice-President, Infectious Diseases and Vaccination Programs Branch	2024/04/19	38
<b>As an individual</b> Matthew Gilmour, Research Scientist	2024/04/29	39
<b>Canadian Security Intelligence Service</b> David Vigneault, Director	2024/04/29	39
<b>Privy Council Office</b> Nathalie G. Drouin, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister	2024/04/29	39
<b>As an individual</b> Richard B. Fadden	2024/05/03	40

# 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. 35 to 41, 46 and 47](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Hardie  
Chair





### **Supplementary Opinion of the Liberal Party of Canada**

Complimentary to paragraph 3, we wish to add additional context to the process that resulted in the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The Government of Canada is responsible for ensuring that sensitive material is protected and that the proper mechanisms are in place to safeguard any personal and security-related information. To disclose these documents without proper safeguards could put sensitive information at risk of being released publicly. Redactions of personal or security information should continue to be made independently by public servants and should not be interfered with politically.

On June 4, 2021, the Minister of Health referred the matter to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians and PHAC sent the Committee the complete unredacted set of documents. As all members hold Top Secret security clearances and are able to receive classified briefings and materials, the proper safeguards were in place to study these documents.

The establishment and work of the Ad Hoc Committee, agreed to by all recognized political parties in the House of Commons, provided a compromise that recognized the essential role of the House of Commons to hold the government to account, while respecting the obligation of the government to keep certain information confidential that could be injurious to national security. We view this committee process as a success and a blueprint for how the study and disclosure of sensitive documents could occur in future.

