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Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): I would like to welcome Mr. Stephen Burt, assistant chief of defence intelligence, to our committee and the study of Canada's naval readiness and the defence of North America.

Before we start with your opening remarks, I just want to let the committee know that I am prepared to leave some time at the end for committee business, if that's agreeable. Having said that, Mr. Burt, thank you for coming. The floor is yours.

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair and members of Parliament, thank you very much for the invitation this afternoon.

It is my distinct pleasure to address you today and provide our views on maritime threats facing Canada and global naval threats more generally.

[*English*]

Before I address these threats, the maritime threats to Canada, and the naval threats more globally, please allow me to provide some context. As you may recall from my testimony before this committee in March of this year, the Canadian Forces intelligence command, or CFINTCOM, is the functional authority for defence intelligence in Canada.

CFINTCOM's mission is to provide credible, timely, and integrated defence intelligence capabilities, products, and services to the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence, the Government of Canada, and our allies in support of Canada's national security objectives.

[*Translation*]

Defence intelligence is a key element in the ability of the Government of Canada to make informed decisions on defence issues, national security, and foreign affairs. You can be assured that our intelligence capability is world-class, boasting a strong team of dedicated professionals and benefiting from productive relationships with other government departments as well as our partners in the Five Eyes community.

[*English*]

At this time, we do not see a state actor that has both the capability and the intent to use military force against Canada. I would caution, however, that while it takes many years for states to develop new capabilities, intent is much more difficult to discern, and it can change rapidly and with little warning in response to international events and competing national interests.

Further, as I will outline, there remain many serious threats to Canadian interests globally. In today's globalized world, conflict and instability in other regions can have a direct impact on the security and prosperity of Canada.

[*Translation*]

In the context of maritime threats, the fact that most of the world's population inhabits coastal regions means that the Royal Canadian Navy could very well be called upon to play a role in dealing with these threats, or to operate in areas where actors possess the capability and intent to pose a direct threat.

Before I begin my discussion of maritime threats to Canada as well as global naval threats, it is important to appreciate the global maritime security environment in which we find ourselves today.

[*English*]

There are five geopolitical realities that I think are worth considering in this context.

First, is the willingness of China and Russia to challenge the global rules-based order, and the resulting uncertainty and tension that this creates. For example, China's ongoing naval expansion and the increasing frequency and intensity of maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea are cause for concern.

The second reality is Russian military modernization and aggression, as evidenced by the illegal annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian sponsored conflict in eastern Ukraine. Russia continues to reassert itself on the world stage, with its navy and air forces returning to out-of-area operations, as well as its direct military involvement in conflict zones like Syria. Such Russian activity, while it does not reach the levels seen under the Soviet Union, has not been seen for decades, and it creates further uncertainty in the geostrategic security environment.

Persistent instability in many areas of the world, with failed and failing states continuing to present real security challenges, is the third area of geopolitical realities I would like to highlight. They provide the ungoverned spaces needed by terrorists to organize and flourish, and they lack effective national institutions to prevent corruption, the abuse of human rights, or crimes against humanity.

The fourth reality is the increasing global demand for energy and resources, which relies on the free flow of commerce through strategic maritime choke points.

The final reality is ongoing climate change, which may trigger social instability and more frequent humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations, and which has implications for Canada's north.

Turning to maritime threats to Canada, the world has seen a marked rise in maritime security threats in recent years, as part of the broader global trend in crime and terrorism. Migrant smuggling and seaborne terrorist attacks, as well as maritime-based transnational crime and espionage, continue to pose threats to Canada and to our national interests.

● (1105)

Transnational criminal organizations increasingly engage in waterside and port criminality and present a threat to Canadian maritime approaches and a challenge to global stability and prosperity. Their illicit activities include the smuggling of people, drugs, firearms, and other contraband goods.

Human smuggling and irregular mass maritime-based migration continue to pose potential national security and terrorism-related threats to Canada. The arrival of migrant vessels in 2009 and 2010 exemplify that Canada is vulnerable to threats brought to our shores by human smuggling operations.

There are a number of foreign-based terrorist organizations that possess maritime capabilities and the potential to mount maritime-based operations. Some of these groups use Canada for financing, recruitment, procurement, and operational planning purposes. Although the maritime domain is primarily exploited by terrorist organizations to help finance their own operations, these organizations have also aimed to disrupt global maritime trade by targeting shipping at high-volume choke points.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction threatens Canada and our allies. North Korea's provocative actions continue to threaten security in north Asia and beyond. Iran poses multiple significant security concerns for maritime assets operating in the Middle East. Russia and China both possess a growing arsenal of sophisticated weapons, including strategic nuclear capabilities designed to discourage western intervention in a regional crisis.

With regard to espionage, as a leader in many maritime economic and scientific fields, Canada is an attractive target for espionage. Hostile foreign states and foreign intelligence services are engaged in the unlawful acquisition of Canada's military, political, economic, and scientific information or assets that relate to the maritime environment.

We also assess that select foreign nations are likely to encroach on the Canadian and North American perimeter in the Arctic, the western Atlantic, and the Pacific Ocean with unauthorized or illicit activity by ships or aircraft. While it remains unlikely, as I've already stated, that Canada will be attacked in the foreseeable future, there are countries such as Russia that maintain capabilities such as ballistic missile submarines and long-range aviation aircraft, which can target Canada and North America. As the Arctic becomes more accessible due to climate change, there is an increased potential for threats to emerge there as well.

Finally, there are a number of sophisticated sea-based systems that could pose a threat to Canada or North America, most notably Russian long-range, submarine-launched nuclear ballistic missiles as well as conventional and nuclear submarine-launched cruise missiles. Submarines with these systems conduct regular patrols, primarily in the European theatre but also in the High Arctic and the North Atlantic, with these assets having an occasional presence in the Canadian exclusive economic zone.

Turning now to global naval threats more generally, the threat environment facing Royal Canadian Navy assets deployed abroad is dynamic and varies by region. We face a number of challenges and threats from both traditional state actors and non-actors.

Surface platforms, such as corvettes, frigates, and other offshore and ocean-going vessels, continue to be developed with great diversity and at an increasingly rapid rate. Russia is in a period of naval rejuvenation. China is rapidly shifting from a coastal defence force to one capable of patrolling and defending its territorial waters and beyond, and India and Iran are developing new capabilities as well.

Anti-ship cruise missiles are an extremely potent threat to both warships and merchant shipping. They can be launched from a multitude of platforms, including ships, submarines, and aircraft. While few missiles have the capability to destroy a frigate or a destroyer-sized ship, they can easily incapacitate them. Russia, China, India, and Iran are all key developers of this technology.

While anti-ship cruise missiles are a well-recognized threat, anti-ship ballistic missiles are an emerging one that will prove challenging to counter. Anti-ship ballistic missiles are in use in China and, we assess, likely in Iran.

Anti-ship torpedoes are one of the most effective weapons available to enable arsenal capable of sinking large vessels on impact. They are difficult to detect, and once detected, are difficult to evade or defeat. Russia maintains the world's largest and most diversified inventory of torpedoes, and it continues to develop, produce, and export both anti-ship and anti-submarine torpedoes.

Naval mine warfare represents one of the most difficult battle spaces in modern anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare. Mine-fields are dangerous, and clearing them is a long and dangerous process. This makes them ideally suited for small and large military forces alike, as well as non-state actors, because an inexpensive mine is capable of sinking a large and very expensive warship.

● (1110)

Finally, military interest and acquisition of unmanned systems are driven by the requirements to reduce operator workload, increase mission endurance and survivability, and reduce risks to human life. Unmanned systems pose several threats to maritime elements, including the ability to physically damage a target, conduct surveillance, perform electromagnetic attacks, deploy and/or neutralize naval mines, and so on.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, as you can appreciate, the maritime threats facing Canada and the RCN both at home and abroad are numerous and varied, and they are nested in a volatile and unpredictable security environment. The Canadian Forces Intelligence Command is interested in monitoring such threats, because they affect the ability of the Canadian Armed Forces to operate.

I hope that you find my testimony today helpful. This concludes my presentation. Thank you very much for your attention. I would be happy to answer your questions.

[*English*]

Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Burt, for your comments.

I'm going turn the floor over to Ms. Romanado for the first round of seven-minute questions.

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

I'd like to thank you again, Mr. Burt, for being here.

Since the last time you were here in March, we've had some developments. We've had an opportunity to travel to NORAD to receive briefings, specifically with respect to intelligence and the importance of intelligence, and we concluded the first phase of our study of the defence of North America. Now we're on the naval readiness component.

When it comes to intelligence, I think it's not something that can be looked at in silos. All three branches of the military need to be working together, as well as the folks with the RCMP, and so on.

One area you didn't talk about in your testimony today, but you did refer to in your last testimony in March, was the importance of cybersecurity. We learned when we were in NORAD that currently cybersecurity is not something that is looked at as a joint initiative through our NORAD agreement.

I'm going to back up a second. It may sound like it's coming from left field, but I've just gone across the country for electoral reform, and one of the areas we're looking at is whether we should move into electronic voting. The reason I'm bringing this up is that there are a lot of concerns in terms of cyber-attacks, and so on, and people trying to change the results of elections. We're hearing a lot from our friends to the south about concerns of hacks and things of that nature.

I'd like you talk a bit about the importance of cybersecurity. I know we're looking at a new policy review through the Minister of Public Safety. Could you could talk to us a bit about that area? We haven't heard a lot about it today.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Sure. I'm happy to do that.

In terms of the maritime domain, specifically, the primary cyber-threat I would underline is the threat to merchant vessels, in fact. They are often more vulnerable to hacking for a variety of reasons. There's a tendency to use more outdated software and more dated systems on some of those ships. They sometimes were not designed with cybersecurity in mind the way systems are designed now, certainly within the military context, but even more generally for the private sector now. This is something that is present in people's minds.

From a maritime security perspective, this obviously presents a range of challenges: financial loss for companies, potentially, depending on how systems are manipulated; loss of an ability to track a course that can result in lost goods or environmental crises of one kind or another; and the risk of manipulating a vessel's automatic identification system or electronic charts, depending on what systems they're using.

All of these things are taken very seriously by the private sector and are something they monitor now, but because of the nature of commercial shipping, there are many vessels still on the oceans that aren't fully up to date with software and hardware that would give them the robustness we would like.

With regard to threats to military vessels, there are certainly nations out there, Russia and China primarily, that have the capability to effect a range of systems. What I would say about that is that it is a known threat, something we take very seriously, and something we are conscious of when we're designing or upgrading our own systems. Keeping, as much as possible, ahead of that threat curve is very much a part of the work we feed into from the intelligence command perspective.

● (1115)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: On that note, we know when assessing threats that we look at the capability and the intent. You mentioned that Russia and China have the capability. We have seen that Russia does have the intent to use cyberwarfare.

Given our proximity to and relationship with the United States, and our agreements with NORAD, what are the possibilities that our systems can be hacked through our relationship with the United States? If the United States is vulnerable to cyber-attacks, which means they can get into Canadian systems, what are we doing to put in place a cyber policy, perhaps, whether it be just for our nation or for a binational policy to protect our intelligence, especially in terms of military intelligence, from cyber-attacks? Do you have any updates on that?

Mr. Stephen Burt: The cyber-policy issue for the Government of Canada runs out of Public Safety. That's something they've been working on for a long while and that we and others are plugged into.

As you note, by its nature, cyberspace is very much a shared space, and obviously in North America in particular there are a number of interlinkages. I couldn't tell you, frankly, to what extent which areas might be more vulnerable or which ones are more.... I wouldn't want to get into that anyway, even if I did have the information at my fingertips, but certainly it is something that we work very closely on with the Americans, on the military side with U.S. cyber command, and with our own elements within the Department of National Defence.

Given the nature of it and the interlinkages not just military to military but between government and the private sector and then private sector to private sector, it really is something that has to be addressed holistically, which is why Public Safety might be in a better position to comment on some of those things.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: In terms of the importance of our surveillance capabilities and our aging physical assets, we've heard, for instance, that the north warning system is going to reach its shelf life in 2025. We've heard that we have to look at our RADARSAT.

We hear a lot about the physical assets. What about our human assets? You might not be able to talk to us about that, but what initiatives are we taking to ensure that we have enough human assets in terms of intelligence gathering?

Mr. Stephen Burt: It's an interesting question. Certainly in the Canadian Forces intelligence command and in defence intelligence generally speaking across the spectrum—because the command only controls a little less than half of the overall defence intelligence resources—this is absolutely a growth area. There's a lot of interest. I'm told that in recruiting centres the second most-requested area of interest by people walking in is “intelligence officer”, after “pilot”.

A number of initiatives are under way in the defence intelligence enterprise, both within the military and for civilians, to bring in new folks, to recruit them out of school, and also to bring in people who have areas of expertise in other domains, to bring them in, train them up, and have an investment in the future.

The challenge right now, frankly, is that you end up with.... We have more people and we're growing quickly, but a lot of our growth is in new people, so they don't necessarily have all the experience and training that we would want to deal with everything we're dealing with right now. There's a big piece of work under way from a training and development perspective, and again, for both uniformed and civilian personnel, to make sure we have the right skill sets.

● (1120)

The Chair: Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Burt, may I speak French?

Mr. Stephen Burt: That is not a problem for me.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Burt, the first time you testified before our committee, during our study on the air force, we were left with a somewhat bizarre impression, because you said there were no threats from state actors. The committee has met with several other people and all of them were of the opinion that there was some degree of threat.

You represent the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, and to our mind, you are the key person in terms of the Canadian government. You have come back here today to talk to us about the Royal Canadian Navy and you are again saying that, at this time, there is no state actor that has both the capability and the intent to do harm to Canada using military force.

So I think I have understood your arguments and I would like to have that point clarified for the committee today.

If we take Russia, for example; it has demonstrated its capability and its intent. You say that if Russia does not have malicious intent, we cannot consider Russia to be a threat. I would like to divide the question in two. First, do the Russians have the capability to deploy forces, if then have the intent to do so? The intent could emerge today or in five years, we do not know. Is the Russian navy's capability effective enough? According to the eight pages of information that follow, if the intent is there, there is a real threat.

I would like this to be clear for the committee, please.

Mr. Stephen Burt: That is exactly the issue. The definition of "threat" has two aspects: capability and intent.

Certainly, in the case of Russia, we are keeping a close watch on several aspects relating to capability, to see what it is capable of doing. However, we do not see any intent on the part of any country to attack Canada militarily.

That does not mean that no country has the intent to harm Canada's interests. A number of states are doing things that harm our interests. In the case of Russia and China particularly, some things being done that involve international law are creating uncertainty in terms of how we will need to act in the future.

That harms Canada. As a nation engaged in global trade, we need a certain foundation of rules to conduct our affairs and so that our interests will be protected. So each time these nations or other states take measures that, while they are not military threats, properly speaking, affect our interests, that poses a problem for Canada and is a threat to our interests.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Let us assume that Russia, China or some other country decides to enter Canadian waters in the Arctic by non-military means, with icebreakers or in some other way, to create a passage and occupy the territory for trading purposes. From a military point of view, you do not consider that to be a threat. Rather, it would be a threat that affected public safety, given that there would have been no aggressive military action.

Is that right?

Mr. Stephen Burt: It would depend a little on what those countries were doing. If it was a demonstration of their capability, it would show that if their intent were to change, they would have the capability to act accordingly. To that extent, it would be a warning to us.

However, let us not forget that Russia itself owns a large part of the Arctic. So it has rights and interests in the Arctic also and it can act within its own maritime jurisdiction. It seems reasonable to us that it would build bases and enhance its capability to monitor its own passage. It is doing that for its search and rescue operations within its own jurisdiction, or to monitor maritime trade going on there. We do not see that as a threat.

● (1125)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: At present, are you seeing Russia becoming more powerful on the west coast, in the Arctic? We can observe equipment and bases and everything Russia needs for taking action being prepared. From their perspective, it is peaceful, but it could become an economic threat for us.

Mr. Stephen Burt: The Russians are doing two things in the Arctic.

First, they are building bases that enhance their capability in the Arctic. This is mainly to preserve their own capability to act within their own territory.

Second, most of Russia's strategic capability is also based in the Arctic. That is different. It is a global capability. There are a number of good reasons for it to be in the Arctic. That capability appears to us to be a threat.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: So I come back to my first question.

As I understand it now, Russia's capability is fairly impressive. I think it has become significantly more powerful. If the day comes when Russia has the intent of engaging in maneuvers, we might have trouble, if we do not take steps of our own to build up significant naval power.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Intent can change very quickly.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: So it seems to me to be important not to say there are no threats, because a threat can happen quickly and we have to be prepared.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. MacGregor, welcome back. You have the floor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair; and thank you, Mr. Burt, for appearing today.

I was looking over some of the subagencies that you're responsible for. Under intelligence collection, you have the joint meteorological centre and the Canadian Forces joint imagery centre; and under intelligence assessment and enabling, you have the directorate of meteorology and oceanography. I would say you have some very powerful tools at your disposal to analyze the impacts of climate change. Canada being a northern country, we are starting to see the effects of climate change far more rapidly than countries around the equator. I know forest fires are going to be an issue in the future, as well as rising sea levels, and of course, an ice-free Arctic Ocean is a very real possibility by the end of this century.

I wonder whether you could provide the committee with an overview of the future of Canada. This study is specifically looking at Canada and the defence of North America, and if we're going to start seeing the effects of climate change hit us a lot more rapidly as we go into the future decades. Could you just provide the committee with an overview of some of the threats in that context?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'd be happy to do that.

I should specify with regard to the two units you've mentioned, one that works for me, which is the directorate of meteorology and oceanography, is primarily a policy unit. It deals with our linkages with Environment Canada and the arrangements we have with them for forecasting and whatnot. The joint meteorological centre, which is in Gagetown, New Brunswick, is actually the forecasting centre for the armed forces. I didn't know when I took this job 18 months ago that I was going to be responsible for the weather in addition to other things.

A voice: You're doing a great job so far.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Thank you. We do what we can.

In response to your question, primarily what they're involved in is not forecasting on global trends in terms of climate change and whatnot. They're providing day-to-day services for pilots, for ships, for artillery units, and whatnot, in terms of what the particular climatic conditions are that day that will affect the ability to operate. It tends to be very much what's happening in the next day to a couple of weeks that will affect military operations.

That said, we do pay some attention to climate change as a driver in a number of areas. With climate-change-enhanced storms, rising sea levels, coastal flooding, whatnot, there are effects in Canada, but what we see primarily are effects globally, where we then get involved because of a humanitarian need, for example. The military gets called out to deal with some of those things.

Climate change obviously is having an effect on our Arctic, but that effect is still relatively gradual. The Arctic still presents a very difficult operating environment, particularly for commercial purposes. That change, while it is real and while we are seeing even now a certain amount more of tourism traffic and research vessels, and whatnot, will continue to be gradual, probably throughout my lifetime.

● (1130)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Specifically with the receding ice and and the opening of the Arctic Ocean to navigation in the coming years, you must be starting to put some thought into how we're going to be responding to that and the increased number of resources we may need to look after our sovereignty, to look after the Northwest Passage. Can you provide a bit of context with those specific areas? I know there are some international disagreements over the Northwest Passage.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Right. Being in the intelligence business, when it comes to resources, my primary area of focus is the resources we would need to monitor and collect on what is happening in these areas. Essentially, I'm interested in accumulating information. The policy issues and procurement issues around what we're going to do about that, once we've identified that something is going on here and have said that we'd like to know more about this or that and there are some gaps that we have in terms of what's going on, it passes on to the various services, the army, navy, and air force, our procurement people, the wider Government of Canada, to make policy decisions around what's the right approach to dealing with those issues. So I'm limited in my ability to comment on what we should do about the Northwest Passage.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: As you said, because roughly 70% of the world's population lives close to a coastal area, the main response for our forces, particularly navy, could be involved in humanitarian efforts due to coastal flooding and tropical storms, and so on.

Mr. Stephen Burt: I think you see that every year now.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Yes, absolutely.

I'll switch gears. My riding is on Vancouver Island, and I'm very close to CFB Esquimalt. I also have the Coast Guard station near Patricia Bay on the Saanich Peninsula. I was just curious, the Department of National Defence is responsible for managing marine security operations centres. Could you provide an explanation of how that network functions, and how DND contributes to it?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I can provide you a bit of an explanation of how it functions. The Government of Canada's responsibility for marine security sits with Transport Canada. The DG of marine security at Transport Canada runs the network and convenes the talent to deal with marine security issues, and is responsible for the overarching management around the marine security operations centres.

Within the Department of National Defence, the primary responsibility for maritime surveillance and actions taken as a result of what we might see in that surveillance sits with the Canadian joint operations command. The MSOCs, the marine security operation centres we have—one on the west coast, one in Halifax—are housed on the military bases, but they are multi-agency organizations, managed by Transport Canada and housed by us. The overall marine security portfolio includes 17 different federal departments and agencies with various mandates. There are a lot of players. The MSOCs include Transport and Defence obviously, plus Canada Border Services Agency, the Coast Guard, and the RCMP, just to cover off the various aspects of surveillance and action that you might want to take as a result of that.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: I think that's my time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, it is.

Mr. Gerretsen, you have the floor.

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

Thank you, Mr. Burt, for being here.

Usually we have more than one witness, so you'd have an opportunity to take a breath every once in a while, but we appreciate your being on the hot seat for two hours straight.

I want to return to the questions you were answering from Ms. Romanado, in particular as it relates to information and cyber threats. We've seen recently where state and non-state actors can try to affect the integrity of different nations. I think that the one thing that Canada takes great pride in, and that we're known throughout the world for, is the fact that we are a good player globally, that we want to participate, that we want to genuinely make the world a better place. I think that resonates.

But one of the threats that we've seen, and in particular the example that comes to mind is the accusation that Russia played a role in undermining the integrity of the refugee acceptance into Germany. I'm curious, given the fact that our military is deploying battle group air assets and a frigate into eastern Europe, what threats do you see that might come with that? Should we expect to see similar threats of state or non-state actors participating in, and in particular trying to undermine, the role that Canada is playing there?

● (1135)

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'm not familiar with the German story. It would be interesting to take a look at that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I think the accusation was that Russia was purposely trying to suggest that, don't quote me, a Syrian refugee had sexually assaulted somebody in Germany, and the whole idea was to undermine the work that's been done by Germany.

Should we be worried about similar threats of that undermining happening with Canada as we go out into different parts of the world, and in particular now in eastern Europe?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Russia has been very clear that they see eastern Europe as small, and it is. It's their near abroad and they get as concerned about it—maybe even more concerned—as we would when we see them operating in our near abroad whether it's over the pole or elsewhere. They have publicly stated that they reserve the right to take action when they feel it is getting a bit close to home and it is a bit threatening.

Unfortunately the actions they choose to take are often a bit unsavoury and a bit underhanded, and difficult to attribute, which raises significant uncertainty in terms of who's actually done it in the moment and what the best response to it might be. There's an approach by Russia to the international rule of law that I think is quite corrosive, from a Canadian perspective, in terms of our interest in being part of global system that operates above board and that works for us.

I don't think there's any question as we deploy troops into Latvia and put assets in and around eastern Europe that the Russians will take an interest in that and it will at times be an aggressive interest in undermining the credibility of those efforts and doing so occasionally in a very direct and personal way for individuals who are deployed in those—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: So it would not, for example, be unreasonable for us to perhaps see threats, suggestions that Canadian military personnel are engaging in less-than-desirable activities, promoted by other state actors? Would you agree with that?

Mr. Stephen Burt: There will no doubt be a steady stream of news stories and public incidents that raise questions about what NATO troops generally are doing in eastern Europe and whether or not they're the kinds of people you would want to have based in your neighbourhood.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That leads me to the second part of my question, which is what the best practices are to protect against that. How do we protect our reputation? How do we make sure that we're protecting ourselves against these threats?

Mr. Stephen Burt: You have to do a multi-faceted set of things, and none of them will be perfect. I think there will be a number of things we can do in the intelligence domain to watch for these efforts and to try to guard against them and to warn when they're happening. But a number of things will have to be done by the force generators in army, navy, and air force once those threats have been raised and highlighted, as they have been, to prepare their ships and aircraft and the individual human beings who are actually going to be in those areas to recognize those things when they're starting to happen and to deal with them appropriately. What is happening on the training front, to be honest, in terms of what specific actions we're taking probably involves a level of detail that I can't get into.

● (1140)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Forgive me for saying so and with all due respect, your answer seemed more like you were suggesting what we might do, but are there best practices? Can you at least confirm that there are steps that we would take to work against that kind of thing?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I think we've seen a fairly consistent track record of activities being employed. I think there are things we can do to prepare our people.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Are we doing things to prepare our people?

Mr. Stephen Burt: We are doing things to prepare our people.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

Mr. Stephen Burt: Without getting into the specifics of what we are doing, there are things you can do to prepare your people to recognize those events as they take place and to behave appropriately. Whether or not an individual is actually able to do that in the moment is a separate issue.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Have we been tested in that regard?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I can't get into specific incidents that have happened in the past.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I don't want specific incidents. I'm just curious as to whether you can say—

Mr. Stephen Burt: We've had troops deployed into western Ukraine for some time now. We have had troops deployed in other areas where they are in proximity to Russian actors, so this isn't new.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, thanks.

The Chair: Thanks for that.

Mr. Rioux, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): We are very pleased to see you again.

I want to congratulate you on your introductory presentation; it was very clear. That has given us a lot of information. It was a good summary.

You talk about climate change that is happening. Most of the time, when we have talked about that in this committee, we have mainly talked about the effects on the Arctic. Environmentalists tell us there has been very obvious warming over a 30-year period. That means we should expect to see human migrations.

A little earlier, my colleague Mr. MacGregor talked about the fact that the largest portion of the world's population lives in coastal areas. If there is very obvious warming, that means there will be displaced populations.

Have the military authorities considered different possible scenarios, both both a humanitarian point of view and in terms of potential conflicts?

Mr. Stephen Burt: The various possible scenarios change considerably from region to region. My team is working on preparing possible scenarios. Ordinarily, we focus on things that are closer in time, things that should be happening within six months, for example. I agree that major changes should be anticipated because of climate change. However, the challenge is that those changes may take years to occur. Most of our resources are allocated to support current operations and operations that will take place in the next few months.

That being said, we also do larger studies, from time to time, to see what the consequences of climate change in Asia might be. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of storms, hurricanes, or other phenomena of that nature that could cause displacement of the population, but not necessarily migration, properly speaking.

We have also examined the migrations that are currently going on in Africa and the Middle East, but it is not always clear that those changes are caused by climate change. In fact, there are several other factors that have to be taken into account.

Does that answer your question?

● (1145)

Mr. Jean Rioux: More or less. I find your answer very disquieting. It must be noted that we are planning equipment purchases for a period of at least 30 years. Environmentalists tell us that by 30 years from now, there will be major upheavals caused by climate change.

I find it disquieting that we are not looking at the situation in terms of the next 30 years, to determine how we will have to act when it comes to humanitarian aid, and what conflicts are foreseeable for Canada. I find it disquieting that you have no response scenarios for protecting our security and our sovereignty, first, but also to make sure we have the capability to deal with these threats.

We know that climate warning will cause population displacements. In fact, you mentioned that the largest portion of the population lives along coastlines.

Mr. Stephen Burt: In a way, I agree with you. It is not that we are not working on those scenarios, but most of our resources are allocated to supporting current operations. We certainly have an idea of what might happen. We submit the results of our analyses to the people who are in charge of equipment purchases so they can take them into account when they make decisions.

I am not saying that we are not developing scenarios, but our level of effort is lower for something that might happen in 10 or 20 or 30 years. It is difficult to invest a lot of resources in that when there are many other things that need our support right now.

That is a question that touches on the way we use resources.

Mr. Jean Rioux: You say that...

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm going to have to give the floor to Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to our witness, welcome back.

My first question has to do with how you sort out all the intelligence, from the various means, that is flowing into your command. Are you planning on using what's referred to as "cognitive technology" to help sort through some of this data that you're inundated with?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Without getting into the specific tools that we use, certainly the upkeep of our IT systems, the ability to integrate information from multiple sources and bring it into a single place where an analyst or a team of analysts can get access to everything they need, regardless of where it's coming from, and the ability to sort through big data and all these things to get at the bits and pieces that are of value or to put them together and see what kind of value you can get when you've agglomerated them into a mass, is something we pay a lot of attention to.

We have projects, more or less, on an ongoing basis to look at our IT to make sure we have the right level of integration for existing information feeds and to look at what might be coming in the future. It's a major area of work.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: With respect to using cognitive technology or artificial intelligence, as it's also known, to sort through these vast amounts of information so that you can actually distill it into a recommendation or a briefing, do you see any concerns from the standpoint of security and confidentiality that might be a result of using that type of technology?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Talking about security of the individual, privacy concerns, and whatnot, first and foremost, we don't focus on individual Canadians within defence intelligence. We're much more interested in trends—political trends, global trends, and things that are going on—and while there's always the chance of running across information that you didn't intend to collect, we don't actually have a use for that.

● (1150)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I never thought you would do that. I just thought maybe there were some technological problems that might occur as a consequence of that, or security from the standpoint of people knowing what you are doing who you don't want knowing.

From the standpoint of being the functional authority for defence intelligence in Canada, how would a peacekeeping mission in a place like Mali, for example, be in Canada's national interest? That's from your standpoint of gathering information.

Mr. Stephen Burt: I can't speak to what's in Canada's national interest from my perspective. From an intelligence perspective, what we would want to be able to do when we look at a particular mission set of any kind is to look at the kinds of forces we might be deploying into that area. First and foremost, we would look at what is going on in that area and help National Defence and the government come to a decision about what kinds of forces are necessary to achieve what the government would like to achieve there, so to define the context for the government. Then, once those decisions have been made around wanting to deploy and what kinds of forces you want to deploy, as a force generator, what are the things we would want to put in there from an intelligence perspective to ensure force protection and to make sure that the commanders have the information they need to make the operational decisions to make the mission a success?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Now we're going to go to a little more along the maritime threat. How critical is it, from the standpoint of your command, for Canada to have a submarine fleet?

Mr. Stephen Burt: As I said in response to one of the questions earlier, my interests on the intelligence side are really in having the best possible sources of information. There's no question that the more of the geographic spectrum you can cover—space, air, surface, and subsurface—the more information you have available to you and the better your knowledge is of what's going on. I'm in favour of more information essentially, getting access to more information.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Still on submarines, from the standpoint of, as you just said, surface and below the surface, would you have access to better intelligence for the defence of North America were you to have access to data that would come in real time from an under-the-ice submarine?

Mr. Stephen Burt: What I would say is that I am platform agnostic. I don't really have a view on what device you are using to gather that information. If the information is accessible, then I would like to be able to have access to it. I'm not too fussed about what those sensors are actually sitting on in terms of the kind of vehicle or naval platform that might be.

The Chair: That's your time, Ms. Gallant.

We're going to move over to Mr. Spengemann. You have four or five minutes.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Burt.

I want to pick up on some of the comments that Ms. Gallant made, but put them into a broader context.

What this committee is dealing with and has received testimony on are really three things: the changing nature of conflict, asymmetries that are developing, and a pressing need to invest, especially in this segment of our study on the Canadian navy. I also think the retention and the extension of the trust of the Canadian public in our armed forces, and specifically with respect to your field of intelligence, is an area that you may want to comment on.

I want to ask you this. If you cast, let's say, a 10-year shadow back, could you tell us how your business has changed, starting out, perhaps, with international operations? I want to take you to the domestic side as well, but with respect to increasingly complex coalitions—different cultures, different intelligence cultures, but also operational cultures—that the Canadian Forces is going to be part of and is part of, how has the strategic and operational setting changed for you in the last 10 years? What gaps are there that the government could help you close?

Mr. Stephen Burt: The major changes I've seen over the course of my career, which is about 20 years now, have to do with rising uncertainty in the global environment.

It's not always clear to me when we talk about how the world's more dangerous. I think in some areas that's true, but in other areas it's less so. I think the world is much less predictable now than it was 10 or 20 years ago. For an intelligence practitioner, I guess that's good for business in the sense that there is a need to, as much as possible, get out there and try to figure out what is happening and what is going to come at you and from where.

I think that in the last decade the mission in Afghanistan surfaced and then reinforced the need for good, tactical, and operational intelligence in support of decision-making. I think we haven't always had the culture around that, which some other countries do, but I think Afghanistan really made it clear how important that spectrum is, from the soldier on operations all the way up to the national decision-makers, and how important it is to have the best quality information on a day-to-day basis.

I think that those two things make for real growth, and I think there is a much greater understanding and perception of the importance of intelligence, and defence intelligence in particular, because of the profile of defence missions over the last decade, but intelligence more generally. I think there is a much greater understanding from the records previously than has ever been.

● (1155)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Let me take you over to the domestic side.

I also sit on the public safety committee. As you may know, there's a discussion under way on oversight in the committee of parliamentarians. This committee here has received evidence that—and I don't want to say it's the single biggest threat—a very prominent threat against Canada is that of domestic terrorism.

Taking my question to the domestic side, how has the operation changed here around the interaction with more civilian agencies? Maybe you can comment a bit about how open versus classified sources feed your business. If there are any gaps that we can assist in closing, then it would be helpful to this committee to know what they are.

Mr. Stephen Burt: On the domestic security side, with domestic national security terrorism and other threats, our specific interest in the Canadian Forces operations command and defence analysis more generally is really on the security of our personnel and our bases. That's really where we spend the bulk of our effort, in liaising with partners, whether they're municipal police forces or RCMP or CSIS and others, to make sure we have a good understanding of what the current threat picture looks like domestically and whether or not there are any issues that we're going to have to deal with in areas that we're responsible for, or people that we are responsible for.

It is, to use a metaphor that I think Admiral Lloyd used when he was here, very much a team sport. We contribute to that picture in terms of our operations overseas and what we see happening over there that may have implications, but we really do rely on a mandate for authorities and information flow domestically, since we don't operate in that sphere in the same way with our domestic partners.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I think that's my time, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Bezan.

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

Before you start the clock, I just want to point out that the last time Mr. Burt was here was when we passed my motion on doing a study on force protection. That was back in March. Here we are several months later, and we've had times when there have been no meetings called by the chair, and we still haven't had an opportunity to have one single witness to talk about how we protect our forces when they are either at recruiting centres, armouries, or on base. It's unfortunate and downright embarrassing that we haven't done that yet, when that motion was passed unanimously by the committee.

I'll start my questions with Mr. Burt. It's good to see you again.

You almost contradicted yourself. You said that there are no state threats but then went on and painted a picture of what Russia and China are doing. Really, it's downright scary the threat they pose to us here in Canada. I really appreciate what you've laid out on the naval threats facing us here in Canada.

Of course, we're going through the request for proposals right now for the future surface combatants. There was a report released just this morning by Dr. Danny Lam. His concern is that the design of the existing hull or the vessel that's out there today, does not have the capabilities to deal with the threats you so clearly laid out: ballistic missile capabilities; the sensor arrays we're going to need, which take a lot of energy and require an on-board ability to generate that type of electricity; and new direct energy weapons, such as lasers, rail guns, and things like that that are going to come online.

Do you feel that we need to broaden this and look at adaptability and modularity as we go into the ship design of our next surface combatants? As Dr. Huebert suggested when he was at committee on Tuesday, maybe we should only be building a ship for today, and then look at doing something different. Rather than doing 12 or 15 ships of one design, we should be adapting as we go through the building process over the next 20 years to take into consideration new threats and new technologies.

● (1200)

Mr. Stephen Burt: We work very closely with our procurement staff, the navy, and the other services to ensure that there's a clear understanding of what we see in the future threat environment. At that point, it becomes the responsibility of the services and the procurement folks to decide what the appropriate response is.

I'm not familiar enough with the ins and outs of the current procurement setup to comment. I understand that you may have Mr. Finn coming through in the next couple of weeks. He might be able to give you more detail on the procurement side of things.

I am confident that the information we provide in that process is heard, registered, and becomes part of the decision-making. Certainly everything I've passed on to you today are things we have raised before and have been raising for some time. This information is known and is accounted for in the decision-making by the department.

Mr. James Bezan: I appreciate that.

We are talking about Russia and expansionism. We're watching very closely what's happening in Ukraine, Syria, and of course, along the eastern plank of NATO. You are more than well aware of Russian aggression against NATO allies in the Black Sea and the Baltics and through the North Sea and the English Channel.

I read an interesting article last night on the concern that Russia's interest in the Arctic is resource based. Oil is running out in Siberia. Even with the lower prices, with a commercial approach we wouldn't develop it unless there was a return on investment, but they need cash flow.

Are you at all concerned in your work through the Canadian Forces intelligence services that Russia's appetite for oil to generate cash to fund their military machine is something we have to be paying closer attention to, especially with the expansion of military bases throughout the Russian archipelago islands in the Arctic?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I absolutely agree that we need to pay attention to the state of the Russian economy and how it is doing globally. Obviously, energy is a big part of their revenue generating, on the economic side.

I am not sure that being able to extract energy from the Arctic is a big driver of their current infrastructure push right now up there. I think what they're doing right now has a lot more to do with control of their own maritime territory and being able to track, and frankly tax, any commercial shipping that is going through that area. It's their own issue of maritime sovereignty and surveillance, much as what we have.

Having said that, the overall issue of the poor, frankly, Russian economic picture and what that does in terms of driving decision-making in Russia is of great interest to us.

The Chair: Mr. Fisher, you have five minutes, please.

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

I'm thinking along the lines of Mr. Bezan with my questions as well, regarding Russia. You mentioned that they possess a growing arsenal of sophisticated weapons, and you mentioned naval rejuvenation. Your job is to accumulate information. My thinking is, can they keep this up, this proliferation? They've built their economy on oil. Oil is at $45 U.S. today. The Russian economy is not great.

Maybe there are some members of the committee who have a clear sense of this proliferation, but can you paint a picture for me of Russia five to 10 years ago, Russia today, and what you think Russia might look like in five to 10 years? I'd like to get a better understanding of what this proliferation looks like, has looked like, and what it might look like based on the fact that oil is $45 a barrel now.

● (1205)

Mr. Stephen Burt: That's a great question.

I can paint you a very brief picture. The major changes in Russia, 10 years ago to now, and likely looking into the future, have been around the political attitudes in the Kremlin. I think they've made a series of decisions that have put them in a bit of a corner economically while attempting to advance their interests geopolitically.

Russia sees itself as being under threat. It sees itself as having been taken advantage of in the nineties, after the end of the Cold War. It believes and feels that it wasn't respected in that time and wasn't cut any slack and allowed to reform its economy. I think there's a real drive for respect. They want to be a great power. They want to be seen as being a great power. They become infuriated when they feel that their interests are not being taken into account, especially in the near abroad.

It's a difficult mindset. It makes it difficult to deal with them on a number of issues, because pride becomes involved. I think going forward it is an open question.

To answer your specific question about whether they can afford to continue doing what they're doing, the only answer I can give is this. So far, yes, but at a certain point, they are digging themselves a hole that they're going to have to come to grips with, just as the Soviet Union did. When that will occur and how they will react is something that I would have some difficulty speculating on.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I get the respect and the pride side of it. You said that they feel that they're under threat.

Mr. Stephen Burt: There's a strong sense, publicly stated by President Putin and other senior Russian leaders. They tend to see the colour revolutions in places such as Ukraine, central Asia, and whatnot, and attempts to democratize in some countries in their periphery as western-run influence operations to undermine Russian interests in those countries. They feel that the opening of NATO membership to eastern European countries similarly was a direct attack on Russian interests. They feel that, wherever possible, the west takes advantage of Russian weakness, so they're determined not to be weak.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You spoke in your opening comments about the "increasing global demand for energy and resources, which relies on the free flow of commerce through strategic maritime choke points." How big an issue is piracy? Is any of this by state actors, or is it all just one-offs and small pirate groups?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I wouldn't necessarily tie that with piracy. I think piracy is an issue, but it is an issue that can be managed both by navies and by the private sector in terms of protecting their own ships as they move through some areas where piracy is rampant. Piracy is an issue. It has been an issue, obviously, off the Horn of Africa. It is an issue presently in the Strait of Malacca, off Indonesia.

The bigger issue in terms of threats to global commerce that I would identify is in the Asia-Pacific region around territorial disputes, and given the number of choke points in that area, the potential for territorial disputes to get hotter and to block trade.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have nothing further.

The Chair: Mr. MacGregor, the floor is yours. You have three minutes.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Burt, in your opening remarks, you talked about some of the maritime threats to Canada. I want to look at organized crime specifically and at some of the smuggling that happens: the smuggling of people, of drugs, and particularly of firearms coming from the United States and so on.

I come from a coastal community on the west coast. I was looking at all the streams of intelligence that come in. It can range all the way from the shipping manifests that Transport Canada is looking at to a municipal police force to the CBSA. You have all these streams of information coming in. I want to get a sense of how your agency fits into that. Also, are you satisfied with the current state of maritime domain awareness in Canada and do you see any improvements that can be made?

● (1210)

Mr. Stephen Burt: Our role in all of that from a defence intelligence perspective is to remain alert to foreign activity or illicit activity off the coasts and in maritime approaches and to be aware of what's going on in those areas. Specifics around transnational organized crime in ports and the smuggling of weapons and whatnot is very much a law enforcement responsibility.

With regard to our role in that, we have a role in feeding into the maritime domain awareness picture—often abroad or in the near abroad in terms of our approaches—and making sure that picture is fed into the RCMP, the CBSA, and others who have specific law enforcement and regulatory powers.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Sometimes you'll be feeding the intelligence to them, but at other times you may receive intelligence from your partners. I guess that would lead you to directing a naval ship to an intercept mission?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I think there's a range of actions that might be appropriate, but certainly once they're inside 12 nautical miles and into territorial waters, that becomes a legal law enforcement issue much more that it is.... If there were to be Royal Canadian Navy or other Canadian Armed Forces assets used, they would have to be used in conjunction with the mandate and authorities of other partners and agencies.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Just quickly, in looking at the security, I have a lot of constituents who are either directly or indirectly employed at CFB Esquimalt. Continuing on the line that Mr. Bezan started, what can you tell us about the trend for security for the personnel who work at those bases? It's not so much on the base, but has there been a trend of increasing threats to people who are off the base and so on?

Mr. Stephen Burt: My major concern when it comes to threats to personnel is threats to uniformed personnel. I think that's what we've seen in the last couple of years. I think that Canadian Armed Forces in uniform are uniquely vulnerable, both because they're so easily seen and identified and also because targeting them has a certain symbolic value.

There is a symbolic value in targeting the base and base infrastructure and whatnot, or perhaps a recruiting centre, but my personal concern, my greater concern, I think, is at the level of the individuals who are easily identifiable and are seen to have a certain symbolic value if you were to do something nasty to them.

The Chair: That ends the formal questioning. We have some time, so we'll go around the track once, at five minutes per question. I'll start with the Conservatives.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Burt, I would like to talk about cooperation with the Coast Guard when it comes to terrorist activities.

We know that the coastal marine security operations centres, in Halifax and Esquimalt, analyze the various threats, and the Royal Canadian Navy oversees the operations.

If there is a maritime threat and a ship with terrorists on board arrives along our coasts, the Coast Guard will be the first to intervene. However, it may be too big a threat for the Coast Guard's resources. At that point, the Canadian Forces, in the form of the Royal Canadian Navy and the Special Forces, will have to intervene, in that kind of situation.

In the last two or three years, have there been any terrorist threats by sea, near Canadian coasts, that have called for intervention by the Coast Guard or the Royal Canadian Navy?

● (1215)

Mr. Stephen Burt: I think the threats that come by sea are certainly terrorist in nature. You see that mainly in other countries. There have been several cases of terrorist attacks in ports and in essential passages, for examine, in areas like the Strait of Malacca. These are very narrow canals that ships have to pass through.

There is always a risk of a terrorist attack in Canada, and that could take various shapes, including by sea. That being said, most terrorist activities that take place in maritime areas are connected with criminal groups and terrorist financing.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: If you raise a warning flag at the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, to say there is a threat, will we have the resources needed in order to take action?

Mr. Stephen Burt: We have the resources needed for analyzing threats and raising a flag in that regard. In terms of whether we have the resources needed in order to take action, I cannot really answer that.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Speaking of maritime aspects still, I saw a news report yesterday in which it said that the Coast Guard was facing problems in relation to icebreakers. For example, the ice in the river that runs between the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay may not get broken up, and this may cause major repercussions in economic terms.

To combat ecological threats or other threats of that kind, would it be worthwhile for the Royal Canadian Navy to have equipment and resources?

Certainly, the Coast Guard is not under the same department. We here are studying the situation of the Royal Canadian Navy, in military terms. Should coordination not be improved?

We might have a problem. We might have a good navy, in military terms, but it might not be able to deploy because the Canadian Coast Guard was not sufficiently effective.

Do you think the Royal Canadian Navy should be able to be autonomous?

Mr. Stephen Burt: All I can tell you is that we work very closely when it comes to intelligence. We communicate information. To be able to work together, we have to have the same picture of the situation.

I understand your question, but...

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: You are part of an intelligence cell and you are an expert in that field, but when you encounter problems, is the operational sector in a position to respond? That is what I want to know.

Mr. Stephen Burt: I am unfortunately not an expert in the operational field.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Very well.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: The next five-minute question goes to the Liberals, and I believe Mr. Spengemann had a question.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I may not need the five minutes, and I'm happy to delegate my time to the next Liberal speaker.

Mr. Burt, I'd like to switch gears and talk about economics a little, not just economics but the idea that with respect to defence we often talk about spending. What we really should be talking about is investment so that the Canadian public understands that we don't just create value around the public good of national security but that we create economic opportunity for Canadians and Canadian companies.

In your line of business are there any obvious connection points with private sector involvement, be it satellites and radar all the way down to the software you use day by day? Can you point to any levers where we could say we need to invest more, and there are Canadian opportunities here through the public procurement process?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I would be hard-pressed to come up with examples of companies or technologies, if you're looking for that level of specificity, that we might be interested in that I would want to talk about.

Canada is a technology leader in many areas, and the Government of Canada has made a number of investments in capabilities such as RADARSAT that are extremely helpful from an intelligence perspective. We enjoy the ability to recruit a very high level of individual, whether in uniform or as civilians, with good technical knowledge of cutting-edge systems, all of which is to our advantage, and we have good relationships with the people we need to have good relationships with in the private sector.

● (1220)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: On a more general level, what are one or two areas in your line of work that require ongoing investment, and maybe even something around paradigm shifts on where to take things next in terms of resources and equipment?

Mr. Stephen Burt: As I mentioned earlier, in response to Mrs. Gallant's question, the issue of investment in information technology, generally, and the ongoing need to deal with massive amounts of information in a sensible and reasonable way so that I don't have analysts spending all their time looking for things and they are actually able to get access to what they need, is a constant struggle. I think it's no different from the struggles that are experienced in large private sector IT firms.

There is always a need for investment in those areas.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Rioux, you had a question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux: I am going to come back to the question of climate change.

Are there any studies available about possible human migrations in 10 or 20 or 30 years, and the repercussions that could have in military terms, or is that confidential information?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I do not know. That is the short answer to your question.

I know there are some environmental groups, as you said earlier, that are observing the effects of climate change and talking about the possibility of islands in the Pacific disappearing, for example. Obviously, this change has repercussions on migrations, particularly for our allies in Australia and New Zealand, which see the direct effects of it on movements of peoples.

That is something worth considering, but I am not personally familiar with these kinds of studies.

Mr. Jean Rioux: Once again, I find that very surprising. I think it is a very realistic threat and we have to consider the repercussions that these population displacements and the conflicts that could cause may have.

Mr. Stephen Burt: If I may, Mr. Rioux, I would say that the question mainly depends on the number of years before the situation in question arises. Forecasting for the next 20 or 30 years is worthwhile, but I would say it is more a matter of scientific research than of intelligence work.

I think that when it comes to purchasing or procuring, we have to look ahead 20 to 30 years to foresee what may happen in technological terms, in order to combat the possible threats our forces may be subject to.

However, in terms of more political questions — population movements, possible conflicts, and so on — we plan on a much more short-term basis, because we have to foresee upcoming operations.

It is not that we do not take an interest in that, but we consider it to be work that could be done by other people.

Mr. Jean Rioux: I am not convinced; far from it. I think planning has to be done for the next 30 years. It seems to me that it is reasonable to contemplate that kind of planning. We expect the temperature on the planet to increase by two degrees Celsius. That will have repercussions. Studies have been done on this subject. I think we have to be prepared to deal with the situation and we have to consider ways to respond. Planning is important if we want to avoid military conflicts.

I hope you are going to engage in that process. I also hope that we are going to include this subject in our report. In my opinion, it is vital to consider the changes that global warming and the potential conflicts that could ensue will bring about.

● (1225)

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm going to give the floor to Mr. MacGregor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Burt, just staying on the topic of the resources we are giving our navy—and I don't really want to look at procurement so much—when you assess the intelligence streams you are privy to, are you satisfied that the security infrastructure at our naval bases is adequate right now? Can you comment on any improvements you would like to see?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I really can't.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: You can't. Okay.

Mr. Stephen Burt: My domain is about the resources we need to do the diagnosis when there's a problem. That's done and it's done again. It's looked at on a constant basis, and issues are flagged up to base commanders and to security people as they arrive. I'm confident that we have the resources to do that appropriately and to the right level of certainty.

As to the issue of whether we need more fences, more guards, more technology, and more something to help solve that problem, I'm really not in a position to say.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: You're not in a position to say. Is there nothing I can take back to my constituents who work the base to say improvements are coming or that there's a general level of satisfaction with it?

Mr. Stephen Burt: Unfortunately, no. I'm just not the right guy for those kinds of questions.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Sure, no worries.

I wanted to switch gears to the subject of submarines. They are unique vehicles, especially for intelligence gathering and for the fact that they can remain unseen. With our current deployment of submarines, how reliant are you on the information they gather, and would you like to see Canada expand its submarine capability to aid you with that intelligence gathering?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'm afraid I may disappoint you, again.

There's no question, getting to the comment about submarines earlier, that being able to monitor what's happening under the sea is an important capability from an intelligence perspective. I can't get into specifics around what you get and what you don't get out of specific capabilities like that.

What I would say is that from an intelligence-gathering perspective and from a more straightforward military capability perspective, 41 countries around the world continue to make significant investments in submarines. We see booming business by French companies, in particular—French and German companies—in exporting submarine technology to east Asia and around the globe. We see booming business in the construction and export of submarine launch torpedoes and missiles. These are seen as an important capability by many countries around the globe who invest heavily in making sure that they have them and who watch very carefully when their neighbours get them. It is a system of importance. It is a system that is being invested in heavily, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, and it is a system that our navy is going to run into when they deploy around the globe.

It is an important maritime capability. The issues of what Canada should or should not do are a bit beyond my remand.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Right.

We've heard testimony at this committee before about a country like Australia that has two-thirds of our population and is making significant investments in their submarines. You look at the neighbourhood that they inhabit, and it's probably a wise choice. Are you able to offer an opinion that we should expand our role? Is that something you would like to see in our submarines?

● (1230)

Mr. Stephen Burt: I think it would be wisest if I did not offer an opinion on that particular question. What I would say is that the Royal Canadian Navy is a global force. Yes, in Australia's immediate neighbourhood there are a number of countries that are making investments in submarines, but we also operate in those environments, even though we don't necessarily live there.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Okay, I think that's time, and I thank you very much for coming today.

The Chair: We have time, if we want to get to committee business, which I'm sure we all do.

We'll take two more five-minute questions, starting with Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: I'll share my time with Ms. Gallant.

I have one quick question for you on your business of intelligence gathering and sharing. Can you talk about the relationship with the Five Eyes from a military perspective?

At a previous committee meeting, one of our witnesses said that if we are lacking in any certain capabilities, such as submarines, we may not get the intelligence from our Five Eyes partners on whether or not there is a threat in the region. I just wanted to ask, are there any caveats that could be placed upon the information that we share or information that we gather from our Five Eyes partners?

Mr. Stephen Burt: In terms of reciprocity? In terms of being able to contribute...?

Mr. James Bezan: Or from the standpoint of threat....

An example is that the *Windsor* was deployed in the North Atlantic to track a Russian submarine earlier this year. If we didn't have the submarine capability, would we have known that was in the North Atlantic and near Canadian maritime domain that we're responsible for?

Mr. Stephen Burt: In general terms, I would say that the Five Eyes relationship is of essential importance on the intelligence front. We gain far more than we give out of that relationship just partly by its nature, partly because of the capabilities of our partners. It is fundamental to our success and our ability to operate globally, that close, really unprecedented co-operation among five different countries.

Without talking about a specific capability area like submarines or anything else, the ability to speak the same specialized language around working in a domain and understanding the ins and outs of it and being able to talk to your counterparts who also have experience operating in that domain are an important part of information sharing. It's important to have people who, on all sides of that discussion, actually understand the business when you get into specialized capability areas.

Having said that, our allies have always been very open and generous with us. It's not to say they will always be so, but certainly historically we have benefited immensely with their willingness to share things with us across the spectrum of their own capabilities, whether or not we actually operate in those areas.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: To our witness, in your final response to Mr. Paul-Hus you mentioned you had limited resources. What does your command need in order to increase its capacity to fulfill your command's missions?

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'm trying to recall what I said we had limited resources for precisely.

At the end of the day, in intelligence we have—to quote my former boss—two weapons systems really. One is our computers and the other is our brains. The resources that we need and that we rely on heavily are fundamentally people-based, so getting the right people with the right expertise in the door, trained, security-cleared people you can trust to do hard things and to think about hard questions and come up with clever, innovative answers. It's our ability to communicate and share that information generally over information technology systems, both internally with domestic partners and with allies. Those are the two areas where I would always want more resources.

● (1235)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

The Chair: The last question goes to Ms. Romanado.

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

I'd actually like to offer my time to the honourable member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Thank you.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): It's not often I get called the honourable member.

There was an interesting article in *The Globe and Mail* this morning about “Amerexit”. It's a triumphalist Chinese colonel who is basically anticipating that the chaos in the United States will ultimately and quite quickly lead to China's supremacy as the world's foremost superpower. There have been some developments down there. The first was of course The Hague decision, which China has unilaterally blown off. The second has been the change of government in the Philippines and a more obvious rapprochement between the Philippines and China. The third is the relationship between Malaysia and China, which seems to have some warming effect.

I would think that all of these things have some impact on your analysis of the threat environment, but also on the overall intelligence operation that you conduct. I'd be interested if you feel comfortable commenting on these recent developments, which are all in the public domain.

Mr. Stephen Burt: I'll briefly preface my remarks with two comments. One is that you promised me you weren't going to ask any questions. The other is that I will be in Colorado on election day, watching from NORAD. I may not come out again, depending on how that goes.

More seriously, with regard to your question—and I've alluded to it a couple of times here but haven't really expanded on it—we've talked a lot about Russia, but the Chinese reaction to the Philippines court case in UNCLOS around the maritime disputes in the South China Sea was very interesting. It was a much harder-edged decision than I think many people had anticipated, certainly than I had anticipated. It was much more embarrassing for the Chinese government than I think they were anticipating, and they've struggled with how to react to it.

The changing government in the Philippines, at the same time, has cut across that in sort of an interesting way, because I think a different Philippines government could have made it much more difficult for China to deal with this issue.

Hon. John McKay: Aquino in particular, the previous president, was extremely hostile to that creation of islands.

Mr. Stephen Burt: It's very interesting to watch the Chinese try to recover from that and to try to put forward their preference for bilateral relationships and deal with specific disputes as opposed to dealing with the risk that they face in India to cope after that ruling with a number of ASEAN countries hopping onto that bandwagon.

To conclude, all that is to say that the submarines question and some of the other questions you've had regarding the operating environment in the South China Sea and East China Sea, and the refusal of China to abide by internationally recognized codes of conduct in some of those things, are very troubling.

The Chair: Thank you.

It looks like that concludes our round of questions. I want to thank you for coming. I appreciate your time. I'm going to invite you to come back again. I'm sure we'll see you again. We'll suspend for a few minutes while you leave.

● (1235)

(Pause)

● (1240)

The Chair: Welcome back. We had said that we would get to committee business and we have about 18 minutes to get out of here on time. That leaves the committee business we are going to at least start with, which is the two motions put forth by Mr. Bezan.

Mr. Bezan, you have the floor.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The first motion I want to put on the table is as follows:

> That unanimous consent be required for any Member of Parliament who is not a member of the Committee to be present during in camera proceedings of the Committee.

Just for further clarification, we had one issue when we were at an in camera meeting and the chief government whip came into the meeting. He did leave after some issues were raised with it, but I just want to make sure that we have this as part of our routine motions, which we approved at the beginning of the session. I just want greater clarity that we actually have that as part of the routine motions.

The Chair: That's debatable obviously. Is there discussion?

Ms. Romanado.

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

I just want to get clarity on it, because that motion says unanimous consent is required. I know for a fact myself, that when I was absent, travelling on committee business, I had to have a substitute. Would we now require unanimous consent to have the substitute there? The motion is not clear in that regard.

I think, from what I understand, we are following the rules that are in place in the *House of Commons Procedures and Practice*. I just wanted to double-check to get some clarity on that because, from what I understand, we have been following that. There was an incident. It was corrected and the whip left. I'm not quite sure where this is coming from.

Mr. James Bezan: First, it wouldn't change the fact that substituting members have privileges. They'd be considered members of the committee.

Second, in the event that the government decided that it was worthwhile to have the parliamentary secretary participate in a committee meeting, especially if we were talking about a particular study and we wanted to make sure that we had the calendar of the minister and availability of the minister to appear, maybe on estimates or supplementary estimates, which is often information that the parliamentary secretary is aware of, we may want to have him attend our meeting. This would also provide us with the ability to do that, so it does provide greater certainty in how we manage our affairs.

● (1245)

The Chair: Is there more discussion?

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'll just say that although I appreciate Mr. Bezan's intent, it seems redundant. This is already the case. This is already defined.

It seems as though you're just reaffirming what is already supposed to be the practice. It may not have happened exactly like that—

Mr. James Bezan: That's the issue.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: —but that doesn't mean that it's not already enshrined within our rules.

Mr. James Bezan: Every committee is the master of its own domain, so every committee can set the rules that govern their operations. This would be part of our routine motions and would help us deal with these circumstances that might be considered "practice", but sometimes things around here that are commonalities aren't always the practice of committee. This actually puts it out clearly.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, maybe you could ask the clerk to clarify. I'm not trying to get the clerk into the debate, but is what's being proposed here already enshrined within our procedural orders?

The Chair: Go ahead. Cut to the chase.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just factually, I'm not trying to drag you into the debate.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Philippe Grenier-Michaud): Basically, regarding the participation of non-members in committee proceedings, there's a quote in the book that says usually when a committee proceeds to sit in camera, non-members will leave by themselves as a courtesy, but the committee can, by a motion, allow non-members or anybody else to stay. The intent of the motion, I guess—and I don't want to speak for Mr. Bezan—is to make sure that for every occasion, if a non-member is present in camera, unanimity will need be sought and obtained for that member to stay.

An hon. member: But not an affiliated member.

The Clerk: No, this won't apply to a substitute or an official member, only to other members present in the room. Because of Standing Order 114, if a member is a substitute, he's acting as a member.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just for clarity, we already have to put forward a motion to accept the other individual anyway.

The Clerk: The committee could. Usually, the committee, as an express way, will seek unanimous consent because it's easier and quick, but the rules are—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I saw the rules. It says, unanimous consent or majority.

The Clerk: Yes, "or".

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Right, so in unanimous consent, you do it without a motion, and for a majority, you use a motion to do it.

The Clerk: Exactly, so—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It would appear to me as though this is already taken care of in our procedural bylaws.

The Clerk: This motion is more strict.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: This gets rid of the unanimous consent.

Mr. James Bezan: No, this is unanimous consent.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Oh, you're requiring it to only be....

An hon. member: As opposed to a majority.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Right. I don't know about that.

The majority rules. Come on now.

Mr. James Bezan: You guys essentially want to set it up so you have seven against four.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Don't tell me you didn't do that a year and a half ago.

The Chair: I want to give the floor to Ms. Romanado.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Thank you.

I want to double-check. When we met on February 18, we passed some routine motions. One of them that we made sure we adopted was:

> That, unless otherwise ordered, each Committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one (1) staff person at in camera meetings and one (1) Whip staff from each party.

I remember a debate about whether or not interns could be there, and that's why we said no, it has to be a staff person. I think that clarifies—

The Clerk: That governs only the staff, not the members of Parliament.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: No, but we're saying that you're only allowed to be accompanied by one staff. That's it, so there's no—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Sorry, just on that point—

● (1250)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: I'm sorry, Mr. Gerretsen, I have the floor.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: That being said, I want to make—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I should be sitting on that side.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: I want to make sure that I'm understanding this correctly. We've already passed this motion. To me, it's very clear that we cannot have extra people in the room without consent, if I understand this motion correctly.

The Clerk: It's for the staff. This motion is saying and is interpreted as "staff".

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Staff? Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I was just confused. Are we talking about motion number two now?

The Chair: No, we haven't even gotten through motion number one.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay. Well, that's what motion number two seems to address, so that's why I was....

For the record, for the blues, because this is public, I do not want to sit on the other side of the table.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Is there any more discussion on this? There's obviously a will to make it a little more formal and restrictive.

Mr. James Bezan: I'd like a recorded vote, please.

The Chair: We'll have the clerk call the recorded vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: Okay. That motion's defeated.

Mr. Bezan, you have the floor for your second motion.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay, I'll move ahead with the second motion although I'm very disappointed. I move:

> That, pursuant to Standing Order 119, unanimous consent be required to allow Parliamentary Secretaries to participate in the proceedings of the Committee, either during debate or during the questioning of witnesses.

Just so everyone knows, Standing Order 119 reads:

> Any Member of the House who is not a member of a standing, special or legislative committee, may, unless the House or the committee concerned otherwise orders, take part in the public proceedings of the committee, but may not vote or move any motion, nor be part of any quorum.

Again, this is to add clarity to the Liberals' own mandate letter from the Prime Minister to the government House leader that says they're going to change the rules that ministers and parliamentary secretaries no longer have a vote on committees. If you look at the Liberal book of campaign promises, you see they said that they are going to remove the ministers and parliamentary secretaries from interfering with committees.

Just to take that one step further and to help the Liberals honour that campaign promise, we should actually ensure that a parliamentary secretary only is allowed to participate in the proceedings of our meetings, including asking questions of witnesses, if there is unanimous consent to do so.

Again, it wasn't our decision to take parliamentary secretaries off committee. It was a decision by the Liberals. When I was parliamentary secretary of defence, I got to participate in committee meetings because I was a member of the committee. Unfortunately, that was a decision by the Prime Minister to remove parliamentary secretaries from committee.

The Chair: The motion is debatable.

Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Bezan, would this have eliminated the opportunity for Mr. McKay to speak when Ms. Romanado gave her time to him?

Mr. James Bezan: Yes, it would have today, if this wasn't....

It wasn't a decision from our side of the House to say that parliamentary secretaries would not be interfering in committees anymore—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Is your party bringing this forward to every committee?

Mr. James Bezan: No, this is my motion.

What I witness here is that Mr. McKay is fully participating in committee, and I didn't think that was the intent or the will of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm quite content—

Mr. James Bezan: I can tell you that I understand other committees are quite happy to have parliamentary secretaries. They can ask them questions and have them participate because of the relationship that's been cultivated, but that doesn't seem to happen at this committee.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: In the other committee that I'm on, the environment committee, Ms. May comes to the committee from time to time and wants to participate. She basically has to get somebody to share their time, and I don't particularly see a problem with that. What does it really matter if Mr. McKay asks the questions, or if he gives the questions to Ms. Romanado to ask?

If she wants to yield her time to somebody else who is another member of Parliament, is that not in the best interests of democracy if that's what she wants to do?

Mr. James Bezan: I'm just putting this forward for clarification and certainty as to the Liberal promise, but that was an anomaly today that you actually shared time. Usually it's just been directed from the front that Mr. McKay will speak—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Which is within the rules....

Mr. James Bezan: —which is within the rules. I understand that, but it hasn't been the normal practice at this committee. This just adds more clarification on how the committee functions.

● (1255)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

Ms. Romanado and then Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: If I choose to share my time with another member, I think that is my prerogative. If I'm giving up my slot, I'm giving up my slot. I understand that the NDP often have a colleague who will come and participate in the meeting who is not an official member, but will cede their time to another member. I'm not quite sure what the beef is. Quite frankly, we've had other members share their time, and as my colleague Mr. Gerretsen mentioned, I think that's my prerogative.

The Chair: I think it's more specifically with regard to parliamentary secretaries.

Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: As my colleague James Bezan mentioned, that intention does not come from us; the request comes from the Prime Minister.

The first goal is for the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of National Defence to work closely together.

From the outset, this committee has had a lot of difficulty and has not been able to ensure our sovereignty as a committee or do what we should be doing, autonomously.

At present, for some things, we are more in a situation of interference from the Minister and the parliamentary secretary, at the request of the Prime Minister. He is the one who asked that the procedure be changed, not us.

We simply want to apply the procedure so the committee can function, myself included. I occasionally attend meetings of other committees, and it is totally different. I would like us to be able to have a more effective way of working for everyone.

The motions we are making are not aggressive. They are motions to govern the functioning of the committee; we are trying to function.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Mr. Chair, there would only be two reasons for Mr. Bezan to want to exclude the parliamentary secretary. One is that it somehow infringes on the time allocation, and the other is that he doesn't want to hear his view.

With respect to interference with the committee's work, I don't believe that having the parliamentary secretary, who has experience in the sector, ask a question would constitute interference with the committee.

In terms of time allocation, it's quite clear, in fact, Mr. Chair, you've been extremely generous in the third round. Usually you've given everybody five minutes. If anything, the opposition has gained time allocation in this committee setting. There's no peril at all to somebody not getting in their fair share of time, so I don't see the rationale for excluding prima facie the parliamentary secretary in his capacity as somebody who knows about defence issues.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Just in rebuttal to that, if we had four witnesses at the end of the table, we'd be using the entire two hours and we'd only get through our scheduled rounds. That's just by adding an extra 30 minutes at the head of the table with statements. That happened quite often in the past at this committee as well as at other committees when we had four witnesses appear at one time. Today was an anomaly. We only had one.

The second part is that this is definitely only targeted toward the parliamentary secretary, not other members. If Nathaniel Erskine-Smith or Robert-Falcon Ouellette wanted to attend, I'd be more than happy and may even share my time with those two stand-up individuals. This would not prevent the NDP from sharing their time with one of their colleagues or if Elizabeth May or a Bloc member wanted to attend and participate and we felt that was definitely in line with the witnesses we had that day, I wouldn't be at all opposed to that.

I'm not trying to infringe upon Ms. Romanado's rights to share her time. This is about honouring the Liberal promise of removing the interference of parliamentary secretaries, although we know they still work behind the scenes. At the same time, we also know that Mr. McKay, as parliamentary secretary, is privileged to receive much more detailed briefings than what we're getting here from government officials. It's more important to hear from people who don't have that opportunity to question these witnesses rather than Mr. McKay.

The Chair: I have Ms. Gallant and Mr. Fisher, and then we'll check our clock.

Ms. Gallant, the floor is yours.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I just want to make sure I understood Ms. Romanado correctly in that her personal prerogative trumps the Prime Minister's mandate letters to the ministers and campaign promises. That's what the intent of Mr. Bezan's motion is, to uphold the campaign promise as well as what's in the mandate.

● (1300)

The Chair: I'll let Ms. Romanado respond, and then I'll give the floor to Mr. Fisher after she responds to Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: I'd be happy to clarify. My response was that I should be allowed to share my time as, I understand in the last round of questioning, time was shared on the other side. Please don't take my intent as anything but what it was.

The Chair: Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The motion has parliamentary secretaries, plural. Does this have anything to do with Parliamentary Secretary Alleslev who participated one day? It is plural and it doesn't just speak to one parliamentary secretary.

Mr. James Bezan: No. In her case, she came in as a substitute member, so she had full rights. I'll just put it on the record that I was not happy about her participation. I do feel that as the parliamentary secretary to a minister who shares responsibilities on procurement of national defence assets, it is a conflict and is a violation of your own directive in the mandate letter. However, she was duly and officially substituted in and she was a member of the committee.

Mr. Darren Fisher: The motion wasn't meant to be plural.

Mr. James Bezan: I put “secretaries” because I want to be sure that anyone who is attending not as a substituted member wouldn't have the ability to be carrying out the PMO's wishes at committee by interfering.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It could be the parliamentary secretary for environment, right?

Mr. James Bezan: If she decided to sit in, if we were having a hearing on how much the carbon tax is going to impact the price of operations of vessels and aircraft and—

Mr. Darren Fisher: But as this motion reads, Rodger Cuzner couldn't come here and participate.

Mr. James Bezan: Right, though I really like Rodger.

Mr. Darren Fisher: As it's written, I certainly won't be supporting the motion.

Mr. James Bezan: It would need unanimous consent. That's the reality.

The Chair: Is there any more debate on this issue, or do you want to call the question?

James, do you want a recorded vote?

Mr. James Bezan: Yes, I'd like a recorded vote, please.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: I know you had something you wanted to talk about but we're—

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: I want to move a motion and I have it worded. The motion is as follows:

> That the Committee invite the Minister of Defence to appear at the earliest opportunity before the Committee for two (2) hours, to discuss the recently tabled Supplementary Estimates; and that the meeting be televised.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I have a point of order.

I believe that this motion, because it doesn't relate to committee business, needs to have 48 hours' notice.

The Chair: We're in committee business.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: No, it doesn't relate to the committee business that we're doing today.

The Chair: We're in committee business.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, so in that case I really want to give some thought to this. I have a meeting right now, so I'll move that we adjourn debate on this and we discuss it at the next meeting.

The Chair: All in favour of adjourning debate?

Mr. James Bezan: I want a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.