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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order. I see quorum, and our witnesses are ready to go.

Before I introduce our witnesses and call on Mr. Hamilton for his five minutes, I want members to take note that Thursday's meeting is cancelled due to a joint agreement among the whips. That has left us in a bit of a scramble, but members should know now rather than later that we won't be meeting on Thursday.

May the chair express an unhappiness with the decision of all the whips, because this is happening way too frequently. It's very difficult to run committees and have coherent studies if in fact in we are subject to the whims of whips. I get irritated with the solid and important work of committees constantly being deferred to other issues. It's something that only members can remedy. I encourage individual party members to talk to their whips about these issues.

Having had my rant for the morning, I will ask Mr. Hamilton to begin his five minutes for his opening statement and introduce Ms. Kutz and Mr. Randall.

With that, Mr. Hamilton, welcome back to the committee.

Mr. Kevin Hamilton (Director General, International Security Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you, Chair. It's a pleasure to be here again.

I welcome the opportunity to join you all today to discuss the evolving security environment in the Arctic, Canada's Arctic sovereignty and our Arctic foreign policy.

First of all, Canada's Arctic sovereignty is of long standing and is well established. Every day, through a wide range of activities, governments, indigenous peoples and local communities all exercise Canada's enduring sovereignty over our Arctic lands and waters.

With respect to security, since the end of the Cold War, the circumpolar Arctic has been characterized as a region of international co-operation and peace. While the Arctic region remains peaceful, it is not tension-free. We must remain alert to the impact of ongoing geopolitical conflict and the activities of our adversaries.

Russia's continued military buildup and weapons testing in the Arctic remains troubling in and of itself, but its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine demonstrates Russia's complete lack of respect for international principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, fundamental principles that underpin co-operation in the Arctic.

[Translation]

That's why like-minded Arctic states have responded in a strong and concerted manner, including by discontinuing their cooperation with Russia in regional forums such as the Arctic Council.

Canada continues to work closely with like-minded Indigenous and state partners to promote collaboration and continue the important work of the Arctic Council on projects that do not involve Russia.

Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework and the national defence policy entitled "Strong, Secure, Engaged" describe the security challenges and risks that Canada faces in the Arctic.

The international chapter of the framework identifies priority areas for Canada's international activities in the Arctic, including strengthening the rules-based international order in the Arctic, more clearly defining Canada's Arctic boundaries, promoting a safe, secure and well-defended Arctic and north, and expanding Canada's international activities in the North.

• (1105)

[English]

I understand that colleagues from the Department of National Defence briefed the committee earlier this month. It's important for me to emphasize that investing in our domestic defence and Arctic capabilities strengthens our position internationally. As such, Global Affairs Canada is strongly supportive of efforts to improve Canada's domestic capabilities and to enhance our defence posture in the Arctic.

Of course, our partnership with the United States is of critical importance to Arctic security. Canada and the U.S. are working closely to expand co-operation on continental defence and in the Arctic, including by modernizing NORAD.

Canada's security is also anchored by our membership in NATO. Of the eight Arctic states, five are current NATO allies, and Finland and Sweden are on track to join the alliance in the near future. As Secretary General Stoltenberg has repeatedly stated, NATO will protect and defend every inch of allied territory. This includes all of Canada's territory, including, of course, our Arctic.

While geopolitical tensions are front of mind today, it is important to remember that global climate change remains a grave threat to the Arctic and to its people, including northern indigenous communities. Canada is a leader on climate issues, including on the ways in which they impact our security. Global Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence are working to establish a NATO climate and security centre of excellence in Canada. Climate change impacts on the Arctic security environment will be one of the many topics that Canada and our allies will address through this centre of excellence.

[*Translation*]

As climate change makes the Arctic more accessible, albeit unevenly, international activities and interests will continue to grow, including from some states that do not share our values.

In China's case, its interests and ambitions regarding the Arctic are both economic and geostrategic, and reflect its growing participation in broader global governance. China sees itself as a "near-Arctic" state, a designation without international recognition, and has described the polar regions as one of the world's new strategic frontiers.

Canada's evolving strategy towards China recognizes the complexity of the relationship between the two countries and the need to address challenges, compete, collaborate, for example, on climate change, and co-exist where appropriate.

[*English*]

In closing, I would like to say that Canadians have long benefited from the protection afforded by geography, particularly the geography of our northern approaches. As the Arctic will continue to gain in strategic importance in the years and decades to come, the natural protections once afforded by an ice-covered and distant Arctic will no longer be sufficient to guarantee Canada's security and sovereignty. That's why Global Affairs Canada will continue to work closely across government and with regional allies and partners to minimize and manage regional tensions, to confront threats and to respond to shared challenges.

Thank you, and we look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

Madam Kramp-Neuman, you have six minutes, please.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Thank you for your comments this morning.

I'd like to start by suggesting that there has been some concern, and the chief of the defence staff has suggested that our ability to maintain our sovereignty is certainly in question in the north and will be challenged in years to come. Can you confirm that?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, it's an old axiom of international relations that sovereignty must be exercised and demonstrated to be retained. I would say, as I said in my opening comments, that it is something our military, various levels of government and people of the Arctic do every single day.

That said, as the effects of climate change make the region more accessible, the necessity for Canada to exercise and demonstrate that sovereignty is only going to increase. That will require invest-

ments in military capabilities, in infrastructure and in all aspects of northern life so that we can demonstrate our sovereignty going forward. My point is that it will require investments for the future.

• (1110)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Perfect.

Moving on, with regard to pilots, our ability to recruit and train and retain pilots is definitely essential to defending our Arctic. I'm just curious about what your mindset is. Do you have concerns with regard to the media outlets in the United Kingdom and Canada that are making reference to former Royal Canadian Air Force fighter pilots in the employ of the People's Republic of China to train their fighter pilots in western tactics?

Number one, are you aware that this is happening, and are you concerned that this could challenge the Arctic airspace?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, I'm aware of the media reports, certainly. As for the implications, I'm afraid it's something I would have to defer to the Department of National Defence.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: This committee as a whole understands that there's a tenuous hold in our Arctic. It's not just due to a lack of materiel in terms of equipment; there's a lack of trained personnel in our military. Has this complicated our ability to project our rights in the diplomatic sphere? How much more can military capability suffer before even more allies begin to challenge our ability to project our own sovereignty in the north?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, I don't think there are near-term threats or challenges from adversaries to our sovereignty in the north, but that day is coming. That's why I think there's agreement across government and certainly between Global Affairs and the Department of National Defence that investments in our military directed at the north—cold weather training, more fighter jets, the modernization of NORAD over the next 20 years to the tune of \$38.6 billion—are all instruments and demonstrations of the exercise of our sovereignty. Make no mistake: We do recognize that the challenges to our sovereignty are possible in the years to come.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thank you.

This is my last question. With Finland's and Sweden's accession into NATO, we certainly do have a new dynamic in the Arctic Council. Can you speak to whether or not the Department of Foreign Affairs has issued a new strategy document concerning the Arctic, considering developments in the war in Ukraine and the fact that the majority of the Arctic now falls under Article 5 of NATO?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: I'll defer to my colleague, Heidi Kutz, on the question of the Arctic Council and documentation.

I should say that from Canada's perspective the impending accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO is wonderful news. It gives us a better 360° awareness of the threat in the European high north as well as the North American Arctic. It is a new dynamic. It is in our judgment a positive dynamic, but I'll ask Heidi to speak to the Arctic Council dynamics.

Mrs. Heidi Kutz (Senior Arctic Official and Director General, Arctic, Eurasian, and European Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Sure. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just first of all qualify, of course, that military activity and co-operation are explicitly excluded from the work of the Arctic Council, which still does stand as a key organization in terms of its support for the environment, climate change and sustainable development co-operation. Members are likely aware that Canada originally paused its participation in the Arctic Council in order to determine a way forward under the Russian chair through to 2023. Canada and our like-minded partners have condemned Russia's invasion and remarked on its invasion as being contrary to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which stand essential to the Arctic Council.

Nonetheless, the seven like-minded states under the council have reinitiated their co-operation with each other. That does exclude co-operation at this time with Russia, but again, these are in non-military areas by way of the original declaration of the Arctic Council.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Fisher, you have six minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll stay with Ms. Kutz on the Arctic Council, if that's fine.

On March 3, shortly after Russia illegally invaded Ukraine, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States declared that they will no longer attend meetings of the Arctic Council as long as it's chaired by Russia.

On June 8, Canada and the allies declared their intent to resume co-operation on a limited number of previously approved Arctic Council projects that do not include Russian leadership or participation.

Can you outline what that looks like? What does that participation look like? When we think about the Arctic Council, how has it been impacted since the illegal invasion?

Also, we've heard at this committee that surprisingly enough, prior to the invasion Russia was reasonably "co-operative"—I'll try to stretch the imagination here and use that word—on Arctic-related matters with other members of the Arctic Council. How do you see this relationship changing and maybe impacting our priorities in the Arctic?

• (1115)

Mrs. Heidi Kutz: Thank you very much for the question.

I'll reiterate that the sequence is correct as you've outlined it.

In March of this year, like-minded states condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We put an immediate pause on our own partici-

pation in the council and any travel into Russia, in light of the fact that Russia is the current rotating chair of the council through to 2023.

Also, as informed by and in light of the importance of the council's work and the contributions that it makes to northern communities and to the stakeholders who are involved in it, in June of this year, after assessing all options, the like-minded states re-engaged in those project activities under the council that did not involve the Russian Federation.

Every two years at the ministerial, the Arctic Council approves an agenda of projects. Upwards of 100 projects are normally in play during a regular term. With our re-engagements in the projects, the council may work on issues of environment, sustainable development, indigenous knowledge and the whole gamut of activities. Canada has re-engaged in about 70 of those activities with partners.

Of course, we're concerned about the future of the council and its sustained health and stability. We're currently taking into consideration and working behind a smooth transition of the chair, which will next pass to Norway in the spring of 2023. We're doing what we can to maintain as much activity under the council as possible in the meantime and we're focusing on a successful and smooth transfer of the chair.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you so much.

Mr. Hamilton, in January of 2018, China released its Arctic policy paper and declared itself a "near-Arctic state". I think you said in your testimony that this term is not recognized.

Can you share the implications of China's Arctic policy on Canada's Arctic sovereignty? Also, can you signify what China means when it refers to itself as a "near-Arctic state"?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: That's quite correct. This is a self-appointed term that the Chinese have given themselves. This term, "near-Arctic state", means nothing in international law. We interpret that they mean they have an interest in the Arctic region.

We've seen in past years a lot of Chinese research in, for instance, international waters in and around the Arctic. They are an observer in the Arctic Council. They certainly have interests. As the ice melts in the High Arctic, they have long-term interests in transit points. That's why it's so important that Canada reinforces its sovereignty over key stretches of water, such as the Northwest Passage.

We are very alive to and wary of how China has articulated its approach to the Arctic.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Do I have any more time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have a bit more than a minute.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you for that, Mr. Hamilton.

In that paper, China's developing military projection capabilities are mentioned. That would extend into the Arctic region. It seems counterintuitive to some of the things that we're hearing.

What is their thought behind developing military projection capabilities in the Arctic region?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: China is engaged in a campaign of increasing its military projection capabilities globally. The Arctic seems to be part of that intent, although they have had some setbacks, as we can see through open sources over the last year. Their icebreaker, for instance, didn't leave port this year. It was very likely undergoing repairs and so forth.

At this moment, we don't assess that China has the capability to project military power towards the Canadian Arctic. They can certainly send vessels and they can undertake activities that might concern us, but projecting a blue-water military capability across the Pacific towards our Arctic is not something we assess as a challenge right now. It is very likely that it will become a challenge in the future, however.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fisher.

Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

I think we should declare Canada to be a near-Caribbean state, particularly between November and March. What do you think? Do you think that would stand up in international law?

Go ahead, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

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

I'd be curious to hear the answer.

Mr. Randall or Mr. Hamilton, my question is more about ocean law. In your work at Global Affairs Canada, how important is it to know what's in our territorial waters? Is it important to know whether it's a commercial or scientific vessel, where it went, where it left and where it's going?

For the purposes of your work, how important is it to have an accurate, real-time picture of what's happening in our territorial waters?

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Randall (Executive Director, Oceans, Environment and Aerospace Law, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Mr. Chair, in terms of territorial waters and internal waters, the Arctic Archipelago has straight baselines drawn around it. The Northwest Passage, for instance, is considered internal waters to Canada, so there is no right of passage there. There would be a right-of-transit passage through the territorial sea, which is 12 nautical miles beyond our baselines. There is a right to that transit if it's innocent passage. It is important to know what exactly someone is up to in terms of being innocent passage. However, there is a right of transit for states to have their maritime vessels go through those areas. It's important to know what they're up to, but it's not something that we can control access to.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I asked you this question because we received a report this morning from the Auditor General of Canada on the Arctic, which identified a number of gaps in Canada's surveillance capabilities.

The report points to long-standing problems that have yet to be addressed, including oversight particularly in terms of surveillance and, more importantly, the transfer of information between various departments. It also talks about outdated fleets and communication transmission systems that are not up to date.

Has your department noticed this reality of the lack of information that the Auditor General is raising today?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, perhaps I can take that question.

Certainly there's a recognition across government of the need for better and more modernized surveillance capabilities in the Canadian north. I think we are seeing now a commitment from the government for investments in those areas.

Work is ongoing, for instance, to complete the Nanisivik naval facility at Arctic Bay. That's going to support refuelling for our naval vessels in the north to increase the Canadian Armed Forces' presence and the ability to sustain their long-term presence.

The government recently announced that it will move forward with the construction of two polar icebreakers for the Canadian Coast Guard. That will give us a greater year-round presence in the Canadian Arctic. The pace of our military exercises and surveillance operations in the north has increased over the last year or so, and I know it's something that the government is committed to continuing.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I'd like to go back to the Auditor General's report. It mentions the risk that several vessels and satellites currently in service may reach the end of their useful life before being replaced.

Is your department aware of this situation? Is a contingency plan already in place to continue monitoring marine traffic in Arctic waters?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, certainly we work with the Department of National Defence to ensure that there is a plan in place for the modernization and upgrading of antiquated systems, systems that are fast reaching the end of their useful life. Once again, that is the reason for these reinvestments in our surveillance capabilities. I know there are plans to look at the RADARSAT Constellation mission. The member mentioned satellite surveillance. Certainly there's NORAD modernization, which will move beyond the traditional realm of just aerospace monitoring and look at pan-domain surveillance, including maritime and subsurface and outer space surveillance, as well as cyber.

I think the government, and officials within government, are very much aware of these challenges of aging equipment and aging systems, and that's why there is a plan in place to replace them.

The Chair: We will go to Madam Mathysen for six minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There has actually been a consistent problem for over a decade in terms of the Nanisivik naval facility. As the Auditor General's report mentioned, it's only operational four weeks of the year. When can we expect that to be improved, if it's already been a problem for more than a decade?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, my apologies; I don't have a specific timetable available to me on that. That is a question we'd like to refer to National Defence.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Okay. In terms of the increase of the threats that you were talking about, Mr. Hamilton, and the fact that there are more people needed, can you talk about how the government is further addressing the key lack of infrastructure to support the people who are already living in the north in terms of clean drinking water, housing and other key infrastructure capabilities? How does the government plan to expand that if they're looking at increasing the number of people in the north to help with the surveillance?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, on issues of support to northern communities, it falls outside Foreign Affairs directly, although perhaps I can turn to Heidi to discuss some of the work of the Arctic Council in supporting northern communities.

I will say, though, that just from a military and security point of view, I know that National Defence is looking through the lens of dual use. For NORAD modernization and military investments in the north, they will look at every opportunity to create jobs for local populations and make some of the infrastructure useful to civilian populations. There is an integrated plan, as I understand it, to move forward with our military infrastructure investment alongside the civilian infrastructure investment.

Heidi, did you want to add anything?

Mrs. Heidi Kutz: The only point I would add to that is to make reference to the Arctic and northern policy framework, which really does have that base overarching domestic framework, and then on the part of Global Affairs there is the international framework, and on the part of National Defence the defence and security chapters.

That domestic framework, which contains a lot of the reflections and the packaging and the forward proposals with respect to infrastructure in the north that is non-military, falls under that rubric, guided by Indigenous Affairs, so I would defer those types of questions to them.

In the Arctic Council work, we work to engage and use the governance structures that we have set up to engage with northern communities, including the indigenous permanent participants, to work towards and identify the projects that make the most sense to them within the work of the Arctic Council.

• (1130)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: With regard to the Arctic Council and the previous conversation about the shift of leadership to Norway in the coming year, Russia certainly considers itself quite attached to its Arctic, as Canada does as well. It's defined by that.

What's your opinion in terms of the Arctic Council moving on to a new leadership role? How will Russia react to that ultimately when they see that they are being left behind? We've often heard in this committee about the further isolation of Russia and the dangers of that. Could you comment on that further?

Mrs. Heidi Kutz: I think I would agree. Russia certainly does identify itself as an Arctic nation, and the Arctic Council's originating declaration identifies the membership as including Arctic nations. Those points are all correct.

Canada's approach in light of the current circumstances has been to keep the council as healthy as possible, with as many projects as possible operating, given the current circumstances and the fact that we simply are not operating under business as usual. In that context, of course, we are not co-operating with the Russian Federation.

We're working towards a smooth transition to the next chair in Norway. We're focusing our considerations into what the Arctic Council will look like going forward in ways that we can take into consideration the current circumstances and also make sure that as much work as possible is being done to the benefit of northern communities.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We also heard that opening up the Arctic obviously leads to a great deal more commercialization. We were talking about the increased need for rescue, often in really dangerous situations. Is there a belief or a move or a conversation at all from our side with regard to banning a lot of that commercial activity—cruise ships, for example—and the environmental impact they could have?

The Chair: You have about 10 seconds.

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: I can defer to Heidi again on this question. I'm not aware of any conversation around banning particular vessels coming through our waters as a matter of principle.

Certainly through the COVID period, for instance, there was a prohibition that we instituted for our own waters to protect isolated communities from having commercial ships dock at their ports. We do certainly have that capacity. It could be exercised in the future, from a safety and security point of view, for search and rescue types of things, as you mentioned, or environmental concerns. It is a hallmark of the exercise of our sovereignty up in the Canadian north that we—

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

Before I go to Ms. Gallant for her five minutes, the Auditor General's report about Nanisivik and its four weeks of utility I thought was quite an interesting observation. I note, colleagues, that we have the Coast Guard and search and rescue and some military people coming next week, but I think you've hit on a significant element of the report. Colleagues may want to ask questions about that at that point.

Ms. Gallant, you have five minutes.

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

What does the PRC's interest in the Arctic say about President Xi Jinping's foreign policy? Specifically, does the PRC's interest in strengthening its economic, defence and energy capabilities in the Arctic pose a threat to Canada?

• (1135)

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, it's two-part question.

I think you'll see that Chinese interests in the Arctic are mirrored by Chinese stated and manifest interests in a great number of regions around the world. This is an assertive China. This is a China that does want to project. The Arctic is just one piece of that.

On the question about whether that represents a threat to the Canadian Arctic, I would say that certainly in any reasonable foreseeable future we do not perceive a military threat, a sea-based military threat, from China in the Canadian Arctic. That said, there is a potential for challenge to our sovereignty in the Arctic. That's why we must invest, and we are investing, in protecting and patrolling the approaches to our Arctic. That is part and parcel of what we're doing with shipbuilding as well as with NORAD modernization.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What threat assessments have been done with respect to China's and Russia's increased presence in the Arctic?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: A myriad of classified assessments are done on an ongoing basis on both those countries with respect to the Canadian Arctic.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is there anything you can share with us with respect to threat assessments on the military buildups of the two states?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: I can certainly say that we see the military buildups.

With respect to Russia, their buildup is in their own Arctic on their Arctic territories. Once again, from a purely military point of view, we don't detect that land-based or sea-based buildup as a direct threat inasmuch as we don't perceive the Russians trying to initiate an attack against the Canadian north. That said, the political disposition of Putin's Russia does give us concern, and we've seen that they have very little to no regard for international law, so even though we don't see the material buildup *prima facie* as a particular threat aimed at Canada, we do see the politics surrounding that kind of military buildup as a matter of concern.

As for China, once again we see the threat as not military—not kinetic, as such—but we have seen nefarious Chinese activity aimed at Canada through hybrid threats, through cyber activities and predatory investment attempts, so we are monitoring those issues very carefully.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Ms. Kutz, what role do observer states have in the Arctic Council, and has the Arctic become a region of competition?

Mrs. Heidi Kutz: Observers within the Arctic Council have the ability to attend meetings when they're sitting and to support and participate in the project work of the Arctic Council. You will recall

that I mentioned upwards of 100 projects that are normally active within the council.

I'm sorry; I didn't write it down. Could you repeat your second question?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Has the Arctic become a region of competition?

Mrs. Heidi Kutz: Certainly the Arctic is a region of many geopolitical interests and commercial interests and, by its very definition, of different interests and competition, be they commercial or otherwise. That will only become more pronounced, as we all know that the disproportionate effects of climate change on the Arctic will, over the course of time, render it more accessible and certainly render it of higher geopolitical interest.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

Ms. O'Connell, you have five minutes.

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

Thank you to the witnesses who are here today.

I want to follow up on Ms. Normandin's question and the answer around the free passage for—now I forget how you phrased it—innocent passage or fair passage. What does that mean with regard to China's interest in building shipping routes through the polar silk road? What is Canada's role, or what action can Canada take?

If you can't convince China not to do these things and if you can't prevent some of that passage, is there a way to make sure that they can't build the infrastructure or industry along the way that they would need to be partners there? What is the thinking around the attempts to build China's polar silk road?

• (1140)

Mr. Stephen Randall: I think I'll respond first to the question of innocent passage.

As I mentioned previously, Mr. Chair, the territorial sea is beyond our 12-nautical-mile baseline, so it's not the internal waters of Canada, but it's something we have a great deal of sovereign rights over. However, there is the right of innocent passage for every state to move through the territorial sea if it's considered innocent passage. The way they define that in the convention is that the passage is innocent as long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of the coastal state.

Obviously, you can't use weapons when you're in the territorial sea. That's not considered innocent passage. You can't carry out unlawful acts or serious acts of pollution in the territorial sea. You can't carry out research or surveying activities without the permission of the coastal state. Basically you're told that you have the right of innocent passage to just pass through. That's something that all states under the Law of the Sea Convention adhere to quite strictly. Canada takes advantage of that in other places in the world.

With respect to Chinese ships, we have noticed in the last few years that they do carry on research, marine scientific research. They haven't done it in our internal waters. They have done it a few times in our territorial sea, and they have asked for permission, and we've granted it. In one case, we in fact had scientists on board.

As for some of the infrastructure, I think I'd better defer to Mr. Hamilton about that.

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: I can speak to China's polar silk road. As I understand it, and as they have articulated it, that route is actually closer to Russia's northern sea route than any Canadian territorial waters.

A lot of comment has been made about a nascent or ongoing strategic partnership between Russia and China. This is one area where there is friction. I think it is evident, and it has been widely reported. The Russians have a great deal of concern about this Chinese polar silk road concept because it comes so close to Russian territory. There is concern around Chinese predatory tactics surrounding precious commodities and so forth in that region.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Keeping in mind northern or Arctic sovereignty issues, whether it's Russia's concerns over China and the silk road or innocent passage, I think the concern is that if China builds into these routes, it becomes much more difficult than when they no longer respect international treaties and the international order in terms of asking for permission and things like that.

How closely are you monitoring this? How much work is being done with our allies, for example, in Europe? You spoke earlier on Mr. Fisher's questions around Norway. What work is ongoing in terms of our allies in Europe? Again, it's that connection in making it across that would be concerning. What is the conversation there?

I know you can't necessarily get into threat assessment, but what is the mood and anticipation, given that this is building?

The Chair: Unfortunately, Ms. O'Connell has left you no time to answer the question, but it is a very interesting question, I have to say. I would like it to be answered, but I can't....

We have to go on to Ms. Normandin for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Hamilton, I would like to hear your point of view on critical minerals. It wasn't that long ago, a week or two at the most, that Canada took away the right of Chinese companies to extract critical minerals in the north. A few days later, we learned that the Americans are very interested in these kinds of projects, which they may want to fund with big government subsidies.

Between you and me, I would much rather have the United States operating in the north than China. That said, isn't there a risk that this could jeopardize our ability to take advantage of these minerals, in a context where supply chains are very dependent on them?

Is there a risk that the Americans will want to take over the mining resources of the north to ensure their own security in the supply

chain? Are we a major player in this sector or are we letting our resources go to a much bigger player?

• (1145)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: I'm not aware of any specific investment plans, but I know they certainly do exist.

Concerning China, first of all, we have this legislative instrument, the Investment Canada Act, which has very broad powers to deny certain kinds of investments throughout Canada, particularly in the Canadian north and with respect to critical minerals, when the security and intelligence community assesses that it would be a risk to our national security. I know that this was exercised very recently with respect to a prospective Chinese investment.

With the United States, as the member says, we are much more comfortable with their investments. Of course, the United States is bound by all the trade rules and regulations that exist between us through our bilateral and trilateral agreements, which bring Mexico on board, as well as broader global standards of international trade.

I am confident that the rules-based international order as it applies to trade and investment applies particularly well to Canada and the United States. Every prospective investment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Chair: We are going to have to leave it there.

I think Ms. Normandin was referring to an article in *The Globe and Mail* last week about the U.S. Army having a particular set of funds available for investments in projects of national security concern—I think that's what you were referring to—and I'm not alarmed, but it's important to know. Am I correct?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Actually, I was referring to a CBC article.

[*English*]

The Chair: It was a CBC article. Thank you for the correction. If it's a CBC article, my friends over here will not appreciate it, but if it's a *Globe and Mail* article, they may appreciate it.

Ms. Mathysen, you have two and half minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: When there was the discussion—I think it was you, Mr. Randall—about the innocent passage, I think you had mentioned that it was China that asked for permission to come into our waters for research, and we allowed it. In terms of access to other international waters, Canada, I assume, does the same. Are we always given that allowance as well, or were there any specific instances when we were not? I would imagine it would be in Russian Arctic waters, or something like that.

Mr. Stephen Randall: The provision under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that allows states to conduct marine scientific research sets a very high bar for saying "no". You have to have a particular reason, because under the convention, people are encouraged to conduct marine scientific research. One of the ways to ensure that it takes place is to invite the coastal state scientists on board to take part in it as well.

You also have the obligation, if you're the state doing the research, to give the data to the coastal state, so you have to give anything that you find as well.

Canada does take advantage of that, although not as much as some places in the world. We do much scientific research in our own Arctic. We have done some scientific research on the Alaska side, which requires permission from the United States, and on the Greenland side, which requires permission from the Kingdom of Denmark.

• (1150)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: There's nowhere else that you're aware of?

Mr. Stephen Randall: Not to my knowledge. I'm more of the Arctic person, and to my knowledge that's the only scientific research that Canada has been carrying on recently.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Often we've heard in this committee that a lot of the issues we are currently contemplating in terms of the security of our Arctic are governed by those international laws. Are there things that this committee should take into account in terms of strengthening some of those laws? Where would we go with that?

A lot of the academics who have come to this committee have said that they are insufficient and that instead of dealing with a lot of these issues in a military sense, we need to do it through that international law basis.

The Chair: Answer very briefly, please.

Mr. Stephen Randall: The most important one is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out all of the different marine and maritime territories, and all coastal states in the Arctic are adhering to that—even Russia.

It's a rules-based order that actually works in the Arctic up to this point, and the more that we follow those rules, the more they are strengthened for all the coastal states involved.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We have Mr. Bezan for five minutes.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to thank our witnesses for appearing.

I want to follow up on the discussion around the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Of course, everyone in the Arctic has been making territorial claims to the seabed of the Arctic Ocean, Canada included. There's a great deal of overlap, especially from competing nations. The United States has a different view of where their territory lies in the Beaufort Sea versus Canada. We know that Russia is trying to claim everything right up to the continental shelf of North America.

I'm wondering where that process is at, Mr. Randall, as to those claims, and when final decisions will be made at the United Nations.

Mr. Stephen Randall: Thank you.

This is about the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provision that allows coastal states to have sovereign rights beyond 200 nautical miles if you can prove that the seabed and subsoil is actually an extension of your land mass, and because the Arctic Ocean is an enclosed ocean, which was once all together and pulled apart, almost all of it is continental in nature. One of the five coastal states will have sovereign rights over some part of it.

As a result, there are also lots of overlaps. The process is a scientific one. You're proving to the commission responsible in New York that it's continental in nature. They're not deciding on boundaries; they are only deciding whether it is continental in nature or not.

The question is correct: There have been some pretty expansive submissions to the commission in New York, showing a large area of territory that they say is continental shelf, but it doesn't mean that they own it.

Because of the boundaries involving a lot of overlaps, all the coastal states will have to sit down someday and arrange among themselves where the boundaries are. All of the coastal states continue to adhere to the Ilulissat Declaration, which says that they will do that in a peaceful way and in accordance with international law.

As for how long that will take, the commission in New York is terribly backed up. They have more submissions than they ever thought they'd get when they created the convention, so right now it's taking many years, once a state files, for them to review the submission. That's something we're working on in New York to try to speed up the process, but unfortunately, right now it takes a very long time.

Mr. James Bezan: Knowing that the Christmas season is coming, I hope that at the end of it all we can still say that Santa Claus is a Canadian.

Mr. Hamilton, you said that you hadn't had a chance to view the Auditor General's "Report 6—Arctic Waters Surveillance". However, there is an interesting note in here in exhibit 6.3 on page 4 that says....

Just so you know, in 2020 the navigation season in the Arctic was restricted. No pleasure craft or others were allowed to come into northern communities because of possible exposure to COVID-19, but some vessels tried to breach those restrictions.

In the exhibit, it says:

For example, during that summer, a foreign sailing vessel entered the Canadian Arctic without approval or exemption. It was identified in the vicinity of Cambridge Bay by an Inuit monitor.

Our systems of surveillance missed it completely until it was almost at shore, where somebody actually saw it, probably a Ranger.

My question to you is this: Do we know the nationality of that vessel?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, our system knows the nationality of that vessel. I'm not sure that I'm permitted to discuss that in an open-facing forum. However, we do know the nationality of that vessel, and my understanding is that very large fines have been applied against the owner of that vessel.

• (1155)

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, because I think this report is germane to our study that we're doing right now on arctic surveillance, I would move that we invite the Auditor General to appear to discuss "Report 6—Arctic Waters Surveillance".

The Chair: Okay. The motion is in order. It's relevant to what we are discussing. It's on the table. I'm assuming that you don't want to debate it just yet and that we can defer the debate. Can we?

Mr. James Bezan: We don't need to debate. We can have a vote.

The Chair: Okay.

An hon. member: I don't even know what it was.

The Chair: Does everybody understand? Okay. We don't understand.

Mr. Bezan has moved that the Auditor General be invited to this committee for our study. As I said, the motion is in order. He wishes to have it voted on today, but of course, we may want to debate it.

I see Mr. May's hand.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Can the clerk...? Again, we're going to get into a bit of a rabbit hole here if we debate this too much, and we do have witnesses for a few more minutes here.

I'm wondering if the clerk might be able to share where we're at with this study and the number of meetings we have left. I know we had some discussions about the number of meetings and what kind of timeline we have and when we would potentially fit this in. I know we're losing a meeting on Thursday, so I'm wondering what could be in the realm of possibility for this.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson): Thank you, Mr. May.

I currently have invitations out for the meetings on November 22 and November 24, so next Tuesday and Thursday. This is our sixth meeting on the arctic security study. The work plan that was agreed to by the committee and that was put together by the analysts identified nine meetings. However, some of the witnesses that appeared on that work plan have been unavailable, so should the committee wish to have those witnesses, we would need to add additional meetings.

Mr. Bryan May: I personally don't necessarily disagree with Mr. Bezan's assessment of the motion. I'm wondering if we could move this to committee business to plan this out so that we have an idea of what the timetable looks like.

The Chair: Mr. Bezan, I don't want to take a lot of witness time to do this. Would it be acceptable that we move it to the end of the

second hour and deal with it then? Maybe by that time we will have settled our concerns.

Mr. James Bezan: I'm good with doing that.

I'll say this, though. The Auditor General is an officer of Parliament. She's written a report that is very relevant to our current study on Arctic surveillance. I think it's important that we have the office attend and describe exactly what they found in their report. They made a couple of recommendations. We have to make sure that those recommendations are being acted upon.

I think it is incumbent upon us as a committee to have her here. The sooner that we can do that, the better. If we need to take another hour or so to determine whether or not we want to vote on this, I'm more than happy to defer it.

The Chair: I think the sentiment and the principle of your motion, as I'm sensing in the room, is probably acceptable. We're down to mechanics, so let's get down to mechanics in about an hour. Is that all right?

Go ahead, Cheryl.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Chairman, in one of our meetings, I asked the clerk to provide us with a calendar so that we'd know what our work plan is. I haven't received one yet. We could have saved some time if we'd had them. I request that they be prepared for us.

The Chair: It's a flexible calendar, shall we say.

Let me finish with the witnesses. We will suspend for a minute or two while we bring in the next panel. Maybe there will be some settling among ourselves.

• (1200)

Mr. James Bezan: Didn't I ask for time out before I moved my motion?

The Chair: You did, but you didn't get it.

With that, Mr. May still has five minutes, if he wishes to use his five minutes right now.

Mr. Bryan May: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, thank you, Mr. Hamilton and your team, for being here today.

Earlier last month, the United States released a national strategy for the Arctic region. It focuses on four pillars: security, the environment, sustainable economic development and international governance. In response to the new strategy, the Arctic Institute's founder and senior fellow, Malte Humpert, stated:

The new U.S. national strategy for the Arctic suggests that rising geopolitical tension resulting from the war in Ukraine will spell an end to Arctic exceptionalism. The region is likely to see less international cooperation and expanded military activity, by Russia, China, the US and its NATO allies, in the coming years.

In your opinion, how has Russia's illegal invasion influenced the U.S. Arctic strategy? What implications do you see this having for Canada?

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: Mr. Chair, it's an excellent question.

The U.S. strategy is something that we looked at very carefully. I would suggest that from where we stand now, understanding the geopolitics of today, we would certainly agree with the sentiments that are put forward that, because of greater geopolitical competition globally, one can't help but think there will be an impact on the Arctic.

That said, all of the Arctic states, minus one, are exceptional allies and are very co-operative in nature in terms of the security of the circumpolar region. That one exception is, of course, Russia. I think it's undeniable that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has influenced the U.S. assessment, as it has influenced our own assessment.

That said, the future of the geopolitics of the Arctic is very long term. Vladimir Putin is not going to be president of Russia forever. One could imagine a day when we become co-operative with Russia again. That day is not soon, but it requires diplomacy. It requires coordination among Canada and the other Arctic allies to hold Russia to account, but also to create a space where co-operation can be reborn. That is not going to happen in the near term.

Mr. Bryan May: As stated in the Arctic and northern policy framework, the Canadian north is warming at about three times the global average rate, which is affecting land, biodiversity, cultures and traditions. The framework states that while this presents possible opportunities, it also brings increased safety and security challenges. What are those safety and security challenges? How is climate change impacting security dynamics?

In addition, can you elaborate on how the Government of Canada is addressing the issue of climate change with the Canadian north?

The Chair: You have less than a minute and a half.

Mr. Kevin Hamilton: It's happening in a great many ways, but I won't get into them because they're not my areas of expertise.

I would point out the forthcoming NATO climate change and security centre of excellence that Canada will host in Montreal, and we anticipate that it will be operational by next year. That centre will elaborate NATO doctrine as it pertains to how climate change affects security. One large aspect of their studies will be on the Arctic and how the changing environment is, as you say, creating opportunities but also creating new challenges, so there will be more doctrine to follow under this Canadian initiative.

Mr. Bryan May: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. May.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank all three witnesses.

Mr. Hamilton, you're becoming a frequent flyer before this committee, and we appreciate it. We appreciate Ms. Kutz and Mr. Randall as well.

Thank you for the way in which you presented yourselves and how you informed our study.

With that, we're going to suspend and bring in the next panel.

• (1200) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1205)

The Chair: The meeting is back in order.

We have, for our next hour, Mr. Clint Davis, president and chief executive officer of Nunasi Corporation; and Mr. Les Klapatiuk from International Logistical Support Inc., from somewhere; we're not quite sure where.

Mr. Davis, you're present, so you have five minutes.

Colleagues, I'm looking at the clock and I'm mindful that we have a couple of motions at the end, so I'm going to have to cut back everybody's time. I'm not sure by how much, but be forewarned.

Mr. Davis, we're not going to cut back your time. You have five minutes, please.

Mr. Clint Davis (President and Chief Executive Officer, Nunasi Corporation): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. It's an honour to be here to have a conversation about a topic as important as Arctic security.

Nunasi is a Nunavut Inuit birthright corporation owned by two regional Inuit associations, QIA and Kivalliq Inuit Association, and one regional Inuit development corporation. The structure ultimately means that Nunasi is owned by all of the beneficiaries under the Nunavut Agreement.

It actually has a very interesting story. It's the oldest Inuit development corporation in the country. It was started in 1976 by the Inuit Tapiriit of Canada, now known as ITK, and it was done in a way to ensure that Inuit had an opportunity to participate economically in anticipation of the resolution of Inuit land claims. It was involved in a variety of different business activities at the time, from mining to airlines, hotels and hospitality. Today it's focused on four areas: health services, energy, infrastructure with transportation, and national defence.

Nunasi is a shareholder of Nasittuq, which is the majority Inuit-owned corporation that is currently operating and maintaining the North Warning System under a seven-year contract. That contract was actually awarded at the end of January of this year.

The second shareholder of Nasittuq is the Pan Arctic Inuit Logistics Company. This company represents the six Inuit development corporations located all the way from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories, across Nunavik in northern Quebec, to Nunatsiavut in Labrador, where I'm from.

The third shareholder of Nasittuq is ATCO Frontec, which is a subsidiary of ATCO Ltd., with an extensive history of working in the north and partnering with the Inuit.

As many of you know, the North Warning System is a chain of radar sites and support facilities that forms part of Canada's NORAD agreement with the United States. It was established in 1985 to detect and allow for an early response to potential threats entering the North American airspace. The federal contract requires the maintenance of 47 remote sites in the Canadian Arctic, in addition to three facilities in Ontario. This is the second time that Nasittuq actually will be managing this military infrastructure. The first was from 2001 to 2014. Needless to say, we were very happy to learn that we actually secured that contract once again.

In early October of this year, Nasittuq was also awarded the eight-year contract to provide operations and maintenance services and support at CFS Alert on Ellesmere Island, Nunavut. Nasittuq was the incumbent contract-holder and has provided services at CFS Alert since 2012.

I'm here to say that Canada's plans for policy development and investment in Arctic security must include the Inuit.

First of all, according to the Inuit business leader Harry Flaherty, we are the eyes and ears of the country in the north. The Arctic region that we're talking about encompasses a massive amount of land referred to as Inuit Nunangat, or the Inuit homeland. It makes up 35% of Canada's land mass and 50% of its entire coastline. There are 53 communities within Inuit Nunangat, with a population of over 56,000 people, of which 47,000 are Inuit. Inuit have lived there for 5,000 years, and our uninterrupted presence substantiates any Canadian claim of sovereignty over the Arctic.

Second, Inuit business and development corporations have grown in financial capacity and business acumen over the last 10 years. We're very good business partners, and our experience should be drawn upon throughout the various stages of planning for domestic security.

Third, the federal priorities of reconciliation and national security can support each other when it comes to the Arctic. Inuit development corporations are ready to work with the military and other federal departments to develop plans that will meet security needs, while respecting the sovereignty, rights, and way of life of our communities. This approach recognizes the obligations under Inuit land claims agreements and supports the federal government's commitment to economic reconciliation.

Finally, the goals of Arctic security can only be reached through well-planned investments in local infrastructure. It should not be a surprise that infrastructure in Nunavut, and in fact all across Inuit Nunangat, is in some cases non-existent as compared to the communities in the south. Reliable services that many take for granted, such as clean water, reliable power and consistent Internet connectivity simply do not exist at the acceptable level that we see here in the south.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, which is the territorial Inuit political body, released the report entitled "Nunavut's Infrastructure Gap" in October 2020. It was the first of its kind, and it showed that Nunavut's infrastructure is commonly inadequate, in poor repair or altogether absent when compared to the Canadian baseline. This situation has to change.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I look forward to your questions.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davis. That was nicely under five minutes.

Mr. Klapatiuk, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Les Klapatiuk (International Logistical Support Inc.): Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

Members of Parliament, Inuvik is the most active NORAD base in Canada.

I speak to you from the same ramp and hangar from which the CC-130 tactical air-to-air refueller operated 439 times, and ILS supported the RCAF and the United States Air Force an additional 600 times over 16 years. The "green hangar"—as we're commonly called—on the Inuvik airport is the only infrastructure of its kind in Canada's western Arctic, north of the Arctic Circle and on the Arctic Ocean, yet a division of DND Real Property Operations removed us from the "here and now" and the leading edge of North American defence.

This is the same property that Innovation, Science and Economic Development on August 25 of this year stated was critical to North American defence, but DND will not lease, contract or buy it to support NORAD. It is the same property for which, on September 12 and 13 of this year, two United States military attachés visited and spoke with me about a possible purchase. This is now country to country and actively being pursued.

In testifying before the House of Commons committee, General Pelletier—I believe it was on November 1—did not mention this. I was advised that everyone in Ottawa, Washington and NORAD knows of what's transpiring, as do the British and NATO.

"Trust, but verify." You as a committee are operating at a complete disadvantage. You have to trust what you are being told, but how do you verify? All of my statements and charts can be verified through open-source information, ILS records, invoices, photographs and notes or emails with individuals.

The gist of the matter is I cannot answer why Real Property Operations, during a time of nuclear crisis, refuses to support NORAD by providing the only available hangarage in 40% of Canada's land mass.

Real Property Operations will not support our air-to-air refueller crews, who have intercepted Russian bombers from the ILS hangar.

Real Property Operations is forcing the RCAF and NORAD to conduct snowbank operations in Arctic conditions without any security for the airplanes.

In October, 2021, a lieutenant colonel in Real Property Operations ordered his staff to develop a new contract for ILS. They refused. Why?

Real Property Operations gave away NORAD's strategic fuel supply of approximately 270,000 litres on the Inuvik FOL, the forward operating location, and had four 75,000-litre tanks destroyed. Fuel availability throughout the Arctic is and remains critical to all RCAF and NORAD operations.

On June 11, 2021, a NORAD general and a Canadian general asked me about the state of contract negotiations between Real Property Operations and myself. When I replied that there were none, there was puzzlement and betrayal. NORAD made their needs known. Real Property Operations and Canada have ignored them and our common defence.

Real Property Operations started this attempt to destroy ILS in 2015. They have persisted ever since, but at what expense to our country and harm to our relationships with our allies, including NORAD and NATO?

We appear to be at a state of overlapping, cascading failures, where a decision has ramifications several times removed. By that, I mean that Canada's termination of ILS is an infrastructure retreat that impacts NORAD, our defence, and search and rescue. Each of these has further ramifications. Unaccountable bureaucratic decisions have impacted air-to-air refuelling, search and rescue, and fuel, each with downstream effects. We can remedy this.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1215)

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

With that, colleagues, I think to have any chance of staying in an order I'm going to cut back the six-minute round to five minutes. Then we'll see where we end up for the second round.

With that, you have five minutes, Mrs. Kramp-Neuman.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

First of all, thank you both for being here, with Mr. Davis in the room and Mr. Klapatiuk.

My first question is posed to Mr. Klapatiuk.

From a defence perspective, I understand the infrastructure in the north is in dire condition. I certainly haven't been there, but I've been reading a tremendous amount. If we don't maintain our sovereignty, which is maintained by presence, then what do we do?

With regard to the cancellation of particular contracts, how does this undermine our national security? What's the issue? Is it ideology?

To be more specific, as you know, Canada has come to a point where critical NORAD infrastructure has to be upgraded. That's going to cost tens of billions and proceed over several decades. What kinds of opportunities do you envision for your company? What specific infrastructure projects can you see benefiting local communities, as well as National Defence?

There's a lot in that question.

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Yes, there is.

Right now we have the Inuvik runways being extended. For the next five years, the new air-to-air refueller cannot land here. It's ac-

tually five to eight years. Even if it lands, the future means that there's no hangarage and there's insufficient fuel for this aircraft.

As for what I see happening, I made a proposal to NORAD directly on August 10 of last year. I indicated that they could make a lease with me or a contract, or buy me out completely so that my existing hangar would handle the CC-130 air-to-air refueller. I have sufficient property on the airport already, so we could build a hangar large enough to hold the A330 MRTT and the CC-177, just not at the same time.

We are completely adjacent to the boundary line of the Inuvik FOL. As I said, it is the busiest FOL in Canada. It's the busiest NORAD base. There are opportunities for civilian companies to partner with the Canadian Armed Forces to develop infrastructure.

As for leaving the infrastructure to the government to build, I'll use these examples. The Inuvik runway was first discussed by General St-Amand in 2007, and it's only starting now. The Nanisivik fuel depot for the naval ships was started in 2008 under the Harper government, and it may be ready next year. In Yellowknife, there's apparently a new building going in for the JTFN. It was first discussed in 2004. Now I understand the property's been purchased. I don't know if they've broken ground yet.

Twenty to 25 years hence does not make defence here and now, and that's what we have to be concerned with as well. Future construction is great, but we also have to look at what we are going to do here and now.

I hope I answered your question.

• (1220)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: To complement that, I see your company as being a great example of shared infrastructure between National Defence and the civilian side.

What do you believe is the biggest challenge to make these historic investments in NORAD modernization when it comes to that critical infrastructure that is needed?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Reality.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Is "reality" political ideology?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: I don't want to say political ideology. One of the problems that we face, though, is that people don't understand the length of time that it takes to build anything here.

Second, do the people in the local communities have the capability and capacity? Do they have the training?

One of the major items that we face is security clearances. People cannot get security clearances under the standard operating procedures. I believe my counterpart with Nunasi Corporation must run across that all the time.

There has to be a reality—

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Would that concur similarly with gatekeepers? Is that the issue?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: I'm not sure what you mean by gatekeepers.

People in the Arctic who want security clearances have to meet the same requirements as southern contractors for security clearances. Our crime rates in the Arctic—I'll only speak for the Inuvik region—are significantly higher with some—

The Chair: We're going to have to leave the answer there. Whether it's a gatekeeper or a reality check, I don't know.

Ms. Lambropoulos, you have five minutes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of our witnesses for being here to answer some of our questions today.

In previous panels, we heard about the fact that we need to demonstrate sovereignty. As it was mentioned before, the best way to do that would be having a presence and making sure that the communities that are currently there are empowered as well.

As someone who believes that we definitely need to put reconciliation forward and do our best in those efforts, I see this defence spending in the Arctic as a major opportunity to be able to do that.

I know that there are certain Inuit-owned businesses that have received contracts. Can you tell us what the benefits have been in this area? How has this helped the north and northern communities?

Also, what policies and frameworks need to be put in place, and how can they be improved in order to see more of this going forward?

• (1225)

Mr. Clint Davis: Thank you for the question.

We just received the North Warning System contract recently. It was at the beginning of the year. The contract start date was in April. We've had to significantly ramp up staff, particularly at headquarters here in Ottawa, as well as ensure that we have training and development and the right support to ensure that we have a higher representation of Inuit workers and employees in those particular sites.

Some of that is happening during the transfer from the previous contract holder over to Nasittuq. That's one piece. We've held the contract for CFS Alert since 2012.

The benefits have been profound. Prior to us not winning the contract previously for the north warning system, a significant number of young Inuit business leaders started their careers working at Nasittuq and are working on different sites and so on. Some branched out to become entrepreneurs and things of that nature.

Not only is it training development and job opportunities, but two other areas specifically. In particular for procurement, right now, Inuit development corporations—of which there are only seven in the country—have investments in well over 100 businesses. Some of that is done through partnerships and so on. As other pro-

urement opportunities come up, we are well positioned to take advantage of that.

When we do that, that net revenue flows back for the benefit of the community. It helps to achieve economic reconciliation. It has had a very positive impact on employment and, certainly, on procurement. Even with our revenue distribution to our development corporations, we use that in support of trying to develop other programs to support local communities.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Can either of you speak to some observations that you've had from various levels of government working with...in order to advance economic reconciliation?

Do you see that there needs to be better coordination of these efforts in order to advance the cause and make sure that they are benefiting the most from these investments?

Mr. Clint Davis: First of all, the North Warning System contract is one of the first federal contracts that was developed in compliance with the requirements under the Nunavut agreement with respect to federal procurement in the territory. The Inuit benefits piece had a significant amount of waiting when we went through the RFP process. That, we saw, was absolutely impactful for us to strategically position ourselves to secure that contract.

Are we seeing that in other departments? Not as much, unfortunately. Hopefully, we'll see this as a bit of learning for the other departments to be able to fully implement it as well.

The Chair: We'll have to leave it there, unfortunately.

Ms. Normandin will speak in French, so if you prepare yourselves for the translation, we'll suspend for a second while that happens.

Mr. Klapatiuk, have you adjusted to receive the question in translation?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Yes, I have, sir.

The Chair: Okay. That's good.

With that, Ms. Normandin, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank both witnesses for being with us. We greatly appreciate it.

Mr. Davis, you talked about infrastructure, which is in a very critical state. If we were to prioritize infrastructure upgrades, what should the government's priority be for infrastructure in the Arctic?

[English]

Mr. Clint Davis: I'm sorry. I got the last part: "What priority would the government have in upgrading infrastructure within the region?"

There has been a commitment on the part of the Government of Canada in the most recent budget with respect to infrastructure as a part of the indigenous community infrastructure fund. I think there is a significant amount of capital that will be flowing to the Inuit political body, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, specifically for Nunavut.

That's a good start, but when we talk about infrastructure investment, as I just highlighted, for the north, \$500 million to a billion dollars is nowhere near what's required. I think my colleague here can talk more specifically about some of what's required across the Arctic.

I think we need to look at the Arctic as a fundamental part of the Canadian identity. In order to demonstrate that we want to substantiate that role of the Canadian Arctic in our national identity, we have to make the necessary investments. We're seeing these types of investments happening in other parts of the world.

Our Canadian Arctic makes up 25% of the land mass of the global Arctic, but when you look at that global economy, which is about \$250 billion U.S., we contribute 2% to that global economy, so I think infrastructure is absolutely critical.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Klapatiuk, I'll ask you the question slightly differently.

What should the priority be for infrastructure funding? Should it be communications infrastructure, roads or transport? What is essential right now?

[English]

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: In Inuvik we already have one fibre optic line, and there's a second one coming up the Dempster Highway, so in terms of communications, we're very fortunate.

As it pertains to land transport, roads are very difficult to build and will take a long time. One of the key transportation modes in the Arctic is air. One thing we have to look at, from a government perspective, is upgrading airports. Number one will be the critical airports, which are defence related. We also have to look at purchasing aircraft types, if we're talking from a defence perspective, that are going to operate off austere runways, which are gravel or ice, which is something that the new CC-295 search and rescue aircraft cannot do.

We also have a situation here in which infrastructure within communities will be built when major contracts start and we will have a secondary type of economy that will start, related to supplies or to the provision of transportation. There's a symbiotic relationship. It's not that the government has to come in and build the housing for people; it's more a matter of getting the economy rolling with defence-related infrastructure immediately and then other things starting to build.

One of the problems we do face in the Arctic, though, is that we have too many companies that come in on what we will call a drive-by or a storefront. They want to make a partnership in the Arctic so they can come in and do the business. That has negative ramifications, because companies in the Arctic sign on, and the first thing that happens once the project's gone is that there's no carry-on and there are no further economic benefits that accrue from the previous work. It's a feast-or-famine situation here. That's why we will need some of these long-term contracts for runways or for upgrading marine assets, from an immediate defence perspective.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen, go ahead for five minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

To both witnesses, what do your businesses now require due to some of the impacts of climate change? Are there any specific investments you need to make in response to harsher conditions or changing conditions?

Maybe Mr. Klapatiuk can go first.

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Thank you for the question.

I'm an extremely fortunate individual. My hangar and property are situated on bedrock, which is approximately 25 feet below the surface, so I'm a very lucky individual. Some of the other areas are not that fortunate.

I think what we have to do is to look at things in the longer term or, pardon me, maybe even in the shorter term. The current situation in Europe precludes a long-term climate change type of view. My presentation here is more from the perspective of what we are going to do here and now. Canada has no capabilities in the Arctic right now, so what are we going to do over the next five years to make sure our NORAD base in Inuvik is properly supported? While it is good to talk about long-term construction and the impacts, our game right now should be looking at how we protect the country, because if we can't protect our own country, what country do we have?

• (1235)

Mr. Clint Davis: Just very quickly, we invest in a company called Nunavut Construction Corp. When it does planning, it has to take into account the impact of climate change. We're trying to make our houses much more energy-efficient so that we're not wasting any energy.

Something that I think is really interesting, though, is that of 53 Inuit communities, 52 are on diesel. A huge priority we see for this government, as well as for this country and the world, is to get off diesel to move towards net zero. Ironically enough, one of the biggest pieces of military infrastructure is the North Warning System, and all of their sites are run on diesel.

We think there's a great opportunity there because in Nunavut right now, we're not able to realize the renewable-energy piece at this point. I think there's a great opportunity to see what we can do to incorporate renewable energy into some of these sites, certainly, as a part of NORAD modernization. Any learnings from that could be extended to have a positive impact on communities as well.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I wanted to follow up on what we heard from a previous witness. He referred to "smart defence investments" in terms of how the government does business with first nations-led or Inuit-led companies and said that often governments get the idea of consultation wrong, in that it's top-down instead of being grassroots.

Can you talk about the importance of seeing this being Inuit-led on the ground for the Arctic in moving forward? Have you had any challenges in terms of that idea? I mean, from a DND perspective, it's very much what they need and then how it benefits the community, instead of the opposite.

Mr. Clint Davis: It's a great question.

I think it's actually starting to happen now. I represent an indigenous business. I'm not here representing a political body, a political entity, so I don't know exactly what is happening in that regard, but we certainly had some touchpoints with the Department of National Defence.

In some instances, I think, they have a certain perception, neither positive nor negative, of the capacity of indigenous businesses or, in my case, Inuit businesses. We do this type of industry primarily in construction and so on, and they may not necessarily consider some of the other opportunities that would come out of NORAD modernization. That part of the consultation could be missed for us.

For us, I think, we're very open and innovative when it comes to how we do get involved in economic opportunities and how we ensure that is communicated effectively to the Government of Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

Colleagues, we have a hard stop at one o'clock. If we allow five minutes for the discussion of the motions, which will be a very quick discussion, we basically have a three-minute round, so three minutes it is.

Ms. Gallant, you have three minutes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

My question is for Mr. Klapatiuk.

What role will ILS fill with respect to our expanded early warning system and in a modernized NORAD?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: We would hope to be able to provide the leading edge of defence. The expanded NORAD capability is one thing, but we still need the fighter jets. We still need the infrastructure on the leading edge in order to handle and support all of this equipment, and right now we don't have it. This is one of the things that people fail to realize.

We can have all the radar. We can have everything we want. A good example is the satellite download sites in Inuvik. There are two. One is private and one is government, but both download information off the polar orbit satellites, so here we are using satellites, speed-of-light equipment, and yet we still need boots on the ground in the Arctic.

It's no different on defence. We need hangarage, we need fuel and we need runways. We need everything that is needed down south and, to be very blunt, most of the air bases down south are nothing more than training bases and hangarage maintenance bases. We have no capability of hangaring the MRTT, the A330, in Inuvik, yet we will have that same capability in Trenton, but Trenton is five and a half hours from Inuvik. We have to have that infrastructure in the Arctic.

Then again, that opens up business opportunities for other people, because on the Inuvik airport, for example, we don't have any municipal water. We need to have everything hauled in and hauled out. That's a business opportunity for somebody else. We don't have many of the things that you would associate with a southern airport.

• (1240)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Have you or anyone you deal with up there observed the presence of Chinese people, the government, trying to purchase real estate or doing anything else that just seems out of order?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Yes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Can you expand upon it?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Sure.

You can ask Senator Dawn Anderson. The Chinese were up to look at the marine infrastructure in Tuktoyaktuk. That was the jumping-off point for all the offshore drilling that happened in the Beaufort Sea and in all of the offshore around Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk.

We had the Russians fly across the Arctic with private airplanes. We call those "amphibs". They're amphibious aircraft and will land on the runway and on water, and they happened to follow the North Warning System.

We've had Chinese from the Chinese embassy in Ottawa come through Inuvik. The RCMP tried to identify them, but we'll leave that one alone.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave the answer there, Ms. Gallant.

Mr. Fisher is next for three minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to both of our witnesses.

Mr. Davis, we touched on this topic a little today, so if it sounds like I'm repeating a question, I want to try to get a bit of a focus.

We talked about the Minister of Defence announcing the largest investment in NORAD in four decades. You talked about the North Warning System and about the issues with staffing. You talked about training and development, and you talked about aligning federal priorities on reconciliation that must include Inuit.

I'm giving you some time to outline where you see opportunities to advance economic reconciliation. Also, if you see room for improvement, whether it's in policy or in execution, I would love to hear your thoughts on that in the remaining time.

Mr. Clint Davis: We see that that there's a tremendous opportunity around NORAD modernization. This is going to be a generational impact. Obviously we're in the early stages right now, and we're trying to position ourselves to demonstrate that we have the ability, the capacity, and the financial capacity as well, to be able to participate.

Some of the other opportunities we would see, as my colleague talked about, are greater investment in airstrips and so on. We definitely would have the ability to go in with some of our companies and partners to be able to participate, so investment in infrastructure and critical infrastructure would be important.

With regard to some of the policies and procedures or frameworks that would be a benefit for us, as I mentioned before, across the board, not necessarily on the military side but in other parts of the other departments, having a much more consistent approach in implementing indigenous procurement I think would be absolutely invaluable and have a huge impact.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You talked about having touchpoints with National Defence. Can you let us know how you made out with those when you made connections with National Defence?

Mr. Clint Davis: They were very good, very positive, and they are very preliminary at this stage. It's being able to demonstrate and send the message that Inuit businesses are not just looking at our traditional kind of activity that you see in the north, but that we're willing to go beyond that to see what we could do to take advantage of that.

Mr. Darren Fisher: You mentioned staffing up here in Ottawa. What is staffing like in the Arctic region?

Mr. Clint Davis: Certainly my colleague can talk about that as well.

Everybody is looking for good people, right? That's the biggest challenge. The Government of Nunavut has a staffing challenge. All of the Inuit organizations have a staffing challenge.

For any major business that wants to go up, the first thing they talk about is that they need to find people in the Arctic. For Nunavut itself, we're talking about a population of 39,000 people. When you break it down to the people who are actively able to work, it does become a bit of a challenge.

The biggest thing for us is to focus on kids who are in school and to motivate and incentivize them. As my colleague talked about, this is a medium-term and also a long-term play, frankly, for the country. The biggest thing for us is to focus on the youth.

• (1245)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fisher.

Ms. Normandin, you have a minute.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Klapatiuk, you mentioned the very long construction times. If the Department of National Defence wanted to repair the infrastructure as part of the NORAD modernization, I understand that it would take an extremely long time.

If you were the one doing it, though, can you give us an idea of how long it would take to build, as well as how efficient you would be, given the rising costs everywhere in construction?

Also, if you don't have a signed contract, you have no incentive to upgrade your facilities for NORAD. From a business perspective, it's not attractive, as I understand it.

[*English*]

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Well, if there's incentive, why are we here?

When it comes to construction, I've looked at building a new hangar for the MRTT here. We have a five-year to eight-year window while the Inuvik runway is being lengthened and extended. I

would have a hangar ready for the MRTT in five to eight years. Five to eight years is a long time, yes, but we have logistics problems and staffing problems.

As my colleague said, staffing is difficult for everybody on both sides of the Arctic—east and west. There has to be a co-operative attitude with the civilian people who already have infrastructure, because it's much easier to jump off from an existing building than it is to push through a greenfield.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave the answer there.

Next we have one minute for Ms. Mathysen, and then three minutes for Mr. Bezan and three minutes for Ms. Valdez.

Ms. Mathysen, you have one minute.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Klapatiuk, I wasn't entirely clear. You were talking about your issue, potentially, with the Real Property Operations services. I think you said you really weren't sure about what was going on, but is it that they lack an awareness of exactly what is needed on the ground by companies such as yours, or is it that they're not communicating that effectively to higher-ups or other government officials or other departments?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: Real Property Operations does all the maintenance on all the bases and handles all the contracts for the Canadian Armed Forces. They do not answer directly to the CDS, the chief of the defence staff, but to the deputy minister of defence, so the route they take is that if NORAD needs a hangar, they go to RP Ops to get the hangar. RP Ops knows exactly what NORAD wants, but they're in a position of not being accountable to NORAD, so they don't have to give NORAD a hangar. They can delay, obfuscate or whatever they have to do. That is the problem where we sit in Inuvik right now. RP Ops has said that NORAD will not have hangarage. There is nothing NORAD can do because of the way that RP Ops does not answer to anybody other than to either the assistant deputy minister of defence—

The Chair: Again, we're going to have to stop there. I'm sorry to run this clock hard, but it is what it is.

You have three minutes, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, and I want to follow up on that question with Mr. Klapatiuk.

Property management has cancelled your contract. They went ahead and destroyed the fuel tanks. This seriously undermines our national security, our ability to project power in the north for us and for the United States.

Is there any way you think they'll take any direction if there's ministerial intervention here?

Mr. Les Klapatiuk: I don't know. I'm not familiar with Ottawa. What I am familiar with is that both air and army attachés—and this speaks volumes—came here. My last conversation with the air attaché was on November 10. They are very concerned as to what's going to happen in Inuvik. That's why the U.S. is looking at getting involved, and, as I said earlier, it's now country to country, whether through NORAD or CANR. This is a serious situation. We have no hangarage. We have no support.

• (1250)

Mr. James Bezan: It is very serious.

You also mentioned, in response to earlier questions from Ms. Gallant, the potential foreign interference or foreign interest in facilities in the area by the Communist regime in Beijing. I have a question for Mr. Davis that I want to get to, so could you provide in writing the examples you have of other foreign nations or operatives in the region?

The Chair: I'm not quite sure how you're going to do that in the three minutes that's already expired.

Mr. James Bezan: It's already expired? That was so damn fast. You only gave me two and you cut me off last time.

The Chair: I feel so bad for you. Trust me.

Ms. Valdez, welcome to the committee and this harsh chair who cuts people off when they have three minutes.

Please go ahead. You have three minutes.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Davis, you mentioned in your opening the importance of engaging with the Inuit community and how that assists with reconciliation. Can you describe the types of synergies we can achieve when we collaborate with Inuit communities to protect the Arctic?

Mr. Clint Davis: Some of the synergy we can actually identify is having a better understanding and realization of our capacity as Inuit development corporations.

As I mentioned before, there are seven development corporations. We invest in and own either equity ownership pieces or wholly owned companies, hundreds of these companies, and we employ thousands of Inuit. With government, if they have a better understanding and work on a business timeline, which I know can be a bit of a challenge, I think that act would certainly help to support our move towards economic reconciliation and really support empowering Inuit as well.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: For the completed or ongoing projects, can you share what you've learned with us in this committee so we can invest in the right areas?

Mr. Clint Davis: I'm sorry; do you mean for the ongoing projects on the military side?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: That's right, yes.

Mr. Clint Davis: Again, we help to maintain and operate the North Warning System contract. As I said earlier, I think there's a great opportunity for us to see what we can do to utilize renewable energy for some of these sites, to see if there are any learnings that can happen with communities. I think a better utilization of some of

our business through different procurement processes would actually help significantly.

I agree with my colleague about the investment in airstrips. That's the road to the Arctic, right? Not one road is connecting any community in Nunavut. Not one road is connecting any community in Nunatsiavut. I think ensuring we have the right airstrip and airport infrastructure in place would be absolutely critical, so that's a critical investment.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: My last question is on your future projects. Can you share what excites you the most about what we can do to strengthen the Arctic?

Mr. Clint Davis: For me, as I said, it's trying to utilize renewable energy.

I think what we can do to strengthen the Arctic is to try to identify the Arctic as a great place for investment for the private sector. My colleague talked about some of these companies that come in and just stay for a short period of time. Something we see very little of is private sector investment, actual financial capital, through different forms of infrastructure investment like P3s and so on. I think we have to utilize that and demonstrate that our Arctic is a really good place to invest, and hopefully that will result in a greater, more sustainable build-out of the Arctic.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Valdez.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank both of you for your time.

I must admit, Mr. Klapatiuk, I have never had a witness come before a House of Commons committee from a hangar. You're our first. Well done.

Thank you both.

We will suspend for a second while we release the witnesses.

James, don't wander away. Both motions stand in your name. I see Mr. May's hand, but before I do that, I will say that I think we should deal with the motion on the Auditor General first.

Do we all have a clear understanding of what's on the table with the Auditor General motion?

With that, I will open it up to Mr. May, who I assume wants to speak to that particular motion.

• (1255)

Mr. Bryan May: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would support the motion. I don't think we need a vote on it, to be honest.

My concern, as I was trying to articulate earlier, is that this study has gone from involving four meetings to nine meetings to now potentially 10 or more meetings, and we're losing a meeting this Thursday. I'd like to seek some collaboration on potentially combining seven and eight. We have actually requested that the department appear before us three times on this study, which seems excessive considering it will be the same witnesses in many cases. I'm suggesting, given that we've lost Thursday, we combine meetings seven and eight, which would be on CAF operations in the north. We could combine the meetings on icebreaking and SAR into one.

I'm looking to the clerk to see if that is in the realm of possibility.

The Chair: I'm hesitant to get into organizing the meetings in this format, but, perhaps, Mr. Clerk, you could speak to that briefly. I think consolidation is good if we make the principle that we stay with nine meetings and somehow or another wedge the AG into the ninth meeting—

Mr. Bryan May: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair:—rather than directing the clerk on how to organize it.

Mr. Bryan May: Yes. I'm not asking for a full calendar from the clerk at this point. I think MP Gallant asked for a calendar earlier today. I think there is a work plan in place, which I believe I've seen. I will defer to the clerk on that. My hope is that we can just agree that we don't necessarily need a vote on this.

The Chair: Do you want to speak to that?

The Clerk: Sure.

For the meeting on November 22, we have planned for icebreaking and search and rescue.

Then the operations in the north have been bumped from this Thursday to the following Thursday.

Basically, to answer your question with a bigger answer, we have eight meetings between now and December 15. If we finish the witnesses who are outstanding from the Arctic study, that would be five of those eight meetings.

This would leave us with three meetings. The AG could fill one of those meetings. We also have the supplementary estimates still to be tabled.

Mr. Bryan May: Mr. Chair, excuse me.

We really don't have those three meetings. I think those are “nice to haves”, but we know we're losing meetings on a frequent basis. We are also potentially going to want to have the minister appear before us before we rise for the holiday.

As a former chair, I'm trying to be logistical about this and recognize that we need to build in some buffers.

The Chair: Yes, this particular chair, peculiar that he is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Chair:—likes to do logistics off-line. It's much better to do it that way. Otherwise, we'll be chewing up all the rest of our three minutes.

Can we report back to you as a committee next Tuesday, unfortunately? I'd like to report on Thursday, but we don't have that opportunity, so it would be next Tuesday. Hopefully, we will have a consolidated approach. Is that good? Are we good with that? Okay.

Those in favour of the motion, please signify.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Good.

Now we have....

Hang on. He's on for a second motion.

A phone is ringing. If that's the whip's office calling, tell him to ditch the whip.

Mr. James Bezan: I want to move the motion I moved at the previous meeting:

That in the committee's current study regarding reports that former Royal Canadian Air Force pilots have undertaken employment to train members of the People's Liberation Army Air Force, the committee invite CanLink Aviation, who operate Moncton Flight College, and other flight schools in Canada who may be training pilots from the People's Liberation Army to appear.

I'll just speak about that motion. We're talking about CANLink Aviation and the Moncton Flight College because reports about the company in South Africa that has employed former fighter pilots from Canada and other nations who are training members of the People's Liberation Army Air Force have said that CANLink Aviation is engaged in similar activities.

Based on that, and knowing that there are other flight schools in Canada that do test flight training as well as fighter jet training, we should look into having others appear as well. I would just say that this builds upon a very big concern that we have, I think, as members of this committee, that former staff of the Royal Canadian Air Force are violating both the National Defence Act and the Security of Information Act as well as their non-disclosure agreements, and possibly trading away secrets of how our air force operates to an adversarial People's Liberation Army Air Force.

• (1300)

The Chair: Okay. Great.

If we continue this, we'll just run out of time, and I'll have to adjourn.

Mr. James Bezan: Can't you get consent?

The Chair: Well, translation will stop and the meeting will stop.

Go ahead, Mr. May.

Mr. Bryan May: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've had conversations with my colleagues on this side, and the concern we have is this: What are we expecting to hear? We've asked the department to respond. We've had that meeting. Quite frankly, it was incredibly repetitive, with not a lot of information.

A lot of what this motion is asking us to do is to go off speculation. I agree that if there is something here, if Canadian pilots, former CAF members, are doing something illegal, we want to address that, but there has been no confirmation that I've seen on any of these reports. We're now asking for a Canadian company that isn't the company that's responsible in these articles; it's just speculated that they might be doing the same thing.

I just think we're fishing, and I'm not sure that this is a good use of our time. If there is a situation that we can identify that this committee can deal with, then we would agree.

The Chair: Do you want to speak to it, Ms. Normandin?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Yes, I'd like to make a quick comment. Along the same lines, I don't want us to invite people to appear and end up hearing the same things for an hour.

Before we vote on adding a meeting, would it be possible as a first step to instruct the clerk of the committee to contact the CANLink Aviation representatives to see if they want to come, since they would have the option of declining the invitation?

Before we vote on adding a meeting, the committee should at least send the invitation. I don't know if that makes sense.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'll recognize James afterwards, but I want to hear what Jennifer has to say.

Ms. Mathysen, go ahead.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: My concern is that I didn't really hear a lot from our previous meeting. We didn't get very far, and this company might have obligations of privacy protection for their clients that mean they couldn't share anything, so I would agree with Madame Normandin in terms of that ability to get anywhere with this. I'm not seeing it.

The Chair: We have Ms. O'Connell and then Mr. Bezan.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Chair, my concern is that even sending an invitation based on this motion is an implication that this company has done something wrong. This is a Canadian company. If it hasn't been verified....

Frankly, if there are companies operating that are breaking the law, that is a role for police. It's not up to the defence committee to go on an investigation. Inviting them, if there is no wrongdoing, puts it in the public sphere that we think there's wrongdoing, and I am very uncomfortable with that without a more credible source or anything to back it up.

I'm not comfortable. I appreciate the compromise, Ms. Normandin, but I'm not comfortable sending that in the context that we're assuming that they've done something wrong when there's no real proof.

• (1305)

The Chair: You have the final word, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: First of all, when National Defence was here, the testimony was completely not helpful. They just pass the buck all the time to the Department of Justice and the RCMP, who refuse to attend.

We know that CANLink has been named by the company in South Africa, so if there is anything that is libellous in that, they can take legal action against that company for slander. I would just say that if they wanted to appear, it would be their chance to clear their name if there is false information.

Let's dig into this knowing that there is credible evidence in the reporting that's been done by multiple news agencies from the United Kingdom and here in Canada. I think it is our responsibility to dig in on this.

The Chair: Seeing no further wish to debate, do I call the motion?

An hon. member: It should be recorded.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: With that, thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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