



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 024

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Chair: The Honourable Bardish Chagger



Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Thursday, June 2, 2022

• (1105)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 24 of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[English]

The committee is meeting today to continue its work on the operational security of the parliamentary precinct along Wellington and Sparks streets.

For the first half of the meeting, I would like to welcome the following witnesses. We have the Honourable Vernon Darryl White, senator, as well as former chief of police, Ottawa Police Service, Peter Sloly.

Welcome to committee. We will provide you each up to five minutes for your opening comments.

I will turn the floor over to you, Mr. Sloly.

Chief Peter Sloly (Former Chief of Police, Ottawa Service Police, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Good morning, everyone.

[English]

I appreciate the invitation from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to participate in this important study because of my continuing commitment to this city, as well as my mission to help build a more safe, just and inclusive society. In addition to my former role as the chief of the Ottawa Police Service, I bring to this committee over three decades of private and public sector experience in the areas of security, policing and justice, where I played lead roles in the planning and implementation of a variety of multijurisdictional and multi-agency operations. These include two tours of duty in the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Kosovo.

I have previously participated in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security regarding systemic racism in policing. I was a participant in the Prime Minister's listening circle regarding police reform, and I was the co-chair for Public Safety Canada's national expert committee on countering radicalization to violence.

The events relating to the “freedom convoy” represent a paradigm shift in the way that protests are organized, funded, executed and responded to in Canada. The presentations by police and national security leaders that have been made at this and other standing committees studying the aspects of the “freedom convoy” events consistently indicate that this was an unprecedented national security crisis for which our institutions were not fully prepared. Despite this, Canada's national security agencies, police services, public institutions, elected officials, civic leaders and regular Canadians worked together to successfully end this highly volatile national security crisis without any loss of life or serious injuries.

Unfortunately, this crisis also exposed long-standing structural issues that now need to be formally assessed and effectively addressed to improve public safety for all Canadians. These structural issues need to repair, rebuild, rethink and indeed reimagine aspects of how we manage these issues, the potential expansion of the parliamentary precinct boundaries being just one such example, which I turn to now.

The parliamentary precinct covers roughly two square kilometres and represents the most visible, accessible and politically critical public space in the country. The parliamentary precinct exists in the wider geographical, institutional and legislative context of the national capital region, which includes a significant amount of critical infrastructure across rural, suburban and urban communities in two provinces.

The parliamentary precinct is Canada's most highly securitized area, with six different police agencies involved in serving and protecting the elected officials, public officials, residents, businesses and visitors using the space daily. The six agencies are the Parliamentary Protective Service, the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Sûreté du Québec, the Gatineau police and the Ottawa Police Service, which is designated by law as the police of jurisdiction in the city of Ottawa. These six NCR police agencies work primarily through two formal bodies—Intersect and the national capital region command centre. These bodies enable joint intelligence sharing, joint training exercises, joint event planning, integrated incident command operations and after-action reviews among its activities.

With this larger context in mind, I draw the committee's attention to the following areas that, in my view, need to be carefully considered. First is crime prevention through environmental design. Consider changes to the parliamentary precinct's physical environment, including the boundaries, to improve security. These might include making boundary changes, closing roads to create a pedestrian mall and installing bollards and other barriers to limit vehicular access.

Second is budget and resources. Consider increasing resources to Intersect and the national capital region command centre to enable the six NCR police agencies to continually improve their capacity to counter the ever-evolving threat environment, including both physical and cyber-related security threats.

Third and last is the issue of police of jurisdiction. Consider potential changes to the jurisdictional and legislated mandates of the six NCR police agencies while keeping in mind that such changes will be very difficult to achieve and will not alleviate all of the core issues of multi-agency, multijurisdiction operations.

I encourage the committee in its important work, which will hopefully lead to other solutions needed to prevent and mitigate enabling threat factors that underpinned the national security crisis we experienced earlier this year. These factors include social media disinformation campaigns, societal polarization, ideological extremism and reduced public trust in our democratic institutions.

• (1110)

I end my remarks by recognizing everyone who was impacted by this national crisis, especially Ottawa residents and business owners. I thank the civilian and sworn members of the Ottawa Police Service and those of our policing partners who were professional, ethical and compassionate in their efforts to resolve the local events and the national crisis.

I also thank my wife, children, family, friends, former colleagues and community leaders, as well as the many Ottawans and Canadians who supported me during my tenure as chief of police of the Ottawa Police Service.

I welcome any questions from committee members.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you so much for those opening comments.

Senator White, I want to start by apologizing. I should have come to you first for opening comments. The floor is now yours.

Hon. Vernon White (Senator, Ontario, CSG): That's okay. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the committee for inviting me here today.

By way of introduction, I'm currently a senator representing the province of Ontario. I've previously worked as a police chief of the Ottawa Police Service and the Durham Regional Police Service and served with the RCMP for almost 25 years, leaving as an assistant commissioner. Of note, I have been the chair of the Senate Speaker's advisory committee on security since 2015.

Many people will speak to the importance of relationships between the various law enforcement and security jurisdictions, and obviously they are extremely important. In fact, it might be argued that with the national capital region sitting on the border of two provinces, as well as being the seat of the federal government, relationships and understanding jurisdictions are key to maintaining a law enforcement model for those who work, live and, in the case of some, play here. I've seen that others have spoken specifically to the challenges and, I would argue, the opportunities as well that come with that model and the structure that is currently in place in Ottawa.

I'll speak directly to one area of concern that I believe we should consider in determining any expansion of the parliamentary precinct. The area of concern that has been raised multiple times in other forums—and here I believe as well—relates directly to the concerns that exist where vehicle access is—or at least has been—permitted on Wellington Street and on the west side of Elgin Street, next to the War Memorial.

Since the growth of parliamentary precinct security following the shooting at the memorial and on the Hill in 2014, there was a concerted effort to increase the security of the precinct and of people who work in and visit the precinct. There were as well at that time discussions about the potential for a catastrophic event on Wellington Street and what a “post-blast” would look like should someone decide that was their goal.

In relation to the direct security of the Hill, there have been many changes, as we all see, and the parliamentary precinct security and the RCMP should be commended for their work over the past six years, but the concern of the actual security of Wellington Street has seen little or no change.

The stark reality is that a blast like that seen in Oklahoma City, where over 300 buildings were damaged or destroyed and 168 people were killed, could very well happen here if we maintain a lax sense of security on Wellington Street and continue to allow vehicle access directly in front of precinct buildings and, as important, the Langevin building.

Many will argue that this occurred in the U.S., and it did, but the planning that was being forwarded by groups such as the Toronto 18 in 2006 had very similar planning: using vehicles to move forward on a plot of bombing many places, including activity at the parliamentary precinct. As long as vehicles have direct access to this location, we are at risk of large vehicles being used to deliver explosives. As a result, we're at high risk of a catastrophic event occurring on Wellington Street.

When considering security, we should always look at the design basis threat. There have been many movements by the parliamentary precinct, obviously, to combat the design basis threat that we face; however, when we consider design basis threat, our goal is to either alleviate or eliminate and counter that threat. I would argue that the best effort to immediately lessen the threat of such an event on Wellington Street is to remove all vehicle access from Wellington Street and the section of Elgin that moves along the side of Langevin, allowing for a buffer zone to be pushed south at least to Sparks and maybe beyond. It would have an immediate impact and would reduce the gravity of that threat.

There are many other reasons to recommend an expansion of the parliamentary precinct, if for no other reason than to give control of the space we're discussing to those who have a direct responsibility for the safety and security of the precinct.

If you have any questions, I would look forward to them. I'm happy to respond.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Senator, for those opening comments.

We'll now proceed to six-minute rounds. We'll start with Mr. McCauley, who will be followed by Mr. Naqvi.

[*Translation*]

I will then give the floor to Ms. Gaudreau, who will be followed by Ms. Blaney.

[*English*]

Mr. McCauley, the floor is yours, through the chair.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Thanks, Madam Chair.

To our witnesses, thanks for joining us today.

I appreciate and thank you for your many years of service, Mr. Sloly. I had a cousin who served in peacekeeping there as well. Perhaps you ran into him.

I have a question for Mr. Sloly, please.

What support did the police service request from the federal government during the federal convoy protests? I'm aware of the request for the 1,800, but what other services or resources were requested?

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you very much, Mr. McCauley.

There were a number of wide-ranging conversations, at one point on a daily basis for almost a full week, if not more, with a wide variety of deputy ministers and, in some cases, ministers. We literally covered—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Could we have some specifics?

Chief Peter Sloly: Literally everything was on the table in those discussions. We talked about the need for significantly more staffing: police officers in particular, and officers with particular skills.

We talked about efforts around mediation—interlocutors that could be brought in to provide some level of discussion to reduce the volatility of the situation. There were discussions around the financing of the event, tow trucks.... Literally everything that we could think of to bring a safe and effective close to the events here in Ottawa and across the country was discussed.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What was provided of those items that you had asked for, the resources you asked for? What was actually provided to Ottawa police?

Chief Peter Sloly: Ultimately, the primary provision of resources were additional officers from provincial and federal agencies, who coordinated municipal contributions as well. That was the primary thing I was asking for, and it was the primary resource from the federal government. If you're referring specifically to the federal government, that was the primary resource that arrived during my tenure in office.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Through you, Madam Chair, did you or anyone in the OPS request the invocation of the Emergencies Act?

Chief Peter Sloly: I did not make that request. I'm not aware of anybody else in the Ottawa Police Service who did.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

You had gone public in requesting I think 1,800 officers or support people—I think it was on a Friday—and that was turned down. I think the quote was that the Prime Minister said you hadn't "exhausted" your tools and resources yet.

Had you exhausted your tools and resources when you made that request?

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I thank you for the question.

I'm not aware of any particular quotes attributed to any public official or elected official. I did ask for the 1,800 officers, including some civilians, as a request from my board. I presented that to my then board chair and the mayor, and they signed a document that was sent to provincial and federal governments requesting those resources specifically, along with other supports.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

Through the chair, what was the response from the provincial and federal levels?

Chief Peter Sloly: The immediate response verbally from both levels of government in the meetings that I was directly involved with was positive, and there were constructive efforts by both levels of government and other municipal agencies and their governments to provide those police officers and resources. It took time for them to arrive, so that was our biggest challenge.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Had the resources been provided as requested, would the Ottawa police have been able to clear the streets safely, as was done, but without the invocation of the act?

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I won't speak in conjectures, sir, but I think I understand the intent behind the question. The plan that was in place required at least 1,800 police officers. When those officers arrived, I had every confidence in the commanders and the tactical officers to put that plan to effect, for a safe and effective resolution. That is what happened.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It was the resources provided that allowed Ottawa police to clear the blockades, to clear the protesters safely, securely, and not the act itself.

Chief Peter Sloly: The scale of those resources and the other supports that were requested by us as an integrated operating command system and other levels of government all contributed, and I said that in my opening statement, Chair, through you: This was literally a whole-of-Canada effort to resolve a national security crisis.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Through the chair, was there a request from the Ottawa Police Service or the PPS to provide technical capacity for non-invasive checking, non-invasive review, for explosives detection in the trucks that had been parked?

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I made no such request. I won't speak for the Parliamentary Protective Service. There are others here in the room, I believe, who could do that. I'm not aware of any member of my service who made that request.

We did have a large, integrated intelligence operation process that was under way before the events transpired here in Ottawa and across the country. I can't say for certain whether or not such a discussion took place.

• (1120)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Were you aware if the PPS had requested...?

Chief Peter Sloly: I cannot speak for the PPS, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You were involved, obviously, with a lot of talks with the PPS and also with the RCMP. Were you aware if the RCMP provided such services or had done non-invasive checks—for lack of better words—for explosives?

Chief Peter Sloly: Again, thank you, sir.

Chair, through you, I am not aware of any such request or any such acts.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Through the chair, did this issue come up at all in your high-level discussions and the coordination with RCMP and PPS?

Chief Peter Sloly: Chair, through you, there were a number of discussions around the overall intelligence capabilities from the national security levels down to municipal police agencies like mine that had events taking place within their jurisdictions. Other than in high-level discussions around the past, current and future capabilities of intelligence to resolve the circumstances, I never participated in any meeting or discussions in which those specific items were raised.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: My time is up. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We will now move to Mr. Naqvi for up to six minutes.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will be asking questions through you, and I want to thank both our witnesses for their public service and for being here today.

Mr. Sloly, I will start with you, through the chair, if I may. Can you speak to the kind of occupation that you saw take place as a result of the protest you spoke about, how the nature of protest has changed and perhaps the level of lawlessness that you and the Ottawa Police Service were experiencing during this protest?

Chief Peter Sloly: Chair, thank you. Through you to Mr. Naqvi, I appreciate the question.

It's been probably the most overused but accurate word. It was unprecedented. It was unforeseen. That doesn't necessarily mean it couldn't have been predicted, but the totality of the intelligence, the totality of the experience within the Canadian policing and national security agencies had never seen and dealt with a demonstration, an occupation or illegal actions of the nature in and around the events of the "freedom convoy".

I can tell you from my personal experience in over 30 years in policing that I had never experienced that, and I have been involved in major planned and unplanned incidents in this country, across this country and internationally. The level of organization, counter-intelligence, logistics, planning, financial resources and commit-

ment—individual and collective—were on a scale that I had not experienced. As I said in my opening comments through you, Chair, institutionally and nationally, we were unprepared for it. Locally, we were unprepared for it.

That said, we pulled together locally through the leadership of people like you. We pulled together nationally and were able to successfully resolve a national security crisis without loss of life or serious injury. There's a lot to learn from it, but there's a lot to give credit for to every Canadian who was directly impacted and involved in the resolution.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Absolutely. Through you, Chair, I recognize and I'm thinking of the timeline for the invocation of the Emergencies Act and how it might have been just around the time that you stepped down as the chief of the Ottawa Police.

I'm sure you've looked at the very targeted powers that were provided for under the Emergencies Act. Given the experience of those of you who were involved in the operation, do you feel that those were appropriate and targeted powers that were required to bring an end to the occupation that was taking place in Ottawa?

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you. Chair, through you, to Mr. Naqvi, there is no doubt in my mind that efforts needed to come from across the policing, justice and national security organizations in this country and well beyond those. I expressed that numerous times and I will continue to say that this was a whole-of-society effort to address a national security crisis.

The various invocations of emergencies at all three levels of government in relation to these events had, in some material way, benefits. Primarily, as the head of the police of jurisdiction and the chief of police in Ottawa, my number one need was police resources—police officers with specific skill sets on a scale that had never been gathered before nationally to address this. I also needed all the other efforts of private citizens, BIAs, the not-for-profit sector and the three levels of government, including the invocation of the various emergencies and the private injunction. They all contributed in some way to the success of resolving that national security crisis.

• (1125)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you.

To Senator White, through you, Chair, you've spoken before and today about security and Wellington Street. One of the key aspects this committee is looking at is expanding the parliamentary precinct, which in my view goes hand in hand with keeping Wellington Street closed and making it more pedestrian.

Do you think that's the right direction we need to move in to ensure that the entire parliamentary precinct is secure, not only for people who work here but also for the residents and small businesses in and around the parliamentary precinct?

Hon. Vernon White: Through you, Madam Chair, I thank the member for the question.

Absolutely. I think that's the way we can reduce the risk, in particular in front of the parliamentary precinct. I want to include in that the Langevin building. Although it is not part of the parliamentary precinct, it is the Office of the Prime Minister. It's a high-risk location. I think the fact that we've continued to allow large vehicles to travel that route has been a problem for us. In fact, in 2014, I spoke with city council members as well as city administration about the fact that I felt we should close it off after the shooting on the Hill. Their concern was around the bus service. They did say that they would consider that once the LRT was in place, and it is now in place.

I certainly think it would alleviate some of that threat. As long as we don't do that, we have a continued risk in that location.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Very quickly, through you, Madam Chair, to Mr. Sloly, do you concur with Senator White's assessment?

Chief Peter Sloly: I do. I mentioned in my comments that there should be consideration of what I call crime prevention through environmental design. That includes boundary changes, bollards and barriers. While I specifically referenced vehicles, I think in general there just needs to be control of the movement of people and things through the parliamentary precinct, given the security required for such an important area for Canadians.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, both.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the witnesses very much for being here.

I'm going to speak slowly, and I hope I'm not going to be limited by time. I have a lot of questions to ask. I have written them down and I will also use the documents I have in hand.

In previous meetings, witnesses have told us that there was a command post from the first week the convoy set up.

I am addressing Mr. Sloly, Madam Chair.

On what date were you informed that a large convoy was coming to Wellington Street?

[*English*]

Chief Peter Sloly: Madam Chair, my microphone wasn't working. I missed almost all of the opening context and most of the question.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: On what date were you informed that a convoy was coming to Wellington Street?

[*English*]

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I think I understand most of the question.

I don't have the exact date. It was the week of February 13 when I think the formal announcement came out of British Columbia about a convoy that would be travelling. Probably within 24 to 72 hours of that I would have received some sort of a briefing note.

At that time, we were actually dealing with the horrific death of multiple people in an explosion here in Ottawa. That was my primary concern at that point. I started to receive material intelligence briefings from federal and provincial bodies during that week in the buildup to the arrival on the weekend of the 26th, 27th and 28th, but at no point were we given a full understanding of the totality of the threats and the volatility that we would be experiencing over the subsequent weeks.

Through you, Madam Chair, I hope that answers the question, although I'm not sure I got the translation correctly.

The Chair: Perhaps I can pause the time here.

Mr. Sloly, you mentioned February 13. Did you mean January 13?

Chief Peter Sloly: You're correct, Madam Chair. It was January 13.

Again, in terms of the context, I came prepared to talk about this committee's mandate. I have not received the information that I would need to review all of the dates and times in order to be precise, so it's with that caveat.

• (1130)

The Chair: I actually appreciate that caveat, because we are here in regard to the parliamentary precinct. There are questions that kind of relate into that world. Therefore, sometimes it's not a clear line. As you are comfortable, please do answer the questions that are being posed of you and we'll make it work.

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: I will resume the time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

In fact, we are here to think about the safety of parliamentarians.

Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to find out who was first to respond to the request. Was it the Parliamentary Protective Service, which has the legitimacy to respond on Wellington Street, or was it the Ottawa Police Service? I'm trying to figure that out.

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you very much.

[English]

Through you, Chair, the police of jurisdiction in any Ontario location under the Police Services Act is the primary service with the responsibility for providing policing in all of its forms for that jurisdiction. In every case of protests, planned and unplanned events and natural disasters in Ottawa that require police response, the Ottawa Police Service is the primary police agency of jurisdiction to lead the response. They are inevitably supported by a wide range and in this case the full extent of policing and national security agencies for an event as large and as complex as this one, from CSIS to RCMP to, yes, the Parliamentary Protective Service.

I did say in my opening comments, and I will repeat in answer to your excellent question, that there are six primary police agencies. They are supported and coordinated by and collaborate through two primary entities for intelligence sharing, planning and operations.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: We talked earlier about January 13. You talked about the whole preventive aspect, which is important to you, and the possible request for 1,800 agents. I wonder how it is that nothing happened. Nothing was done beforehand. But you mentioned that this was a unique situation, in terms of security, both for parliamentarians and civilians.

I for one am somewhat concerned. There were many lessons to be learned from the events of 2014. Our witnesses have told us about it. How can I be reassured, when on January 13 we knew about it and a command post bringing together the six services was only established after the truckers were installed and the occupation had begun?

What happened? Were you pressured or ordered not to act beforehand?

[English]

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I thank the member for her question. I suspect that this may be one of those where I need to defer to Justice Rouleau's federal inquiry for that level of detail.

I can only say, in answer to your important question, what I said in my opening statements. This was a paradigm shift in terms of demonstrations and national security events. It had not been experienced by me before. I'm not aware of anybody else who's a serving police chief or national security commander who has experienced it. There was no opportunity for us to have a perfect response to the perfect storm that visited this city and other jurisdictions across this country.

What we did as a policing community and as a national security community was rally quickly around the reality that this was a different beast. We shared intelligence information. We collaborated and coordinated on a continuous basis until we had the right resources and the right combination of larger institutional supports to achieve a remarkable level of success, with no loss of life and no serious injuries.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Can I ask one last question, Madam Chair?

What can I tell my fellow citizens about the fact that a command post was only established after a week? What is going to be done to reassure us and to prevent the next breach, the next one-off event? Action was not taken when it should have been. We know that in other places barricades were erected to prevent the movement of these trucks, which were taking up a lot of space.

Madam Chair, I would like Mr. Sloly to reassure me.

● (1135)

[English]

Chief Peter Sloly: Chair, through you, I thank the member for her excellent question.

I actually think you answered the question excellently yourself. Lessons learned shared quickly amongst a broader community, in this case the policing community, allowed other jurisdictions to understand the full nature of the risk and the threat that had arrived in Ottawa prior to its arriving in those other jurisdictions.

I also want to include Coutts, Alberta, because that was happening almost simultaneously as the convoy and the events around it came to Ottawa. There were two jurisdictions, the RCMP in Coutts, Alberta, and the Ottawa police here in the nation's capital, that within hours were able to start to share information with other police agencies—Winnipeg, Windsor, Edmonton, Toronto, Quebec City. They had the time and the intelligence understanding of the threat coming to do things differently and ultimately more successfully.

The answer to your constituents is exactly that: We will never be prepared perfectly for these unique crises. What we must do is try to be as prepared as well as we can be, and then respond as quickly and as effectively after the storm breaks.

[Translation]

The Chair: Very well. We've used up some time from your second round of questions, Ms. Gaudreau.

Ms. Blaney, you have the floor for six minutes.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, I thank the witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Sloly, you have said repeatedly in your testimony today that you were unprepared and that this was something beyond anything you could have imagined or other sectors could have imagined. My curiosity, especially as we're talking about expanding the precinct, is around why there were not any indicators or plans or thoughts about blocking any part of it before they arrived. Perhaps you could clarify that thought process.

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I thank the member for her question.

Just to clarify, there was a range of discussions and a range of elements in every plan. There were multiple versions of the plan as we learned and went through the process with various agencies—around the blocking of routes, around jurisdictions, around city cores and around critical infrastructure, including border crossings. To be clear, all of that was part of the initial plan and every other plan that I was privy to, all the way through.

We did not have, I think in answer to your real question, an intelligence threat assessment that said what arrived was going to be arriving on the scale that it arrived, one that would require a full blockade of any portion of this city, including the downtown core, what we called the “red zone”.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Through the chair, there wasn't the appropriate intelligence. I hear what you're saying there, but is part of the challenge the multijurisdictional area? Listening to other testimony from other jurisdictions, this is a very unique overlap area. It felt like there was a lot of miscommunication. There are articles out there that are talking about the breakdown of communications that have been tracked through emails between different departments. Without that intelligence, was there...?

I guess what I'm asking is this: What would be different if the precinct were expanded? Would it clarify some of those things? Would it allow for responsiveness to be different or more unique, or is it just “now we know better and we're going to do better”?

Chief Peter Sloly: Through you, Chair, I think that is the ultimate purpose of the study this committee is undertaking. As I said in my principal presentation, this is an area that should be looked at, reconsidering the legislative and jurisdictional mandates of particularly those six police agencies. I suggest that it will be very difficult to change substantially. I'm certain that it will not alleviate all of the problems of communication, coordination and collaboration that happen, particularly in critical events like the one we are talking about.

I have also suggested that there needs to be more resources to the central bodies that allow those six agencies in their current state, with their current legislative mandates, to be improved. Financial resources and human resources to intersect and the national capital region command centre will help to prevent and mitigate some of what took place in the events we've referred to over the course of today.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Through you, Madam Chair, I'm wondering if Senator White has anything to add.

Hon. Vernon White: If I may, Madam Chair, I think Chief Sloly has identified the issues.

Look, we're supposed to learn from these experiences. There are no two the same. Ottawa would have 250 protests and demonstrations a year, and not once did we see anything that came close to what we saw in Ottawa with the convoy. I don't think anybody could have accurately identified what was coming until it arrived.

I think we've heard witnesses in the Emergencies Act hearings, particularly from the RCMP, about the gathering of intelligence. I think they would probably identify that the amount of intelligence they had gathered was insufficient to actually tell other police agencies what was coming as well. I think there is a learning opportunity

here. I think it's the reason other places handled it better. New Brunswick knew what was coming. They were able to deal with that situation, as were Quebec City and Toronto. I think the learning opportunity is something that shouldn't be lost here.

The reality, though, is that none of that changes the fact that, if we want to be better prepared, it means having a better structure of security for our parliamentary precinct. That may mean changing what parliamentary precinct security looks like in the future. They're still not a police agency. Regardless of the numbers or how much money we spend or how many tools we give them, they still don't have what I would argue are some of the assets they need to do their job sufficiently.

• (1140)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Through you, Madam Chair, I'll go back to Mr. Sloly again.

When we look at this context of where we're at and what we've learned, what powers did your officers require that didn't already exist in order to deal with the occupation?

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair. Through you, again, I'll repeat from my principal presentation and other answers.

For me, the number one thing as chief of Police in Ottawa was resources. On the order of magnitude, the Ottawa police has roughly 1,200 officers. At any given time, 10% to 15%, potentially 20% of them, are not available for duty. They're required to provide 24-7, 365 policing to the largest geographical municipality in Canada, the second-largest in North America.

When something that big came to town, as we've been talking about, I threw every single officer that I could at it, while still trying to serve and protect the one million people who call Ottawa home. Ultimately, it took 2,000 additional officers from across the country, with specific skills—almost double the size of my regular staffing availability—to bring the events here in Ottawa to a conclusion. That is the order of magnitude.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Through you, Madam Chair, I've also read that there was an increased amount of absenteeism in the Ottawa police during that time. I'm just wondering if you could speak to that and to whether there was any related cause to that increase of absenteeism. Did that actually have an impact on the capacity of the force to do the work that it needed to?

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair. Through you, I'm not aware of any particular increase in absenteeism. Like every sector of society, we were dealing with the ongoing fallout of the global pandemic. I think the Ottawa Police Service actually did a remarkable job in keeping their members healthy and well during that extended period.

We, like every police service, were extremely worn out from years of resource struggles against exponentially increasing threats, and most of my officers worked, in some cases 18 to 25 days in a row during that particular event, in the coldest snap this city has seen for the majority of it. Sometimes it was as cold as -35°C degrees during the daytime. I have every respect for, and offer thanks to, the members of my service and every other police service that came here and acted professionally, compassionately and ethically.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now move to Mr. Vis for up to five minutes, followed by Mrs. Romanado for up to five minutes, and then we'll probably get a minute from Madame Gaudreau, followed by a couple from Ms. Blaney.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll move very quickly with my questions to the witnesses today, just out of time constraints.

Through you, Madam Chair, following up on my colleague's commentary, in questioning, Mr. Sloly, you mentioned "resources" numerous times and said that resources were a big issue. Through you Madam Chair, I believe you used to work in Toronto. Is that correct?

Chief Peter Sloly: That's correct.

Mr. Brad Vis: Were you present during—I believe it was—the G7 or G20 protests?

Chief Peter Sloly: Toronto hosted the G20 in 2010, yes.

Mr. Brad Vis: Were there more than 1,800 to 2,000 police officers present in Toronto during those protests?

Chief Peter Sloly: I don't have the exact numbers, but they were, on scale, over the course of that period, between Muskoka-Huntsville...probably 10,000 assets in and around that area.

Mr. Brad Vis: You say 10,000 assets, so it wasn't the existing laws in Canada that were preventing you from dealing with the situation. It was the use of resources that you were requesting from other levels of government that prevented you from doing the job you wanted to do at that time.

• (1145)

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair.

Through you, just to clarify again, and I said it earlier on in a response, my priority as the chief of the police of jurisdiction here, facing the brunt of that national security crisis, was resources.

Mr. Brad Vis: Yes, thank you.

Chief Peter Sloly: It was 1,800 that became 2,000, but we needed supports well beyond that, resources that included accessing heavy tow trucks for the removal of large vehicles and other aspects

that eventually came into the mix that allowed for the successful resolution.

Mr. Brad Vis: Okay. Those are resources that I might consider were probably available when the G20 protest happened in Toronto.

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair. Through you, while I appreciate the attempt to draw a nexus between the scale and complexity of the G20 and other G7 and G20 events that have taken place in Canada, I do not think it is a comparison worthy of the discussions we need to have in order to really prepare for these types of events going forward. I would suggest that January 6 in the United States, Washington, D.C., would be a closer aspect.

Mr. Brad Vis: I appreciate those comments.

Councillor McKenney wrote a letter on February 3 requesting "that the federal government and the RCMP assume full operational control of Parliament Hill and the Parliamentary Precinct so that Ottawa Police Services can be deployed into the local neighbourhoods to restore peace and enforce our laws, something that is simply not happening at this time."

Was that an accurate statement put forward by the councillor?

Chief Peter Sloly: I appreciate what you've just read.

Madam Chair, through you, I'm not aware of the statement, so I can't validate its accuracy.

What I will say.... It comes back to your previous point, so thank you for the question. What I will say is that we did not have enough resources to deal with the portions of the events taking place here in the police jurisdiction that I was responsible for and to provide proper, adequate and effective police services to the city of Ottawa.

I was asked that question explicitly by the former board chair, and I answered it in the same way: I do not have the resources, the capability, to provide adequate and effective policing in the context of an event of the scale we're dealing with and our regular policing requirements.

Mr. Brad Vis: That's very helpful. Thank you.

The Canadian Police Association was in Ottawa a few weeks ago. They're proposing right now—it was one of their key asks—that:

...the federal government organize a national summit that brings together key stakeholders, including representatives of police executives, front-line police representatives, municipal and provincial officials responsible for public safety, and community-based organizations with experience in organizing public events, to establish a clear framework to coordinate the response to protests and demonstrations.

Given the comments already heard, Madam Chair, would the witnesses believe that is a prudent step to take, possibly with legislation that would include some type of framework to help coordinate a future unprecedented protest on the scale we saw?

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chief Peter Sloly: I'll defer to my colleague Vernon for his comment.

Hon. Vernon White: Look, I don't disagree that we need to have greater dialogue about how we're going to handle these events, because I think this is the beginning, not the end. I think we'll have future events that we're unprepared for, and I think we had better try to improve on that.

I think the RCMP needs to take a stronger role nationally in dealing with what I would argue—and as the chief has said—is a national security event. They're responsible for national security law enforcement in this country and I think they need to take a greater role.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That was very helpful, Senator White.

I have one more quick question.

Through you, Madam Chair, Mr. Sloly mentioned “environmental design”. Would removing cars from Wellington and maybe putting in a tramway be a good way to deal with some of the security issues you mentioned, through environmental design versus the jurisdictional challenges that were outlined in the opening remarks?

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair. Through you, it's an excellent framing of the challenge that this committee has taken on.

First of all, I would say to be as open as you can to considering all the environmental changes that are available to you. I suspect that list will quickly narrow to a few.

It has been my experience in two jurisdictions within this province that, in crime prevention through environmental design, physical change is the low-hanging fruit that often has the biggest return on investment. I've already stated several times: Legislative or jurisdictional change is the high-level fruit that is really hard to get. It's very timely and consuming and may not ultimately address the primary core issues that have been raised to me so far today.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Mrs. Romanado for up to five minutes.

• (1150)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Through you, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here today and for your service and your expertise. It's very helpful.

I don't want to repeat what my colleagues have said, but one area that has concerned me is the fact that Wellington is open to vehicular traffic. You've both alluded to that.

When we look back almost 30 years to the Oklahoma City bombing, Pennsylvania Avenue has been closed in front of the White House to vehicular traffic. When I look online, I can find the Canada Day vehicle closures for all of Ottawa from 2019, and there was no possibility of a vehicle getting close to Parliament Hill, let alone parked, whether it be a truck or not.

Senator White, you mentioned that we didn't know what was in those trucks. The Prime Minister's itinerary is very public. A truck parked on the corner of O'Connor and Wellington with explosives in it on a Wednesday at 2:30 would technically wipe out West Block, including all parliamentarians, so the question of whether or not Wellington should remain open to vehicular traffic is in my view not even a question.

How would transferring the jurisdiction of Wellington to the Parliamentary Protective Service—understanding the unique nature of protecting the Senate building and all of the parliamentary buildings, including West Block—help to alleviate and prevent this from happening again? Could you elaborate? Thank you.

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you, Chair. That is an excellent question. I hope I answer it, but I will frame it a little bit differently.

A boundary change is a boundary change. I think that's probably the least challenging aspect of what you're trying to study. Changing the jurisdiction is the problematic piece. It's not impossible, but it's the challenging piece of what you're trying to tackle. No matter what you do to change a jurisdiction, you first have to find a legislative ability to do so. You're going to have to address the Attorney General and the Solicitor General of Ontario to remove the Ottawa Police Service lawfully out of the Police Services Act. You have a former AG sitting next to you, and he would understand the complexity of this.

Assuming that you could get through that barrier, you would then have to convince whatever the legislative authorities are that created the Parliamentary Protective Service to allow them to become the full policing authority of jurisdiction. That means everything from responding to mental health and addictions calls, to sexual assaults and gang-related activities. It would require a level of scale of resources well beyond what even Senator White referred to earlier on as the necessities now for the current mandate. Then you'd have to start to trade off resources, because the police service of jurisdiction, the Ottawa police, currently has that within its resourcing capability—I would suggest, under-resourced.

That's where the real complexity comes in—around jurisdictional or mandate changes. Move the boundaries as far as you want—shrink them, expand them—the jurisdictional and legislative mandates are where the real trick in the tale is.

Again, at the end of that, no matter where you would redraw those boundaries to, you're still going to have multijurisdictional, multi-agency challenges in large-scale crises like the ones we saw. You could redraw that boundary up to the 417. You're still going to have, on the day, challenges with communication, coordination, collaboration, levels of preparedness and intelligence gathering, and none of those issues go away.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Thank you.

I'll cede the rest of my time to my colleague Mr. Ferguson.

Thank you.

Hon. Greg Ferguson (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to my colleague.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming forward.

I have two very quick questions.

Senator White, for a long time you have been calling for changes to the boundary for the security reasons that you outlined in your discussion. I've followed your work very closely on this, and it would seem to me that every time there has been a crisis on Parliament Hill over the years—and I've been around here for over 34 years—we always move in incremental pieces.

Is the vision that you outline—and, frankly, the matter that is largely being mooted around this committee table—large enough to think further ahead for the things that we can't imagine, that we can't predict?

Hon. Vernon White: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and, through you, thanks for the question.

Post-2014, there were a number of us who were meeting when the discussion was on the development of legislation regarding parliamentary precinct security. At that time, we looked at a number of models, including the Capitol Hill police service in Washington, D.C., as being a potential model. A number of those were brought forward to the government of the day and not adopted. Instead, they adopted the expansion of the PPS, which we see today.

A number of other areas—and my friend talked about crime prevention through environmental design—were things like one access point for walking traffic to Parliament Hill. Today, you can walk in next to the canal and come up in behind the West Block and nobody even knows you're there unless the camera happens to pick you up, and it certainly doesn't know what you're carrying in a backpack.

Those things were recommended and never adopted, because within 72 hours of that shooting, people wanted to get back to the way things were: making Parliament Hill accessible to everybody. They misunderstand the difference between “accessibility” and “security”. You can be hard on the outside and soft on the inside, like an egg. From a security perspective, that's really what they should be looking at.

There is a whole group of other things beyond Wellington Street that I think need to be implemented—or at least considered—and have not been implemented and that I don't believe were given sufficient consideration.

• (1155)

Hon. Greg Ferguson: Madam Chair, I heard the buzzer go off, but is there an opportunity to seek a comment from Mr. Sloly?

The Chair: Yes, briefly.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: It's the same question.

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you.

I won't repeat and will try to build on the excellent response you gave, sir.

Chair, through you, there is a hyper-focus for a very legitimate reason on the large-scale event that just took place and the trucks in particular. The day-to-day threats to this environment are edged weapons, small arms, objects that can be weaponized by individuals if they choose and by individuals who unfortunately, increasingly, are suffering from a range of emotional, psychological and health-related issues that predominantly are things that victimize areas like this with regularity across the world.

I would echo the point that we really need to think about hardening and reducing access, while still allowing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for protests and gathering, etc.

Incrementalism in policing in general I have fought against for the majority of my career. We have an exponentially changed society. We have an exponentially changing threat environment. We have only really talked about the physical here today, and I referenced in my presentation cyber, which could create far more mayhem than what we're talking about, even with an IED packed into the back of a truck.

I really believe that this is an opportunity to potentially go well beyond the original thinking and get into the realm of exponential and resist getting into the realm of incremental.

The Chair: Thank you so much for that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you may take the floor to ask a question.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm really shocked and worried. When my children ask me about prevention, I won't know what to tell them. To tell you the truth, I realize that the specialists we turn to for the inside story will always tell us something new.

So how will we be prepared for such events? I'm worried. I tell you, that's my big observation.

That said, we are still establishing new ways of doing things so that there is, in advance, a lead or a commanding officer.

I have a very simple question for you.

We knew in advance that trucks, possibly with explosives, would stop and not move. How is it that the Ottawa police, who had a duty to enforce regulations, took so long to set up a command post or do anything? They had means at their disposal, like issuing tickets or towing trucks.

What happened that we couldn't do something?

[English]

Chief Peter Sloly: Thank you very much. Madam Chair.

Through you, I appreciate a desire to share a greater sense of security with your family, with your constituents and with Canadians more broadly.

I can assure you, though, that the characterizations you just laid out are not accurate. I am not aware of any intelligence that suggested there were munitions and IEDs attached to any of the vehicles coming. I'm not aware of any of that being the case for any of the vehicles that were here. However, I was not a part of the final days of the events.

There was a command post—

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Chair, I really want Mr. Sloly to answer the question.

Why? There were tickets to be given out and it wasn't done.

My question is only about that.

[English]

Chief Peter Sloly: Chair, through you, this is unfortunately inaccurate information. I think those details will be provided through the important study of Justice Rouleau. I will agree to participate, however I'm called, to that inquiry or other standing committees.

Unfortunately, these are not adequately informed positions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Blaney.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Through you, if I could ask Mr. Sloly... One of the things he spoke about in his presentation was misinformation and the challenges with regard to that. I noticed that, eventually, the Ontario police Twitter account started to address misinformation directly. I'm wondering if that had any impact.

Reflecting on what has happened, how is dealing with misinformation important? What things could we do better in the future?

• (1200)

Chief Peter Sloly: Madam Chair, through you, that's an excellent question, and it's one that I hope this committee will really put its mind to. There are the physical threats and cyber-threats. I believe, in the long term, the greater threat to security and safety in our democracy and within the parliamentary precinct will be around the level of trust that people have in our institutions and in the information that might come from a source like the Ottawa Police Service, the RCMP or the Parliamentary Protective Service.

Right now, from the feedback that I have had from the military, national security and police agencies, our inability to have a single source of truth and to have timely information that is consumed, believed and trusted, and, therefore, acted upon is one of the greatest local and national security threats that we're facing.

Whatever efforts this committee and any other committee working on this can make around disinformation campaigns, particularly those that are started and furthered on social media and other digital platforms, will be critically important to the safety of Canadians.

The Chair: On behalf of committee members, I want to thank Senator White and Mr. Sloly for their time here today. I will also say that sometimes additional thoughts come to mind or you might want to expand on the information you've shared. We would welcome that information for members through the clerk. Please do not hesitate.

I hope you and your loved ones keep well and safe.

With that, we will suspend and switch over to the second panel.

Thank you.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1205)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

For the second part of our meeting, we have community advocates Chief Wendy Jocko and assistant professor of indigenous studies, Veldon Coburn.

I'd like to welcome you both to the procedure and House affairs committee.

Chief, we will start with you. You have up to five minutes for your opening comments.

Ms. Wendy Jocko (Chief, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation): *Meegwetch*, Chair.

[Witness spoke in Algonquin and provided the following text:]

Anishinabe aking ate awso kikina-wadji-chigun.

[Witness provided the following translation:]

This land we are upon, the spot where you sit now, is the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

[English]

The Anishinabe Algonquin people are one heart and one soul, and have lived for thousands of years on this unsundered territory. We thank and honour the land.

We acknowledge the enduring presence of all first nations, Inuit and Métis people who call the Algonquin territory their home, along with other nations. We acknowledge all of the residential school survivors and children who never made it home. We acknowledge the survivors and all they have endured.

We honour the important contributions of all veterans in the service of Canada. We remember those who lost their lives and those whose lives were forever changed.

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for inviting me to discuss expanding the parliamentary precinct to include sections of Wellington Street and Sparks Street.

On October 22, 2014, a man evaded security and entered the Hall of Honour with a rifle and a knife after fatally shooting Corporal Nathan Cirillo of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. He threatened the very lives of parliamentarians and personnel at the Hill. Before he was stopped, he injured a constable. That day, it was as if the very democratic principles of our country were under attack. Our country was unified then in its condemnation of this heinous act, vowing “never again”.

On November 2014, the joint advisory working group on security identified a lack of communication among security groups on Parliament Hill as a significant problem and recommended combining the existing security forces under the Senate, the House of Commons and the RCMP detachment in charge of the grounds into one integrated security service. Parliament subsequently passed Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, which, among other things, amalgamated the Senate Protective Service, House of Commons Security Services and Parliament's RCMP detachment into the Parliamentary Protective Service.

In late January to mid-February 2022, demonstrators occupied the downtown core of Ottawa, including much of the parliamentary precinct. The Ottawa Police Service acted as the lead agency, with a number of other agencies from across Canada providing support. The Parliamentary Protective Service was responsible for security on Parliament Hill and at the Senate of Canada building.

The polite—some would say even mild-mannered—police response to the blockade of downtown Ottawa by thousands of protesters revealed to indigenous people a double standard in how law enforcement agencies treat civil disobedience. Had indigenous activists made the same threats, broken the same laws and engaged in the same level of disruption, history has shown they would probably have been met with a very heavy-handed crackdown.

To some, it leaves little doubt that there was racism involved. Many have asked why people were allowed to threaten the life of the Prime Minister, especially after the promises made after the death of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. While there were some in the group who claimed to be indigenous, they did not respect the protocols of the Algonquin nation in respecting ceremony. They were asked by the rights holders and the chiefs of Pikwakanagan, Kitigan Zibi and the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council to respect our territory and customs, to no avail.

We wondered about that, because if it had been an indigenous person, they would most certainly be sitting in jail.

Social media users shared images of flags bearing icons of fascism, white supremacy and hate, including Nazi swastikas and Confederate flags that garnered shock, horror and outrage. My own father and mother, both military veterans of the Second World War, would have been saddened by the presence of these deplorable symbols of hate.

• (1210)

Video also circulated showing demonstrators appropriating first nation drumming as they danced, drank beer and chanted “yabba dabba doo” and nonsense while shouting obscenities to the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. The drum is a sacred ceremonial item whose handling is governed by specific cultural protocols. These episodes happened only steps away from the Centennial Flame, where throughout the summer stood a memorial to residential school victims. It was an absolute insult.

• (1215)

The Chair: Chief, if you could finish up your comments, that would be great.

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Okay.

The parliamentary precinct currently includes the buildings and the grounds on and around Parliament Hill. The area covers the three city blocks on the south side of Wellington Street, between Elgin Street and Bank Street, and along the north side of Sparks Street. The expansion of the parliamentary precinct to include sections of Wellington Street and Sparks Street to ensure another unlawful occupation does not occur in the downtown core again will allow more robust safety protocols to be put in place and should definitely be re-evaluated.

However, this does raise some questions. We understand that the extending of the parliamentary district to include what I've just described will have a potential effect on the Algonquin building that has been promised to our nation. While in principle we may wish to support the extension of the zone, we need to ensure that the spirit of this promise is maintained. Therefore, clarity around how this extension will affect this promise needs to be unpacked.

I guess I can end there.

The Chair: Thank you.

We can also share around your opening comments, and we'll make sure they're translated. We'll also have time for questions and comments.

Mr. Coburn, you have up to five minutes.

Dr. Veldon Coburn (Assistant Professor, Indigenous Studies, As an Individual): Thank you and good afternoon.

I won't be saying as much as my chief did. I'm grateful for her. She is quite eloquent and I underscore her service to the nation in the military and those from the Algonquin nation who did likewise, including my grandfather. I've had two grandfathers who served in the military, as did my father.

The point I would like to register with the parliamentary committee today—and some of this has been alluded to by Chief Jocko—is that, yes, although we use the words “traditional Algonquin territory”, we are the rights holders. We still maintain that because it is unceded. What that means is that the territory is unmodified in our section 35 treaty and aboriginal rights. We do have the aboriginal rights. They are recognized and affirmed in the Constitution although the treaty rights are under the negotiations of the current modern treaty process in Ontario and have been under way for 30 years now, since the early 1990s, accepted by the Crown in right of Canada and the Crown in right of the Province of Ontario.

My point to impress upon you here is that, when you consider expanding the parliamentary precinct to enforce, you must consider what Chief Jocko alluded to, that there are considerations of access and mobility through the particular area, which are still Algonquin rights that should be upheld. They were infringed upon by those protesting.

One point is the indigenous peoples space, for which the Algonquin nation reached an agreement with then Crown—Indigenous Relations minister Carolyn Bennett back in July 2019. That lies across the street from Parliament Hill at 100 Wellington Street.

Access and mobility as Algonquin rights for the area also include our access through Wellington Street to make our way to what we know in Algonquin as Akikodjiwan and Akikpautik, which are known as the Chaudière Island. It is a very sacred site. Our access to that and mobility through there were considerably constrained by the protesters and the convoy.

Now, I am respectful that the right to protest comes as an individual right under the charter, but also we might have to consider the balancing of charter rights against our section 35 aboriginal rights of access and mobility.

I would close very quickly with these concise words. Not only is that a question but what Chief Jocko alluded to is that oftentimes when Algonquins protest with non-indigenous peoples but also with other indigenous nations that are here in the seat of federal power in Ottawa, our indigenous protests are typically quite peaceful, but we are met with considerable police presence. While a march of ours may go through the downtown core, down Wellington Street past Parliament, it may be very transitory in nature. It isn't an occupation entailing all the sort of despicable and unseemly behaviour that Chief Jocko enumerated, which, I might add, included reports of defecation and urination.

I'd be happy to talk further about what is entailed between Crown-Indigenous Relations and those of us in the Algonquin nation as we make our way towards the modern treaty. Chief Jocko is an Algonquin negotiation representative and might be able to fill you in a little bit more about the comprehensive claims policy as we seek certainty around our treaty rights in this particular region, which includes Parliament Hill and the parliamentary precinct.

Thank you.

● (1220)

The Chair: Thank you very much for those comments.

We will now proceed to six-minute rounds, starting with Mr. McCauley followed by Mr. Fergus, Madame Gaudreau and then Mrs. Blaney.

Mr. McCauley, you have up to six minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great. Thank you. Through you, Chair, I'd like to thank the witnesses for the feedback and the information.

Professor Coburn, I'd like to chat with you. You chatted about access to Chaudière Island. I'm more interested, going forward, in any of the plans that have been put forward for the changes in the precinct. We see the transit loop. Realizing that what happened in January and February, as difficult as it was for a lot of constituents and folks, was generally, hopefully, a once-in-a-lifetime thing, we should not take away all access to everything based on, perhaps, what looks to be a policing and city failure.

What are your thoughts on the plans that have been publicized so far? Has your community been brought in enough, discussed enough, been consulted enough about access to Chaudière and other areas?

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I don't believe so. I'm a citizen of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, and Chief Jocko is my chief on chief and council. She represents one of the chiefs of—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great, because she was getting that as a follow-up question, so that works out.

Dr. Veldon Coburn: Right. Chief Jocko is very good about reaching out to the citizenship for consultations. We would have received information packages. We receive them weekly for information that the chief and council seek input on.

I don't believe I have. I would defer to her, but as a citizen, normally no, I haven't, not from any of the authorities themselves from our nation.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Through the chair, it's a continuation. I'd like to hear feedback on what the community thinks of the proposed changes. We've seen everything from the Alexandra Bridge being reused, torn down, repurposed, a loop, a pedestrian street.

I'd like to hear what the community thinks of those proposed changes, and if the community has been involved in any consultations and given any feedback on any of the proposed goals. What are the top goals of the community and what are the absolute no goes—like do not go down that path as it will not be acceptable to us?

I'll give you the rest of my time to hear your thoughts and feedback.

Chief Wendy Jocko: From us both...?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, from you both, please, and Chief Jocko, jump in if it's more relevant to you, being on the council.

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I might defer to our political leadership right now, but I'm happy to provide any kind of information, say, on the historical importance of various sites around the area as well.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm thinking more about a go-forward basis, so that we don't end up two years from now making all these plans and saying, hey, we forgot to ask this community.

I'm curious right now. Again we've heard of the transit loop, shutting down Wellington, expanding police services. Has your community been consulted, and what are your thoughts on what we should do with this area? What are the absolute no goes you cannot go forward with, from your point of view?

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I think a little more of an extensive consultation with the wider Algonquin Anishinabe nation, so Chief Jocko and her council as well as the.... Because, despite this being in Ontario, and we're the only status first nation of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation in Ontario, there are nine others in Quebec where title is vested in the nation. They would have to be consulted, I believe, but they are also represented by more of a conglomerate federation through the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council, so they have a larger body that could join in on the consultations.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Chief Jocko, would you weigh in there?

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Yes, I believe I did mention in my opening statement, just as Professor Coburn has mentioned, that the Algonquin nation is one heart and one soul, so we are in constant communication on various issues.

At Pikwakanagan, we do have our own consultation department, so any consultation of any description certainly does come through, including, I should mention, certain projects within the city of Ottawa. We are aware of certain activities that go on. We are consulted, and it doesn't necessarily get filtered down to the membership, but on various occasions, we do get reports. We do have elders who sit on certain committees as well as youth and other members of the community.

• (1225)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Chief Jocko, through the chair, do you have any feedback on any of the proposals that have been discussed or put forward so far—again, the transit loop or shutting down Wellington. We heard how it could perhaps affect access to the Chaudière Island.

Ms. Wendy Jocko: I don't live in Ottawa. I live in Pikwakanagan, so I visit Ottawa from time to time. I'm quite aware of the district.

Obviously the expansion of the parliamentary district is going to have more than just security implications as we look forward—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's what I'm trying to get at, the non-security. What does your community think? Have you been consulted? Do you have any feedback on it right now?

Ms. Wendy Jocko: No, I have not been consulted. I was basically asked to participate in this witness appearance. We weren't consulted in any way.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. I'll cede the rest of my time. Thanks.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you so much.

Now we will move to Mr. Fergus for up to six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. As the member of Parliament for Hull-Aylmer, that is a fact that I always acknowledge.

I would like to ask you a question, Chief Jocko.

I enjoyed your testimony this morning. We are currently discussing the operational security of the parliamentary precinct to avoid a repeat of what everyone experienced with that illegal occupation earlier this winter.

From an indigenous perspective, especially that of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation, what aspects should we be paying attention to, when we are going to discuss security in the context of the expansion of the parliamentary precinct? How can we ensure the security of the parliamentary precinct in a way that is respectful of and in partnership with indigenous peoples?

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Jocko: I did miss a bit of the conversation because my translation was not on; however, I did catch the latter part of your comments and questions. I would say that we would like to be part of the discussion going forward and not to be excluded from those discussions, if that captures your question.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you for your brief response to my question. This is an important aspect that can have a lot of consequences.

Professor Coburn, I would like to ask you the same question.

As part of the expansion of the parliamentary precinct, what attention should be paid to ensure safety not only on the Hill, but also for all Canadians, including indigenous peoples who will be visiting or occupying their space on the site?

[*English*]

Dr. Veldon Coburn: Thank you, Mr. Fergus.

I believe that the Algonquins are very amenable. Quite a few projects have been advanced across the city of Ottawa, working with the municipality and the provinces. I know that Chief Jocko has worked on that quite a bit. It's not that we would hold up things. We don't have an expansive reach such that we would unduly impose burdens and requests upon Canada, or the federal government itself, to undertake the measures, but I believe that there is the obligation to reach out to I think each of the 10 Algonquin nations, including the tribal council itself, for a response to be involved going forward.

I've just heard that nothing has passed through us. Otherwise, through our consultation department, I would have received something long ago. We do receive these quite frequently. Our administration of our first nation under Chief Jocko is quite on the ball. As soon as we get something, it comes out through the mail—information packages—for our input. As of yet, we have yet to see anything whatsoever, but I would definitely welcome it, and you would see some feedback.

Again, I don't think anything would be unduly burdensome to the extent.... The point that I'd still underscore and restate for this purpose here is that there are a few sites for which we would still ask for compliance with and enforcement of our access and mobility. That would be the Algonquin nation's building at 100 Wellington as well as movement through. I know that perhaps under emergency measures your business as carried out by Parliament can be relocated; however, for these particular sites, with the significance for us, the same can't be done as well.

They're not very large, and again, I'm also cognizant of the fact that there is a charter right to protest, but to the extent that it can infringe upon, say, the section 35 constitutional rights of aboriginal peoples—namely, the Algonquins who are on this territory, where they are recognized and affirmed—there is a duty to ensure that people can't necessarily just occupy to the extent that we couldn't practically enforce it. The formal recognition has to be met by effective compliance. A convoy, for example, can pass through without being an undue burden on our aboriginal rights as well, and we would hope that the federal Crown would do what it can to uphold that partnership with us as the Algonquins. That would be a good discussion to begin things.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you for your testimony.

Unfortunately, my time is up. So I will turn the floor over to the chair of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Gaudreau, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The previous questions were excellent and many of them were answered.

In my opinion, there is something that is non-negotiable, and that is the fact that conciliation has to be through collaboration, through communication and through partnership. That is what I see, and it

will be clearly written in our report. We have heard you and I am glad that you have been able to express yourselves in this regard.

Unfortunately, there are some things that I don't understand, and I will have more difficulty explaining that. You talked about the concern about access and mobility rights. You talked about the building on Sparks Street and the fact that occupying the downtown area infringes on your rights.

I would like you to explain that further. A lot of people are looking at us and want to know what's going on.

The witnesses can answer my question in turn, Madam Chair. I don't know who wants to answer it first.

[*English*]

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I'm happy to answer that.

The particular site was negotiated with the Crown back in July 2019 for our presence there. Nevertheless, the entire region was settled where the three rivers meet. The Rideau River comes in with the Gatineau River and the Kitchissippi, which is the Ottawa River, to the sites around Parliament.

This has always been a site, and it is still unmodified under the land claims that have moved forward. However, we still retain those section 35 aboriginal rights under the Constitution. Those rights aren't something that we could just go back to our homes, if we happen to be Algonquin, and say.... We can't. It's site-specific, so it's geographically specific and we require access to it.

Also, through our territory, there are no restrictions on our mobility to pass through certain sites. It just so happens that what is now the downtown core and overlaps quite a bit with the parliamentary precinct is on those particular sites for which we have agreements with the Crown to continually access.

We understand there will be protests on a number of occasions. That happens even in the summertime on a daily basis. There are differing scales and magnitudes, but it is never so much that it interferes with our access to these particular sites where we might carry out our section 35 rights.

We don't exercise section 35 rights for, say, hunting in the downtown core, but we do for other ceremonial reasons and to gather for less formal, political deliberations among the nations and meeting places.

Victoria Island is going to be closed off for about 10 years for remediation, because of the ordnance that was found underneath. I guess it's the old tannery or what have you. There's contamination. That's a burden that we live with. However, it's not something imposed by other people that is transitory in nature.

I think the extent and length of the protest, which evolved into an occupation quite quickly, put a restriction on the Algonquin. We still have the right to pass through here and, eventually, settle for temporary reasons—not for residential reasons—at the site at 100 Wellington. To make our way across the city, of course, we would have to be detoured through a number of streets and whatnot if we were to make our way through to the Chaudière Bridge if we wanted to go to Akikodjiwan.

Other environmental and infrastructure reasons don't have quite the same nature and characteristics as those that are being put up by people of their own voluntary nature.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you, Mr. Coburn.

I have about 30 seconds left to ask a question.

Ms. Jocko, do you have anything to add?

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Professor Coburn mentioned 100 Wellington Street. That building has sat empty for years now, with three directors general responsible for this since I became chief, which was less than three years ago. The willingness of the government is well known and acknowledged. However, how long will we have to wait to occupy the building promised to the Algonquin nation if this means dealing with the same public servants focused on doing things right instead of doing the right thing?

Anyway, on that topic alone, on the change of the jurisdiction and some activity that might be going on at the precinct, just ensure that there won't be a heavy-handed approach by, presumably, the RCMP, if that's going to be their jurisdiction, for the safety and the dignity of the people occupying all the buildings there. You obviously know that in the past there have been some big issues regarding the police and indigenous people.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I want to emphasize how important this meeting is, Madam Chair. Not only are we learning things, but we are clearly seeing the importance of consultation. The topic we are now dealing with is really security, and the whole issue of cohabitation also comes out of the proposals we have received.

Madam Chair, I invite the witnesses to look at what we have received from the architect who came to meet us. It could be used as inspiration for possible consultations following our project.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gaudreau.

Ms. Blaney, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Chair. Through you, I'd like to thank the witnesses so much for attending today and for their important testimony.

I hope the members of this committee understand some of the specific things that were said about process. I really appreciate

Chief Jocko sharing with us that if an indigenous community is in one place and another indigenous group comes, they don't do anything in that space until they talk to the first people of that territory. Obviously, that process was clearly not done. Those protocols that across this country we understand were not done. I thank Chief Jocko for clarifying that. I think it was very important to get that on the record.

Through the chair, I have a question for Chief Jocko. It's my understanding that during the occupation, her nation was informed by the indigenous liaison in the Ottawa city police and OPP during the occupation. Of course, if the precinct does change and there is an expansion of that, I'm wondering if that similar relationship is followed through with the Parliamentary Protective Service. If it's not, is that something we would have to consider if we expanded the precinct?

• (1240)

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Is your question for me, Madam?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: It is.

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Okay.

You are correct. I must say that I was very impressed with the Ottawa city police liaison officer as well as the local OPP detachment. Killaloe is our closest serving OPP detachment. They were very good to inform me of all the activity that was taking place on the territory and within the city of Ottawa. I would hope that the RCMP would have a similar liaison officer who could keep in touch with us in a similar fashion. That was very helpful. I did feel that I knew exactly what was going on, especially pertaining to the indigenous activities that were going on within the city.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you so much.

Through you, Madam Chair, I want to come back one more time to Chief Jocko.

Chief Jocko, if the parliamentary precinct were expanded and that region overseen by the Parliamentary Protective Service, does that mean you would like to see a very similar process where the discussions are there, where you're informed about different things that are happening, and where it would be something similar to the experience you had during the occupation? Perhaps I could get clarity on that so that we know what to put in the report.

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Yes, I would like to make it very clear that I think it's very beneficial that we have that relationship, of course, going forward. Looking behind at the relationship we have now, like I mentioned, with the local OPP detachment in Killaloe, we have a very good relationship as well as with the City of Ottawa. I've never met former police chief Sloly in person. We have corresponded on numerous occasions involving other significant events that have taken place within the city. I do feel that relationship should be maintained going forward, and we should form a new relationship with the new security force that will be taking over that jurisdiction, if, in fact, that's what's going to happen.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you for that. That's extremely helpful.

For my next question—maybe I'll start with the chief and then move on to you, Professor Coburn—is there a clear process of communication with Parliament and your nation? You talked about the ability to occupy the building here, which is set aside for you at 100 Wellington, and that is still not happening. I'm just wondering if there is a problem with the communication lines between the nation and Parliament? Is there work we need to do there that would open up those communication lines?

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Yes, I can confirm that there is a problem with communication that filters down to Pikwakanagan through the various departments. If that could be improved directly to us, that would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Is there anything you would like to add, Professor Coburn?

Dr. Veldon Coburn: Yes, if you don't mind. I'm foreseeing some of the issues that would come up, and I think that it would only be in very extenuating circumstances. Ideally we'd like to have a liaison officer who would be, not necessarily 100% devoted as part of their full-time equivalency, but would communicate with Algonquin political authorities or what have you. I know that this was once in a lifetime. Who knows how many more protests and occupations of this sort may ensue?

In the event that the parliamentary precinct is expanded, when there are times of crisis and Algonquins wish to move into the precinct during these times of crisis, they should not be met with resistance or force, or be mistaken as protesters or occupiers themselves. They could say that they have made arrangements through the liaison officer, through their nation, to go to visit, say, 100 Wellington Street during the upheaval that may, hypothetically, be under way in the future, if this were to occur again, and not be arrested and mistaken as a protester. For example, they may schedule a site visit into the parliamentary precinct at a time to ensure safe travels in and out.

• (1245)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you for that. I admit that I did check out your tweet site, through you, Madame Chair. One thing that I found compelling was that you were tweeting about comparing the teepee erection that happened on the Hill in 2017 for the 150-year celebration of Canada Day. You talked about the clear distinction that you saw between that, where there were arrests and there was a lot of action by the RCMP to stop the actions that were happening when you wanted to put up a teepee, and what happened with the trucker convoy. I'm just wondering if you want to speak to that and

to your concerns that, if the precinct does in fact grow and expand, it will still be an issue.

How can we move forward to address that?

Dr. Veldon Coburn: That's the situation I would anticipate and would hope to avoid. I was there on the evening in late June—June 28 or 29, perhaps—in anticipation of, on July 1, Canada Day, erecting the ceremonial teepee for the 150th anniversary of Canada. A number of us—not me—were detained by the RCMP and the Parliamentary Protective Service. They put up an ad hoc detention centre, because I guess they don't really have a jail cell, and they might have those particular authorities. A number of individuals were arrested. It was hours of a standoff. Again, this was the peaceful participation in matters that were quite apart from the disposition of much of the trucker convoy.

Not to restate everything, but I think Chief Jocko pointed out that there were individuals bearing signs of universal hate like the swastika or what have you, whereas we and other Anishinabe were just exercising what would be a section 35 rights. Again, we're not exercising hunting, because we can't do that. We know there are reasonable restrictions on that particular right because they're not absolute under section 35. Even the charter right to protest or gather in public assembly, we weren't allowed to do that. Eventually they relented.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We're coming to the very end of our time. We have five minutes for the Conservatives, after which I've asked for four minutes for the Liberals, and that will keep us on time and will bring us to the end of our time together.

Mrs. Block, there is up to five minutes for you.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Through you to our witnesses, I would like to thank you for joining us today. I have appreciated hearing your testimony. I do want to start off by recognizing that June is National Indigenous History Month, and given the comments made by Chief Jocko in regard to her own parents and their service to our country, today they were highlighting the contributions of well over 4,000 indigenous people who served in the First World War and over 3,000 in the Second World War, with many decorated for bravery in action. I just want to recognize that here today.

I think while we have a special committee that's already examining the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which has been referenced throughout the testimony we've been hearing on the precinct study, we also have a long-term group that is reimagining changes to the precinct, and now we have this study before PROC. Your testimony and your comments highlight the complexities with regard to the motion that really initiated this study and the need for consultation, which came on the heels of the protest.

I really have only one question for both of you. I'm just wondering if you have any concerns over the invocation of the Emergencies Act that may well lead to its being more readily used in future events that could include indigenous protesters, not unlike the protest that took place along the rail lines during the blockade of 2020.

• (1250)

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I can begin.

Certainly I don't represent everyone, but I know there's a plurality of viewpoints within indigenous communities and even amongst the Algonquins. I have relatives who supported the convoy as well, but that support eventually waned and they were irritated by, I guess, the ongoing occupation. We're living in a time when people are very critical of government overstep. Indigenous peoples have always been critical of it because of the legitimacy of government. It hasn't received our consent to be governed in many aspects. It's been assumed that's changing as well, so I do empathize with a lot of indigenous people who think, well, we might be next.

We would hope, and I believe, that there might be enough balances that it might actually be checked, but as indigenous peoples, we're also well aware that despite the judiciary putting a check on the executive when it carries out its own interpretation of the legislation, the executive still ignores Supreme Court decisions. We see in the Wet'suwet'en territory, for example, going back to 1997 with the Delgamuukw decision, which recognized the Wet'suwet'en as having territorial title and they've never modified that whatsoever. We still see the Province of British Columbia using the course of the powers of the state to remove them, so there's always that worry, I think, amongst many sectors of indigenous peoples.

We're living in a time of a pandemic too, so there are different viewpoints and perspectives amongst indigenous peoples. Just a sample from my Facebook feed shows, anecdotally speaking, differing perspectives on vaccine mandates, for example, and people asking whether the government can force them to do this and what the government will enforce or force them to do next. They would like to have sufficient checks on the invocation of anything that they might perceive to be infringing upon their freedoms, and I recognize that.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much.

Chief Jocko, do you have anything to add?

Ms. Wendy Jocko: I don't have much more. I won't repeat what Professor Coburn has said, but there's obviously a balance in maintaining civil order, so there certainly has to be a balance there.

I would just thank you for your previous comments recognizing indigenous veterans, and those go for all veterans of this country. I certainly appreciate those comments.

Just for consideration if we're changing things at the precinct, possibly a name change would be in order as well for that area. I'm just throwing that into the equation for consideration.

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you.

Next is Mr. Naqvi.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much to both Chief Jocko and Professor Coburn for presenting today.

I live in Ottawa. I'm an immigrant to Canada, and I consider myself a settler. That's the conversation I often have with my two young children, who were born here, to make them understand our responsibility towards reconciliation. I want to thank both of you for your leadership in educating people like me.

I also want to start by acknowledging something, Chief Jocko. In your testimony, you spoke about the differential treatment by police when it comes to different kinds of protests. You spoke about how indigenous people and their protests are treated by police across the country, and I've seen that in my city, here in Ottawa, as well as towards other racialized communities. There is a systemic challenge when it comes to law enforcement that we have to work towards. I do want to take the time to acknowledge that this is an important conversation to be had as well.

In relation to the work we're doing here in this committee around the parliamentary precinct and what it means, I was wondering if you can help us with your vision of what a parliamentary precinct should look like and what it means to the Algonquins, given that the indigenous peoples space is located right across from Parliament Hill and from Centre Block in particular. As plans are being developed to rebuild block two, which is on the south side of Wellington Street adjacent to the indigenous peoples space and, hopefully, more of our parliamentary square in front of that space, in your view, what should be the vision, keeping in mind reconciliation with indigenous peoples and of course celebrating and understanding indigenous culture and traditions as well?

The question is for Chief Jocko, through you, Madam Chair.

• (1255)

Ms. Wendy Jocko: I guess I'll go first, Veldon.

I think I did mention before that a name change would be in order for the parliamentary precinct. I actually had the opportunity to visit one of the last tours prior to the construction going on in the building. It's quite an elaborate building, but it really is void of our host nation presence. There's really nothing to signify the Algonquin nation in the architectural design of the building, so I think we could, hopefully, see those aspects incorporated into the refurbishment of the precinct itself.

Dr. Veldon Coburn: Mr. Naqvi, I would add that I think a lot of what we might be looking for are the security and the enforcement of indigenous rights through the particular space that's proposed to be the expansion of the parliamentary precinct so that our presence will always be within it.

I think Chief Jocko would agree that there's a special relationship between the Algonquin nation and Canada itself and having the building right across from Parliament is right in the heart and the seat of federal power. We're right next door to it.

In terms of the urban planning, say, Ottawa seems to be quite good. I don't think it does anything necessarily too offensive in any way whatsoever. We know that we're right across the street from Parliament. We can look through the window.... Well, eventually we can, when 100 Wellington is opened up. Again, somebody at the Department of Public Works or what have you is still dragging their feet, but—

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you.

I think we're running out of time. I was wondering if I can ask a very quick question.

One of the things being considered is whether Wellington Street should be closed to vehicular traffic. I'm just wondering if you would be supportive of that.

Dr. Veldon Coburn: I would be. Yes.

Ms. Wendy Jocko: Yes. I wouldn't object to that either.

The Chair: Excellent.

On behalf of the PROC committee members, I would like to thank both of our guests for joining us today. If anything comes to mind, please do not hesitate to provide it in writing to the clerk so that all committee members can consider it.

With that, I want to give the PROC committee members a heads-up with regard to next week. We discussed the agenda in camera, so it's not really out there. June 6, next Monday, will be the deadline for Bill C-14 amendments, as we will be considering that legislation. For June 7, we have sent out invitations to Professor Carty, Professor Taillon and PCO officials. In the second hour of the June

7 meeting, we will have Minister LeBlanc, accompanied by PCO officials again.

At the June 9 meeting, we will continue the operational security of the parliamentary precinct study—the last meeting for that—followed by clause-by-clause for Bill C-14 in the second hour. I would ask that, for June 9, any edits to version three of the code draft report be shared with all members, so that we can pencil it in the following week, following clause-by-clause. We'll have version three of the code following clause-by-clause for Bill C-14. That's the space we will enter into.

You have also received the draft of the indigenous languages report. I'll start some conversations as to when we can have some feedback on that, so that we can put it into the queue following the version three of the code report. That should, hopefully, bring us into the summer season.

With that, everyone, please keep well and safe.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

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 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: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>