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PETER MACKAY (Minister of Justice): And now, ladies and gentlemen, on this historic day in Richmond Hill, I would like to invite our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, to come back to the podium to take some questions from the media here. Thank you.

(Applause)

MODERATOR: When I call your name, please make your way to the left of the Prime Minister. We're going to start with Ike Rai, from SUN.

IKE RAI (SUN Media): Prime Minister, some are openly speculating that the Zehaf-Bibeau manifesto video isn't being released because it doesn't align with the government's terrorism narrative. Commissioner Paulson initially indicated he'd release it and then backed away. Would you personally like to see the video released? And if not, why?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER (Canadian Prime Minister): The video, as I understand it, I have not seen the video myself, as I understand it is in the possession of the RCMP and as they have said, it is a subject of an ongoing investigation. The government does not interfere in police investigations.

MODERATOR: We'll continue with Alanna Satur, from CTV.

ALANNA SATUR (CTV-TV): Prime Minister, where is the parliamentary oversight for all these expanded new powers and can the individual oversight mechanism possibly deal with the expanded new powers?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Well, of course Parliament will have to approve the legislation. There's a legislative process

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that begins today and that is obviously the first and most critical aspect of parliamentary oversight. A parliament can of course at any time call ministers and other officials to examine them on the conduct of their organizations under legislation that has been granted.

But I would also point out there are other types of oversight as well involved in this legislation. For example, for CSIS, for RCMP, for others, there are... for CSEC, the Communications Security Establishment, for all of these various organizations, there are independent, non-partisan expert oversight bodies that exist specifically for those organizations as well that provide annual reports. And most of the powers, in fact, just about all of the key powers today that are being announced today are subject to judicial review and judicial authorization in most cases.

So there is substantial oversight on everything that's being done here.

MODERATOR: We'll continue with Taylor Simmons, from Global.

TAYLOR SIMMONS (Global TV): Prime Minister, do you know of specific people who could be arrested under these new laws and are you tracking those people now?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: You know, in all fairness, that's really a question for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police and security organizations. It is their responsibility to track criminal and terrorist threats. The government, as a political government obviously does not get involved in those kinds of matters. Those are decisions that have to be made by those who are responsible for doing that in a non-political way.

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But I can assure you that our security agencies have... have advised us on the bill we're bringing forward and I know that they welcome the various authorities that are contained in it and believe that it will enhance them in their work as they act to protect us.

MODERATOR: Amanda Ferguson, CITY-TV.

AMANDA FERGUSON (CITY-TV): Prime Minister, how could you guarantee that these new measures won't be in direct conflict with one's own basic civil liberties?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: You know, I think the, as I said there's considerable oversight, but I think the premise of the question itself is wrong. And this is really what we get from our opposition, that every time we talk about security, they suggest that somehow our freedoms are threatened. I think what Canadians understand is that their freedom and their security more often than not go hand in hand.

(Applause)

Canadians expect us to do both. We are doing both and we do not buy the argument that every time you protect Canadians you somehow take away their liberties. It is a jihadi terrorist who endanger our security who would take away our freedoms. And that's what we are...

(Applause)

And that's why we're working with our police and security agencies to bring forward the best bill and the best legislation. And, yes, there will be protections in that legislation against abuse of those powers. But let's not... remember the fundamental fact which our police and security agencies are working

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to protect our rights and our liberties and it's the jihadists that are against us. It's the police who are on our side.

(Applause & cheers)

MODERATOR: Farah Nasser, CP24.

FARAH NASSER (CP24-TV): Prime Minister, how do you enforce the Internet? How do you know it's somebody who's radicalized who's posted something versus a teen that's just messing around in the basement?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Well, first of all, let's be clear about what we are doing in this legislation and what we're not doing. We're giving the power to our security, police and security agencies to provide notice and take down, to remove from the Internet any Canadian-based website that is advocating or promoting terrorism. And obviously that would include promoting terrorist training, those sorts of things.

We can only do that to a website based in this country. We can only do that to a website based in this country. We can't do it overseas, which means there will be websites that we will have difficulty getting to. And we will require – and this, I can assure you, will be a subject of upcoming discussions with my fellow leaders, particularly in the G7 – we will require greater international cooperation to tackle some of these international websites that are involved in recruitment and in the promotion of terrorism.

But you know, I want to take a little bit, I want to take a little bit of dispute with the preamble of the question. You know, it doesn't matter what the age of a person is or whether they're in their basement or whether they're in a mosque or somewhere else. When you are engaged in activities that explicitly

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promote or advocate terrorism, that is a serious criminal offence, no matter who you are. It will be a serious criminal offence.

We cannot tolerate this any more than we tolerate people making jokes about bomb threats at airports. We do not tolerate this in this country and anyone who engages in this, in that kind of activity is going to face the full force of the law in the future.

(Applause)

MODERATOR: We'll continue with Mattia Bello, from Lo Specchio.

MATTIA BELLO (Lo Specchio): Prime Minister, you have announced a new anti-terrorism act today. How do those new measures announced today complement the mission the Parliament approved against ISIS? Do you think Canadians are safer?

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Thanks. Look, as I've said repeatedly, I think we must do both. We must do both. We have an international jihadist movement that is, as I say, increasingly in control of parts of the world from which it is able to, going to be able to develop attacks of increasing sophistication and dissemination. At the same time it is also a base from which it spreads its propaganda, indoctrinates, radicalizes others who may not necessarily be in that particular part of the world. So we have to tackle both of these things.

Obviously, as you know, after the events of last summer, virtually the entire world became alarmed by the fact that we had almost overnight a sophisticated terrorist organization virtually running a quasi-state over a vast swathe of the Middle East. And it was expanding very rapidly. So we intervened

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with our allies not just, by the way, our traditional allies but also Arab partners as well to limit the spread of that and to try and roll it back.

And this is absolutely essential. We just cannot have that kind of phenomenon in that part of the world. But at the same time we obviously have to take on the specific threats that could hit us here and that are being planned to hit us here. This is... these are things that our police and security agencies have been doing for some years now with, we have to say, with a pretty high level of effectiveness. There are, I can assure you, there are far, far more plots that you never hear a word about than any that actually even make the news or, God help us, come to pass. So we're generally pretty good at stopping this stuff but it's becoming increasingly difficult.

I think these measures, what we're doing, we believe that what we're doing overseas with our allies, we believe that makes us safer. We believe the things we're doing today give the police and our security agencies powers to make us safer. But do I say we are safer? I'm not sure about that. What I say is this: I say that we are in a world that is becoming increasingly unsafe and increasingly unsafe, even for free, tolerant, democratic countries like ours that are thousands and thousands of miles away from these situations.

And because we're becoming less safe, we need to take these measures, both home and abroad. We can't... we can't not do either. We've got to do both of them.

(Applause)

ANIMATRICE: On va terminer en français avec Sébastien Saint-François, RDI.

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SÉBASTIEN SAINT-FRANÇOIS (RDI-TV): Monsieur le premier ministre, qu'est-ce que ces nouveaux pouvoirs auraient donné pour peut-être éventuellement contrer les attaques qui ont déjà eu lieu à Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu et à Ottawa? Qu'est-ce que les nouveaux pouvoirs auraient donné?

Et deuxième partie de ma question, qu'est-ce que ça va changer d'avoir des pouvoirs de détention plus rapides pour les autorités?

TRÈS HONORABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Je peux répondre aux deux ensembles. Franchement, c'est difficile toujours de spéculer sur des scénarios différents que des scénarios en octobre. Je peux dire qu'avec les pouvoirs que vous venez de mentionner sur la détention, à l'avenir nos forces de police et de sécurité auront plus de pouvoirs pour de telles situations, plus de façons de réagir rapidement. Et ça c'est clair pour la situation à Saint-Jean.

Pour la situation à Ottawa, c'est un peu plus difficile de spéculer. Mais il y a des possibilités que des... surtout le partage d'information parmi des ministères et des agences de sécurité pourront aider dans une telle situation à l'avenir. Mais c'est difficile de spéculer mais c'est sans doute nos agences, notre police auront plus de pouvoirs et plus de flexibilité et plus de capacité de réagir de façon rapide.

ANIMATRICE : Merci. Thank you.

RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER: Yes, okay. Sorry, he asked to repeat that in English. Look, I was asked what would these powers have done about the attacks in October if they were in place then? That was generally the question.

And look, friends, it is difficult to go back and speculate how scenarios might have been different, because these are complex events and people

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could have reacted in different ways. I will say this, that there is no doubt that specifically some of the powers in here, for instance powers of... a greater ability to detain those suspected of imminent terror acts, the ability to detain people like that, to respond to them more quickly, it is I would say no doubt that situations like Saint-Jean in the future that the police would have more and better tools to deal with that kind of situation than they did in October. And I think that's without a doubt.

In the case of the incident in Ottawa, it's a little more difficult to speculate how a case like that would be handled in the future under these laws, partly because, as you know, the police were... the incident, the Rouleau incident in Saint-Jean, the police, he was very much on the police radar.

The fellow in Ottawa, Bibeau, was not on the police radar.

However, there are important powers in this legislation concerning the sharing of information through not just police and security agencies but other government departments like for example Citizenship and Immigration and Passport, there are other aspects of this bill that could also mean that threats like that could be detected earlier than they were on this occasion.

Look, I don't want... I don't want to do this. I don't want to give the impression. It would be unfair to give the impression. We all know, no matter how much work we do, some of these activities are hard to detect and bad things will sometimes happen. I cannot tell you that everything in this bill will mean that we will never have a terrorist incident in the future. I cannot assure you of that. The terrorists themselves will adjust to the legislation and find, also find other ways of evolving.

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What I can tell you is, based on the incidents we had before us, based on advice from credible security people, not just in this country but around the world, we're taking all of the actions that are reasonable, necessary, consistent with our democratic values to deal with threats as we believe they are likely to present them. And we will continue to do our best and we will continue to move forward with other measures as threats evolve.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

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