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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): I'd like to call the Standing Committee on National Defence to order.

We are here to discuss with our witnesses the defence of Canada and North America, and security and threat assessments focusing on the Canadian NORAD region aerial readiness.

Our witnesses today from the Department of National Defence are Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop, director general, international security policy; and Stephen Burt, assistant chief of defence intelligence, Canadian Forces intelligence command. From Global Affairs Canada we have David Drake, director general, international security and intelligence bureau.

Thank you, gentlemen, for taking time out of your day to come and speak to the committee.

Each person can take up to 10 minutes to give opening remarks. We'll start with both gentlemen from DND, at 10 minutes each, and then Mr. Drake from Global Affairs will have 10 minutes. Either Mr. Burt or Mr. Bishop can lead off.

Thank you for coming.

Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop (Director General, International Security Policy, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the invitation to appear before this committee as you examine what we believe to be a very important subject.

I'm Rear-Admiral Bishop, director general of international security policy at National Defence headquarters. I report to the assistant deputy minister for policy, and I'm responsible for managing our bilateral and multilateral defence relationships including, of course, our very important relationship with the United States of America. I hope that my comments today will help you with your work as you study the defence and security of North America.

I'd like to begin my remarks by providing a broad overview of some of the key initiatives and highlighting some key areas of our defence and security co-operation with our partner, the United States, including our participation in the North American Aerospace Defense Command, commonly referred to as NORAD.

[*Translation*]

As you know, the government has committed to undertaking a defence policy review which will examine Canada's defence priorities and drive our strategy to deal with a dynamic security environment and the uncertainties of the future. The defence of North America will almost certainly figure prominently in the defence policy review, as it has always been an immutable and enduring task for the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*English*]

Consequently, the Canadian Armed Forces is focused on ensuring that we are interoperable with the United States military and we're capable of conducting operations together across the spectrum of conflict. We do this through regular operations, joint exercises, and personnel exchanges in close co-operation as full and equal partners on virtually every defence issue of significance in North America. At any given time, there are more than 700 Canadian Armed Forces personnel serving in the United States. Approximately 300 of them are committed to the NORAD mission, including 147 who are posted to NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs, and there are literally dozens of others at many other locations spread across the United States.

Our minister and the U.S. Secretary of Defense meet regularly in Canada and Washington and at NATO meetings and other international forums elsewhere in the world. In addition to such senior leader engagement, a wide array of bilateral institutions and agreements help sustain and deepen our defence relationship.

The most important of these is the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which has met continuously since 1940. This board serves as a bilateral forum to discuss and provide advice on policy issues related to homeland defence and security, including global military challenges that affect continental defence. To adapt to the changes in the defence and security environment, the membership of the board has evolved significantly over the last decade and a half. Specifically, its composition has been expanded to include other security departments and agencies as well as our new military command structures in both our countries.

Today meetings of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence are attended by senior representatives in the Department of National Defence but also by members of Global Affairs Canada, the Privy Council Office, and the Department of Public Safety, with similar departments and agencies represented in the United States' delegation. The board continues to be the most senior political military advisory board on defence and security between our two countries, and it plays a crucial role in fostering frank discussion on the wide range of emerging issues that could potentially affect our continental defence and security.

In addition to the Permanent Joint Board on Defence and the many other Canada-U.S. forums focused on defence issues, there are more than 800 agreements and arrangements that govern the day-to-day defence relationship, including the NORAD agreement. NORAD itself is a cornerstone of the Canada-U.S. defence relationship and it has evolved significantly since it was established in 1958. Nevertheless, it remains today the key means by which our two nations jointly defend North American airspace. Canada works very closely with the United States to ensure that NORAD remains able to effectively deliver its three missions. These include aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning.

NORAD also plays an important role in ensuring Canadian sovereignty and security, serving as a deterrent against potential attacks, and providing crucial surveillance capability for North America's approaches. As a partner in NORAD, Canada provides a significant contribution to the surveillance of the continent's northern approaches, and this is why we're committed to protecting the status of NORAD as a critical element of North American defence and to continuing to explore options to ensure NORAD can modernize and evolve to meet existing and emerging challenges. A key part of these efforts is examining opportunities for the renewal of the north warning system.

● (0850)

To ensure that we are well positioned to discuss these important issues, we've established the mechanisms to bring together all relevant defence stakeholders, military and civilian, on a regular basis with our U.S. allies to discuss these issues.

[*Translation*]

Aside from cooperation through NORAD, a vital component of our day-to-day operational defence relationship is conducted under the Tri-Command Framework. The Tri-Command brings together Canada's Joint Operations Command, NORAD, and U.S. Northern Command. The Tri-Command is the primary venue through which Canada and the U.S. collaborate on preparing for and responding to civil emergencies, particularly through the Civil Assistance Plan. The Civil Assistance Plan facilitates military to military support from one nation to the other during natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or other crises.

For defence planning, the Combined Defence Plan provides a framework for the combined defence of Canada and the U.S. Similar to the Civil Assistance Plan, it provides a framework for how military forces from one nation can be provided in support of those of the other nation. In both contexts, our regional commanders have established relationships with their U.S. military colleagues across the border to ensure our countries can support each other if required. To ensure readiness, our two nations train and exercise together on an ongoing basis.

[*English*]

I'd also like to touch briefly on the Arctic. While the geographic and geopolitical landscape is complex and rapidly evolving, there is currently no military threat to Canada in the Arctic. However, National Defence does have an important role in the north, particularly in support of whole-of-government activities in the region, as well as through surveillance and sovereignty operations.

Here again our relationship with the United States is critically important. In addition to NORAD's responsibilities in the north, we also benefit from a tri-command framework for Arctic co-operation between CJOC, NORAD, and U.S. northern command. It identifies specific areas of co-operation on safety, security, and planning in the Arctic as it pertains to the defence of North America.

In closing, I'd like to emphasize that our defence relationship with the United States has been and continues to be of critical importance to Canada. As we look at the future and are confronted with a threat environment that remains volatile, unpredictable, chaotic, and ambiguous, this special relationship will continue to be of pre-eminent importance to both nations, as both Canada's and the United States' defence and security will depend on our continued collaboration as full and equal partners in North American defence.

Thank you.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Admiral.

Mr. Burt, you have up to 10 minutes.

Mr. Stephen Burt (Assistant Chief of Defence Intelligence, Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair and members of Parliament, thank you very much for the invitation to testify before you this morning. It is my distinct pleasure to address you today and provide our views on threats to North America.

[*English*]

I'd like to take a moment before I get into the prepared remarks to acknowledge the serious event this morning in Brussels, in Belgium writ large. Obviously I do touch on terrorism in my remarks, but I'm happy to take any questions you have. It's an evolving situation. We're getting things minute by minute on this. Much of it is coming in over open sources, through the media, so I'm not that much further ahead than any of you are, but I'd be happy to take questions on that.

Before I talk about possible threats to Canada as we see them, I would like to provide some background on the role of the Canadian Forces intelligence command—CFINTCOM, as we call it. The role of the command consists of helping the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces to make sound decisions in exercising their duties. Whether that's conducting operations in the Arctic, providing support to events such as the 2010 Olympic Games, or carrying out overseas operations, the Canadian Armed Forces have need of the most accurate and up-to-date intelligence in order to achieve their military objectives and ensure the security and protection of their personnel.

Defence intelligence is also a key element in the ability of the Government of Canada to make informed decisions on defence issues, national security, and foreign affairs. In carrying out our mandate, I can say with pride that our intelligence capability is world class and offers the necessary tools, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, to give our leaders an information advantage in making those decisions. Intelligence is a leading factor in operational success.

I should also note that we benefit from productive relationships with our whole-of-government partners, working closely with the Privy Council Office, the RCMP, CSIS, CSE, Public Safety, and Global Affairs, to name a few. You and the Canadians you represent may be certain that your intelligence organizations are promoting the interests of this country in the areas of defence and security.

Canada also has a solid defence intelligence relationship with our Five Eyes partners, including Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Permanent liaison offices in Ottawa, Washington, London, and Canberra help manage these relationships.

[*Translation*]

Now, to the subject at hand—threats to North America. I appreciate the opportunity to help situate the committee and your subsequent report in how we see the current threat environment. CFINTCOM focuses the vast majority of its energy on military threats and support to Canadian Forces operations abroad.

[*English*]

We define threat as a combination of intent and capability. An entity with the desire to harm Canada but no capability to do so does not in our view represent a threat. Having discerned a foreign actor's intent to harm Canada, the intelligence apparatus must track any advancement in its capabilities in order to determine if that entity presents a threat. Tracking or predicting changes in capability is sometimes challenging, but is usually possible within a reasonable margin of error. Gauging current and evolving intent is more complicated but still possible. However, predicting future intent is highly risky. Where a state may not exhibit hostility while it is developing a capability, once acquired, that capability remains in its arsenal whatever changes happen in its political calculus and intent.

With that definition in mind, I can say that at this time we do not see a state actor that has both the capability and the intent to harm Canada militarily. Nevertheless, we view the proliferation and potential use of weapons of mass destruction, or WMD, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear, as well as the development of ballistic missiles capable of reaching North America, as worrisome. States of concern, such as Iran and North Korea, will likely continue in their attempts to acquire, develop, and improve weapons of mass destruction, along with the ballistic missile capabilities to deliver them.

The dual-use nature of most biological and many chemical-related technologies makes monitoring weapons programs and procurement involving these materials difficult. Furthermore, the ostensible civilian application of nuclear technology and the use of space launch vehicles can mask military intentions. It is important to note, however, that we assess that only states can master the complexities of ballistic missile delivery systems.

In the case of Iran, its current missile arsenal lacks the range to strike targets within North America. With the current P5+1 joint action plan, we assess that the potential for Iranian covert nuclear weapons development has been substantially set back, and is more likely to be detected should it occur.

● (0900)

North Korea, on the other hand, has expressly indicated that it wants to be able to target North America with nuclear armed missiles. While it is actively developing ballistic missiles that could potentially reach North America, whether North Korea has developed a practical weapon is unclear. North Korea's recent claim of successfully testing a thermonuclear weapon or H-bomb is unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, that country's history demonstrates continuing efforts to develop a viable nuclear weapon capability, which we will continue to watch closely.

[*Translation*]

Terrorism is obviously at the forefront of our minds as a challenge to the security of North America. While the primary Government of Canada agencies responsible for countering terrorism domestically are the RCMP and CSIS, the Canadian armed forces are ready to play a role in supporting their emergency management partners across Canada. We also work closely with these and other partners to ensure the safety of our CAF personnel and infrastructure.

[*English*]

Finally, with regard to cyber, there are two specific areas of interest for the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command: threats that affect the ability of the armed forces to operate, and the cyber-capabilities of foreign actors. The bigger picture of cyber-threats, that is, threats to Canada in general, and threats emanating from non-military cyber-actors are the purview of the Department of Public Safety.

The potential exists for foreign states to employ computer network exploitation capabilities in support of strategic intelligence collection. More simply put, this means using computers to spy on Canada. They may also use network reconnaissance in support of planned or anticipated computer network attacks. That is looking at our computer systems so at the moment when we would have to be defending ourselves, they would conduct a cyber-attack in an attempt to render our command and control systems inoperable. As well, they may use network attacks against private and government data and communications networks on which we in the Department of Defence and the armed forces rely.

CFINTCOM is interested in all such incidents because they affect the ability of the armed forces to operate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, this concludes my presentation. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I look forward to answering your questions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Burt.

That concludes the opening remarks from DND. I'd like to give some time to Global Affairs Canada and David Drake.

Mr. David Drake (Director General, International Security and Intelligence Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you very much.

Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. It's my pleasure to be here today to discuss the foreign policy considerations related to the defence of North America.

First, allow me to say just a few words about my own role at Global Affairs Canada.

[*Translation*]

As Director General of the International Security and Intelligence Bureau at Global Affairs Canada, I am responsible for the management of the foreign policy dimension of all of Canada's defence and security relationships. However, my bureau is also responsible for our relationships with other bilateral allies and partners, as well as engagement with key multilateral security organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and Canada's commitments to the U.S.-led Anti-ISIL Coalition.

My bureau also acts as a focal point within our department for intelligence matters and has the responsibility for advancing Canadian positions to address international crime and terrorism as well as to provide advice on certain programming initiatives in support of these objectives.

● (0905)

[*English*]

Let me focus on Canada's foreign policy responses to potential threats to the North American continent. Then I will examine the Canadian activity outside North America to address potential challenges before they reach our shores.

First, let me begin by underscoring that beyond the clear domestic and sovereignty prerogatives of my National Defence and Public Safety colleagues, from a Global Affairs Canada perspective, the security of North America is the primary enabler for the close economic ties with the U.S. that underpin the prosperity of both Canada and the United States.

Almost 25% of Canada's GDP is generated through exports to the U.S. Comparatively, exports to all other countries generate only an additional 6% of Canada's GDP. In 2015, Canada-U.S. trade in goods and services reached almost $881 billion in annual trade for goods and services. Canadian exports to the U.S. were about $450 billion, representing more than 72% of all Canadian exports. Canada imported $431 billion in goods and services from the U.S., representing more than 64% of total imports. Goods and services worth over $2.4 billion cross the U.S.-Canada border every day.

As such, the importance of maintaining a relationship of mutual confidence, including assurances that potential threats will not originate or pass through our respective countries, is fundamental to the continuation of the free and open relationship that Canada and the U.S. currently enjoy.

Moreover, the North American geographic reality necessitates close bilateral co-operation between the U.S. and Canada. We have the world's longest shared border, which has led to close transnational co-operation on domestic security measures. We are surrounded on almost all sides by rugged coastlines, a reality that has driven increased Canada-U.S. collaboration on maritime domain awareness and the 2006 expansion of NORAD's mandate to include maritime warning.

Also, the vast Canadian Arctic and its approaches are of undeniable geostrategic importance for the defence of both Canada and the U.S., as Admiral Bishop has just mentioned, which is the reason that we have invested significant resources into our northern defences.

In an increasingly resource-constrained environment, and given the high cost of operating over significant distances and in the north, the benefit for Canada of close co-operation and cost sharing with the U.S. are obvious. While defence imperatives always require delicate decisions on military investments, without the close defence co-operation that Canada enjoys with the U.S., Canada would be required to make some very difficult decisions on military investments.

As mentioned, one of the primary mechanisms for North American defence is NORAD, the binational command staffed by both Canadian and American military and civilian officers. This organization is unique in the world and has been a priority for Canada since it was formed in 1958. Furthermore, it is seen as a foreign policy priority as well. Global Affairs Canada, for example, contributes a political adviser to NORAD in Colorado Springs, who reports directly to the commander of NORAD.

[*Translation*]

Over the past several decades, the geopolitical situation to which NORAD has responded has shifted and evolved, and NORAD has undergone several adaptations to its roles and responsibilities as a result.

This includes the addition of a domestic airspace monitoring and response role following the 9/11 attacks, and the addition of a maritime warning role in 2006, which I already mentioned earlier, to ensure seamless monitoring and assessment of North America's maritime domain.

[*English*]

Global Affairs Canada continues to work closely with National Defence, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. State Department to ensure that NORAD is able to evolve and modernize to address emerging threats. This work includes the support of bilateral consultations to examine North American defence infrastructure, organization, and planning required for the combined defence of North America.

Admiral Bishop has mentioned the PJBD, the Canada-U.S. Permanent Joint Board on Defence, and I will not repeat the important points he made except to note that obviously this is something that involves very much both sides and that also recently added board members from both Public Safety and PCO to give a wider breadth of discussion and co-operation to this discussion.

● (0910)

[*Translation*]

While our relationship with the U.S. is clearly a priority, allow me to now take the discussion a bit further afield, by noting that our strong preference is to prevent threats to North America at their source, by employing the full range of diplomatic and military tools and the Canadian tool-kit.

[*English*]

This includes diplomatic efforts to engage and de-escalate tensions wherever possible, including through the promotion of nuclear security, non-proliferation and disarmament, combined with the provision of development assistance, security programming, capacity building, and peace operations.

Global Affairs Canada maintains key security programming tools including the counterterrorism capacity-building program, intended to build the capacity of beneficiary states to prevent and respond to terrorist activity globally, and the anti-crime capacity-building program, which aims to enhance the capacity of beneficiary states to prevent and respond to threats posed by transnational criminal activity, principally, in the Americas.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, through a range of multilateral and bilateral engagements, Canada has also focused its diplomatic efforts on addressing trans-national organized crime and illegal migration, and countering violent extremism including through Canada's support to the U.S.-led Anti-ISIL Coalition.

[*English*]

Finally, Canada is also a member of a range of multilateral organizations, the goals of which are to prevent escalation through a combination of military and diplomatic co-operation, confidence building, and deterrence. These include institutions like the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, and others. Canada's membership in these organizations has additional benefits as well, such as, for example, increased situational awareness, training, and joint exercises.

Global Affairs Canada works closely with our colleagues at National Defence to ensure that our strategic and policy directions are well aligned with Canada's interests and our bilateral and multilateral relations are supportive of a more secure North America and a more secure global situation as well.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Drake.

We're ready to go to our first round of seven-minute questions.

Ms. Romanado, you have the floor.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank Rear-Admiral Scott Bishop for his service to Canada.

[*English*]

Rear-Admiral, you spoke of the importance of the relationship between Canada and the United States. Canada currently consists of 14 wings across Canada, including two fighter wings, which are in Bagotville and Cold Lake.

Given the fact that we have these 14 wings across Canada and these two fighter wings, I'd like to get a sense from you as to why, in the recent past, U.S. fighter planes have conducted directed landings on Canadian soil.

RAdm Scott Bishop: Obviously, Canada and the United States together represent a big space, and both countries have limited resources when we're talking about such a large area. A key tenet of the NORAD agreement is that the commander of NORAD, who is an American four-star admiral or general, whose deputy is always a Canadian, normally a three-star air force general, has the authority to move air assets that are assigned to NORAD back and forth across the border, depending on the threat or the need to position aircraft for a potential threat.

One of the benefits of being in this NORAD agreement is that we're essentially pooling our resources given the difficulty of defending such a large continent. Those decisions are taken by NORAD and that's all covered under the NORAD agreement.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Okay, but in terms of our sovereignty, you mentioned that Canada is a big space to cover. Do you think we currently have the aerial support we need with our current fleet, in terms of where they're located and in terms of fuelling capabilities, and so on and so forth? Could you elaborate a little bit on that?

● (0915)

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would start by saying that NORAD is always looking at the mission they've been assigned, and they're always looking at making sure they have the resources they need to meet the mission they've been given. There are constant discussions in NORAD, looking at the threat, where aircraft are, and how many aircraft they have assigned.

The commander of NORAD right now is looking very seriously at the evolving threat, and is in a process of having some very preliminary discussions about where NORAD should go in the future, under the context of NORAD modernization. Part of that is taking a look at the north warning system, as I said in my opening remarks, and making sure the system is appropriate to deal with the kinds of threats we may see in the future. The other part of it is looking at the resources NORAD has. That is all looked at on a regular basis.

We have fighter aircraft who are on alert in Canada. They're essentially put on alert state by NORAD. If there's an increase in a threat, they can increase their alert posture and essentially call more aircraft into an alert state, and be ready to respond given a higher threat.

I think in terms of numbers right now, NORAD is achieving the mission it's been given. We have those wings, as you said. We have two operational fighter bases. We also have some forward operating locations in Canada's far north, which NORAD regularly forward-deploys aircraft to if they perceive that the threat condition has changed. They regularly practise that.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Further to that, in your opening statement you mentioned there are currently no military threats to Canada in the Arctic. My concern is around why we have one of our fighter wings in Cold Lake when there isn't a presence on the west coast. I know we're depending on our partners with NORAD, but I'm just curious to know why we're not on the west coast.

RAdm Scott Bishop: Well, we don't have a permanent presence on the west coast in terms of a fighter base, but the aircraft that are based in Cold Lake do regularly move out to Comox and operate from that operating location.

Again, these are decisions that are made by NORAD, based on what the threat is and where they perceive they need aircraft based on what's going on in the world. On a fairly regular basis, they will forward-deploy fighter aircraft, including fighters from Cold Lake, Alberta, to operate from Comox for as long as they need them there. The west coast of Canada is not cut out of the process, and we're not reliant on the United States to have fighters on the west coast. As I said, quite often fighters will move from Cold Lake to Comox and operate from there, if NORAD assesses that they're required there.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Okay.

On that basis, right now a CF-18 range with ordnance is 3,330 kilometres, and combat radius is 537 kilometres. The distance from Cold Lake to Vancouver is over 1,000 kilometres. My concern is that we're putting not our eggs in one basket, but we're looking at our partners with NORAD and the States to cover our western assets. You have elaborated on that. In terms of the—

Pardon?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): He didn't hear what you said.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Oh.

In terms of our western fleet, I believe NORAD has bases in Portland and Alaska. Is that correct?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would have to go back and check on specific U.S. basing in Alaska. There are a number of bases in Alaska that the United States operates from, but I would have to confirm that.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Okay.

In terms of our capability to cover the large space of Canada, how important is our tanker support for our fleets?

RAdm Scott Bishop: It's vitally important. We all understand that Canada is a huge country, and the aerospace dimension of Canada is even larger as it extends to seaward. We would be hard pressed with our fighter aircraft to be able to achieve the NORAD mission without refuelling support from tankers. That is a critical element of the NORAD mission, just to be able to cover the geography.

That again is another advantage of working inside this NORAD agreement with the United States. We're able to share our tanker resources with the United States when they require them, but also we're able to draw on U.S. tanker resources for NORAD missions.

The Chair: That's your seven minutes, with perfect timing.

I'd like to give the floor to Ms. Gallant, please.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, through you, to our witnesses.

You mentioned that there are no immediate conventional threats; however, we're working on a white paper that will have to do for at least a decade, and all our procurements going forth will be predicated upon these potential threats. What are the top five threats —conventional, asymmetric, and hybrid—to the safety and security of citizens in North America?

● (0920)

Mr. Stephen Burt: The top five threats, all types...? That's what you said?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Burt: In terms of the top five threats, the most urgent one, the one that takes up most of the time and energy at the moment, is terrorism. I think what I said in my statement is that we see no state actors that are currently threatening North America militarily, which is a statement that I would stand behind.

Terrorism is certainly at the top of our list in terms of the amount of time and energy it takes. That's not for state actors, obviously, and not, I would say, an existential military threat, but it's a threat that we watch closely and help out on with our partners wherever we can, as well as watching closely as to what it means for our personnel.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: That's immediate, but—

Mr. Stephen Burt: That's immediate.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: —please include over the next 10 years the trending that you're seeing.

Mr. Stephen Burt: In terms of the next 10 years, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is something that we are watching closely. The evolution of the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East with the Islamic State is something that is of great concern. The proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia is something that we watch, not because we think they are threat to us specifically, but because the proliferation of those weapons is a grave concern.

From my perspective, ballistic missile proliferation really focuses in on North Korea in terms of states that we worry about. Other state actors have an established ballistic missile capability or, for that matter, cruise missile capability—Russia and China—but we don't see the intent there. As I said in my opening remarks, you have to watch intent like a hawk, essentially, which is where I'm going on this, because intent can change. They have an established capability. It is a grave concern. However, we see no reason to believe that in the next 10 years they would form a threat to Canada.

Then there's cyber, and I think it's the only other one that I have to touch on as well. Cyber is an ever-present one. It's often difficult to tell who the actors are behind those attacks. It's something that affects not just our ability to protect the information we have and that we gather in order to inform decision-making here in government, but even our ability to operate. Over the next 10 years, I think this is something that we're going to have to build into our systems in a much more robust and thorough way than we have up to this point, in order to make sure that we are well defended on that front.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What cyber-warfare representation, if any, does Canada have at NORAD?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Cyber-warfare representation at NORAD...?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The U.S. has a cyber command.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Right.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is there a Canadian element there?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Their cyber command is not within NORAD.

RAdm Scott Bishop: It's not within NORAD.

We are very interested in cyber. We do have some liaison officers and exchange officers working in U.S. cyber command. This is primarily because we understand the importance of cyber as a warfare domain going into the future, and we are actively trying to build our knowledge base and expertise base of cyber operations. Cyber operations are really a domain that militaries will be expected to operate in to conduct military operations in the future.

Our cyber posture is focused on defensive operations: protecting our information and war-fighting networks to be able to achieve a mission. I fully expect that cyber will be a key item of discussion in the upcoming policy review.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: At this point in time, there is no cyber element related to NORAD. There's no representation.

RAdm Scott Bishop: I don't believe that we have people participating in a cyber cell inside NORAD. I'm sure that U.S northern command is working on cyber issues, and we do work closely with U.S. northern command, but to your question, yes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Do we have representation in terms of Canada's critical infrastructure at NORAD so that when they see what's going on they can pinpoint areas of concern in real time?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Yes, NORAD does consider critical infrastructure, but that would be a subject I couldn't go into in a lot of detail due to security classifications.

● (0925)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay, but do we have representation there? The last time you were there, we did not.

RAdm Scott Bishop: In the NORAD command structure, we have a fully integrated role with the United States. It's a binational command, so it is a joint Canada-U.S. command.

Canada is an equal partner in decisions that are made in NORAD.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In the plans and priorities, one of the items listed in the estimates is cyber-defence. I saw that there was a call for proposals looking for input into this.

How far has Canada progressed on this front?

RAdm Scott Bishop: On cyber-defence...?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: From a military standpoint.

RAdm Scott Bishop: It's important to point out that in Canada, obviously the lead for cyber is the Department of Public Safety.

On the military side, as I said, for some time the military has been aware that cyber is a very important part of conducting military operations and has sought to include cyber in its planning. In our Canadian joint operations command, we have a nascent cell that is looking at cyber issues and taking account of cyber issues in the planning of military operations before we actually launch those ops. Cyber is incorporated into operations right from the very beginning of planning.

The Chair: That's your time.

The next question goes to Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for appearing here today.

In the analysis that you presented regarding threats, as somebody who is from the west coast and represents a naval riding, there seems to be less attention on naval affairs than perhaps on air affairs, and maybe that's a response to the threats.

I'm certainly happy to see the maritime warning part included in NORAD. I just wonder if any of you would like to comment on the naval capacity of Canada as part of the defence of North America, as opposed to the air defence, which we seem to be mostly focused on by talking about NORAD.

I know I'm asking a rear-admiral.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

RAdm Scott Bishop: It is a question that I can't duck as an admiral. It's a really good question.

The NORAD agreement was amended a few years ago to incorporate maritime warning in its mandate, looking at the maritime approaches in North America. It's a very important mission set.

I would assure you that NORAD pays a significant amount of attention to the maritime approaches to North America, as we do in the Canadian Armed Forces. We're very concerned about what is happening in our waters, on all three of our coasts. We work with the Americans to create a common picture of what is going on in our continental approaches. We use naval assets, as you would imagine, but we also make extensive use of space-based surveillance systems, including Canada's RADARSAT constellation mission.

It is a very important aspect of NORAD, and obviously for Canada and the Canadian Forces, we want to make sure we understand who's in our waters and what they're doing.

Mr. Stephen Burt: I would add, as well, that from an intelligence perspective, we do spend a lot of time—I didn't touch on it in my remarks—focusing on maritime naval developments in other nations where we think there's the potential they will affect us, whether that's close to home or in places like the South China Sea or the Mediterranean.

Mr. Randall Garrison: In terms of development of capabilities rather than threats, there's been a large investment in submarine forces around the Asia-Pacific. Would that be something that you're monitoring in case of changed intent?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Absolutely.

Without getting into a lot details about what we do and how we do it, the developments, particularly in Asia-Pacific.... I wouldn't say they're troubling, but certainly it's what appears to be a more classic sort of military arms race dynamic among a number of countries there, both surface and subsurface weapons systems.

Mr. Randall Garrison: One of the things I think the government is going to be grappling with is the linking of threat analysis to capability development within the Canadian Forces.

I heard two interesting things this morning. One is a statement that there's currently no military threat to Canada in the Arctic. The other is that at this moment there's no state actor that's a threat.

How would you link that to Canada's fighter capacity? We're looking at a fighter that has what I would call the maximum capacities, but that doesn't seem to be linked to the threat analysis in any way.

In other words, might we need something else in terms of air capacity, like heavy lift for participating in peacekeeping or other kinds of things, when instead we're looking at a fighter plane with enormous capacities that, as I said, don't seem to be linked to the threats?

● (0930)

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would say that the comment that there's no direct military threat from another state to Canada in the next 10 years is one that we would all stand behind. I think one of the issues that we face is that it's very difficult to predict with certainty what the world is going to look like over a very long horizon of 20, 30, or 40 years. If we went back to only two or three years ago, I think most of us would not have predicted Russian annexation of the Crimea and Russia's efforts to destabilize eastern Ukraine.

I think there's always a worst-case scenario that we need to be ready to work through, and a lot of those worst-case scenarios require very high-end capabilities. This is obviously something that will be a major feature of the upcoming defence policy review, in which they are going to be looking at the kinds of military capabilities that will be required by Canada over that longer horizon to make sure that the country is always prepared to do its share in the defence of North America.

Mr. Randall Garrison: One of the other themes that seem to run through the presentation this morning is that of the dependence on interoperability with the United States.

Mr. Drake, does this reliance on interoperability in any way restrict Canada's ability to operate an independent foreign policy? In other words, by putting a lot of chips on the interoperability bet, do we restrict our ability to act independently on other foreign policy issues?

Mr. David Drake: I don't think so. I don't think the two are naturally in contradiction of each other. Obviously to defend North America, there is really no choice but to work together. I think it's clear as the admiral and as Stephen Burt have said.

How do we deal with things abroad? I think we need to recognize that we work as a sovereign nation within NATO, in which we have treaty obligations to defend all NATO members and so forth. I think one needs to look at sovereignty in a wider perspective, and I think it's a genuine response that Canada is very much a country with multilateral orientation and we are simply too small a country to be able to look at absolute power projection in any circumstance. We need these abilities to work with others to protect and to do our part within a wider context.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You touched on the reason for my concern, which was the comments yesterday by a certain Republican presidential candidate, who indicated a certain deviance from U.S. foreign policy and commitment to NATO. He said he regarded NATO as a large waste of money and that the U.S. commitment to NATO should be reassessed.

Wouldn't that present a large challenge to Canada if we had such a person occupying the White House when we have a very strong commitment to NATO?

Mr. David Drake: We really don't comment on what is pretty idle speculation from news reports of discussions of presidential candidates, so with your permission, I'll just pass on that one.

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would say that the issue of sovereignty obviously is absolutely critical to us when we're talking about North American defence. We keep a very close eye on any effort by NORAD that looks at modernizing or changing the way they do business to make sure that Canada's sovereignty concerns are kept first and foremost in those discussions. Being interoperable with the United States to pursue military operations is not surrendering Canadian sovereignty. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Being interoperable with the United States lets us remain an equal partner because we have capabilities to work shoulder to shoulder with our most important ally.

The other benefit of remaining interoperable with the United States is that the United States sets the bar for any military operation of significance around the world. By ensuring that we are very interoperable with the United States, Canada can operate in pretty much any foreign military operation and not only operate but also assume a leadership role, which we have done several times.

● (0935)

The Chair: Thank you, Rear-Admiral.

We will go now to the next question, by Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

I think the rear-admiral spoke mostly about the evolution of NORAD from 1958 on. The events of 9/11 certainly demonstrated that NORAD is very relevant, and we can agree that we have a new threat in ISIS. Is there a continual evolution towards being prepared for that type of terrorist event as opposed to the terrorist event of 9/11, which was certainly different from what we're seeing in the world now?

RAdm Scott Bishop: That is an excellent question. We have talked extensively about NORAD's role in aerospace defence looking outside of the continent in monitoring the continental approaches, but NORAD also has a very key role inside the continent in continental aerospace, specifically to look at the threat of an airborne attack from a malign actor like a terrorist. This obviously had its genesis in the 9/11 attacks.

NORAD continuously monitors what's happening in the skies above Canada and the United States. It maintains a high level of awareness about what is going on in the airspace, and not only in terms of where aircraft are moving. It's plugged into federal departments on both sides of the border to understand if there are any issues on board aircraft that are in flight. NORAD has an extensive array of procedures to deal with aircraft that may not be under positive control by pilots, and has a set of procedures to deal with that. That is a very important component of the NORAD mission.

Again, we see that co-operation extend in both directions across the Canada-U.S. border to deal with that potentiality. It is something that NORAD does pay a significant amount of attention to.

Mr. Darren Fisher: In the last Parliament, this very same committee completed a study and sent it to the House. The government had 120 days to respond, but of course there was an election. I haven't read that entire report, but are we able to break new ground here? Are we looking at different things that were not looked at in that last report?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Could you give me an example of specifically what you have in mind?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Well, we're sticking with the aerial side of things in this portion of this study. Do you think we're doing the same things that were done in the 41st Parliament?

RAdm Scott Bishop: That's a difficult question, because I'm not entirely sure I understand the context you've provided and specifically what you may be after.

The issue in terms of NORAD is that they are constantly looking at how they need to evolve to deal with the threats we have today. As I said, there is a lot of ongoing but very nascent discussion in NORAD about how NORAD might have to change, going into the future. We're at the very beginning stages of those discussions. Admiral Gortney, the current commander of NORAD, is working with his staff to explore different options. We're a full participant in those discussions.

I'm not sure if that answers the question.

Mr. Darren Fisher: It does.

I'll move to a fairly general question. I think there is a notion among certainly a portion of the Canadian public that we're not the best equipped or the best prepared to meet our challenges, and that we rely heavily on the United States. There were a lot of comments about equal partners with the United States.

Do you feel that's a relatively true statement, the feeling of the Canadian population, or do you feel that we're well equipped, that we have everything we need, to be an equal partner with the United States? Are we relying on them too heavily?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I couldn't speak for the Canadian population, but I can certainly speak for the Canadian military. I can tell you that we feel we have the level of equipment and training to be an equal partner with the United States in operations, particularly in NORAD. We make a pretty significant contribution to North American defence. I think that contribution is very well appreciated by the United States in the military chain.

As we look for the defence policy review and a replacement of some of our current capability for the military, we will be very interested in making sure that we remain able to operate with the United States, both to protect our continent and to work with them and other partners internationally to pursue military operations when the Canadian government decides it needs to do so.

On a military-to-military level, I think there is a deep amount of respect for what Canada brings to the table in NORAD, a deep amount of respect for what we're doing in operations around the world, but the defence policy review will have to chart the future for Canada and the Canadian Forces in terms of maintaining our interoperability and ability to conduct operations with allies going forward.

● (0940)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, guys.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You have about 90 seconds left. I'll take a quick question, if that's okay.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Sure.

The Chair: This might be for Mr. Burt, but anyone can jump in.

You mentioned earlier that our top threat currently is probably an asymmetric one, so terrorism probably represents our biggest challenge. Thinking of the western part of Canada, would you agree—without giving us a specific threat assessment—that from Winnipeg west, let's say, there would be a higher probability of an incident occurring in the Vancouver area, more often than not, just given the volume and diversity of air traffic going in and out of Vancouver? Would you say that's a fair statement?

Mr. Stephen Burt: For the primary threat, the integrated terrorism assessment centre, out of CSIS, is the lead for this. We feed them staff to help them work on these things, but for these issues, they're really our centre of excellence for the government.

Speaking generally, the terrorism threat in Canada is the inspired individual who is already in Canada. While there are certainly threats to aviation security that have to be monitored closely by Transport and others, by all of us, including through the NORAD construct, I think the chances are that events are going to happen in big urban centres, and they're going to be done by individuals who are already there and who are disaffected for some reason or another. Those are tough cases to track.

The Chair: Just by definition, Vancouver is probably the biggest urban centre west of Winnipeg, so by default, that—

Mr. Stephen Burt: That would be Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Those are the areas that—it's not my mandate—the people who are in that business spend most of their time and energy on.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Next we're going to questions in five-minute rounds, and first up is Mark Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to build on a couple of things. Very briefly—this has been brought up by a few members—there has been a comment that there is currently no military threat in the Arctic. What do you mean by "currently"?

Preparing for a military threat is not something you can do once the threat has been acknowledged. You're going to want to be prepared in advance of a threat. I think it was Rear-Admiral Bishop who made the comment. If you could build on that a bit, I would appreciate it.

RAdm Scott Bishop: Do you want to start, Stephen?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Sure, I can comment on that from an intelligence perspective.

When we look at the Arctic, we can see that there are certainly multiple actors in the Arctic—Russia is the primary example—and there are people who do things in the Arctic who we watch closely and occasionally find of concern. But there's nothing that we consider direct threats to Canada, or to North America, for that matter.

They're not doing anything up there that they don't have a sovereign right to do. They're working in international airspace. They're working largely within rules that we all respect internationally.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: But you would agree that it's a threat.... It's not something that you would foresee coming, necessarily?

Mr. Stephen Burt: It comes down to what I was saying previously about intent and capability. No one at the present time has an intent to threaten us in the Arctic or anywhere. Intent can change, obviously, and it can change quite quickly.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

Did you want to add something, Rear-Admiral Bishop?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Yes. When we say that there's no threat to Canada in the Arctic, it doesn't mean that there's nothing important about the Arctic, far from it. There is a lot of activity going on in the Arctic with global warming and climate change. The Arctic is becoming increasingly ice free, and because of that, there is more activity in the Canadian Arctic year over year.

With the open skies agreements, a lot of commercial aircraft fly over the polar regions. If unfortunately there were a major air disaster in the Canadian Arctic, it would be Canada's sovereignty, such that we would be the first responder on the scene to provide assistance.

There is a lot of stuff going on in the Arctic. There are a lot of federal agencies that operate or have mandates there, but really, getting into the Arctic is a very difficult thing to do. It is the most expeditionary theatre that the Canadian Armed Forces operate in. As you know, there is no infrastructure in the Arctic. There are no roads, no rail lines, and rudimentary airports and logistics facilities.

There is a significant military role in the Arctic, even though there is no direct military threat in the Arctic.

● (0945)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

I'm going to change a bit to the discussion about the west coast. Based on some of the information that we obtained, NORAD has identified that since 2001 and the 2001 terrorist attacks, there were more than 3,500 possible air threats intercepted, which involved more than 1,400 aircraft in airspace in Canada and the U.S.

You talked a bit about NORAD and equal partners between Canada and the States. The U.S., on a number of occasions, has sent or scrambled jets to intercept. They've come to Canada's defence, so to speak. I imagine a lot of that has to do with the fact that we would scramble from Cold Lake and that the commute is quite far.

We're depending quite a bit on the U.S. to defend us. I'm curious to hear if you can comment on this. How many times have we scrambled to defend the States likewise? How often does that happen?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Obviously it doesn't happen as often, but it does happen. I don't have specific command statistics at my fingertips, but I know from personal experience, having worked on the strategic joint staff last year, that there have been occasions where we have sent Canadian Forces F-18s into American airspace in response to an air incident. It does happen. Obviously, the United States has more fighter resources than we do. The commander of NORAD uses all the fighters that he has at his disposal, both Canadian and U.S., to make the best decisions.

I think when there is a threat stream or we have indications and warnings of an event, then the commander of NORAD repositions the aircraft to be ready to respond to those events. For air incidents that occur in Canadian and American airspace in civil aircraft, as you can imagine, there's very little notice involved with those kinds of incidents, so we don't have the opportunity to forward or position aircraft.

Given the size of our country and the resources that we have for defence, I don't think we'd ever be in a position where we would always be able to scramble an aircraft to intercept another aircraft anywhere in Canada. I don't think that's realistic. That's why the NORAD agreement works so well for us because we are able to help the Americans out and they're able to help us out, but in a way that respects each other's sovereignty.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Admiral.

We'll move on to the next question for five minutes with Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rear-Admiral Bishop, we have up till now talked a lot about issues relating to threats. We know that operations with NORAD are of primordial importance. This goes back to 1958. The threat to the north and to the west has always remained roughly the same. However, as you mentioned, there is a change in the environment because of the ice melting.

The threat is not so much the possibility that we may be attacked, but concerns our territorial sovereignty. An assessment has been made of our territory. I would like to know whether we have adequate military equipment at this time. A lot of investments have been made in detection in the north. Concerning the global spectrum, I presume that detection is covered by NORAD and by satellite. There is also equipment on the ground, our CP-140 Auroras and our F-18s.

Do we currently have adequate military equipment to ensure our sovereignty, in light of the threats that have been discussed?

RAdm Scott Bishop: That is an excellent question.

Because of the size of our country, we always have to set priorities when investing in equipment for the Canadian Forces. The defence policy review that will take place over the next few months will allow us to identify the needs in respect of new equipment. It is always a matter of resources with regard to the threats. We have to make decisions in light of that reality.

● (0950)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Rear-Admiral and Mr. Burt, my question is about the current threat.

I think we can agree that you could always use more equipment, but the members of the committee need to understand the situation. We have been talking about threats for an hour, but is Canada well equipped at this time to counter them? If you had to set a priority for additional equipment for our air forces, what would that be?

RAdm Scott Bishop: The issue of new equipment will be included in the defence policy review. In today's world, military operations are very complex and taking part in them requires a lot of equipment. That is why we are cooperating with the United States, NATO and our other allies to conduct operations. It is impossible to provide all of the necessary equipment for any given operation.

For its part, Canada has the equipment it needs to be a very good ally and a good partner to the U.S. in conducting operations. As I said previously, Canada is very well respected as an ally by the United States and the other countries. There will soon be discussions in the context of the defence policy review regarding the acquisition of new equipment. It will be a key issue in the review.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, I'd like to clarify one point.

The rear-admiral mentioned that the department is doing a capacity assessment, but what is our role here with regard to that?

We can talk about it again later.

Do I have a bit of time left, Mr. Chair?

[*English*]

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: We often hear that terrorism and cyber threats are not the responsibility of National Defence, but of Public Safety.

Do you intend to improve your relationship with that department? I think transferring the issue to another organization is not a good idea.

Mr. Stephen Burt: At National Defence, we have a specific mandate regarding the protection of our personnel and infrastructure. Their safety is our responsibility. In Canada, obviously we cannot be in charge of all of these issues on our own. We work primarily with the RCMP and CSIS. In a case such as the attack that took place a week ago in Toronto, we study the situation closely to determine if our participation is necessary, especially when it is a matter of terrorism. If it turns out to be a criminal incident, it is up to the RCMP and the police of the jurisdiction concerned to decide whether it is relevant for us to join forces. We offer whatever support is necessary to all of our partners, everywhere in Canada and in all situations, but our responsibility mainly involves our personnel and our military bases.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

The next question goes to Mr. Rioux.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the witnesses for being with us today.

I'm going to ask all of my questions together, so they will be quite brief.

Rear-Admiral Bishop, you said this in your presentation:

> [...] there are more than 700 CAF members serving in the U.S. Approximately 300 of them are committed to the NORAD mission, including 147 posted to NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs [...]

So this means that approximately 550 additional people are deployed in the United States.

Can you tell us, not in detail but in general, where they are?

[*English*]

RAdm Scott Bishop: I'm going to answer this question in English because I don't have all the acronyms in French. We're an acronym-driven organization.

We have officers working with the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and U.S. Marine Corps across the United States. It would take me a long time to describe everywhere that we are. To show you the level of integration and co-operation, we have officers, as I've said, in NORAD headquarters, in the deputy commander role, and also a lot of Canadians making up a significant amount of that staff.

We also have Canadians in very key leadership roles in American units. For instance, in each one of the five U.S. army corps, they have a deputy who is a Canadian one-star rank, who is integrated into their command structure. That's the level of trust that the United States has with Canada.

We have a lot of people working with U.S. units. In their AWACS squadron, we have a sizeable presence. We have people working in the Pentagon. We have a lot of people in the United States on military courses, and that spans a spectrum from training to professional education at their war colleges.

It's also important to note, in saying that we have a substantial presence in the United States, that the United States sends a lot of exchange officers to work with the Canadian military. These opportunities to work in the United States alongside the Americans, and for the Americans to send people to Canada to work alongside Canadians, is a really effective way of deepening our understanding of each other's ways of approaching operations and of our respective cultures. It makes us a better fighting force when we're paired up to do an operation together.

It is a very close level of co-operation. Those 700 people are spread all across the United States, Alaska, and some of the U.S. territories.

● (0955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'd like to specify that that is also true of intelligence. Several of the people assigned to defence intelligence are in Washington. A large number of Canadians, also on the intelligence side, work at NORAD for the American general who commands the J2, that is to say the intelligence and command aspects. In turn, several Americans work in our organization, as well as elsewhere in defence intelligence organizations.

Mr. Jean Rioux: So there is a broad integration, and a lot of trust.

And is there the same reciprocity in the army? Are there American officers posted to the Canadians Forces?

RAdm Scott Bishop: The numbers are not equivalent because of the relative size of our two countries.

Mr. Jean Rioux: I am talking about reciprocity and not the number of officers. American officers are posted to the Canadian Forces, as are the 700 Canadian officers in the United States.

Mr. Stephen Burt: The number is not the same.

Mr. Jean Rioux: The number is not the same, but there is an integration.

RAdm Scott Bishop: Yes, there is reciprocity. There are Americans in Canada who work with Canadian Forces on a daily basis. That aspect of our relationship is very important.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt you. That's your five minutes.

Mr. Jean Rioux: Am I done already?

The Chair: All done. I have to give the floor to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank our witnesses for coming.

Some of the conversation we've had so far is about the aerial defence of Canadian airspace in the NORAD context. The concern I'm hearing from some members is about protecting that western flank, if you want to say.

Canada makes use of other aerial assets than just fighter jets to do surveillance and monitoring. Could you comment on that?

RAdm Scott Bishop: It's very good observation.

We obviously have the fighter jets that play an important role in NATO, and the tankers, as we've talked about, for providing air-to-air refuelling, given the distances that are involved. We also make use of our other air resources in the Canadian Forces to conduct surveillance operations. We have maritime patrol aircraft, which regularly conduct surveillance missions over the approaches to the eastern and western seaboards of Canada.

We have missions that go up into the Canadian Arctic to survey the Arctic land mass, but also the seaward approaches and the waters in the Arctic archipelago. We also work with other government departments that contract aircraft to conduct surveillance and patrol missions. We pair up with them and make use of those aircraft to conduct surveillance.

As I said, we have, again with our partnership with the United States.... One of our strengths in Canada is our expertise in space. We make use of space extensively to assist in the surveillance, particularly on the maritime side of who is in our waters. The navy, on the Atlantic and Pacific approaches to Canada, has a very good picture of what we call marine domain awareness. That has a high level of fidelity, in terms of what ships are in our waters and where they're going.

It's a difficult challenge based on the size of the space that we have to look at, but we do harness all of our resources, and we work with all of our partner agencies in government to maximize the resources they're employing to build the very best picture of what's going on around our territory.

● (1000)

Mr. Stephen Burt: If I may, this is fundamentally a question of intelligence, right? It's the ability to plug into a global information architecture—signals intelligence, imagery intelligence, human intelligence—to queue those assets, to be where they need to be to find the specific thing we're looking for.

Fundamentally, the job of my organization is to set that framework so that operators and policy-makers can decide where they want to deploy the limited number of assets.

Mr. James Bezan: One thing I'm concerned about with the testimony that all of you gave today was the rather dismissive comments about Russia's military threat to Canadian airspace, Canadian sovereignty. We know that the last time we did this study with the committee a few years back that Russian Bear bombers had come within 80 miles of St. John's, Newfoundland, within 40 miles of San Diego. We're constantly scrambling fighter jets to intercept Russian Bears in the Arctic. That frequency has increased since 2009.

We also know that Russia has developed a new navy base in the Arctic. They've opened up six old air force bases and are building an army base in the far north, close to the same latitude as Resolute Bay and Alert. They definitely see the Arctic as something that they are going to protect. They have the new Balaklava submarines with cruise missile capability, with nuclear warheads. We have seen those cruise missiles in operation in Syria just in the last few months.

I hope that your departments are taking the Russian threat seriously. Otherwise, why are we in the Ukraine training Ukrainian forces? Why do we have forces sitting in Poland right now as part of NATO Operation Reassurance? It's because we see Russia as a threat to global security, as well as a threat to Canadian sovereignty.

The Chair: That was a long question, so I will have to ask for a quick answer on that one. We can circle back to it.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Sure.

Very quickly, I can assure you that Russia is at the top of our list in terms of countries we watch carefully and monitor closely. They're certainly taking any number of actions within the Arctic sphere. Of course, they are an Arctic nation, so some of those are to secure their own domestic interests. It is a country that we encounter not just in the Arctic but in many regions of the world where we are trying to achieve effects, and they are often not working in quite the same direction we are.

The Chair: We'll have to leave it there. We can circle back after a little bit. There will be some more time.

Mr. Bittle, you have five minutes for your questions, please.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Thank you.

We discussed the importance of tankers in defending Canadian airspace. Are tankers compatible with potential replacement fighter aircraft for the CF-18?

RAdm Scott Bishop: That's a good question. I would say that whatever aircraft we acquire will be compatible with the tanker. That would be something they would look at in future fighter replacement. It would obviously be a key requirement of whatever fighter aircraft we look at, or they would incorporate the decision and space to reconfigure the tankers we have if the fighter aircraft needed a different configuration.

● (1005)

Mr. Chris Bittle: My understanding is that the F-35 isn't compatible. Is it a difficult process to retrofit our tankers to make them compatible with the F-35?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I think we'll have to get back to you on that. It's a very technical question.

I'm desperately looking around for someone in a light blue uniform to help me out.

Voices: Oh, oh!

RAdm Scott Bishop: On that level of technicality, I would have to go to the air force and get the answer for you.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Okay. Much appreciated.

I'll switch gears significantly. You mentioned global climate change. Can you discuss the potential impact to North American security?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Do you want to start?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Yes, I can start off on that.

The major impact in terms of North American security is obviously in the north. This actually ties in nicely with the previous question. As polar ice melts and northern routes become more viable economically, we are seeing a large number of countries, particularly some Asian countries, with a great deal of interest in figuring out what their economic stakes might be within the north. China, South Korea, the Japanese, and others are becoming more interested in things like the Arctic Council. Again, it's not a threat, but something from a sovereignty perspective that has to be monitored.

In the Arctic context, the routes that will open first, however, are actually the ones within Russian waters. I think that's why we're seeing a lot of their investment in their own infrastructure along those routes, so that they can exert effective control over their own sovereign interests. There are certainly a number of things from a climate change perspective that are affecting Canadian interests, but that's the primary one that we're watching.

RAdm Scott Bishop: You get increased activity in the Arctic, and there are a bunch of issues that Canada could be expected to respond to. Search and rescue is one, or an environmental disaster of some sort. Those will all require the military to help the federal departments that have responsibility or jurisdiction for those issues to get up to and operate in the Arctic. There's an important role for us.

Looking more broadly at climate change, if we believe the climate modelling, there is a potentiality for more severe weather. That could also have an impact on Canada in the form of more hurricanes, more tornados, and those kinds of things. There could be an increased demand signal for the Canadian Forces to assist in natural disasters, potentially, if climate change carries on in a very unfavourable direction over the course of many years.

Mr. Stephen Burt: At home and abroad.

RAdm Scott Bishop: At home and abroad—that's a key point.

From a military point of view, I think the big issue on the military planning side is looking at the potential long-term impacts of climate change on areas of the world where we see fragile and failing states, and how that may exacerbate the security situation in those countries, which could spill over into regions and cause a threat to Canadian security interests. Climate change is something that military planners are looking at. It's obviously very difficult to predict with any kind of certainty, but it is a key concern for military planners and thinkers looking out into the future.

Again, climate change is such a significant issue. In the defence policy review, nothing will be off the table. I'm sure there will be some discussion about the impacts of climate change on global security and how that could affect our policy.

The Chair: Thank you for your answer.

A three-minute question to close off round two goes to Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

I was very glad to hear from Global Affairs about the increased emphasis and desire to respond to threats at the source, before they're threats in North America. Also we had statements from the new government that it intends to rely more on diplomacy and development-assisted multilateralism in responding to these kinds of threats.

It brings me back to the question of acquisition of capacity. We're facing some very major questions, both in air capacity and naval capacity. My question comes back to here. What threats would drive the choice of a fighter to replace the CF-18? What are the threats we're responding to in making that decision?

● (1010)

RAdm Scott Bishop: That's a really good question. One of the key things is that we need to take a look over a really long horizon at the kinds of situations Canada could potentially face. Those situations are very difficult to predict with any accuracy. I think that almost always drives a worst-case type of scenario, where we have to be able to be prepared to operate across the full spectrum of conflict. That's what essentially drives a lot of the requirements, and I'm sure those same requirements will drive decisions about the future fighter aircraft.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Sorry. If I could just interject, we do know and we do track.... As I was saying earlier about tracking maritime capability developments, we do track air force developments around the globe. We know that China and Russia are working on fifth-generation fighters. We know that both of those countries have a tendency to sell maybe not their best stuff but their second-best stuff to others. These are the kinds of capabilities we could run into in any number of operations around the globe.

What other countries are doing does play in this space. Obviously it's not my job to determine what capability we get to respond to it, but it is something that we monitor closely.

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would emphasize that point. When we look to the future, we have to look at what possible aircraft we'd be required to fly against. It's not just aircraft. It's also ground-based, surface-to-air missile systems. It's a whole package of military capabilities that are emergent or could be in the future that we would have to contend with.

The other part of that threat formula of capability plus intent is often the most difficult to forecast with any kind of accuracy, so we look at countries like China and Russia, which have very high-end military capabilities, and the potential for some of those capabilities to proliferate to different areas of the world. If we're going to operate in the future and in the time frame that we're talking about for something like a fighter aircraft that's going to operate for many decades, then we need to make sure we're getting something that's going to be able to operate against those kinds of adversaries.

It is a very difficult question.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Certainly if you were going to fly into western Syria today, you would want a very capable aircraft, given the level of air defence in that country.

The Chair: We have some time left, so I want to ask a quick question, and then we agreed that I would divide the time up. We'll go to five-minute questions, and we'll start with you guys.

I have a quick question to kind of wrap up this whole Arctic RSA threat. It was mentioned and we never really had a chance to finish it. I think we all would agree that the Arctic is important and is probably a growing concern as we move forward. Currently we don't see a major threat, but we understand, as was just mentioned, that it's about intent and capability. Since Russia has capability, it can change its intent on a dime and then we would have an issue.

As we move forward, whether we're buying fighter planes or sensors or whatever it is that we need moving forward with NORAD next, and even considering what we have today, would you say it's critically important that, whatever we buy moving forward, that equipment or kit is able to sense and react in the north to a change in Russian intent? Would you say that's a very important thing to think about when we purchase things, moving forward?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I think that's a critical requirement. Any aircraft, or for that matter any military capability, we acquire needs to be able to operate all across Canada, particularly with a fighter aircraft. We do need a fighter aircraft that can operate in the far north, and that would certainly factor into the calculus of the people building the statement of requirement for that aircraft.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I'll move over to the other side of the table for a five-minute question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's comforting to know that we don't have any military threats in the next 10 years, so that gives us some time. What type of surveillance and interception capabilities does Canada have in place in terms of ballistic and cruise missile defence? While we recognize that there may not be a threat at the moment or in the next 10 years, what do we have now and what can we do in that time span to make sure that when these threats do present themselves through either state or non-state actors, including launchings from air, land, or sea, we know what we need and we have it in place?

● (1015)

RAdm Scott Bishop: There are a couple of components to that question. The first one right off the bat is ballistic missile defence. Since 2005, Canada's position has been that we're not participating in North American ballistic missile defence. Having said that and looping back to this defence policy review, I think that's certainly a question that could be considered in those discussions. I know that the minister sent a letter to this committee suggesting that as a potential area for you to consider.

For surveillance of North American approaches from ballistic missiles and from cruise missiles, again, we operate in NORAD headquarters. We have Canadians on the watch floor, and despite the fact that we don't participate in North American ballistic missile defence, our officers on the floor are not excluded from conducting surveillance and warning of airspace. NORAD has the capacity to detect ballistic missile launches from other countries, but it's important to focus on what NORAD is doing with ballistic missile defence, because it's not meant to be a defensive umbrella for all of North America against a big state-armed nuclear power like Russia. It is designed to deal with rogue states like North Korea or potentially Iran some day. It does have the capacity for ballistic missile surveillance.

In terms of cruise missile defence, we have a north warning system, which has been put in place across the Canadian Arctic and across Alaska. That system has some limited capabilities for cruise missile detection. I can't really get into them at this security classification, but this again is one of the reasons why we're looking at north warning system renewal as part of NORAD modernization, to make sure that our ability to detect threats to Canada is keeping up with the threat and how the threat evolves.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Canada is not going to participate in the interception of ballistic or cruise missiles. Given what the potential trajectories are from the threats that you mentioned, there may be some of these going over Canada. Do you know what is in place, if anything, to protect Canadian airspace should we be in the pathway of these missiles?

RAdm Scott Bishop: As I said, with regard to ballistic missile defence, our position is that we're not in the North American ballistic missile defence program. Cruise missile defence is separate from ballistic missile defence. There is a capacity for the Canadian Forces to conduct some form of defence against cruise missiles, but I wouldn't want to get into any details on that, based on the security classification that we're operating at.

On the NORAD side with ballistic missile defence, they have an architecture to deal with this. Again if this was something that Canada wanted to officially participate in, I think that would be a key item to consider or talk about in the defence policy review that's about to launch.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Canada is considering a purchase of drones. What threat are these armed drones supposed to protect Canada against?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I would phrase it differently with respect to drones. I'll start there.

Drones have proven to be invaluable for military operations. Almost all of our western like-minded nations are acquiring uninhabited aerial vehicles for military operations. They're particularly good at intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance missions, where you need an airborne platform, with sensors, that can loiter in a specific area for a long period of time. These unmanned aircraft have proven their worth in countless operations over the last decade, including in support of Canada's operations in Afghanistan.

Really, drones are a military capability that most countries are pursuing, and Canada is no different. We have the JUSTAS project, which is looking at our operational requirements for an unmanned aircraft for surveillance and reconnaissance.

The issue of whether or not those drones should be armed is a question that, again, I think will be tackled in the defence policy review. I think that's a very good question for a policy review to look at. From a military standpoint, I can say that armed drones provide a useful tool to military commanders in operations, just like other weapons systems do. As to whether or not Canada should have that kind of capability, I think that's a very important policy question and one that I would expect to be tackled in the defence policy review.

● (1020)

The Chair: Thank you very much. We're going to move on to the next questioner.

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Following up on the discussion about ballistic missile defence and Canada's non-involvement in North America with respect to that, can you comment as to what your position is on it? Do you believe that Canada should be involved? If so, to what degree?

RAdm Scott Bishop: I think what I would say on ballistic missile defence is that Canada made the decision in 2005. We're now more than a decade from that decision. I think it's really important for any country to regularly look at decisions they've made in the past to make sure those decisions are still good decisions in today's day and era.

As I've said a couple of times in response to questions, the question of BMD is a very good policy question that should be looked at in a defence policy review.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Let me ask the question a little differently. Can Canada become marginalized when it comes to making continental defence decisions as a result of not being involved in that program?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Well, I would say that it would be pretty obvious that we are marginalized to a degree because we don't participate in North American ballistic missile defence, and when those decisions are taken in NORAD, we have to step back from those decisions and not participate in them.

You have a policy that's different from our key ally in NORAD, so there is going to be a certain element of that. Is this a major obstacle that hinders our operations with NORAD on a daily basis? No, not at all. The NORAD mission is one that we're full participants in. It's just on this one issue of ballistic missile defence that we don't have a voice.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just so I understand this, if there's an incoming missile that's directed towards Canada, towards Kingston in particular, in my riding, would NORAD, the decision obviously having been made without Canada's inclusion, come to the defence of Canada to intercept it? If so, does that not pose some kind of question with respect to our sovereignty in terms of our ability to be making decisions on behalf of our own defence?

RAdm Scott Bishop: That's a very good question.

On the watch floor, Canadians are allowed to participate in surveillance. On the watch floor, they would see the development of a ballistic missile launch and its trajectory. To stay pure to our decision to not participate in North American ballistic missile defence, we would not have a voice in any decision about what to do with that missile. I think that kind of answers your question.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: So it would be....

I won't say it, because it will show on the record, but I was going to reference a current presidential candidate.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We have about a minute and 40 seconds left.

Anybody on the right side, you have a minute and 40 seconds to ask a quick question and get a quick response. We're going to move on to—

Mr. Darren Fisher: I have a quick one.

We've talked a lot about the west and we've talked a lot about the Arctic, and I know we're really well liked in eastern Canada, but can you discuss just for a moment the protection, the ability to respond to any threats in eastern Canada—P.E.I., New Brunswick, Newfoundland?

I know we have a major base in Florida. We have Greenwood as well, in Nova Scotia. We have our planes in Cold Lake and in Quebec. Is there a quick bullet that you can throw at us on the preparation, what we do, how we would be prepared to handle a threat on the east coast of Canada?

RAdm Scott Bishop: We obviously have a lot of capability in eastern Canada. Right across the country, we've broken the country into essentially five regions, and in each region there is what we call a joint task force commander who works for our joint operations command. If there were any kind of incident, that commander of joint operations command could mobilize all the resources of the Canadian Forces to provide assistance, if it were required.

There is a very robust capability on the east coast. In Halifax there's joint task force Atlantic, which can pull together army, navy, air, and special forces resources to respond to any incident, and we have the same architecture on the west coast of Canada, as well.

In terms of being able to mount a response very quickly, I think it exists on both of our coasts. I have to also say that we have a very good militia service and system of reserves, a lot of whom live in these communities in western and eastern Canada, who in our previous experience have mobilized very rapidly to assist in responding to any kind of incident we have. So east coast, west coast, I think we're well positioned to be able to respond to any kind of crisis.

● (1025)

The Chair: Thank you.

The last question goes to Mr. Garrison, if you have a question.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to go back to the navy now and ask an obvious question to the rear-admiral. Without asking you to comment on what I'm going to say at the beginning as a kind of preface, we've had procurement failures over the years that have resulted in some lack of capacity at this time for the navy. In terms of a threat analysis, we have a gap now with supply ships. Some have called our navy "a territorial navy" at this point. I just want to ask what's happened in terms of the ability to respond to threats at the naval level due to the delays in the procurement process for the new ships.

RAdm Scott Bishop: With respect to replenishment ships, it's a key challenge for the navy. We talk about a territorial navy; it's important to understand that we have huge ocean space in our country. Even to be able to operate in our own waters, we need an expeditionary capability that includes the ability to resupply and refuel at sea, just given the vast distances in Canada.

The Canadian Armed Forces tried to introduce some mitigating measures with an interim replenishment ship. It has also enlisted the support of some of our key allies to send ships up to work with the Atlantic and the Pacific fleets. That's mostly not out of sovereignty or national operations issues, but mostly to make sure we don't lose our skills to be able to operate with a replenishment ship until we've actually built one in Canada.

We are confident that we have a very good plan to bridge the gap from the oilers that have just paid off to the replenishment ships that will be built in Vancouver. Those ships, obviously, will be a great leap forward for the Royal Canadian Navy and also for the Canadian Armed Forces, because they bring some new capabilities to the Canadian Armed Forces that we didn't have in our previous generation of replenishment ships, capabilities that will be very useful for us, like a limited lift capacity.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know how much time you are giving me.

The Chair: You had five minutes. You have two minutes left.

Mr. Randall Garrison: By the same token, what I have heard from some people in the navy is that there's an urgency now to refit some of the frigates, given the longer time frame for replacement of the frigates. Again in terms of the threats we're meeting, what kinds of things are we going to have to do to our frigates to extend their lives?

RAdm Scott Bishop: Our frigates have actually just undergone a major modernization program that has significantly increased their capabilities across most areas of war-fighting and operations. From that standpoint, we're very confident, with the 12 Halifax-class frigates that have just been modernized, that we're well positioned for the next couple of decades until the Canadian surface combatant starts to enter the inventory.

We did a very good job on the modernization of those ships. I've been on board these newly modernized frigates. My only regret is that I'm past the rank to serve on them. They'd get deeply concerned if a rear-admiral showed up and said he was sailing on the ship for six months.

They're great ships and they will be the workhorses for the Canadian navy. They're already proving their worth in the operations they're doing. We have one of those frigates in Operation Reassurance right now in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. She attracts a lot of interest from our allies in terms of what we've done with that modernization program. In fact, New Zealand is going to refit their two frigates in a Canadian shipyard, based on how well that modernization process worked for us.

● (1030)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Great. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank Mr. Burt, Rear-Admiral Bishop, and Mr. Drake for coming today.

Thank you very much for your time.

I'd like to suspend for a couple of minutes. We'll return in three to four minutes for committee business. Thank you very much.

● (1030)

(Pause)

● (1035)

The Chair: Welcome back, everybody.

For committee business, I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Bezan, who is going to table a motion.

Mr. James Bezan: If time permits, we'll do both motions. If not, we'll do one motion today and one motion tomorrow.

The Chair: Okay. Fair enough.

Mr. James Bezan: For the first motion I want to move onto the floor, a notice of motion was already handed out.

I move:

> That the Committee undertake a study on the force protection measures and procedures that have been adopted by the Canadian Armed Forces since October 2014; that, in relation to the study, the Committee invite the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Jonathan Vance, and/or his representatives and any other person the Committee deems appropriate to appear as witnesses; that the Committee hold no less than two (2) meetings to conduct the study; that these meetings be held in-camera to protect the operational security of the Canadian Armed Forces; and that the Committee report its findings to the House of Commons.

Just to give you and colleagues some background on it, Mr. Chair, after the attacks in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and here in Ottawa, which took the lives of, first, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, and then, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, the armed forces started to do a review of the measures that need to be taken to protect the forces here in Canada. Then, of course, with the North York terrorist attack and the wounding of a couple of our soldiers in the recruitment centre in Toronto, I think it's important that we find out as quickly as possible what the forces are doing to ensure that our brave men and women have the best possible ways of protecting themselves from these lone-wolf attacks that seem to be occurring.

Of course, there's no timeline on this, so it leaves it to the discretion of the chair in planning committee business and working with the availability of witnesses to organize and schedule these meetings.

The Chair: The floor's open for discussion.

Mr. Rioux.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux: I am receptive to your request since I am the member for the riding of Saint-Jean.

We have an agenda that goes to the end of June. Ms. Gallant suggested that we broaden our mandate when that work has been done. Could we look at this after June, when we have completed the first part of our mandate?

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: As I said, I'm not trying to predetermine the work of the committee. I'm saying that this is something we need to undertake.

There are going to be times—the chair and I have had this discussion—that witnesses aren't going to be available for our study on North America, so possibly we could backfill to make sure we are making use of those dates with the witnesses we want to call for this study. If it doesn't take place until the fall, it doesn't take place until the fall. But it provides flexibility to the committee so that we're maximizing our time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux: If I understand correctly, we are going to look at this in a second phase, after the month of June, as Ms. Gallant has suggested.

I agree.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Don't be getting confused with this. This isn't part of the North American study. This is about making sure that the proper policies are put in place to protect our forces here in Canada—on base, at recruitment centres, on parade.

● (1040)

The Chair: Mrs. Romanado.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to make sure of something. We don't know exactly.... I'm assuming there's going to be an investigation about what happened a few weeks back at the recruitment centre. But you're not including public places specifically. You're speaking specifically about recruitment centres, bases, and so on. Is that correct?

Mr. James Bezan: This is a study on the entire force protection measures being implemented by the Canadian Armed Forces. It's a policy that they've been working on for the last two years. It's a matter of informing us as a committee.

We'd do this in camera, so that we're not disclosing publicly the measures that the chief of the defence staff is initiating. He's alluded to this in some of the press conferences he's done on the attack that happened in Toronto. Of course, that investigation is ongoing, but we do know that individual has been charged with two counts of attempted murder. Again, the targets of this terrorist attack were unfortunately members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

It's going to take at least two meetings when we look at this. It's the overall policy, what we are doing not just at recruitment centres but what we are doing to enforce protection at bases. A lot of our army bases have no outward security measures in place at all. You can just drive into most of our army bases without going through a checkpoint, unlike at a wing. At a wing, especially in urban centres, you have to go through a commissionaire and checkpoints.

This is about how we best protect members of the Canadian Armed Forces and what measures have been taken, so that we can make recommendations to the House if we feel there are shortcomings.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: On that note, do you think that would be something that would involve the public safety minister?

Mr. James Bezan: Definitely when they're in the public eye.... As we see our honour guard standing at the National War Memorial, they're under the protection of the Ottawa city police. That was one of the policies that had been implemented since then.

I think we're looking at what National Defence has made as recommendations, even to Public Safety as to how we protect our guys when they are on parade, but also how we protect members of the forces when they're on base or at a recruitment centre, or at any public event for that matter.

The Chair: Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm certainly in support of this motion.

My only concern in terms of priorities of the committee is that we had agreed to have an update on the progress on policies on sexual misconduct in the military. I would not like this to come ahead of that. I'm urging that we keep that as the highest priority for any open spots that we have.

The Chair: Before we go to any further discussion, we had agreed to an update on sexual misconduct, a current operations brief from the CDS, and a brief on CSE.

This motion gives us lots of flexibility. I want us to consider that as we're debating it, because there's no timeline on it. We have a reasonable request with regard to priorities.

I'll give the floor back to the right, if they want to talk about this.

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just so we're clear, and I think it's been stated a couple of times, there's no particular timeline. It would be an understanding that the chair would insert it where he sees fit. That's the intent.

In that case, I have no problem supporting it.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: I want to reiterate that the security of our armed forces is of the utmost priority for me as well. Rest assured that it's something that I think we all support.

The Chair: Is there more discussion on this particular motion as moved by Mr. Bezan?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It looks like we have unanimous consent.

Mr. James Bezan: Looking at the clock, I'll save the other motion until Thursday.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Can I have a motion to adjourn? Thank you, Mr. Gerretsen.

The meeting is adjourned.