



Interview Summary: Inspector Russell Lucas (Ottawa Police Service)

Inspector Russell Lucas was interviewed by Frank Au, Mark Pritchard, Eric Brousseau, and Misha Boutilier on August 19, 2022. Questions about this summary should be directed to Frank Au.

Background

Inspector Lucas has been a member of the Ottawa Police Service (**OPS**) since February 2000. He served as Staff Sergeant of the Special Events section of OPS between February 2016 and January 2018, and he was the lead OPS planner for the 2016 North American Leaders Summit hosted in Ottawa. From February 2019 through January 2022, he served as the Inspector responsible for OPS's Patrol Operations division and was the operational commander in response to critical incidents such as barricaded persons and missing person searches. He has completed critical incident commander (**CIC**) and incident command system (**ICS**) training and served as Incident Commander for special events such as Canada Day and Capital Pride, labour disputes, and protests. In January 2022, Inspector Lucas began providing oversight to the Special Events office as Inspector of the Operational Support Team.

Pre-Arrival Planning & Intelligence

Service as Incident Commander & Understanding of Incident Command System

On January 21, Inspector Lucas began to serve as OPS Incident Commander for the Freedom Convoy. He explained that he assumed this role because it fell within his responsibility to oversee the Special Events office, and that he was not appointed to the role by the OPS executive. He stated that OPS considered the Freedom Convoy to be a major event and not a critical incident because OPS reserved the latter designation for specific events such as hostage-takings and barricaded persons. Upon his appointment Inspector Lucas tasked planners in the Special Events office with preparing an operational plan. He also tasked other OPS officers to prepare supporting sub-plans: Staff Sergeant Michael Stoll was tasked with preparing a public order plan, Staff Sergeant Denis Hull was tasked with preparing a traffic management plan, and Staff Sergeant Andrew Moore was tasked with preparing a tactical plan.

Inspector Lucas stated that, as Incident Commander, he had two principal tools: the Police Liaison Team (**PLT**), and the Uniformed Officers/Public Order Unit (**POU**). He stated that the ICS framework envisions a “Command Triangle” with the Incident Commander at the top of the triangle and PLT and POU as the right and left bases of the triangle. As Incident Commander, he would receive advice from PLT about negotiation options and from POU about tactical options, and would act as sole decision-maker on which steps to take. He stated that PLT was a negotiating team that he would use to de-escalate as many issues as possible. While PLT was negotiating, POU would prepare



tactical plans in the event a tactical resolution was required. If PLT was unsuccessful, he could employ POU to effect a tactical resolution as a last resort to preserve life.

Inspector Lucas stated that OPS strategic command would be above the Incident Commander-PLT-POU triangle under the ICS framework and would provide strategic oversight to the Incident Commander. He stated that Superintendent Christopher Rheaume served as the initial Event Commander or Major Incident Commander and was responsible for strategic oversight. Acting Deputy Chief Patricia Ferguson, a member of the OPS executive, also provided strategic oversight. Inspector Lucas stated that he expected Superintendent Rheaume and Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson to ensure that he had autonomy to make operational decisions and support him as he implemented those decisions.

Role of Intelligence in Planning

Inspector Lucas stated that he wanted to base planning on intelligence received, but not necessarily on speculation. He noted that OPS's intelligence unit was responsible for gathering and assessing intelligence. He understood that the intelligence unit shared intelligence assessments about the Freedom Convoy with his planners prior to the convoy's arrival, and that his planners were basing the plan on that intelligence. He noted that OPS's intelligence unit was under-staffed and that its primary focus was criminal intelligence, although it also tried to gather intelligence on protests. OPS does not have a dedicated social media monitoring team and a social media analyst employed by the Waterloo Regional Police Service shared information with OPS. In his view, gathering and assessing intelligence about protest activities that could potentially threaten public safety and public order was a gap area that fell between the responsibilities of the OPS intelligence unit and the OPS Special Events office.

Inspector Lucas did not learn that Project Hendon, an intelligence sharing network led by the Ontario Provincial Police (**OPP**), was reporting on the Freedom Convoy until around January 25-26. Inspector Lucas never received or reviewed Project Hendon intelligence reports before the arrival of the convoy and did not know whether his planners received them. He expected that OPS's intelligence unit would have discussed intelligence, including intelligence contained in Project Hendon reports, with his planners. He did not ask to be sent Project Hendon reports because he trusted that his planners would alert him to any specific concerns that arose from their discussions from the OPS intelligence unit. He knew that Project Hendon reports concluded that the Freedom Convoy posed certain risks, but he did not know if the full range of risks that the Project Hendon reports identified was shared with him or his planners. He did not know the extent of intelligence that the OPS intelligence unit was privy to, and he did not inform that unit that he required additional intelligence.

Inspector Lucas stated that there was minimal corroborated information about the numbers of vehicles participating in the Freedom Convoy before the convoy arrived in Ottawa on January 28-29 and that he would have responded differently if he had known how many vehicles would actually attend. He noted that the original Freedom Convoy



only included approximately 50 vehicles when it departed British Columbia for Ottawa, and that it was difficult to determine the convoy's strength as it traversed western Canada because vehicles would join the convoy for part of the way and then leave. Inspector Lucas stated that the true scale of the Freedom Convoy only started to become clearer on January 28 because some convoys that participated in the Freedom Convoy movement only departed for Ottawa on that date. He observed that before January 28 OPS was only anticipating 5 convoys, and during the week it evolved to 13 convoys heading to Ottawa. Inspector Lucas stated that he was shocked by how many trucks and vehicles arrived in Ottawa on January 28-29. He stated that if he had known that thousands of vehicles would be arriving in Ottawa, he would have requested larger numbers of reinforcements from police services across Canada in advance of the convoy's arrival.

Development of Heightened Concerns about the Freedom Convoy & Planning Response

On January 21 at 1:20 p.m., Inspector Lucas attended an OPS planning meeting for the Freedom Convoy. At this time, OPS anticipated a potential for the Freedom Convoy to engage in protest activity, and that convoy participants might stay in Ottawa until their demands were met. Inspector Lucas stated that he was skeptical that most convoy participants would stay in Ottawa for more than the weekend. He expected the Freedom Convoy to be similar to anti-vaccine protests by local truckers that OPS had successfully policed in 2020 and 2021. He noted that local truckers' rhetoric during the earlier protests indicated they were going to stay on Parliament Hill until their demands were met, but that only 30-40 trucks attended the protest and that they all left shortly after arriving. He also observed that OPS had successfully resolved previous protests that occupied Wellington St., including a 2006 farmer protest where tractors parked on Wellington St. and a 2009 protest against the Sri Lankan Civil War where protestors occupied Wellington St. for 1-2 weeks.

By around January 24-25, Inspector Lucas determined that the Freedom Convoy did not pose any heightened concerns. He based this determination on the Freedom Convoy's dialogue and cooperation with police in western Canada as it moved from British Columbia towards Ottawa and noted that the Freedom Convoy did not cause any significant policing issues in western Canada. He stated that he saw the Freedom Convoy's behaviour in western Canada as the best indicator of its future behaviour in Ottawa, and that there were no significant flags that would impact public safety at this stage. At this time, Inspector Lucas's planning focus was on traffic management because he determined that the most significant risk the Freedom Convoy posed was traffic chaos.

Inspector Lucas also ensured that the OPS police liaison team began liaising with Freedom Convoy participants before the convoy arrived in Ottawa. OPP Provincial Liaison Team officers began engaging with Freedom Convoy participants before the



convoy crossed the Manitoba-Ontario border on January 25.¹ On January 24, Inspector Lucas decided to embed OPS PLT members in the OPP Provincial Liaison Team engaging with the Freedom Convoy. OPS PLT members embedded with the OPP Provincial Liaison Team team and began to build relationships with Freedom Convoy leaders. Inspector Lucas stated that OPS PLT members began to discuss potential exit plans with Freedom Convoy leaders and negotiated with them to keep emergency lanes open upon the convoy's arrival in Ottawa.

By around January 25-26, Inspector Lucas developed heightened concerns about the Freedom Convoy. After learning of social media messaging evolved from indicating that the Freedom Convoy would arrive at Parliament Hill to that they would take the Hill, Inspector Lucas became concerned that the intent of the Freedom Convoy messaging was shifting. He became concerned that anti-government elements might be joining the convoy and that convoy participants might attempt to storm Parliament Hill in a manner similar to the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol. He also became aware that increasing numbers of people were joining the Freedom Convoy, that online support for the Freedom Convoy was growing, that the amount of money the Freedom Convoy raised on Go Fund Me had risen from \$800,000 on January 21 to between \$2 and \$3 million by January 25, and that some convoy participants may have been transporting heavy equipment on trailers.

Inspector Lucas stated that he shifted the planning focus from traffic management to public order and protecting Parliament Hill in response to these heightened concerns. Around January 24-25, he asked Staff Sergeant Stoll to reach out to his POU contacts at other Ontario police services, and OPS subsequently made official requests that these services dispatch POU members to Ottawa. By January 28, Inspector Lucas had received all the POU resources he determined were necessary to secure Parliament Hill and the City of Ottawa. He had two OPP POU teams on Parliament Hill that were diverted at the request of the Parliamentary Protective Service (**PPS**). He held 3-4 additional POUs in reserve ready to deploy if protestors attempted to storm the Hill.

Inspector Lucas also attempted to deepen his understanding of the intelligence picture and enhance cooperation with police partners on January 25-26. On January 25 at 4:53 p.m., he contacted Royal Canadian Mounted Police (**RCMP**) officers by email on to ensure that OPS and RCMP were sharing intelligence and information.² On January 26 at 9:30 a.m., he spoke with RCMP and PPS representatives to discuss a coordinated response to the convoy. On January 26 at 12:30 p.m., he participated in an OPS intelligence meeting at which the changing direction of information was discussed. Inspector Lucas stated that he was attempting to determine what types of people and groups were joining the Freedom Convoy and whether and to what extent online

¹ The OPP Provincial Liaison Team is the OPP equivalent of the OPS PLT.

² OPS00002976.



supporters of the Freedom Convoy would join the convoy in person. He knew that the Freedom Convoy appeared to represent more serious risks than it had on January 24-25 and was attempting to obtain the best intelligence available.

Meetings with City of Ottawa and OPS Executive

On January 26 at 3:00 p.m., Inspector Lucas attended a virtual meeting with the OPS executive leadership, Mayor Jim Watson, and City of Ottawa (**City**) representatives. Inspector Lucas did not present at this meeting. He noted that the City was seeking to understand OPS's plans. The City indicated that it had heavy towing available, but it was later determined to be unavailable as the drivers would not engage. The City attempted to determine how the by-law department should respond to violations of parking and public health by-laws during the Freedom Convoy.

On January 27 at 9:00 a.m., Inspector Lucas participated in an OPS command call with Chief Peter Sloly, Deputy Chief Steve Bell, Acting Deputy Chief Ferguson, Chief Administrative Officer Blair Dunker, and various superintendents. Inspector Lucas did not normally attend these command calls but was invited to provide an update on planning for the Freedom Convoy. He stated that, at this time, OPS was primarily planning for a weekend event, but was developing contingency plans to manage protestors who stayed beyond the January 29-30 weekend.

Decision to Allow Freedom Convoy Vehicles onto Wellington St.

Inspector Lucas stated that, before the Freedom Convoy arrived in Ottawa, he approved the decision to allow Freedom Convoy trucks and vehicles to enter downtown Ottawa and park on Wellington St. He noted that his planning team proposed this decision, and he approved it. This was sent up the chain of command for approval as well.

Inspector Lucas explained that he approved allowing Freedom Convoy trucks to park on Wellington St. to protect the rest of the City from disruption. There is a requirement to balance the needs of everyone. There is also a need to find the right compromise where protesters can get their message out without compromising safety. He stated that his priority was to protect the entire City, not just Parliament Hill. He was concerned that blocking access to Wellington St. would displace Freedom Convoy trucks and vehicles into other Ottawa neighbourhoods, where they could interfere with residents' daily activities, public transit, key bridges, and access to hospitals. He explained that he hoped to minimize disruption and maintain emergency lane access by concentrating and containing the Freedom Convoy in the downtown core. He also observed that, while he could have blocked access to Wellington St., he lacked the resources to restrict Freedom Convoy access to the entire City and doubted that he would be able to find enough parking space outside the downtown core for Freedom Convoy vehicles. Inspector Lucas determined that permitting Freedom Convoy trucks and vehicles to park on Wellington St. would not pose a significant risk because Parliament was not in session on January 29-30 and he believed that he had sufficient POU members in place to protect Parliament Hill if convoy participants attempted to storm it.



Inspector Lucas also cooperated with the City and the National Capital Commission (**NCC**) to obtain parking space outside the downtown core for some Freedom Convoy vehicles. He noted that the City made space available at Coventry Road near Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Park for convoy vehicles to park, and that the convoy participants that parked there car-pooled downtown instead of parking in the downtown core. He also noted that NCC made parking space available on the Sir George-Étienne Cartier and Sir John A. MacDonald Parkways to minimize pressure on the downtown.

On January 27 at 11:30 a.m., Inspector Lucas met with Superintendent Larry Brookson, the Acting Director of PPS. During the meeting, Superintendent Brookson asked Inspector Lucas not to permit convoy trailers onto Wellington St. Inspector Lucas was aware at this time that PPS's preference was not to allow any trucks or vehicles onto Wellington St. Inspector Lucas informed Superintendent Brookson that OPS would attempt to prevent trailers from accessing Wellington St., but that it would be difficult to tell vehicles driving lawfully that they could not access Wellington St. Inspector Lucas stated that OPS PLT officers did ask Freedom Convoy leaders not to bring trailers and heavy equipment downtown, but that OPS did not stop convoy trucks, trailers, and vehicles from entering downtown and parking on Wellington St.

Completion and Review of Pre-Arrival Operational Plan

On January 27, Inspector Lucas received a draft operational plan from his planning team, made a few amendments to it, and approved it. Inspector Lucas confirmed that the plan titled "Freedom Convoy – Canada Unity, January 29 2022" (the **Pre-Arrival Operational Plan**) was the operational plan that he reviewed and approved. He noted that this plan had several annexes, including a traffic management plan prepared by Staff Sergeant Denis Hull, a public order plan prepared by Staff Sergeant Michael Stoll, and a tactical plan prepared by Staff Sergeant Andrew Moore or his team. Sergeant Stoll's public order plan was not ready on January 27. At 4:00 p.m. on January 27, Inspector Lucas presented the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan to the operational and tactical level commanders and planners as they walked through the current operational plan. They discussed how OPS would respond to potential contingencies. On January 28, Inspector Lucas reviewed and approved Staff Sergeant Stoll's public order plan.

On January 27, Inspector Lucas provided the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan to Superintendent Rheaume for review. He stated that this plan was subsequently sent to Chief Sloly for review, and that he believed that Chief Sloly made amendments to it. Inspector Lucas stated that it was made clear to him that Chief Sloly's approval of the plan was required. Inspector Lucas described the requirement for the Chief to approve an operational plan as new, and noted that he had never submitted operational plans to the Chief for approval before January 2022. He did not recall receiving a copy of the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan with all required signatures on it but stated that he understood that the principles and framework in the plan were approved.

The "Threat Assessment" section of the Pre-Arrival Operational Plan states that "[t]he Canadian Integrated Terror Assessment Centre (ITAC) indicates that the current threat



level for Canada is medium.” Inspector Lucas confirmed this passage refers to the threat level for a terrorist attack and that the ITAC threat level has been medium for the past 10 years. He described the ITAC threat level as boilerplate, but noted that it was necessary to keep in mind because any mass gathering is a potential terrorist target.

The “Threat Assessment” section also contains an intelligence assessment by the OPS Security Intelligence Section. The plan’s intelligence assessment stated that many Freedom Convoy trucks and vehicles would arrive in Ottawa, that those trucks and vehicles could pose safety and logistical hazards because of their size and weight, that the Freedom Convoy could shut down movement if it wanted to, that the Freedom Convoy had expanded to include other anti-government groups not associated with the original convoy, and that online occasional lone actors were advising protestors to use violence if they encountered police barricades and that the investigative and intelligence assets continued to monitor and track these activists and provide ongoing updates. Inspector Lucas confirmed that he was aware of all these risks at the time.

January 28-30: Initial Response to Freedom Convoy

Establishment of OPS Command Centres

On the morning of January 28, Inspector Lucas activated the National Capital Region Command Centre (**NCRCC**). NCRCC is a command centre housed in a RCMP facility in the Ottawa region that includes OPS workstations, radios, and communications equipment. The NCRCC provides a venue for coordinated operations. Representatives from RCMP, OPP, PPS, the Sûreté du Québec (**SQ**), the Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau (**SPVM**), OC Transpo, the Ottawa Fire Service, and the Ottawa Paramedic Service were present at NCRCC. Inspector Lucas served day shifts at NCRCC, and four other OPS officers alternated as Incident Commander during night shifts. NCRCC remained operational nearly 24 hours per day during the Freedom Convoy, except for a 2-3 hourly nightly period where NCRCC just kept the lights on. Inspector Lucas described NCRCC as an integrated command where OPS was leading the operation and directing planning, but in an integrated setting with other agencies present.

OPS also established a Service Command Centre (**SCC**) at OPS headquarters at 245 Greenbank Road to assist Inspector Lucas. The SCC was based in a boardroom with lots of equipment. It was tasked with obtaining the logistics required to support Inspector Lucas’s response to the Freedom Convoy.

Arrival of Freedom Convoy and Initial OPS Response

Inspector Lucas stated that Freedom Convoy vehicles began to arrive in Ottawa on January 28. He mentioned that convoy vehicles were attempting to secure prime spots on Wellington St. He stated that most Freedom Convoy vehicles were generally cooperative at this time, and that, consistent with their negotiations with PLT, Freedom Convoy organizers were able to keep open an emergency lane on Wellington St.



Inspector Lucas stated that OPS became progressively overwhelmed and that he and NCRCC were “drinking from the firehose” as additional Freedom Convoy vehicles arrived in Ottawa on January 29. Whenever police respond to an incident, there is chaos. The police go in to establish normalcy in the chaos. He described the atmosphere at NCRCC as chaotic. He stated that more information was flowing into NCRCC than it had the capacity to process, and that NCRCC was facing more needs than it had resources to respond to. After approximately a week, NCRCC was struggling to keep the emergency lane on Wellington St. open, and OPS was under-staffed and was struggling to find enough officers to conduct foot patrol and cover traffic posts. Due to under-staffing, some dayshift officers on January 29 were on duty for over 15 hours, and some officers were not accounted for or relieved by replacement shifts that evening. These concerns were documented in a January 30 at 6:08 a.m. email that Inspector François D'Aoust sent to Inspector Lucas.³

Inspector Lucas took steps to respond to the influx of Freedom Convoy vehicles. He informed SCC that he needed additional resources, and SCC attempted to obtain those resources. He sent POU officers stationed on Parliament Hill to patrol the protest site in teams to project a strong police presence and attempt to conceal OPS’s staffing shortages from protestors. He also delegated decision-making authority to OPS on-site commanders to make decisions in their areas of responsibility. In addition, he coordinated with OPP, SQ, and SPVM to divert convoys away from downtown Ottawa during the January 29-30 weekend. OPP diverted a convoy onto the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway. SQ and SPVM diverted a 1000-vehicle Ottawa-bound convoy into Gatineau by shutting down the interprovincial bridge the convoy was intending to cross. Inspector Lucas described SQ and SPVM as excellent partners.

Inspector Lucas nonetheless observed that over the weekend of January 29-30, OPS lost the capacity to engage in proactive enforcement. Inspector Lucas’s focus shifted to ensuring public safety and attempting to stabilize the situation. He noted that it was difficult to police the Freedom Convoy because the convoy was fractured and had different organizers and participants with different agendas. He attempted to use PLT to engage with different protestor gatherings and identify formal and informal leaders.

The Freedom Convoy began to establish encampments in downtown Ottawa during the January 29-30 weekend. The main Freedom Convoy footprint was on Wellington St., but that other groups established themselves near the National War Memorial, by the intersection of Rideau St. and Sussex Drive, on the Sir John A. MacDonald and Sir George Étienne Cartier Parkways, and at Coventry Road near the Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Park. Inspector Lucas noted that OPS was able to keep the flow of traffic open in some of these areas. However, he stated that OPS had problems negotiating with the protestor group at the Rideau-Sussex intersection. He noted that these protestors

³ OPS00004765.



were associated with the Quebec-based Farfaada movement and characterized them as a freeman-on-the-land, separatist, anarchist group with trucks.

January 31 to February 6: First Week of Freedom Convoy

Interference with Role of PLT

While 60-70% of convoy vehicles left on Sunday, January 30 and Monday, January 31, the area of downtown Ottawa occupied by the convoy remained the same. Inspector Lucas noted that crowd dynamics began to change over the week of January 31 because additional anti-vaccine protestors and other protestors with far-right, freeman-on-the-land, and anti-government attitudes began to arrive in Ottawa from across Canada. The arrival of these protestors complicated his efforts to manage the event. Inspector Lucas also observed that many of the protestors who had departed on January 30-31 returned during the February 5-6 weekend. Inspector Lucas stated that Chief Sloly interfered with his efforts to use PLT to shrink the footprint of the protest site on the week of January 31. After the January 29-30 weekend, the remaining protestors worked with PLT to negotiate movement of protestors from the intersection of Rideau St. and Sussex Drive onto Wellington St. to fill the gaps that departing protestors had opened. Inspector Lucas supported these efforts because they would shrink the footprint by removing protestors from the Rideau-Sussex intersection, would have re-opened that intersection, and would have permitted OPS to redeploy officers from traffic posts to enforcement tasks. He understood that Superintendent Rheaume also supported these efforts. However, Inspector Lucas stated that it was made clear to him that he and Superintendent Rheaume lacked authority to approve the action and that Chief Sloly's approval was required. Inspector Lucas thus told Superintendent Rheaume of the PLT negotiations, and Superintendent Rheaume requested approval from the OPS executive team. Superintendent Rheaume told Inspector Lucas that the executive team stated "not one inch". Inspector Lucas understood that this direction came directly from Chief Sloly.

Impact of Misinformation and Disinformation

Inspector Lucas also observed that OPS struggled to respond to the spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media during the week of January 31. He defined misinformation as unknowingly disseminating incorrect information, and defined disinformation as knowingly disseminating incorrect information. He stated that OPS had to divert resources to monitoring the spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media and that the barrage of social media posts interfered with OPS efforts to disseminate accurate information. As an example, he noted that when OPS first seized jerry cans containing fuel, someone posted a Tweet saying that a court had granted an injunction against the police action, which was not accurate.

Effect of Switching Event Commanders

OPS switched Event Commanders on several occasions during the Freedom Convoy. Inspector Lucas noted that Superintendent Rheaume was removed as Event Commander



during the week of January 31. He understood that Superintendent Rheaume was removed because Chief Sloly wanted to take a new strategic direction, but he did not know what that direction was. He noted that Superintendent Jamie Dunlop began to serve as Event Commander on February 4, that Superintendent Dunlop was replaced by Superintendent Patterson on February 6, and that Superintendent Bernier replaced Superintendent Patterson as Event Commander on February 10. Inspector Lucas explained that each appointment of a new Event Commander corresponded to a change in the OPS executive team's strategic direction. However, he stated that he lacked the resources to manage the protest or to safely and effectively implement the new strategic direction.

Erosion of Inspector Lucas's Authority as Event Commander & Functioning of Incident Command System

Inspector Lucas also observed that his authority as Incident Commander began to erode during the week of January 31. This erosion began on or about February 1 and was complete by February 6, when Superintendent Patterson became Event Commander. By February 6, Inspector Lucas had ceased to exercise the operational decision-making authority that the ICS framework reserves for the Incident Commander, and instead was serving as an operations coordinator who oversaw tactical-level operations. The Event Commander assumed the operational decision-making authority that he had previously exercised.

Inspector Lucas also indicated that the authority he formerly exercised over operational planning was transferred to the SCC during the week of January 31. Inspector Debbie Palmer was commanding the SCC during this week. The SCC assumed responsibility for operational planning in addition to its original logistics function, and Inspector Lucas's planning team was sent there. Both Inspector Palmer and Inspector Lucas reported to the Event Commander.

Inspector Lucas observed that Chief Sloly and the OPS executive began to interfere with operational decision-making authority during the week of January 31. He stated that Chief Sloly and the OPS executive were under pressure from the Ottawa Police Services Board, City councillors, and community groups to address residents' concerns. He stated that Chief Sloly and the OPS executive sometimes focused on obtaining quick enforcement wins that would be public relations successes and show that OPS was addressing residents' and councillors' concerns. Inspector Lucas was critical of this focus on quick wins because it diverted OPS resources that he required to stabilize the downtown core. Those diverted resources were sent to address City councillor concerns in outer areas of the downtown, such as Somerset, the Glebe, and Queen Elizabeth Driveway. He did not receive prior notice of shifting directions from the executive, and he lacked the resources in place to implement those directions.

Inspector Lucas indicated that the OPS executive's focus on quick wins interfered with the development of sound operational plans. He stated that the executive decided to launch specific operations without ensuring that supporting arrest, investigation, and



contingency plans were in place. He noted that OPS lacked plans to hold the areas that it intended to take from protestors, to transition those areas back to regular use, and to address how taking a particular area would impact protestor behaviour in OPS's other areas of operation. He stated that it was challenging for OPS to obtain resources from other police forces because OPS was unable to communicate a plan for how those resources would be deployed. He stated that OPS needed to improve its partnership with other police services that were assisting and to ensure greater discussion of plans within OPS before those plans were actioned.

Inspector Lucas also indicated that the OPS executive's focus on quick enforcement wins interfered with the role of PLT and was contrary to the Command Triangle. Specifically, he stated that the OPS executive sought to conduct enforcement before exhausting PLT negotiation options, and that this approach undermined protestor trust in PLT and PLT's effectiveness.

Specific Areas of Operation: Closure of Off-Ramps and Bridges, Coventry Road, and Rideau/Sussex Intersection

Inspector Lucas observed that the OPS executive's focus on obtaining quick wins had a negative effect on three actual or contemplated operations between February 4-6.

First, Chief Sloly's February 4 announcement that highway off-ramps and interprovincial bridges to the City of Ottawa would be closed created complications. Prior to Chief Sloly's announcement OPS was planning to temporarily close off-ramps and bridges when convoys arrived, rather than close them for the entire February 5-6 weekend. Inspector Lucas noted that there were concerns about OPS's authority to shut interprovincial bridges and expressed concern during the interview that closures would prevent healthcare workers from commuting to work and interfere with legitimate travel to and from the downtown core by Ottawa residents.

Second, Superintendent Patterson's February 6 decision to arrest protestors transporting fuel from Coventry Road at PLT's request undermined PLT's role. On February 6, PLT officers attended Coventry Road to negotiate with protestors and convinced them to remove fuel from the site. On an OPS command call that day, Inspector Lucas was pulled from the meeting and informed that Superintendent Patterson wanted to arrest the drivers of the trucks removing the fuel from Coventry Road. Inspector Lucas was concerned because he had not received arrest or investigation plans. He obeyed orders and directed a team leader to make the arrests. He observed that the arrests changed crowd dynamics and created a chaotic situation on the ground by severing PLT's working relationships with protestors. The arrests convinced protestors that PLT were liars and had betrayed them. They also demoralized the PLT team. Inspector Lucas reported that OPS PLT went home that evening, and that OPP withdrew its Provincial Liaison Team officers from OPS-led operations.

Inspector Lucas characterized the Coventry Road operation as an example of negative consequences of the OPS executive's focus on obtaining quick enforcement wins without



ensuring that supporting plans were in place and that potential impacts on other areas of operations had been considered. He noted that until the Coventry Road operation, OPS had used PLT to engage with protestors and successfully de-escalate on-the-ground flare ups. He stated that, while PLT engagement took time, it could generate significant successes. As an example, he noted that PLT convinced protestors to leave Confederation Park on February 6 by bringing in Algonquin elders to inform the protestors that they lacked Algonquin permission to be there and needed to leave. Inspector Lucas stated that instead of building on this success, OPS undermined the PLT's effectiveness by prioritizing a quick win on fuel enforcement. He also noted that OPS both lacked a plan to establish an embargo on protestors bringing fuel downtown and to obtain the resources required to establish an embargo. He stated that OPS should have developed an embargo plan and assembled the necessary resources to implement rather than seeking a quick win by arresting the protestors transporting fuel from the Coventry Road site.

Third, Inspector Lucas noted that shortly after the fuel arrests, the OPS executive wanted to conduct a public order operation to clear the intersection of Rideau St. and Sussex Drive without having addressed safety concerns or ensuring that supporting plans were in place. Inspector Lucas was not aware of all the details of the plan to clear the intersection because it was being developed by POU commanders. He was aware that POU members were concerned that the executive was planning to launch the operation too quickly, that safety concerns were unaddressed, and that OPS was not prepared to hold the area that it had cleared. He was also concerned that a public order action would cause ripple effects on protestor behavior elsewhere in Ottawa and on protests across Canada, and that the executive intended to proceed with the operation without exhausting peaceful negotiations by PLT.

February 7 Onwards: Arrival of Integrated Planning Team and Establishment of Unified Command

Inspector Lucas stated RCMP and OPP planners arrived in Ottawa and established an Integrated Planning Team during the week of February 7. He recalled that OPP Chief Superintendent Carson Pardy was OPP's lead within this group, that OPS's lead within this group after February 10 was Acting Superintendent Robert Bernier, and that it took them a week to develop an operational plan, assemble necessary resources and equipment, and develop contingency plans. Inspector Lucas did not participate in the preparation of this operational plan. He estimated that 1500 to 1800 officers from other police forces were deployed to Ottawa to implement it.

After the arrival of the Integrated Planning Team, OPS, RCMP, and OPP established a unified command with OPS that was based at the National Operations Centre in a RCMP facility. Inspector Lucas stated that RCMP and OPP pushed for the creation of unified command because they were both contributing additional officers and wanted a say in how those officers were used. He explained that the unified command differed from the NCRCC integrated command because it was not OPS-led. Instead, RCMP and OPP had a say in the development of the plan and in the operational decisions when the plan was



implemented. Inspector Lucas explained that OPS had previously participated in a unified command structure during the 2016 North American Leaders Summit.

Inspector Lucas stated that the establishment of a unified command improved the police response to the Freedom Convoy. Part of the reason was because the OPP and the RCMP were each managing their resources. Their taskings were integrated coming from their respective chain of commands. The NCRCC provided the ability for integrated operations as events unfolded. When OPS, RCMP, and OPP launched the final operation to clear protestors from downtown Ottawa on February 18, he understood when and how the operation would be launched, how far it would proceed on each day, and what contingency plans were in place for scenarios such as finding bombs as Superintendent Bernier provided updates to him.

[Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future](#)

Inspector Lucas stated that, based on lessons learned during the Freedom Convoy, he would take the following approach in response to a future convoy that indicated an intent to park on Wellington St. and stay until its demands were met:

- Request reinforcements from other police services well in advance of the event;
- Liaise with police forces on the convoy's route and ask those police forces to engage in intensive enforcement, including the conduct of motor vehicle inspections of convoy vehicles in every town and check the logs of vehicle drivers;
- Notify trucking companies that they would be held liable if their company's vehicles were used in the convoy; and,
- Conduct enforcement activities starting on the first day the convoy arrived.

Inspector Lucas indicated that he would still permit convoy vehicles to park on Wellington St. to prevent the convoy vehicles from causing disruptions in other parts of the City.