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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): I'd like to welcome everybody to the defence committee this afternoon. More importantly, I'd like to welcome our witnesses.

We have Stéfanie von Hlatky, associate professor and director of the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen's University. Thank you for coming.

We also have Yves Brodeur, fellow at Canadian Global Affairs, via VTC from Quebec; and Julian Lindley-French, fellow at Canadian Global Affairs, via VTC from the Netherlands. Thank you very much for appearing.

Just a reminder, please restrict your comments to 10 minutes. If you see me holding up a white paper at any time, that means I'm looking for you to sum up in 30 seconds so I can keep us on time.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Ms. von Hlatky for her opening remarks.

Ms. von Hlatky, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky (Associate Professor and Director, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University, As an Individual): Good afternoon, everyone.

Mr. Chair, deputy chairs, hon. members and members of the committee, thank you. I'm delighted to be here with you.

[*English*]

It is my pleasure to be here today to testify. I am really delighted by the topic.

Before I go any further, I just want to state that, although my presentation will be in English, obviously we can do the Q and A interaction in French afterwards.

Today, I want to focus my remarks more specifically on gender considerations for NATO. Several events and initiatives have highlighted the importance of taking gender dynamics into account for the practice of security and defence. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and follow-on resolutions were important to outline the need for greater participation by women in conflict resolution and peace processes, as well as the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. These resolutions also called for gender mainstreaming, which is the integration of gender-based analysis and perspectives into policy-making, operational planning, and missions.

Following the UN, NATO adopted its own directives and guidelines to implement the women, peace and security agenda, and I would argue that Canada has an important role to play in the entrenchment of those norms as part of NATO practices.

Over the last year and a half, I have been the lead project director for a NATO science for peace and security grant project that focuses on how best to integrate gender guidelines into NATO practices. The project is called “Tailor-Made Gender Awareness Applications for the NATO Community”. This project includes applied research and the development of a course that examines the many ways gender considerations impact NATO's day-to-day activities. Topics covered include the integration of women in the armed forces; the incorporation of gender perspectives in policies, operational planning, and missions; and how to perform gender-based analysis across a variety of positions.

In order to accomplish this work, it was very important to go to the NATO community first and really understand how these guidelines and directives had been rolled out since the adoption of the first directives and how the end-users, if you will, were perceiving some of the changes that occurred with the incorporation of these various gender directives and guidelines. Our team analyzed over 100 publicly available NATO documents on gender, and we also visited NATO headquarters to do over 50 interviews with various officials, both on the military and the civilian sides. In addition, we ran two pilot courses in order to test the material in front of a NATO audience and seek feedback.

One of the key documents that underpinned our work was bi-strategic command directive 40-1, which focuses specifically on implementing Resolution 1325 and incorporating gender perspectives in the NATO command structure. This document was last updated very recently, in October. The directive applies to allied command operations, allied command transformation, and of course the armed forces that are assigned to NATO operations and missions. Implementation relies on the integration of gender perspectives across NATO's core tasks: collective defence, crisis management, and security co-operation.

If you read the bi-strategic directive, you will notice that the document outlines a rationale for these directives and certain operational benefits to the incorporation of gender perspectives. It sets out certain expectations with regard to NATO performance on this file, and clearly defines and states the roles and responsibilities of positions such as gender advisers and gender focal points.

While the directives are clear, the mechanism to implement this within NATO and across NATO states could be strengthened. Canada is well poised to play a key role in this respect. Canada has a strong tradition when it comes to developing gender-based analysis tools and has made gender equality a central part of its current international priorities. It's also recognized as a leader within the NATO context, given that Canada was among the first group of countries to remove all professional barriers to the participation of women in the armed forces.

● (1535)

My recommendation is for Canada to become a global leader in gender training, bolstering its own gender adviser capacity in the process. Since gender analysis is a field that evolves very quickly, I would also recommend that this training approach be equipped with a proper network of experts, whether in academia or civil society organizations, to provide periodic updates, feedback, the latest data and research. I think that would be desirable. Convening international forums to share best practices with some of our allies and other international security organizations beyond NATO I think would also help support this effort and certainly help with the momentum.

In the short term, there are a lot of opportunities for improvement. The consideration of gender in the realm of security and defence is often very segmented. We saw this in our study leading up to the course. Very expectedly we saw some differences between how the civilian side of NATO would implement gender reforms versus the military side, but perhaps surprisingly we felt the military was somehow ahead of the game on this one because they were quite prolific when it came to producing directives that demonstrated how to implement these gender guidelines, whereas on the political side of the House much of the activities that we surveyed were focused on awareness raising.

On the political side of NATO, Canada can contribute to support the development of a comprehensive strategy to incorporate gender into NATO policies and to make sure that the assistant secretary generals are asked to report on implementation. This would ensure gender considerations are truly integrated across all of NATO's activities and across the eight portfolios held by the assistant secretary generals: political affairs and security policy; emerging security challenges; defence investment; defence policy and planning; executive management; public diplomacy; operations; as well as intelligence and security. In case you're wondering, yes, all those positions are held by men.

This more systematic approach ensures gender analysis is carried out by the organization as a whole, not just by the gender advisers or the women, peace and security office. Too often, improvements in gender practices within an organization will rely on the initiatives of individuals or the expertise of certain people, but that is just not a sustainable way to make change happen, especially not in an organization that has high turnaround and very short contracts.

We must also recognize why progress on the gender file has been slow. There are 29 different political cultures within NATO, which is difficult to reconcile, and this complex and multinational environment creates an implementation challenge that would not be present in the implementation of a strictly national action plan, for instance.

Moreover, gender guidelines are often jargon laden and are seen to impose excessive reporting metrics that do little to relate the gender perspective to the daily work of security and defence professionals on both the civilian and military sides of the NATO house. Another example is linked to the often-cited view that once bullets start flying, gender is irrelevant. Although now you're starting to see more and more work in academia and in policy circles on how adversarial tactics incorporate gender perspectives as well, I think this area is still misunderstood and that has led to some very important blind spots. We can think of the role women play in insurgencies and in terrorist organizations, but we can also look to the mission in Latvia and how the gender dimension has been exploited in Russian information campaigns. Canada's long-standing experience with gender-based analysis is an asset here, one that should be better leveraged in the security and defence realm to support national and NATO priorities.

● (1540)

Canada is a credible actor in this field. However, in the last two decades, Canada was outpaced by Nordic countries. They have continuously updated gender training as opposed to considering gender equality a *fait accompli*, which is something that happened in the Canadian Armed Forces in the 1990s and 2000s.

The Deschamps report served as an important wake-up call for introducing new initiatives and reforms to bring the Canadian Armed Forces' diversity standards and gender literacy to a higher level. Important steps have been taken, like the diversity strategy, the appointments of gender advisers, and the inclusion of gender as an important consideration in the new defence policy, “Strong, Secure, Engaged”. This is a firm basis on which to establish Canada as a leader and norm setter when it comes to gender in security and defence, to show how it can improve policy-making and operational planning tailored to the needs of NATO objectives and missions.

As the framework nation of NATO's enhanced forward presence battle group through Operation Reassurance, Canada is well positioned to advocate for gender best practices not only at the NATO HQ and SHAPE, but also through its contribution in various missions.

To tie this to the broader discussion on Canada's involvement within NATO, I think that very often more qualitative contributions to the alliance are obscured by the big focus on burden-sharing debates and the 2% rule. Canada has already done a lot on the women, peace and security file at NATO, but I think it can do much more in the future.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your comments, Dr. von Hlatky.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Mr. Brodeur.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Brodeur (Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I don't have any opening remarks. I would simply like to thank the committee and its members for inviting me to appear. I will be pleased to answer your questions in English or French.

Thank you.

● (1545)

[*English*]

The Chair: The interpretation didn't come through, but I understood your remarks.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Dr. Julian Lindley-French.

Dr. Julian Lindley-French (Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs, As an Individual): Thank you, Chair. Good evening from the Netherlands.

In this, your Veterans' Week, let me first congratulate Canada for its historic contribution to the freedom of Europe and for its continuing defence.

The other day at Camp Adazi in Latvia, close to the Russian border, I saw first-hand the vital Canadian contribution to NATO's enhanced forward presence and force operations in the defence of Latvia. Still, and with very genuine respect, let me talk, Yorkshireman to Canadians, about how I see your reality. I am no expert on Canadian defence policy, but these are my impressions.

First, I really wondered at Adazi if Canadian forces really understood and would be able, in the worst case, to cope with Russian forces on the other side of the border in the western military oblast.

Second, military power is relative. Reading “Strong, Secure, and Engaged”, I certainly got the engaged bit, but strong and secure?

Third, Canadian defence policy to an outsider seems more devoted, at times, to upholding the values of Canadian society, values indeed that I share, rather than to defending it in what is going to be a new age.

Fourth, at times “Strong, Secure, Engaged” reads like a plan for a previous age, a 1990s-plus strategy, with a focus on stability rather than defence, let alone high-end collective deterrence and defence and trying to do all these things with a force of some 67,000 personnel.

Fifth, I note the ambition to “field advanced capabilities to keep pace with allies and maintain an advantage over potential adversaries”, yet I really wonder, given the cost balance of your forces and your high personnel costs, costs which, reading the paper, I would suggest would increase, if with around 1% GDP on defence you can indeed meet the full spectrum of operations. Two per cent well spent, after all, is far better than 1% however well spent especially when 20% of that is on new equipment.

Sixth, I see no evidence of Canada really preparing for a future war NATO along the lines that General Allen and General Breedlove, Admiral Zambellas, and I discuss in our new paper, “Future War NATO? From Hybrid War to Hyper War via Cyber War”.

Seventh, if you are to meet your three current, and indeed future, defence goals—the defence of Canada, the defence of North America, and contributing to wider security, which I take to mean NATO collective defence as well—you will need to be equipped with the technologies of the new military age. These would include autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, et al. These things do not come cheap. Indeed, if you are to operate closely with U.S. forces in future towards the high end of the spectrum, which is why Canadian forces are indeed in Latvia, that's the bare minimum your forces will need.

Eighth, Canadian forces may well need to be effective, expeditionary high-end first responders if and when the over-stretched Americans are forced to engage the world on multiple fronts at the same time.

I saw in Afghanistan the outstanding quality of Canadian personnel, but I wonder if Canada is preparing for the wrong future. Indeed, when I read your defence policy, and again, I say this with respect, but I'm being a blunt Yorkshireman, my sense is that you need your own strategic analysis to better make the kind of strategic judgments upon which, in a complex environment, Canada will have to engage. I fear that at some point, Canadian troops, under NATO command, could find themselves faced with the best that 20th century Canada could equip them with facing the worst the 21st century could throw at them. Again, I saw the quality of Canadian personnel. When we get defence policy wrong—and I've been very blunt in the House of Commons in London about the consequences for British troops—it is our young men and women on the front line who have to close the gap between the real world and poor policy.

● (1550)

My take-away is this: 50 years ago next month the Harmel report entrenched the twin tracks of sound defence and engaged dialogue at the heart of NATO strategy. They remain there, and rightly so. My sense is that too many allies, too many of us, are happy to pursue dialogue but seem to have forgotten sound defence and, indeed, how much that sound defence costs.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, sir, for your opening remarks.

What we're going to do is we'll go through a round of formal questions, at which time we'll break, and then we'll go into committee business, just as agreed to by the rest of the committee.

Having said that, Mark Gerretsen, you will have the first question.

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

Ms. von Hlatky, thank you for being here today. It's always nice to have people here from the best university in Canada. It was nice to see you last week at the opening of the Peace Support Training Centre that's located at CFB Kingston.

I want to ask you a couple of questions about, first of all, the percentage of women who are peacekeepers in NATO. Are you aware of what percentage of peacekeepers would be women?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky:

Yes, thank you for your question.

There are 11% women in NATO's armed forces, but when you look at the deployed women, it's down to 6%.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: You said six.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Six, yes; I think there is a challenge there in terms of not only understanding that gap between the number of women who are in the national armed forces and then how many are deployed on—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do you have similar numbers for Canada, specifically?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: The numbers I've received from Canada conflict right now. I've reached out to a third source to have that number confirmed.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: What did you get?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: It was hovering around 15%, which would be quite high.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Within the culture of NATO, what do you see as the challenges to having gender better incorporated into peacekeeping efforts? What are the cultural challenges? We've heard about some of the physical challenges in terms of a lot of the stuff being built for male troops. What do you see as some of the cultural challenges?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I think one of the main cultural challenges is that not all 29 member states have the same definition of what gender means, or how it might be relevant to their work.

I think that a second challenge is related to the fact that some officials view gender as the specialized purview of —quote, unquote —"gender experts" within the NATO structure. That would be in the international military staff, the gender adviser, who certainly is there to provide support for the international military staff in terms of the integration of those guidelines and directives. On the international staff side—still within the secretariat—you would have the women, peace and security office, which is led by the special representative to the secretary general on women, peace and security.

You have these individuals whose primary job, if you will, is to look at how we can better implement those guidelines. Without diffusion of that gender literacy, the true mainstream effects will not be felt.

I think that another challenge that relates to the professional culture is maybe at the political level. In NATO you have the North Atlantic Council, and you have the military committee, and the military committee supports the decisions made by the NAC. Then you have the secretariat that implements those decisions, so IS and IMS.

What I want to emphasize with that is that at the political level there also needs to be a lot of momentum. When you look at which countries are vocal on this issue, you will see very uneven efforts. I think Canada in this case politically can serve a very important role in bringing up these issues in the North Atlantic Council, and certainly our current ambassador Kerry Buck has done that.

● (1555)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I want to switch gears; otherwise, I will run out of time.

You contributed to an article in *The Hill Times* earlier this year where you said that Russia will make every effort to undermine NATO's multinational battalion attempts at trust building with local populations in countries such as Latvia.

Can you speak to the types of tactics you see Russia using to undermine those attempts that NATO is working towards?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Absolutely. One of the key efforts that we see in Russia's information operations is to undermine the public support for the presence of Canadian Armed Forces in Latvia, and I suppose of the entire multinational battalion.

It's doing so by basically trying to undermine the credibility of the Canadian Armed Forces through various articles in the Russian-speaking media. For instance, the crimes committed by the Canadian Armed Forces colonel were highlighted in certain of those news media articles. That, to me, has a very gendered dimension, because they are trying to undermine the masculinity of the Canadian Armed Forces by bringing up this idea that the Canadian Armed Forces are —and I quote here from the article that's translated into English—"a bunch of homosexuals", to borrow from that article.

You can see how they're playing on gender conceptions of masculinity there to try to undermine the support for the mission locally.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

Mr. Lindley-French, do you think that Canada should be spending 2% of its GDP on our military? Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: Yes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: As a follow-up question, how do you value non-monetary resources? For example, when we were recently in Latvia, we were told by one official that, when Canada shows up, other countries show up.

Canada might not spend a lot, but we're definitely there when we're needed. We show up. Out of the four battalions that are currently assembling and working, the one that Canada is leading has the most nations that have come to participate with Canada.

How do you value those things that cannot be attributed to a percentage of GDP?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: I don't, bluntly—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: —because other countries can do the same thing.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: But they don't. That's my question. How do you value them?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: I value Canadians, but the bottom line is that if you are not equipping your forces with the kind of capabilities that are being developed elsewhere, you are in effect asking your young people out there to close a gap between what's on the other side of the border and what you're giving them.

I'd rather you spent 2% and gave them the right kit, and still employed that kind of influence, without trying in some way to justify asking for less than 2%. You signed up to it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Maybe the two don't go hand in hand. Why can't the U.S. have that kind of influence? They spend a ton of money.

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: But they do have that kind of influence. Nothing happens in NATO without the Americans.

The Chair: I'm going to have to stop that part of the conversation there, and maybe we can come back to it.

I'm going to yield the floor to Ms. Gallant.

Welcome.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you.

I'll be directing my questions to Mr. Brodeur.

As you know, NATO adopted, as a domain, the cyber-theatre, and it is included under article 5 now.

Having experienced being on the North Atlantic Council, what do you think it would take to get consensus to verify attribution before any action was taken?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: I think, before we get consensus on that issue, we'll have to bring all the members and NATO allies on par in terms of technology. Bear in mind that I've been out of NATO for two years now. One of the issues that we had to deal with—and I think the member will remember this—is the fact that a lot of smaller nations don't have the capacity that's required to bring their standards up to the level of other more advanced nations. Before you reach consensus, I think you will need to do that, and that's a bit the nature of the game. These nations are trying to have the wealthier ones help pay for that through the NATO budget, which we opposed at the time.

As far as I understand it, there are still gaps. They still have to be addressed. It will take time, but the good thing about it, I would argue, is that no nation around the table would doubt the potential risk caused by cyber-attacks, so that's a big plus. I think we've moved a long way. Two years ago, there was nothing on the table. Right now, we've made a lot of progress.

● (1600)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay, so we'd have to bring them up to NATO standards, but what about interoperability? Do you think that is achievable in the cyber realm?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: It is, depending on the extent to which some nations are prepared to go. There is at some point—how shall I put it—a barrier where the national interests meet the strategic interests of the alliance, and for reasons that have more to do with how these nations deal with their own safety or security when it comes to cyber, they may not be interested in actually being so interoperable that the nations that cannot actually protect their own systems would have visibility or would have an input into their system.

Again, it's the question of feeling absolutely sure that by opening up a bit more than you are now, you're not actually introducing a Trojan Horse in your own system. Until all nations have the certainty that this is absolutely the case, then I don't think that you're.... I guess what I'm saying is that interoperability is incremental. It will progress as the cyber-defence in allied nations progresses.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In your experience, what do you think would be the threshold required should article 5 be invoked to take military action on a cyber-attack?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: It would be the damage done. I think it's the wrong question to ask, with all due respect. I think that basically what you want to look at is the damage being inflicted on a country through a cyber-attack, and how we actually decide that this is so crippling it's actually putting the life of your citizens and your critical infrastructure at risk. That's how it's going to be discussed.

How you respond to it is also an issue for discussion. It doesn't mean necessarily that you're going to respond to it through your own cyber-defence system. It could be something different.

To me, I guess, the whole answer is not so much the vector of the attacks, be that cyber, missile, or whatever; it's the effect they will have on a country.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In your experience, are you aware of whether or not NATO can act in a coordinated fashion should there be an electromagnetic pulse attack? Is that something they even consider or take seriously?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: I'll be very frank with you. I just don't know at this point. Two years ago, when I was there, I don't think that would have been possible at all.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What role do you think Turkey should play in the NATO alliance as we are moving forward?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: In what sense do you mean?

Just to be clear, I was ambassador in Turkey as well for two years, and was responsible for part of Central Asia as well. Turkey has been a member of the alliance for quite a long time. It is actually an important one. Certainly it was at the time of the Soviet Union, because it was the NATO front line, I guess, with the Soviet Union. It's still a very important ally from a strategic point of view, given what's going on in the Middle East, and given the issues we have fighting Daesh, and it's not over yet, because I think you're going to see some other problems creeping up. Kurds come to mind, for instance.

So Turkey is a critical member of the alliance. It also has—and we saw it in Afghanistan—inroads from an intelligence perspective into some networks that we don't know very well.

The third point I would make is that Turkey is really the only member of NATO that is a Muslim country, and I think that NATO needs at this point to be able to show that it's open to a Muslim country or to Muslim populations in the world. Turkey plays that role.

In terms of what it's bringing to the alliance, I think NATO would lose if Turkey was not a member of the alliance.

● (1605)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Do you see any issues arising in the future with respect to NATO and Turkey?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: Yes and no. It depends how you look at it. If you look at it from a strategic point of view, I think we want to keep it inside NATO.

One of the issues on my mind is the fact that NATO very often will present itself as defending western values—not even western values, but values such as freedom of speech and so on. What's happening now in Turkey is worrisome. That's my opinion, and I'm speaking in my own name. NATO has to think about this in how it deals with Turkey. That's not only for Turkey, it's a general comment about this value aspect that NATO pretends to defend.

The Chair: That's your time.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Mr. Garrison.

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

I want to stay with Ambassador Brodeur for just a moment.

In 2012, while you were our representative at NATO, NATO conducted a defence and deterrence posture review. As part of that review, it reaffirmed a commitment to “create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons”.

Who in NATO at that time was responsible for that work, and what kind of activities, if any, were carried out to achieve that goal while you were there?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: The issue of a world without nuclear weapons is put forward by allied nations. NATO, as a political military alliance, remains an alliance that will include the nuclear armament in its arsenal. There's no change to that. That being said, NATO nations are prepared to lower that threshold in line with whatever potential adversaries are doing.

I'm not aware of any active work being done to change that within the NATO institution. Some allied nations around the table are active in trying to bring this forward, Canada being one of them and the Netherlands as well. It works by peer pressure.

Mr. Randall Garrison: That commitment was reaffirmed in 2016 at the Warsaw summit, with somewhat more qualified language. Do you see any contradiction between NATO's current policies and the nuclear prohibition treaty? Are these two mutually contradictory?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: My short answer is no.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You don't see them as contradictory, so could work continue to be done by those in NATO, even if they signed that treaty?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: Sure. Yes, why not?

Mr. Randall Garrison: It's just different from testimony we've heard from others.

When you talk about some nations, the Netherlands and Canada, that have worked on this.... You left two years ago, but do you know if Canada is currently working on that commitment?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: No, I don't.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay.

Dr. von Hlatky, thank you very much for your presentation. It's not a perspective we always get, so I think it's very important.

When you said—I believe I have it correctly—that Canada should become a global leader in gender analysis and the implementation of the results, can you talk a little more about what you mean by Canada being a global leader? What specifically would you want to see Canada do in that area?

● (1610)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: What I'm going to say is going to sound like we're going to compete with the Nordic countries a bit in this case, and that's true. Right now, for training our own gender advisers, we send them on a course in Sweden. Sweden is a partner with NATO, not an ally, but it has a bit of a monopoly over gender training at the highest levels.

More recently, we've seen some new initiatives in Canada, like the appointment of gender advisers, which is an initiative that was rolled out last year by the CDS. Since then, we've been looking to some of our traditional allies, like the U.K., the United States, and Australia, for best practices. In Australia, they've set up a pilot course on gender for their own forces, which they will open up to allies and partners. Canada could very well do the same kind of thing: develop a Canadian-branded gender training course that would focus on the full spectrum of operations.

When I look at training materials right now, my sense is that they focus a lot on peace-building and nation building, but training approaches should be considering the full spectrum of operations, because that's what our Canadian Armed Forces face in terms of global engagement. For the gender training to be fully comprehensive, you have to look at how gender might impact, yes, a peace mission, but also, for example, targeting decisions.

When we talk about mainstreaming, I think we've done it well in certain areas, but we need to broaden the skill sets to make sure that training covers any contingency. Canada has a lot to contribute in that.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Under whose responsibility or whose authority do you think creating such a course would fall?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: It starts at the very beginning. We have to look at the cadets, for instance. There is a curriculum review that's under way right now. I believe it's led by military personnel generation. The idea is to look at the entire curriculum and to see it in terms of the education piece and where we can bring that knowledge in, because there needs to be some baseline awareness. Then you look at the various training institutions. You would like to see a gender component in all of them, whether it's the annual military exercise out west, Maple Resolve, or whether it's at the Peace Support Training Centre. The Peace Support Training Centre already does a bit of gender training through pre-deployment, but it could be more comprehensive, of course, as there are more and more demands placed on their training centre.

Mr. Randall Garrison: If I understand what you're saying, and certainly it's what I've observed, sometimes the gender things are reserved for the peace-building and nation building aspects. I guess what you're really saying is that it would take someone like the chief of the defence staff to say, “I want to see these elements in everything we do.”

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Yes, and I think he has said that, and now the gap is to make sure that gender adviser capacity is bolstered. Right now you have some gender advisers in some missions. You have some gender advisers in CJOC and CANSOFCOM and strategic joint staff, but you need a whole lot more if you're going to implement it throughout all of the training institutions and military exercises.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I guess there are two ways you could approach that in the military. One would be a separate budget to fund those things, and the other would be allocations in every piece of the budget to fund those things. What's happened so far?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Right now, as far as I can tell, there has been the creation of new positions—not necessarily a reallocation of funding in terms of training, but just a request to emphasize the gender piece in existing training programs, which don't necessarily have budgetary implications. In my view, if there is no money for additional gender advisers, what you can do is a network of gender focal points. These would be certain individuals whose primary task is not gender, but who have the necessary background knowledge and training to support their teams in implementing that broader vision, which you correctly described.

● (1615)

The Chair: I'm going to cut it off there, Mr. Garrison. I let you go a minute over.

Mr. Robillard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for Mr. Brodeur.

You were the Canadian ambassador to Turkey from 2005 to 2007, and you were Canada's permanent representative to NATO from 2011 to 2015.

Could you tell us briefly about the importance of the Bosporus Strait for NATO and for Canada, historically and in the current global context?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: We have to refer to the Montreux Convention, which regulates naval shipping on the Bosporus and allows transit through the seaway. This allows NATO ships to travel to the Black Sea and Russian ships—at that time, they were Soviet ships—to pass and use the Bosporus seaway.

It's an important strategic route. I'm not going to give you a history lesson, but we can refer to the Battle of the Dardanelles. It was already strategically important.

As you know, part of the NATO fleet was active in the Black Sea, and it still is. It must pass through the Bosporus, which is controlled under the Montreux Convention.

Mr. Yves Robillard: In the context of Canada's being a member of NATO and a partner of its member allies, can you give us an idea of the crisis management required by the crisis created in 2015 by a Turkish F-16 that shot down a Russian air force combat aircraft?

What is the Canadian reaction when incidents like this occur? What is Canada's place in NATO actions under such circumstances?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: What happened is quite simple. Turkey, as a member of the North Atlantic Council, and therefore an allied country, convened a special briefing of the council to make it aware of the events. The council therefore obtained the details that Turkey kindly provided. Canada, as a member of the council and of NATO, was at this meeting. It would be quite accurate to say that all countries around the table, not just Canada, were interested in the issue and worried about developments. This did not require a NATO response, as Turkey did not request it. Turkey just wanted to inform its partners of the situation. The crisis has been managed by Turkey itself. It has become a bilateral topic.

Mr. Yves Robillard: My next question follows on the last one. What kind of crisis management situation created the attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016. What about the aftermath of its failure and the measures taken by the Turkish government against the actors involved?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: All I can give you is a very personal opinion, because I was no longer the Canadian representative at that time. I don't know how NATO reacted within the institutional framework of the organization. I can't tell you at this point what impact it has had on relations between Turkey and NATO, apart from the fact that the secretary-general, Mr. Stoltenberg, certainly reacted. There are probably some press releases available. Beyond that, I would not want to comment, since I wasn't at the table.

Mr. Yves Robillard: From Canada's perspective and given its connection with NATO, could you tell us, diplomatically, what the Turkish situation looks like vis-à-vis the Kurdish population? How does NATO perceive the situation on Turkish territory, in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Iran and Syria? What does this mean for Canada?

● (1620)

Mr. Yves Brodeur: As far as Canada is concerned, I will let the people developing our policies and our points of view on this to answer your question. It's not my issue.

In terms of the Kurdish question and Turkey, I will offer a general comment. With respect to the internal circumstances of the Atlantic Alliance member countries, unless they have an immediate strategic impact on the alliance, such as threats to the alliance, these are subjects that are part of the bilateral component of the nations. So the national interest of the nations is at stake at this time.

As far as I know, Turkey didn't want to bring these issues to the NATO table, and I very much doubt that NATO is doing it itself.

This question can be difficult and worrying. It certainly is for me, in any case. However, NATO officials would tell you that, for now, this isn't an issue of concern to NATO. It's an issue being managed by Turkey. And, without wanting to put myself in the place of the Turkish ambassador, I would say that the Turks would no doubt tell you that it's a question that doesn't concern NATO right now.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

My next question is for Dr. von Hlatky.

You've written twice this year about NATO and the notion of deterrence. How has the role of NATO as a deterrent been articulated in recent years, particularly because of developments in Eastern Europe?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Thank you for your question.

With regard to deterrence, there has been a fairly interesting evolution since the end of the Cold War. After it ended, we saw NATO try to focus on other pillars, such as crisis management and security cooperation. The deterrence and collective defence component never went away, but it was emphasized less. It is also seen in the way the nuclear dimension is expressed in key strategic documents as the strategic concept. It is noted that the role of nuclear weapons, as described in these documents, is more political than military.

It is really the current debate that led to the development of the defence and deterrence document as part of the NATO position, which Mr. Garrison mentioned earlier. It was truly a pivotal moment to determine whether NATO deterrence would give more or less space to the nuclear dimension. In the end, we realized that it was more the status quo. As well, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 really reinforced or endorsed this change.

Let's come back to 2017. I personally believe that there haven't been huge changes in NATO's deterrent position, because there are still three key capabilities: the nuclear dimension, which remains; the conventional dimension, which has been reinforced by NATO's enhanced forward presence; and the anti-missile shield dimension. So, it's a fairly stable position, but the conventional dimension has grown considerably since 2014.

[*English*]

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

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

Professor von Hlatky, thank you for your testimony. I'm moving my first question aside so I can talk to you a bit more about gender equality.

With our defence review and assigning a GBA lens, and with reference to your comments about being behind the Nordic countries, when implemented, does the defence review bring us in alignment with those Nordic countries? Are we proposing the right things to get us where they are?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Thank you for the question, because this is a message that I want to highlight.

We don't necessarily have to emulate what the Nordic countries have done. I think it's okay to have a Canadian approach to how to do this gender mainstreaming strategy. I think the gender-based analysis tool that has been in place for several years is a well-designed tool. Where we need, I suppose, to speed up our efforts is in how we adopt those tools to security and defence challenges.

The baseline tool is great as a primer and as a baseline, but it's an additional challenge to see how the guidelines within that tool kit can then be applied to complex security and defence challenges, whether those are policy challenges, or operational planning, or mission-specific challenges. I think it's that leap that we still need to do.

I'm not saying that Nordic countries are doing it.... They have a training infrastructure to provide training at the leadership level and for gender advisers. However, when I look at training approaches writ large, even the UN training approaches, what's missing is that tailoring. It's teaching people to know how to assess their operational environment as a social ecosystem, to understand what their presence will be like locally, and understanding the differentiated impacts on women, men, boys, and girls locally. Then it's how gender is incorporated as sometimes even a tactic in adversarial strategies.

It's that piece where a lot more work needs to be done. I'm not seeing anyone leading the way on that, which is why I think Canada should seize on this opportunity. What I'm seeing is a lot of baseline training. It is very focused on peace-building and nation building, as I mentioned before. However, when it comes to being able to tailor to a broader range of operational context, I think this is where the exciting developments lie ahead.

● (1625)

Mr. Darren Fisher: How would ensuring a gender-specific perspective on all future NATO missions enhance security? How does that change the way things are being done right now?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Some of the deeply held gender biases that we have and we harbour can lead to faulty operational planning sometimes, or incomplete policies. I think we only need to look at missions of the past to see that those are lessons we tended to learn the hard way.

Bringing this forward in the planning process, in terms of building that into policies and operational planning, as opposed to finding stuff out while on mission and then calling that back home to tweak the approach, would be preferable. That would mean, within the force generation process at NATO, already building in some gender requirements and capability asks to make sure that is built in from the very beginning.

Gender analysis is very useful also for identifying early warning indicators. When building links with host communities, as well, I think that the tendency has been towards ignoring women's voices, which leads to an incomplete social picture of the operational context where we send our troops.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Do I still have time?

The Chair: You have 45 seconds for a question and a response.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I'll go very quickly to Mr. Brodeur.

You believe that Canada needs to assert its position in the alliance more or else we run the risk of NATO becoming more Eurocentric.

We've heard testimony—and I might be paraphrasing and I might not even be totally correct—that if the U.S. ranks first in NATO contributions, Canada ranks sixth out of 29, which is pretty significant. Touching on what Mr. Mark Gerretsen said about punching above our weight class, can you talk a bit about how you feel we need to assert our position in the NATO alliance?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: Yes, sir, and thank you for the question. It's a very important question.

The way I see it, there are three different circles of nations at NATO, and this is without regard for the amount of money they spend or the amount of money they contribute to the overall budget. The United States is in a category of its own. Then you have countries such as France, Germany, and the U.K., due to the size of their armed forces and the effort they invest in trying to equip, adapt, exercise, and modernize their own forces. Then you have another group of nations, of which Canada is a member, that is actually influential. Therefore, a decision cannot be made without Canada being in the picture. There's a lot of business that's being done in corridors before decisions are made, and Canada is always part of that.

What I was worried about and what I witnessed was the cohesiveness, or the growing cohesive approach, of European nations, as a European bloc, at NATO during council discussions, which actually leaves us squeezed somewhere between a huge United States and an EU group that is not yet powerful but actually meaningful. We're staying there with Turkey, for instance, not being a member of the European Union and having no vocation of being one, and not being the United States. I guess what that taught me was that we need to know exactly what we want and what we expect—

● (1630)

The Chair: Mr. Brodeur, I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to cut you off and yield the floor to Mr. Hoback.

As a reminder to our guests, I'm trying to stay out of it here. If you see this signal—this is like the white flag—you have 30 seconds left. Please yield to this, so that I can make it fair for everyone involved.

Go ahead, Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, I thank all the witnesses for being here today. I have questions for all of you. Again, I have five minutes and he's going to cut me off at four and a half.

I'm going to start off with you, Mr. French. You were very frank and very blunt and I appreciate that. I don't like BS. I'd rather have the facts straight up.

You talked about our not preparing our forces for the future. Can you highlight what you meant and give me a few examples that back what you're saying?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: Yes. Thank you, sir.

My main point is that your assumptions are still based on the idea that the United States will always be there as an effective first responder when a crisis happens in the Euro-Atlantic area. My analysis, and that of my senior colleagues, is that there could well be scenarios coming up where the United States is simply overstretched and engaged in the Asia-Pacific or perhaps in the Middle East.

For example, in the North Atlantic and in the Arctic Circle, I can well foresee scenarios in which NATO allies would have to face a serious Russian incursion, possibly without U.S. forces available. I look at your maritime amphibious building program, which is okay, but then I look at the kinds of technologies—ship-based, land-based, submersible, and unmanned—and I wonder if Canada is really building in the kind of offensive and defensive firepower that will be needed to engage in that kind of NATO task group. My fear is that none of us.... My fear is that we could be caught very flat-footed by an event, which could happen far more quickly than many of us would like to believe.

My sense is that there's almost a resistance in Canada—with genuine respect, I know Canada's history—to consider the worst-case war-fighting scenario. My sense of you is that you're living in a virtual 10-year rule, like the old 10-year rule the Brits had, where they assumed they didn't have to plan for a major war for at least 10 years. That's over. A major war could break out far more quickly than many of us would like to believe. With due respect, I don't get any sense from Canada that your planners, or indeed you as a political class, are thinking about those kinds of dangers that you would have to consider, as a NATO member.

Mr. Randy Hoback: You're saying that because we haven't thought through the policy or the fact that this could happen sooner rather than later, and we haven't taken into full consideration what life would look like without the U.S.... I come from Saskatchewan. In western Canada, when we talk about the Arctic, we just assume Canada-U.S. or that the U.S. will take care of it. However, you're saying that we shouldn't be assuming that and this is something NATO really has to step into.

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: That's right, sir. NATO will have to be an effective first responder to keep the Americans strong where they need to be strong. Now, I can foresee scenarios where the only global power is America, but it's very overstretched. I work closely with the Americans. They tell me this all the time.

When I read your defence policy, it's very much a reflection of an incremental policy that has grown out of the past. There's no sense of the kind of technology shock that we might be facing. Speaking as a foreigner, if I had one recommendation for you all, it would be to establish your own strategic analysis mechanism to better give you, the political leaders, a sense of the potential risks that are out there and the policies you might need to adopt that are affordable and indeed effective.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Looking into the future, how do you see cyber-technology and hybrid warfare playing into Canada's role at NATO? What should we be looking at in that area as far as providing expertise or working with NATO is concerned?

● (1635)

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: The first thing I'd recommend is that you read the new paper "Future War NATO?", which just came out this week. It is on the GLOBSEC website. We go into great depth about this.

I think it's important for Canada to understand that hybrid warfare, cyberwarfare, and what's been called "hyper-warfare" are not separate. They're part of a new escalation ladder that challenges fundamental conventions on traditional deterrence. It's all about relative military power. There are 120,000 Russian troops, many high-quality, on the far side of the Latvian border. The main problem is that if our conventional relative power weakens further, then the nuclear threshold could well drop. That is a very real danger. My own country is very profoundly concerned about that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Thank you to all for your excellent presentations.

Before we start, Mr. French, you highlighted a number of articles. You said them so quickly I missed the titles. I think one is about future war, and another one was just recently released.

Could we ensure that we get copies of those reports so that we can include them for review in our report?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: I can send them to the clerk.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

As well, Stéfanie, you mentioned two different articles listed here —"NATO, deterrence and what it means for Canada" and "NATO and the return of deterrence"—but I think you mentioned one more.

If it's okay, could we get all of those reports for consideration? Thank you.

First, Ms. Hlatky, thank you for coming. I do need to ask you this: why Canada, and why now? Is it because Canada is a leader and has demonstrated itself to be ahead of the curve in all things women and peace and security, particularly in defence operations, or is it because we're in a position where we may have a political will and some insight, and therefore have the opportunity to leapfrog ahead because we've arrived at a point where it's right? Or is it some other potential option?

Why Canada, and why now, in this conversation?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: That's an excellent question, and I think both of your proposed answers are correct. I know that NATO allies look to Canada for leadership on this. I used to think that this expectation was not necessarily deserved, earlier on, but since the reforms that have been undertaken in recent years, I really think Canada has stepped up to the plate in terms of making up for lost time.

I'm referring here specifically to the post-Deschamps reforms, the CDS directive from Operation Honour, all the way to the appointment of the gender advisers, and then more recently the rolling out of the diversity strategy. I think now we've put in place the pieces that demonstrate that Canada can be a cutting-edge leader, whereas before I think we were riding on a reputation, which we had earned in the eighties, nineties, and early 2000s, when it came to removing all of those barriers for women in the armed forces.

I think Canada is also well poised because we're still in that top tier of the alliance when it comes to representation of women in the armed forces. When it comes to diversifying NATO armed forces, I think NATO will intuitively look to the states who are leading the pack on this.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: So we've done some of what could be considered—I'm going to be a little controversial—the easy stuff: gender-based analysis and putting in some gender advisers. I'd love to know how many positions have actually been created, how many have been filled, and how many are filled by men. Perhaps you could give us that.

Now there's that next step, the meaty stuff, which gets a little more to the core in terms of including it in operational considerations, looking at it at military college. I was there over 30 years ago, and not much has changed. This is now getting closer to the real core of what it means and the culture and educational challenges.

How do you propose we tackle that? How do you define success? How would you measure and hold them accountable for that success?

● (1640)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: There are a lot of questions wrapped up into that one. I will try to tackle them all.

I do have the numbers for NATO as a whole. NATO has 440 trained gender advisers. I should say they have not been necessarily trained by NATO. This is a national responsibility. Then there are 33 deployed on missions. When it comes to Canada, there are three working in a headquarters capacity, and then we have some deployed on our current missions. When it comes to NATO, that would be one in Latvia, and I know there are at least two male gender advisers.

This is where I want to highlight the fact that I think it's important to have mixed teams of gender advisers and gender focal points. I think very often we tend to take the view that you add a few women and then that will transform all of the dynamics within the organization and on the field. I think that narrative is a little bit dangerous. It's like “show me the data that shows that women are effective at doing their jobs”, and we don't place the same amount of scrutiny on their male counterparts. I think really we need to look at the training in broader professional cultures, so that everyone feels it's their responsibility. I think that's the hard part and that's the challenge moving forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

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

I thank our witnesses for appearing today and for sharing their wealth of knowledge.

I want to start with Mr. Lindley-French. You talked about strategic analysis lacking in our defence policy here in Canada and our need to have a process and a tool to do that. Can you describe that in greater detail as to what that tool would look like? Does it need to be built into a formal process within National Defence? Are we talking of it as part of the legislative process, or is it just policy-making decisions, a risk analysis, and doing it on a more consistent basis than we've been doing?

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: Thank you, sir. I would propose that you have a defence engagement program that is built around a defence think tank where you bring together academics, policy-makers with practitioner experience, and people like me who have been both. Most of your senior NATO allies have similar mechanisms, but I'm not aware of a mechanism in Ottawa, although I am aware of the excellent analysts that you do indeed have in Canada. I've worked with many of them. That would be my specific recommendation, that you create this new defence engagement program and you invite DND to get on with that or at least frame that argument.

Listening to you debate has been fascinating for me as foreigner. You're a very big country with very small forces in a very big space. You're grappling with a whole range of tasks that cross the conflict spectrum, and to do that you have to have some very intelligent policy generation. I'm sure you can do that instinctively, but it's sure as hell helped by sound analysis. I would suggest that your affordability, your cost-effectiveness, indeed your 2% arguments, or as you were, the 1%-plus arguments, would be strengthened if you have this kind of effectiveness and efficiency promoting strategic analysis hub, which could really show how efficient Canadian forces are and indeed how they are applied across the conflict spectrum.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you for that.

President Trump, of course, campaigned on burden sharing within the NATO context. He has also been signalling that the U.S. would be doing less on the world stage, not more. John Howard, when he was prime minister of Australia, gave one of the most compelling speeches and articulate deliveries that I've seen in a joint session of Parliament here in Canada about 10 years ago. He pretty much said that the world without a powerful United States would be a very scary world indeed. I noticed in one of the comments that was made earlier that you kind of disagreed with a comment that the U.S. wouldn't be able to rally support around it, if it were to take on more of a lead role within NATO or any other context. I want to give you an opportunity to address that.

Dr. Julian Lindley-French: Thank you, sir.

I'm currently about to publish a major report with General John Allen and Ambassador Sandy Vershbow on these issues of NATO adaptation. It will come out later in November.

One of the issues we suggest is that it's reasonable for the United States to expect that the allies provide up to 60% of all NATO-related activities. It's not about comparing the U.S. global defence spend with our defence spend; it's about that aspect of U.S. defence expenditure devoted to NATO and the defence of Europe.

Looking at the American economy, looking at the growth of China, and looking at other challenges, even if the Americans wanted to, they could not sustain their current imbalance inside the alliance. For our own defence and for the sake of the alliance, but also to keep the Americans strong where they need to be strong, which is in our interests, I strongly believe in the 2% objective.

It's an arbitrary benchmark, but it would send a wonderful signal to Washington, whether President Trump or indeed another president is in power, because when I'm in Washington, which is a lot, Democrats and Republicans on the Hill tell me that this is an issue. I think we would be making a mistake as allies to try to identify this issue as simply a Trump issue. It's a much deeper issue in the American body politic.

● (1645)

Mr. James Bezan: I agree with you. Thank you.

I have one quick question I want to pose to Ambassador Brodeur.

Ambassador, with your expertise in both NATO and Turkey—we talked about the F-16 shooting down a Russian fighter jet—what is your read on Turkey buying S-400 air defence systems from Russia? Their relationship has changed dramatically, from shooting down jets to now buying defensive weapons from Russia, and also the work they've done together in Syria.

Mr. Yves Brodeur: It's not good news, if I may say so. Someone asked me earlier about interoperability. It won't work, so there's a lot of, I guess, nervousness about this. I see a red flag there, so....

Mr. James Bezan: That's a good point. I appreciate that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

My first question is for you, Professor von Hlatky. Thank you for your work on gender equality. I think you're in a position to really help us move this file forward in a very cogent way.

I want to ask you about Canadians of minority gender identity and expression and their role in our armed forces and in NATO, especially with respect to the decision the United States took, but also more broadly. How do you see that project moving forward across the spectrum of NATO allies at the moment?

Seeing that we're broadening the circle a bit, maybe I could just graft on a question about diversity in general and having a Canadian contribution to NATO that's reflective of the diversity of our society.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Thank you for the question. It's very important.

I was quite disturbed and concerned with the reversal of the policy in the United States when it came to LGBTQ service members. I'm happy that right now the issue is being reconsidered in the face of the lack of evidence to support the policy, and let me clear on that in regard to any additional costs associated with the participation of trans members.

When it comes to Canada, the new diversity strategy that was unveiled I think addresses this question quite well. I really like the change of tone in the diversity strategy that the Canadian Armed Forces rolled out. It's moved.... I think a person who put it best was one of the key focal points for the effort: Lieutenant-Colonel Sarah Heer. She said that before now the tone was “we don't care what your gender identity is as long as you're part of the forces”, and now it's “we care and we want to hear about it”. I think that change in tone is incredibly important not only in changing the culture, but in creating that inclusive environment.

At NATO, when you look at their diversity report, you don't see any targets identified or have that sense of identity tracked. You see gender-disaggregated data, and here the numbers are quite concerning. There's a big gender gap at NATO, especially when you look at the positions at the highest levels.

I do have them here, if you're interested. In civilians NATO-wide, you have 26% female and 74% male. At the highest grade, U grade, you have 0%, and then 16% at the A grade. That's at the highest levels. In NATO-wide military staff, it's 7% female and 93% male.

Although NATO makes a statement in its diversity strategy when it comes to LGBTQ members, the data it has is strictly the gender breakdown by age and by level of seniority.

● (1650)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thanks very much. I have a whole series of follow-up questions and I have very limited time.

Ambassador Brodeur, I want to take the last two minutes to ask if you could sketch for the committee your view of the NATO-Russia relationship or non-relationship, as it stands now. In the very tight time frame can you point to some of the nuances within the NATO allies, the European states and their position vis-à-vis Russia?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: Yes, I'll try to do that very quickly.

When I was there the relationship with Russia was not good. The NATO-Russia Council essentially didn't work, and we in Canada were not in favour of reopening that forum. It's now up and running again. I'm told that the discussions are not that substantial at the moment, but at least having a meeting is better than none, from my point of view. I think we have no option but to steadily pursue the two sides of this approach with Russia, which is to beef up our situation and then also dialogue with them. The problem is that Russia doesn't seem to be very interested in dialoguing with NATO, so I have no idea what you do about that. I think it has to be pursued on a bilateral basis by allied nations in Moscow.

The future will tell if this is the future or not. I certainly hope so. I certainly welcome the approach that we now have, which is to sit at the NATO-Russia Council.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: In 30 seconds, how much fragmentation, if any, do you see inside the NATO position on Russia among some of the key European states?

Mr. Yves Brodeur: I saw a lot two years ago in the sense that national interests such as investment in national economies by Russian companies, be it in the field of energy or high tech, was extremely important and got in the way of our overall strategic interests as NATO.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I tried to remember where we left off because I felt I was at a critical point in my discussions with Dr. von Hlatky, so I want to try to return to that. I know I only have a very short time in this round.

We were talking about a chief of the defence staff statement, a commitment to work on the gender issues. We've had a defence review that considers it. You said to me that it's not necessarily always a question of needing additional resources to move forward.

What is needed now to drive things forward? If we have the commitment, we have it in the defence review, it's not necessarily resources. What does it take?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: One thing I'm still a little bothered by in this whole wave of changes is the disconnect between the internal dimension, the sexual misconduct issue, and the external dimension of integrating a gender perspective in operations, because to me, they're connected. I think you need to have your internal house in order so you can be an effective fighting force. This has been recognized in the latest iteration of the NATO bi-strategic command directive 40-1 making explicit that internal-external connection.

I have felt some reluctance on the part of the Canadian Armed Forces stakeholders that I've interviewed when it comes to making that connection. They are two separate issues. One is more HR internal diversity and the other is more external and implementing Resolution 1325. I think the credibility of the Canadian Armed Forces or any national armed forces in the world when intervening externally rests on having a really solid reputation and the highest professional standards. I know the Canadian Armed Forces can achieve that, and they've taken the appropriate steps since 2014 to see this change through.

I'm still a little concerned by that rhetorical disconnect between stuff like Operation Honour and the misconduct piece, and then the broader 1325 women, peace and security agenda because gender awareness impacts every facet of your work, whether that's working within your unit or being deployed abroad. To have the gender analysis as second nature, you need to open your mind to that consideration so it becomes second nature, like a risk analysis or a cost-benefit analysis. By segmenting the two, I feel we're making it harder, in a sense.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I think a lot of us, and I certainly, have said that the Canadian military deserves credit for tackling sexual misconduct in a way most public institutions have not, including Parliament itself. It's interesting to say there's another step to that. Who would drive that connection, or how do we drive that connection?

● (1655)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: It's the CDS and the top brass. It's also our military educators. I think we can expect some generational change, but the generational change and the deeper cultural change won't happen if it doesn't happen right at the schoolhouse and at the basic training institutions as well.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I think that's my time.

The Chair: That's your time. You went a little bit over.

Given the fact that one of the witnesses didn't have any opening remarks and the time we have left for committee business with those in front of us, we do have time to go around the track one more time. I know there's a will among some of you who may still have questions.

I'm going to go with four-minute periods of questions for Mr. Rioux and Mr. Bezan, and then that will be the end of it.

Mr. Rioux, the floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the speakers for their presentations.

Mr. Ambassador, you said earlier that it was difficult for Canada to have some degree of cohesion, given the role of the United States and of the European union. We are between the two, sort of like Turkey.

I'm going to ask you an open question so you can add personal information. How do you see Canada's contributions to NATO? How do they serve our interests in terms of national defence and foreign policy?

I should mention that I my time is limited to four minutes.

Mr. Yves Brodeur: I guess my answer shouldn't exceed the four minutes you have, so I'll try to be quick.

First, Canada is a key player in the Atlantic Alliance. It has always been a key player and continues to be, so much so that the alliance would like more from Canada. We've been involved in all NATO operations since the beginning, since its inception. The professionalism of our military is recognized everywhere within NATO and beyond. In terms of reputation, Canada has absolutely no reason to be jealous of the allies around the table. This serves us enormously.

I would like to come back to the issue of Europe and the influence of Canada. Introducing an economic element, such as the CETA that we have just concluded with Europe, is important. It's in Canada's interest to be able to contribute directly to European security, since that security is directly related to our economic interests under CETA. This is a big gain.

I would also say that the contribution we are currently making to Latvia is perceived, at the diplomatic level, as being a strengthening of Canada's presence. All of this plays a lot in our favour and gives us a platform, if I may say so. In other words, we have a lot of credibility, and we can use it to take action on other issues that may be of interest or concern to us, economic or otherwise.

In my opinion, the Canadian presence and Canadian influence in NATO is an investment that goes far beyond the realm of European security.

Have I kept to the time allotted? I still don't see the little flag.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes. You have another minute and change.

Mr. Yves Brodeur: Okay.

[*Translation*]

What I said before is that Canada's influence within NATO will require more and more effort from us, because we are located between the European Union, whose security positions are becoming more cohesive and consistent, and the United States, which is what it is in terms of security.

It ties in with what Mr. Lindley-French said, that we need an extremely strong strategic analysis that is unique to Canada. As ambassador, when I was there, I knew exactly what Canada didn't want, but what Canada wanted was a lot less clear. There is a lot of work to be done, and it must be done in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, the Department of National Defence, and members of a think tank that Mr. Lindley-French was talking about to develop a clear idea of our strategic objectives and how these objectives fit into a group like NATO, for instance, but more broadly too.

I think this work remains to be done. It's something we have been short on. I would say that it was greatly lacking.

There we are. I'm being told that time is up.

● (1700)

Mr. Jean Rioux: Thank you very much, Mr. Brodeur. That was very interesting.

[*English*]

The Chair: The last question goes to Mr. Bezan.

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

I haven't had a chance to ask Professor von Hlatky questions, so I want to ask something quickly and then I'll share my time with Mr. Hoback.

I'd like to ask a quick question on deterrence measures. Everything right now is focused on the eastern flank of NATO. What do you think Canada can be doing more of, especially from the perspective of the North Atlantic and Arctic, as it plays into the overall aggression that we're seeing from Russia?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Actually, in terms of deterrence, the other flank that needs to be looked at is the southern flank. In this respect, NATO has just enacted a series of initiatives and measures to project stability and to make sure that NATO is protected and deters threats beyond its own borders. This is where I see a lot of exciting stuff happening, like the hub for the south being created, and bolstering some partnership initiatives. We are very focused on the eastern flank right now. The southern flank is very important, and the recent developments by NATO are worth looking into more closely.

When it comes to the Arctic, I know that's been of importance to NATO in recent years. I also know that sometimes Canada has been a bit of a reluctant player when it comes to this, but we could look at some NATO Arctic military exercises in the future, and Canada could play a key role alongside Nordic countries in seeing that to fruition.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Hoback, go ahead.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Thank you.

Again, I want to thank all the witnesses here today.

Chair, I'll actually take this time to move my motion.

Given that we've heard more testimony about cybersecurity and the importance of being prepared properly for cybersecurity, I want to read this motion into the record:

> That the Committee undertake a study of no fewer than three meetings on the state of Canada's defensive capabilities against cyberattacks, the Government of Canada's offensive cyberwarfare capabilities, and that the committee report its findings to the House.

I am being very open-minded. You can take it to the steering committee. You can decide what time you want to actually have these three meetings, before Christmas or after. I just think we need to get it on the record and in the books that this is a priority for this committee and that we actually want to look at that.

I put it into your hands that we move forward with this motion at this point in time.

The Chair: Thank you for your patience. You are going to see Canadian democracy in action here. I'm going to put this to debate.

Mr. Garrison, go ahead.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Chair, while I do agree that cyberwarfare is important, we have established a priority in this study, and if we are going to finish this NATO study at a time when it might be useful, I would not be in favour of the cyber study going ahead of the NATO study.

Of course, I have my own self-interest. We agreed to a peacekeeping study last April, which has fallen down the list as other priorities have overwhelmed it.

While I am supportive of the member's idea, I am not supportive of prioritizing it above the work we are now doing and the peacekeeping study.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen, go ahead.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, I would move that we suspend for five minutes to allow our witnesses to properly depart, to allow them to leave and officially be thanked so that they don't have to sit through this. Then we could continue with the meeting to discuss this.

The Chair: All right, I'll suspend. We'll come back in public, because I'm sure you want to continue this discussion in public, and then we'll go in camera.

Witnesses, thank you very much for your participation in this very important conversation about Canada and its involvement in NATO. I appreciate your time.

I'll suspend for a few minutes.

● (1700)

(Pause)

● (1705)

The Chair: Just a reminder that we are still in a public setting. We'll debate the motion by Mr. Hoback, and then, following the resolution one way or the other, we will go in camera to do committee business.

The floor was about to be passed to Mr. Gerretsen, and I have Mr. Bezan and Mr. Hoback.

Mr. James Bezan: I don't want to waste a bunch of time, because we have important business that we want to do in camera.

I would just say that there are no timelines tied to this. This is just a motion to undertake the study. I agree with Randall that we have another study—the motion that was passed some time ago—which in my opinion should be dealt with sooner rather than later.

The NATO study is our priority. Let's get this work done. The Ukraine study is at the report stage. We are drafting another report anyway. Let's get the NATO study wrapped up.

The steering committee can deal with this and schedule it in. We have two years between now and the next federal election, so we have lots of time to make this work.

The Chair: Mr. Hoback, do you want to add to that?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Like Mr. Bezan, I am open-minded on this as far as timing is concerned. I am even open-minded if you want to use some of the evidence in one of the existing reports. That would be fine, too.

I just think it's very important. We are hearing it come up time after time with witnesses on cybersecurity and our role in it. We need to get an understanding in this committee of what we actually have for capabilities. I respect my NDP colleague's preference. That is why I said to take it back to the steering committee, and you guys can decide in the steering committee how you want to bring this forward in the timeline.

It would be a good study for this committee to have because it's coming up all the time.

● (1710)

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I moved that we adjourn debate on this at the last meeting a couple of days ago because of my concern over the timing and where this lines up. I agree totally with what Randall said.

What we're trying to figure out is what other committee might be studying this, in particular, the new committee that's just been formed for security and intelligence. Am I getting that right? I really want to get a better understanding as to if this is within the purview of that committee and therefore if what we're doing is just being redundant. I don't want to just go out and vote against this to kill it. That's why I want to adjourn the debate again so that we can look into that and then come back.

I do agree that it's an important topic. I think we all agree on that. But we just want to make sure that we're prioritizing properly and that we're not being redundant.

I want to move that adjournment of debate again so that we can figure that out, but I don't want you to interpret it as we're trying to push the item off the table. We're genuinely interested in this.

Mr. James Bezan: Could I reply before you adjourn?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes.

The Chair: You're not moving to adjourn debate?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: No. I would like to hear what Mr. Hoback has to say before I do that.

Mr. Randy Hoback: First of all, the new committee being struck is not a standing committee. It's a special committee on its own. Second of all, it would not be public so we would not be able to take that data and analyze it ourselves to use it in our reports or studies or use that information to have better questions for the witnesses who come in front of us. That would be my concern with having it go to a different committee.

They may do their own study, and I suspect they will, and I suspect that study will go 10 times deeper because of the security clearances that committee will have compared to this committee.

But I think as members of Parliament we need to have our own understanding of exactly where we sit, and you can't do that through the other committee. That would be the concern I have.

The Chair: I apologize, Ms. Gallant. I think you wanted to get in earlier.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I've been sitting in on that public safety committee and they do have that bill before them.

There will be some overlap. In addition to having the sharing of information and a whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity, we also have to make sure that from a military perspective and how we work with our allies there is a coordinated effort. That is the dimension we are looking at.

Even if there is redundancy, it doesn't mean we're going to discover the same things or hear the same things or come to the same conclusions. Just as with a computer system, it's good to have redundancy in some respects.

The Chair: Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: My understanding about the national security and intelligence committee of parliamentarians is that they're reviewing CSIS and CSE as to their operations and functions, not so much looking at doing studies. They're going to call in the experts definitely to talk about threat levels and our capabilities. They're going to have a lot more tools at their disposal than we have.

Again, we do have Bill C-59 that's coming before the House. That has a CSE component. This study would dovetail off that as public safety deals with it. Then how does CSE function? How does cybersecurity...? Bill C-59 actually has an enabler there for first-time legislation on cyberwarfare, both on defensive and offensive means. I think once Bill C-59 gets through the House, it will provide us an opportunity to look at that in greater detail and how those changes may impact national defence.

The Chair: Before I go to Mr. Gerretsen, did you want to jump in? I had you on the list.

Mr. Randy Hoback: No, I'm fine.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: We hear all of that. We get it. We're interested in the topic too, but we're asking that you let us consult with ourselves again so that we have a better thorough discussion and then we talk about it at the next meeting or the one after that.

With all of that in mind I'll move adjournment on the debate, Mr. Chair.

(Motion agreed to)

● (1715)

The Chair: I will suspend the meeting so that we can administratively go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]