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• (1605)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): We can bring this meeting to order.

First of all, let me apologize to our witnesses for democracy—

An hon. member: For voting.

The Chair: —and for voting, yes, but apparently that's what you defend and we all exercise.

We have another vote scheduled for around an hour from now, so the first thing I need from colleagues is an agreement to proceed through when the bells start ringing, which I anticipate will be in about half an hour, and to give ourselves an additional 15 minutes in respect of our witnesses. I'll adjourn at that point, and we'll cancel our meeting with the analysts.

Is that agreeable? I'm seeing no dissent. That's excellent.

Our two witnesses are Mr. Quinn and General Kelsey. I thank you, gentlemen, for your patience. As you can see, speed is the order of the day today, so insofar as you can truncate your remarks, that would be good.

With that, I'll turn to Mr. Quinn for his opening five-minute statement.

Thank you.

Mr. Jonathan Quinn (Director General, Continental Defence Policy, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will be very brief.

Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak to you today about NORAD modernization and our current efforts to strengthen our continental defence.

My name is Jon Quinn. I'm the director general of continental defence policy at the Department of National Defence.

My division is responsible for policy development for continental Arctic defence, NORAD modernization and the military use of cyberspace and other emerging capabilities. In this capacity, we also work really closely with Major-General Kelsey and his team to ensure close alignment between policy direction and force development.

Canada and the United States formally established NORAD in 1958 as a binational military command. NORAD's mandate of aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning is

more important than ever to meet current and evolving threats to North America. However, the last major investment in NORAD capabilities was in the late 1980s, when the north warning system was established.

Modernizing NORAD and strengthening continental defence more broadly is becoming ever more urgent in the context of two fundamental shifts in the global security environment.

The first is the return of strategic competition between states, which we're seeing play out tragically and in real time on the ground in Ukraine. This tectonic shift in geopolitics will not be limited to Europe. It will also play out at home, on our continent and in our Arctic, and we need to shore up our defences.

The second is the increasingly stark complications of climate change that are increasing international interest in the Arctic and increasing demands on our military to respond to emergencies, including conducting search and rescue operations. We are actively working to deliver on the directions in Minister Anand's mandate letter to modernize NORAD in collaboration with the United States and to more broadly strengthen our domestic defences.

This commitment is also an important element of high-level bilateral discussions with the United States, including the Prime Minister's engagement with President Biden in February 2021. Also, in August 2021, the previous minister of national defence and the U.S. Secretary of Defense released a joint statement on NORAD modernization, which identified priority areas to guide future investments and collaboration.

We have conducted extensive analysis to identify key threats, gaps and potential solutions to defend Canada and Canadian interests in this new reality. Our analysis benefited from ongoing collaborative work with the United States, including through NORAD in Colorado Springs.

We also engaged multiple stakeholders, including academics, industry and territorial and indigenous governments to ensure we approach the challenges ahead of us in a holistic way in looking at the full range of defence and security challenges Canada will face in the coming years and to ensure we maximize the broader benefits to Canada of any future investments in defence.

In closing, I would note that the minister has been quite clear about her intent to bring forward a robust package of investments to strengthen continental defence in the near future.

I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Chair.

• (1610)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Quinn.

Go ahead, General Kelsey.

[*Translation*]

Major-General Stephen Kelsey (Chief of Force Development, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee.

My name is Stephen Kelsey, and I am the chief of Force Development at the Department of National Defence. I lead the community of planners that specialize in future force design, often referred to as “force development”.

This community comprises military and civilian experts, of course, defence scientists, operational researchers, academics and industry partners.

The community also accesses NORAD planning, and processes such as those led by NATO.

[*English*]

My role in this endeavour is to lead collaborative planning for defence in an effort to develop the investment strategies and proposed priorities for the future. In this capacity, I do work very closely with Mr. Quinn and the defence policy team.

The department's force development planning program is essentially the means to provide an analytical basis to anticipate changes in threat and security. It does so by conducting deliberate analysis, leveraging academic and defence research, as I alluded to, and at the same time conducting a review of our current platforms, systems and capacities.

Mr. Chair, as inspiring as I feel the remainder of my opening remarks would be, I think I'll truncate them in the interest of time. I look forward, with sincerity, to the questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for that consideration and inspiration.

With that, the only chance we'll have to get to a second round is if I cut the first round to four minutes each. I know Mr. Motz is very disappointed about that, but he's going to have to deal with his good friend, Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Motz, you have four minutes.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Chair. I'm going to share my time with my friend, Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Quinn, according to the managed security service providers alert that came out yesterday, the U.S. infrastructure was targeted by Russian hackers scanning the energy system companies and oth-

er critical infrastructure in the United States. This is obviously state-sponsored acting by Russia and it's a current threat in the U.S.

Does it present a current threat to Canadian national security? Would we even be able to notice it and defend ourselves? Are we able to perform any offensive cyber-kinetic attack back, if required?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Chair, this is a bit of a wide-ranging area of responsibility that includes our colleagues at Communications Security Establishment. Certainly I would say we are in good hands. Cybersecurity is taken very seriously. Our colleagues at Communications Security Establishment have the overall lead for cybersecurity of government systems.

National Defence also has a responsibility to defend and protect its own secure networks. A robust program is in place for that. As you might be aware, the CSE Act gives CSE fairly wide-ranging responsibility, including to conduct offensive cyber-operations under certain conditions. Consistent with the Canadian defence policy “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, the Canadian Armed Forces have the authority and responsibility to develop our own capabilities for offensive cyber-operations as well.

• (1615)

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Mr. Quinn.

I'm going to pass it off to Mr. Ruff right now.

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thanks.

Mr. Quinn, along the same lines on the cyber stuff, before I took my uniform off, we were working through some of the challenges to conduct those offensive cyber-operations due to international law and all sorts of things.

Have we made progress or are there still challenges?

The Chair: The French is on the English channel.

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: I'm very sorry.

Chair, if it would be possible to repeat the question, that would be helpful. It was a little bit distracting.

The Chair: Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Alex Ruff: [*Inaudible—Editor*] two minutes.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. May.

Mr. Bryan May: It's just a technical issue. I'm on the English translation, but the French was coming through.

The Chair: Yes, that's what we're trying to fix. We're just going back on it.

Mr. Alex Ruff: How much time do I have, Chair?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thanks, Chair.

Mr. Quinn, when I left and took my uniform off, part of the challenge in the cyber stuff to conduct some of these offensive-type operations is that it crosses multiple departments. There are international law challenges.

Have we made progress? Are there still challenges that need to be overcome?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: I'm not sure exactly when the member left, Mr. Chair, but I think great progress has been made. We work really closely with the Communications Security Establishment on these kinds of issues. By all means more improvements could be made, and we're working through those to make sure that everything is as aligned as possible.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thanks.

This question is for you or General Kelsey.

Tied to the importance of being integrated with the U.S. for NORAD and the continental U.S., from a security systems perspective, are we completely integrated? Are there any potential hiccups or challenges specifically around the use of 5G networks and Huawei?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I'll answer briefly, Mr. Chair.

One of the great enviable things about the Canadian approach is the seamless integration of CSE, CSIS and Defence in this domain. That's not to say that no challenges remain, but it's certainly an example of how within government the cohesion between those three entities allows Canada to lead and innovate in ways that may be unexpected.

As far as collaboration with our partners in the States goes, we have folks embedded in their cyber command. The collaboration between CSE and the U.S. agencies as well as Defence for our specific role when we're outside of the country continues on a day-to-day, week-to-week and minute-to-minute basis.

It's a challenging environment, particularly in terms of attribution of who's doing what, and therefore elevating other tools or instruments of national power to act, and it is a growing domain.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam O'Connell, please go ahead for four minutes.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you both for being here.

I want to speak about the recent agreement for the north warning system in partnership with indigenous communities. Can you elaborate on that?

We've heard different things from witnesses, and they've spoken a lot about the work that the rangers do, but we haven't heard a lot about this program, at least in the testimony I've been part of. Could you elaborate on that program?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Mr. Chair, I'll take this one.

Absolutely, replacing the north warning system with a more advanced technological system as soon as possible is a really key priority as reflected in the Joint Statement on NORAD Modernization by Canada and the U.S. that I mentioned.

More recently, PSPC awarded a contract on behalf of DND and CAF to Nasittuq Corporation. I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that correctly. It is an Inuit-owned company and it will maintain the current north warning system for an initial period of seven years. That contract was valued at \$592 million.

The intent is to continue to maintain the current north warning system until that new technology is in place. We anticipate that a layered system of systems will be required, rather than kind of a radar-for-radar replacement. These details will be available soon, once the minister has announced the plans for NORAD modernization in more detail.

• (1620)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you for clarifying that it was Inuit, because I said indigenous.

I want to follow up on that, too. There have been some talks as well—maybe this is a bit of a hypothetical or theoretical question—on the question of northern sovereignty, defence of the north and whether or not Canada should look at it as the defence of Canadian interests. Of course, that's always going to be our number one priority, but we are also looking at it as more of a North American defence system with our allies in the U.S.

There's some debate on whether or not we want to do that. I think our interests in terms of safety and security will always be aligned, but we've seen different administrations with different priorities. Have we given much thought to a North American approach versus a solely Canadian sovereignty approach to defence in the north?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Absolutely. I would say that one great thing about our relationship with the United States, as administrations come and go, is that the ties in the relationship on the military and the defence side seem to remain strong regardless of the different political administrations that are in power. NORAD has a long history, as I mentioned in my opening remarks. We have full confidence in NORAD's ability to defend North America from aerospace threats. They also have a maritime warning function.

At the same time, there are certainly Canadian interests in the Arctic that fall well outside of the NORAD mandate. We certainly need to have domestic capabilities. We need the Canadian Armed Forces to be able to launch and sustain operations across the north across the full spectrum of operations, from safety and security, search and rescue, to protecting our sovereignty and Canadian interests in the context of an increasingly competitive geopolitical environment.

It's really about finding the right balance and making sure we have domestic capabilities, but also, I think we can rely with full confidence on the binational NORAD command to defend North America in—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. O'Connell.

[Translation]

Ms. Normandin, you have four minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the two witnesses for being here.

Over the past year, we've talked a lot about purchasing new fighter jets. More recently, we've been talking a lot about protecting the north, in the context of the war in Ukraine. My questions will be about those two issues.

I would like to hear what you think about the capacity of F-35s to fly in Arctic weather. Some people have said that the aircraft might have some deficiencies in that regard.

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is absolutely essential that the F-35s be able to function in the Arctic.

[English]

One of the clear requirements of that aircraft is to meet and conduct all of the tasks and missions that Canada wishes, as well as those that we've signed on to as partners. It's absolutely true that this aircraft can function in the Arctic.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: When it comes to the distance that F-35s can travel, some have said that their range is more limited. Since the bases in the north don't have the capacity to land these aircraft, they wouldn't be useful, and the planes would have to be refuelled in flight, which would make us more dependant on the Americans for that.

Are these legitimate concerns?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I don't believe so, Mr. Chair.

In fact, we rely on three systems. For our F-18s, we use a strategic tanker system, a command and control system, and the fighter aircraft themselves. It is essential that we plan for this capability in the Far North.

• (1625)

[English]

Regardless of aircraft, to be able to interdict any incursions in Canadian or North American aerospace requires the close co-operation of strategic tankers, fighter aircraft and command and control systems. It's not just looking at the capacity of any given fighter that has been selected; it's how those three systems interplay.

Today, as an example, when an F-18 is dispatched, they launch, refuel, and they move to the area where they're going to intercept. They intercept, refuel, and they come back. This is a tried and tested system that is utilized by NORAD.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

Recently, there has also been talk of joining the anti-missile shield, in collaboration with the United States. In the past, the door was closed on the issue.

I would like to know what the main advantage and main disadvantage would be for us to join this kind of initiative.

MGen Stephen Kelsey: If we're talking about ballistic missile defence, I have a few points to raise about the 2005 policy decision, which had to do with a specific aspect of Canada's defence. Ballistic missiles do indeed constitute a potential threat to Canada.

[English]

There are a number of threats to Canada. There was a policy decision around that specific threat, ballistic missile defence, but the collaboration through NORAD against the other threats continued unabated and does so today.

Our NATO allies, as an example, consider other holistic views of threats to airspace and that planning continues at various levels either through NORAD, through NATO, as well as other [*Inaudible—Editor*].

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Normandin.

Madam Mathysen, you have four minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses.

I want to work further on Madam Normandin's questions about the F-35 jets. Currently, with the CF-18s we were told that 55% are operational. We will not see the delivery of the F-35s until 2025.

How are people on the ground doing that work and using that equipment making the operability of those CF-18s stretch until 2025?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Chair, I must begin by just qualifying my response by confirming that the area of expertise I have is in force design, understanding the threats and vulnerabilities against Canada. Although this is a specific question to one of our platforms, we do look at, holistically, the capabilities that we need and seamless transition between fleets. We have the assurances, through various mitigation measures, that the F-18s we have, the new ones that are coming on line to mitigate a gap, as well as the completion of the final step for the next generation of aircraft, will assure that we have seamless coverage for the defence of Canada and our NORAD missions.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Okay.

In terms of the cost, we heard last week from officials and additionally from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the delays in purchasing equipment was problematic because of inflation, supply chain issues and COVID-19-related issues, in terms of that increase in cost.

How will that increase the costs on the F-35 project, specifically? Do you know?

• (1630)

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I can't speak specifically, Mr. Chair, to that fleet, but in general terms, we're seeing, as the wider program is impacted by the effects of COVID-19 and supply chains, it will take time. Part of the negotiation that's under way now, the final step of the acquisition of the new fighter, all of that will be laid out and we'll get a sense of what the implications are for that specific cost that the member alluded to.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Is it possible to get that information to the committee when you receive it? That's just a delay in terms of when you're doing that analysis. Is that what you're saying?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: The answer is yes, of course we can provide the committee with the answer. It is not my area of expertise.

What I do know is it's going to take time to complete the analysis, but we have obligations to both internally report what those expenditures would look like, and of course, our obligations for Treasury Board and Parliament.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I will squeeze in one more.

One of the things that I would imagine is very important on all procurement projects is for the government to do the fiscal impact assessment, but there's also an environmental impact assessment. Under our obligations with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples regarding an indigenous impact assessment, will that be done on all future procurement? When can we expect those reports back and can they be tabled with the committee?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I don't know the answer to the first question. Perhaps I'll start and Mr. Quinn can help.

Every procurement that is undertaken does take into the account the need and obligation to satisfy those obligations. To talk about the wider analysis that Mr. Quinn and I collaborated on in relation to continental defence, there, again, is another good example of where the approach to how any potential decision on investments

would be made absolutely has to integrate the indigenous consultation. I'm thinking specifically of those potential investments that could be in the north. Our planning and analysis absolutely factored those obligations into effect.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave it there. Thank you.

Again, we have 25 minutes' worth of questions and not 25 minutes' worth of time, so it will be three minutes each, and one minute, one minute.

With that, Ms. Findlay, you have three minutes.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

General Kelsey, what capabilities are we currently deficient in, in a modern combat environment?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Chair, I'll answer the question in perhaps two different ways.

First of all, the spectrum of platforms and capacities that we have is sufficient to satisfy the threat and vulnerabilities that Canada has today.

What is the central element of our study related to continental defence and NORAD modernization is about the need for modernization and the need for people to be able to be ready for those threats and vulnerabilities of the future.

There are two aspects of it. We're very much focused on positioning Canada for the defence of our national interests and the security of North America in the future. That's the basis for analysis in the NORAD modernization review.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: General, in terms of cyber and artificial intelligence, in what direction is the Canadian Forces going with regard to future systems?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: As my colleague Mr. Quinn alluded to, there is a distinction between the responsibilities that defence has versus nationally, which the security establishment has. I'm aware you received testimony from those experts earlier in the week, if not last week.

One of the things that is clear about how we will operate in the future is that there is going to be an expanded use of cyber and cyberspace, as well as information and misinformation.

The investments that were considered and are being proposed do relate to growing our expertise in defensive cyber for National Defence's systems as well as their employment overseas.

Again, those investments are done absolutely in lockstep with CSE and CSIS. It's equally true that there is a people component. It's not just about having any systems or capacity. It's really about how we attract and retain the expertise needed to be able to do that. That's a challenging question and certainly a focus of the chief of the defence staff's reconstitution efforts.

• (1635)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Quinn, when will the port be completed at Nanisivik?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Mr. Chair, I understand there have been some delays. It's always challenging to do this kind of infrastructure development in the Arctic under normal circumstances. That has been compounded a little by COVID and other issues recently.

This isn't my area of expertise, so we'll have to defer to colleagues in our infrastructure and environment branch.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

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

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses today for their testimony.

I think about the changing world and I think Canadians are certainly more worried than ever about Russians entering our airspace, or North American airspace.

What is the degree of threat posed by Russians as it pertains to coming near North American airspace? How often does that happen?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Mr. Chair, maybe I'll take this one initially.

I can't speak to specifics in terms of exactly how frequently that happens. I would point to some recent remarks by the chief of the defence staff indicating that in the Arctic we don't see an immediate military threat. Obviously, the environment is changing dramatically both physically and geostrategically. We're monitoring developments in Russia and China vis-à-vis the Arctic really closely. We obviously need to be aware of what's happening in the north and be prepared to respond and defend.

I would say despite everything that's going on, with the world becoming more dangerous, we don't see an immediate threat and we're well prepared at the moment to monitor what's happening and respond as necessary.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I'll rephrase it a bit. Has the number of NORAD jet fighter scrambles and interceptions involving Russian military increased over the past few years?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Mr. Chair, I would answer by acknowledging that it's an operational question beyond both Mr. Quinn's and my expertise. I would say that those incursions have been constant over the last decade, but I believe the question is specifically in relation to events in Ukraine.

What I would comment is that, from a defence planner perspective, it's a very sobering reality where the Russians are making investments in the north and, importantly, the will they have to act.

It's not just about Ukraine. It's in cyberspace. As my colleague said, it's not so much a fear of direct incursion on Canada's economic zone. It's all of the other instruments they're investing in to be able to get an advantage or to act as a deterrence for us in the future.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fisher.

I see the lights are flashing. I'm assuming, Mr. Clerk, that we have half an hour before the vote.

The Clerk: Those are the half-hour bells.

The Chair: Can I get unanimous consent to proceed for the next 15 minutes?

I see nodding.

What I propose doing is running through this round. We might have a minute or two for each party after that, so I might do a speed round for the final bit.

With that, Madam Normandin, you have one minute.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

These days, we're hearing a lot about hypersonic weapons. The cost to operate these weapons is extremely high, up to \$100 million. So we can expect them not to be widely used, but I'd like to know how much of an effect they will have. To what extent will they affect decisions that will have to be made about the North Warning System?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's an excellent question.

It will certainly inform our approach in the future.

[*English*]

It's the speed, the manoeuvrability and the flight profile that will change how we look at our systems or surveillance. It is absolutely factored into how we're looking at the domain awareness of the future.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Normandin.

Madam Mathysen, you have one minute.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

This was touched on before, but I've had a lot of people ask me about it directly. I want to double back and ask whether there have been any talks or discussions whatsoever on developing Canada's ballistic missile defence.

MGen Stephen Kelsey: There are no known plans or discussions related to ballistic missile defence that I'm aware of.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

The Chair: We have Madam Gallant for three minutes, please.

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

This question would be for General Kelsey.

You're training and planning for what our troops need to be able to do based on the threats of the day. We spoke about the Arctic. Are you presently planning, or do you have future plans, to have a modern submarine capability in terms of the human workforce that's needed to operate in those conditions?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: Mr. Chair, with the funding received from “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, as you're aware, we are in the process of modernizing the Victoria class. That will carry on for the next number of years. As part of routine, prudent planning by all of our services, they look to the future at what the technology will enable and what our requirements will be. In the case of the submarine, it is perhaps one of the most strategic investments that has the ability to hold any threat actor at risk.

I can say that this will be part of any future consideration related to how we posture the forces to meet the vulnerabilities and threats of the future.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: As for extending the life of the Victoria class, the Victoria class cannot go under the ice in the Arctic. That is what I am told or what we've learned we need.

Is there any thought or planning being put forth to train submarine operators for the next generation of submarines that we need in order to be able to defend our northern flank?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I hesitate to speak for the commander of the navy, but I do know they're paying very close attention to the advancements of technology in the air independent propulsion that could allow, if that is the path chosen, to create different capacities for the next generation if pursued, but there's not training under way today to be able to facilitate what that next generation would be.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: When will the recruitment and training start for the fabled F-35s that are apparently finally being negotiated? What plans are in place to get a full-flight crew for each of those planes ready to go?

MGen Stephen Kelsey: The project is in the final stage, where it has been given authority to negotiate for the price. Part of that negotiation, as was alluded to earlier, is understanding the implications of COVID, etc., and therefore what the value for dollar would be. Equally true at the same time, the Royal Canadian Air Force is looking at how to sequence the training of pilots in the same way. It's absolutely factored. I'm unable to give you specifics as to what that looks like in terms of the next number of years, but I know it's absolutely a consideration.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

Mr. Spengemann, you have three minutes.

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

I'd like to thank our witnesses for being with us.

General Kelsey, thank you for your service.

I'd also like to thank our colleague, Alex Ruff, who's with us today, for his service.

I'd like to spend my time on a brief discussion of the threat setting in 2022.

In very broad strokes, we have moved from the 1990s, the collapse of the former Soviet Union, into and through the post-9/11 era and the Arab Spring. We're now at a time when, once again, one of the great powers has exercised military aggression against another country. We're having discussions about cybersecurity. We're hav-

ing discussions about technology, geopolitical threats, secondary and tertiary implications and also a lot of intersection points between the military and civilian sectors.

Could you each give us a brief assessment of how you see the threat environment in 2022 and what the key priorities are for Canada? Perhaps you could sum up some of the points you made earlier, but maybe add some new ones as well.

• (1645)

MGen Stephen Kelsey: I'll start, with your permission, Jon.

I would characterize it this way. It's a very sobering understanding not just to watch as a military planner where the investments are being made, what advancements in technology are being implemented, but it's also the will that threat actors have to actually act and do such things as what we've seen in the past related to cyber and misinformation, and now specifically with Ukraine.

In terms of our specific threats and vulnerabilities, it reinforces the need for Canada to modernize, particularly as it relates to North America and continental defence, so that we protect our national interests and the security of the north. It comes back to people. We do have a challenge. We're short. We want to attract and retain the best that Canada has to offer. People are the key to success to any mitigation of threats and vulnerabilities in the future.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you.

Mr. Quinn.

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Mr. Chair, I think General Kelsey captured it pretty eloquently.

The one thing I would add to his response is that Canada had the luxury of relying on our geography for much of our history for our defence, basically. We can rely on that less and less. You mentioned cyberspace and the information domain. Obviously, geography has no impact on these kinds of activities at all. As well, we've talked about military modernization and some of our potential adversaries in terms of Russia and China developing faster missile technology that can be launched from further away, that is specifically designed to challenge our defences

Definitely, as General Kelsey said, it's a sobering environment. We are, I think, legitimately entering a new era of global competition. We need to make sure we're prepared to confront that.

I mentioned climate change at the outset in my opening remarks—I'll be really quick—which is another real, key driver for Canadian defence and security, in particular. It has very practical implications, including for the melting permafrost and the impact that has on our northern infrastructure, but it's also enhancing interest in the north and the resources that are there in a way that could affect Canadian interests over the long term.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: That's another thing that we're obviously watching closely—

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

We could squeeze out one question per party if we do it at one minute each.

The Conservatives have one minute for a question.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thanks, Chair.

I still want to go back to my earlier question about the importance of our integration with the U.S. If that gets compromised, i.e., they determine that security integration is no longer reliable due to us taking on technologies that they view as compromised by China, Russia or other state actors, what would be the implication for us in being able to do our part in the defence of North America?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Really quickly, maybe I'll take that one, Mr. Chair.

I think you're absolutely.... I think that if we weren't able to enjoy that degree of integration it would have profound implications for Canadian defence and security.

There's no doubt about that, but I would point to the recent joint statement on NORAD modernization signed by the previous minister of national defence and the U.S. Secretary of Defense as an illustration that this doesn't seem to be happening. We're moving ahead full speed on the modernization of NORAD with confidence that it will continue to be our mechanism of choice to defend our shared continent.

The Chair: The Liberals have one minute.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

Building on the last question, in this highly interconnected world, and maybe particularly looking at the Ukraine crisis at the moment and its aftermath, how important is it that we are connected not just to the United States but also to the rest of our allies, both in operational planning and in budgetary questions and procurement and acquisition questions?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: That's a great question, Chair. I would say that it's vital.

In the western world, I think our allies, friends and partnerships are one of our key advantages over our potential adversaries, who tend to operate more unilaterally. By all means, across the board, whether it's through information sharing, intelligence sharing or collaboration on technology, operational training and exercises, collaboration with allies continues to be absolutely critical.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

Ms. Normandin, you have one minute, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

There has been a lot of talk recently about Arctic sovereignty. Many people have mentioned that one of the ways to crystallize our

sovereignty in the Arctic is through effective human occupation of the land.

Is the approach of an increased human presence in the northern territory part of National Defence's plan?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: If I understand the question correctly, Mr. Chair, I think I would say that having a presence in the north is fundamental to asserting sovereignty over it.

I'm not sure if it was my comment or General Kelsey's that you were referring to, but I think the idea there is that socio-economic development in the north and continuing to support northern communities and allowing them to flourish are as important to Canadian sovereignty in the north as having the military capabilities to actively defend it.

I'll just take a moment here to briefly say that as we pursue potential investments in NORAD modernization, we've conducted a fair bit of informal consultation with northern communities in advance of that and would continue to do so once decisions are taken as we get into implementation, in order to make sure that in every investment we make in the kinds of things we're looking to do, we're seeking out opportunities for dual benefits and to support the needs of local communities as well.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave that question there.

Madam Mathyssen, you have the final minute.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: In terms of that NORAD modernization, it comes with a hefty price tag, of course, which is understandable, but some are suggesting that Canada might be required to pay up to 40% of that. Is that realistic? Is that correct in terms of the suppositions? Is that what you're planning?

Mr. Jonathan Quinn: Chair, on this one, I think the 40%-60% split that has been talked about is in relation to the north warning system. There was an MOU in place that divides investment in that system along those lines. We'll wait until we're able to share more details on the minister's plans for NORAD modernization and broader continental defence. I wouldn't want to speculate or presuppose any decisions that haven't yet been taken on that.

The Chair: Thank you.

That brings our time for questions to an end, unfortunately.

I appreciate your patience with our having to accommodate the votes.

This concludes the formal part of our study. The testimony has been uniformly excellent. Having both of you here has been an excellent way to finish off.

Thank you, Mr. Quinn, and thank you, General Kelsey.

The meeting is adjourned.

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