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# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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**NUMBER 115**

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

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Chair: Mr. Ron McKinnon





## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

• (1005)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 115 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Before we begin I would like to ask all members and other in-person participants to consult the cards on the table for guidelines to prevent audio feedback incidents. Please take note of the following preventative measures in place to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. Only use a black approved earpiece. The former grey earpieces must no longer be used. Keep your earpiece away from all microphones at all times. When you are not using your earpiece, place it face down on the sticker placed on the table for this purpose. Thank you for your co-operation.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. To ensure that the meeting runs smoothly, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For members in the room, please raise your hand if you wish to speak. For members on Zoom, please use the "raise hand" function. The committee clerk and I will manage the speaking order as well as we can, and we appreciate your understanding in this regard.

I remind everyone that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

We are meeting today pursuant to Standing Order 106(4). The committee is meeting to consider a request to call the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, alongside officials from relevant federal departments and agencies, to testify to discuss security concerns.

I will go now to Ms. O'Connell.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Caputo, go ahead on your point of order.

**Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I believe that it was four Conservative members and one member from the NDP, Mr. MacGregor, who requested this meeting, pursuant to section 106(4) of the Standing Orders. I believe it would be convention to give the floor to the parties who requested it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, but Ms. O'Connell did get my attention first. We will take this in order as well as we can.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** I have a point of order. I move to challenge the chair's ruling on that, please.

**The Chair:** Shall the decision of the chair to give the floor to Ms. O'Connell be sustained?

If you vote yea, it's to support the decision of the chair. If you vote nay, it is against it.

Madam Clerk, take the roll, please.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 4)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. O'Connell, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Thank you, Chair.

I move:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the committee invite as soon as possible the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and relevant departmental officials to discuss the foiled terrorist plot in Toronto, the security screening process in place to review permanent residence and citizenship applications to ensure that individuals who have engaged in acts of terror are unable to enter Canada, and why Ahmed Fouad Mostafa El-didi was admitted to Canada.

I have copies in both official languages for the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any speakers to this motion?

Mr. Caputo.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if we could have a minute or two to review the motion, please.

**The Chair:** Yes, we'll suspend for a couple of minutes.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1005)

(Pause)

• (1040)

**The Chair:** The meeting has now resumed.

We have a motion that was moved by Ms. O'Connell. Some of our colleagues have taken a few moments to review it. At this point, we're looking for debate or a vote.

Mr. Caputo.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I would move an amendment to the motion put forward by Ms. O'Connell. My understanding is that this will be supported by, I hope, all opposition parties. I have provided a copy to Madam Clerk in reference to this amendment.

This amendment would add, after “the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada”, the following:

Former Minister of Public Safety and current High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Ralph Goodale,

Commissioner of the RCMP, Michael Duheme,

Interim Director of CSIS, Vanessa Lloyd,

President of the CBSA, Erin O’Gorman,

Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada, Shawn Tupper,

Deputy Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Dr. Harpreet S. Kochhar

and relevant department officials

Then, after “enter Canada, and”, add “how” Ahmed Fouad Mostafa Eldidi was admitted to Canada “and obtained citizenship.”

**The Chair:** Has that been distributed?

Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Jivani.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the primary thing worth highlighting in the amendment we have put forward to Ms. O'Connell's motion is the sense of urgency for a comprehensive review of the systemic failures that occurred in this case.

Of course, all Canadians are alarmed by what we've learned in news reports concerning the foiled terrorist plot that was organized by ISIS and that allegedly involves Eldidi, but those of us in the Toronto region are particularly concerned, given that the terror plot was targeting the region where we live and work. Mr. Eldidi was arrested in a hotel in Richmond Hill on charges related to terrorism. According to court documents, he was residing in Scarborough, or was at least claiming to reside in Scarborough, so our communities are very concerned. The urgency that is affirmed in the Conservative amendment to this motion is critical to reflecting the concern among the broader Canadian public but certainly in the Toronto region in particular.

We are very grateful that law enforcement has done its work to address the case and to foil the attempted terrorist plot, but ultimately a lot of questions remain. Are there threats remaining out in the country right now produced by the same systemic failures that allowed for Eldidi to not only enter the country but also obtain citizenship? Canadians deserve answers to these questions. We believe that just as law enforcement is doing its work, Parliament must do its work as well, in pursuit of transparency, to prioritize public safety, give answers to the questions Canadians have and help Canadians feel assured that they are safe in this country.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We go now to Ms. O'Connell. Note that we are debating the amendment at this time.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Thank you, Chair.

We are supportive of these amendments. As my original motion and our motion, as well as Minister LeBlanc's public statements indicated, Canadians deserve answers. That includes a response in a letter to Mr. Caputo yesterday from the minister explaining that we are committed to providing this information. We welcome the opportunity to have these conversations.

I think it's important to note as well in these conversations that the commitment to our national security is paramount. In fact, I'm very pleased to see the Conservatives finally realize that their cuts have consequences. Previously, when the Harper government cut more than 1,000 CBSA employees, the president of the Customs and Immigration Union, Mr. Fortin, said:

There will be little, and in some cases potentially, no investigating or surveillance being done to keep these criminals out of the country and out of our communities.

Fortin also said:

If the government doesn't change the course and withdraw its plans to implement these cuts, the federal government will be putting the national security and public safety of our community at risk.

This is precisely why we have been making reinvestments in CBSA staff, to deal with the previous Conservative cuts. It's exactly why we continue to make investments through the budget and the fall economic statement, which the Conservatives voted against.

We look forward to having these meetings so Conservatives can truly appreciate that their cuts have consequences to our national security and the safety of our communities. We are very supportive of these amendments and of having that conversation.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

● (1045)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Caputo, go ahead on a point or order.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I realized that when I was reading the amendment that I sent to Madam Clerk I neglected to read in one of the lines regarding the timing of the meetings. When the amendment is distributed, if people could pay attention to that and if what has been distributed as the proposed amendment could carry, I would appreciate that. That is ultimately what's important. That is with respect to two meetings during the week of August 26.

I apologize. I'm trying to find the last version. We would have six meetings, with two meetings the week of August 26. Priority would be given to the ministers' appearance, and then we would move forward after that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I have you on the list for—

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I have a point of order about procedure on that.

**The Chair:** Go ahead on the same point of order.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Thank you.

I see that what was sent mentioned timing, but what was read into the record was different and was obviously prior to my comments. I would ask that this be required to be a subamendment after we vote on these main amendments. Otherwise, perhaps you could confer and confirm for us whether that requires a subamendment since it wasn't read into the record.

**The Chair:** That's a fair point.

Mr. Caputo, would you like to move that as a subamendment?

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** The amendment is what will ultimately be sent around by the chair. That would be the subamendment and that's what the motion would look like.

I would move that my subamendment would be what was sent to the chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Does that work?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Okay, whatever, but procedurally they would never let us get away with reading into the record one thing and submitting something else.

**The Chair:** I accept that.

Mr. Caputo, we'll take the points you just made as a subamendment. The debate now is on the subamendment.

Is there any debate on the subamendment?

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I don't believe I moved a subamendment. What I was doing was clarifying the amendment because I neglected to read something in.

**The Chair:** I think Ms. O'Connell's point is valid in that what was read into the record was not what was distributed. The amendment you read into the record was not what you just said. I'm certainly happy to consider what you just said to be a subamendment to your amendment.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Is there unanimous consent to accept it?

**The Chair:** I suppose we could ask for unanimous consent.

Do we have unanimous consent to accept Mr. Caputo's subamendment?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** I would challenge the chair's ruling on that then.

**The Chair:** What is the challenge?

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** The challenge is as to what the substance of the amendment is—whether what was sent to the chair is ultimately the amendment to the motion.

• (1050)

**The Chair:** Okay. Shall the decision of the chair to regard the latter remarks of Mr. Caputo as a proposal for a subamendment be sustained? If you vote yes, you sustain the decision of the chair that it is, in fact, a subamendment. If you vote no, you override the chair.

Madam Clerk, perhaps you could take the roll.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Thank you. The decision of the chair is sustained. Your remarks will be taken as a subamendment.

The debate now is on the subamendment.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** On a point of order, Chair, would it not make procedural sense...? What the clerk has is the substance of the amendments to the motion. Would it not make sense for that to be read in now and be accepted as the amendment to the Liberals' motion? Would that not be a reasonable point to take now?

The clerk has it. We've all received it. Rather than debating a subamendment to an amendment, what's available to all the committee should be considered to be the amendment.

**The Chair:** Those are interesting arguments; however, the decision—and it's supported by the committee—is that it is a subamendment.

We are on the subamendment. If there is no debate on the subamendment, then we'll take a vote on the subamendment. Is there any further debate on the subamendment?

I'll call a vote.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** The amendment as amended is what Mr. Caputo has distributed.

The debate continues on the amendment as amended. Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Seeing none, I shall call the vote.

(Amendment as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** We now go back to the original motion as amended. Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

Seeing none, could we have a recorded division, please?

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*]) (Motion agreed to)

• (1055)

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** I move a motion to adjourn.

**The Chair:** We are now adjourned. Thank you, all.

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