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• (1640)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I will gavel this meeting in.

We have General Eyre, General Simoneau and General Holman for this meeting on transparency and the study of space defence.

As this is potentially General Eyre's last appearance before this committee—

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Say it's no so.

The Chair: Yes, I would agree with that. I'd say it's not so but it is so.

I'm going to be something other than my ruthless self with the time and let General Eyre share with us the wisdom he's gained. I was going to say the wisdom he's gained appearing before this committee, but maybe there are a few things he wants to share beyond that. We look forward to what he has to say.

Again, we appreciate your co-operation over the years, General Eyre, with your colleagues and your appearances before the committee. It's an important relationship. We appreciate you holding up your end of it.

We look forward to your remarks. Please go ahead.

General Wayne D. Eyre (Chief of the Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and committee members.

As the chair mentioned, I am here with Major-General Erick Simoneau, chief of staff of professional conduct and culture, who has been leading the charge on our grievance system's modernization; and our judge advocate general, Brigadier-General Rob Holman.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss the modernization of our grievance system, which is part of a broader institution-wide movement to evolve our military.

[Translation]

This effort—ranging from whole-of-Canadian Armed Forces initiatives to grassroots work being done aboard ships, at bases and wings and on deployments—is to ensure that our institution meets the expectations of current and future military members and the Canadian public, while upholding their values.

[English]

We have to work tirelessly to instill a climate of respect, inclusivity and integrity throughout the organization. I view fitness in the gym as an analogy. You can't go to the gym once and call yourself fit; it has to be a continuous effort. Our efforts to modernize our institution, to change the way that we deal with people and to continue to evolve have to be continuous as well.

This is all firmly embedded within the values and ethical principles laid out in “Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve”, which we published in 2022. I'm very proud of it, and it's a foundational document for our military profession, a document that we've shared with numerous allies, to their appreciation.

The Canadian Armed Forces has undertaken a number of broad reforms. Modernizing our grievance and complaint processes is a critical element of this work. For example, the grievance system that we have is still modelled after an industrial-age system in which organizations favoured stability and predictability over responsiveness and timeliness. Those two aspects are required to thrive in the information age. Our intent is to make it easier for members to submit grievances, to make the system more responsive to their concerns and situations, and to resolve their concerns in a timelier way. We've made some significant strides to streamline processes, enhance accessibility and ensure that all members have a fair and impartial avenue to address their grievances.

An example of this work is the digital grievance submission form that was launched two months ago. This form is intended to simplify, standardize and streamline both the submission and resolution processes. Initial reports are good. We're also in the process of establishing a new grievance centre of expertise in the fall of this year. This centre of expertise will allow members and the chain of command to have direct access to grievance experts, providing them with direct support on submitting and adjudicating grievances. Moreover, it will allow us to identify systemic issues across the institution to give us the justification to take rapid action.

However, we're not waiting for perfect solutions to be implemented before we adapt to the new environment. We recently implemented a pilot process to clear the backlog of files in the grievance system. This is a key driver of our grievance transformation efforts. Supported by a diverse multidisciplinary team of military and civilian leaders and policy experts, this pilot project has succeeded in achieving two overarching objectives.

First, it has significantly reduced the number of backlogged grievance files. This work has set in motion the steps required to finalize a substantial number of these files in the coming weeks and months.

Second, we are leveraging the new tools and lessons learned from this pilot process to inform our broader grievance system transformation efforts. This effort at reducing our backlog was led here by General Simoneau, who is prepared to discuss it in more detail. Increasing the use of informal resolutions, direct engagement with policyholders and commanders, and the deployment of new delegated authorities are all elements of the pilot process that can be brought forward to streamline our grievance system and make it timelier and more responsive to individual grievors.

[*Translation*]

We're working to implement recommendation 10 of the Arbour report, which focuses on prioritizing and fast-tracking grievances related to sexual misconduct. We expect our response to this recommendation to be fully implemented by the end of this year.

• (1645)

[*English*]

The effectiveness and independence of review bodies like the Military Grievances External Review Committee and the office of the ombudsman are also critical to our work in these areas. They are two bodies I engage with on a regular basis. These independent bodies, among others, provide the necessary review and independent analysis to ensure the continued evolution and improvement of the Canadian Armed Forces. Our goal is to develop solutions that are responsive to the needs of our members and that align with best practices in grievance resolution and organizational excellence. We don't claim to have all the answers. That's why it's so important to reach out to external experts and be open to that advice.

It's imperative that we ensure the well-being of our personnel and address any systemic barriers that hinder their ability to seek redress without fear of reprisal. This includes providing timely and transparent access to grievance decisions while also protecting personal information. We are committed to further modernizing the grievance system and care for our people. Our operational effectiveness is based on teamwork and cohesion. They in turn are predicated on trust—trust in a system that will look after them. Given the deteriorating security situation around the world, this trust is imperative. We must continue to move forward and pull ourselves into the information age.

I'll change gears and talk a bit about you. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the members of this committee for your unwavering dedication and commitment to the rigorous oversight of matters concerning the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. As I stand before you today, I recognize the

privilege it has been to contribute to your important work. Your steadfast professionalism, thorough examination of legislation and diligent scrutiny of policies and programs have undoubtedly strengthened our national defence capabilities.

I've said often that a pillar of military professionalism in a democracy is its subservience to duly elected civilian rule. It's a pillar we must continually remind ourselves of and it's a pillar we must all embrace. You help maintain that imperative, so thank you.

Now, as the chair said, this is likely—maybe not, but likely—my last appearance before this committee. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable opportunity to collaborate in the service of this country. I have full confidence in the continued excellence of this committee's endeavours and full confidence in whoever the government selects to come in behind me to provide the same level of engagement with you. I extend my best wishes and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

In the twilight of my career, as I mentioned to a group of young students at lunch in my second speech of the day—I think this is my fourth—which included a group of young officer cadets, I know that this is an institution on the upswing. Despite all the challenges, with the dark clouds on the horizon and the deteriorating security situation we face around the world, I am confident that this institution is on the right path. As I told that new generation of leaders, I am envious. I am envious of the challenges they're going to face, because this is about the journey. I would do it all over again.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the safety and security of Canada. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, General Eyre, and thank you for those kind words.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Thank you for the enthusiasm of appearing before the committee. I can imagine that the enthusiasm varied from time to time, however.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: With that, we'll turn to Mr. Bezan for the first six minutes.

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

General Eyre, I just want to say thank you for your incredible service and tenure as CDS and your entire military career. We're all very thankful that you've been in a position of leadership during some difficult times, with everything from COVID to the war in Ukraine and the increasingly dangerous world we seem to find ourselves. We're trying to navigate through that, despite tight budgets and cuts in those budgets at times, and all the other things that have happened within the Canadian Armed Forces.

You stepped into a situation that had the entire CAF in turmoil following one of your predecessors. Thanks for coming in, stabilizing that ship and moving the troops in the right direction.

We're here to talk about transparency, and you did talk about that in your opening remarks. The chair and I both spoke last week at the defence intelligence conference, and one of the concerns that I raised.... We talk about making sure Canadians understand the importance of our Canadian Armed Forces, the situation we find ourselves in and how we change public perception. A lot of it comes down to the classification of information and the overclassification of information. If Canadians are going to understand the threat environment, then we need to be more blunt with information. This committee, of course, does not have any security clearances, so the information shared around this table and the information shared with the public is limited and only open source.

Do you believe there needs to be a change in how the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence handle information so that we can make sure the public is onside with the expenditures, the investments and the missions we have to undertake to keep Canadians safe?

• (1650)

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Yes, I agree that we need to continually evaluate how we classify information. We need to have a “need to share” mentality instead of “need to know”. This is an approach we have discussed with our closest allies as well, because often there is a tendency to compartmentalize information that would be more effective in being shared.

It's a question of balancing synchronization with security and understanding with security. We must continue to question whether we are overclassifying information. The default position can't be to put “secret” and “Canadian eyes only” on it.

To the second piece of your remark, just three hours ago, I was talking to my U.K. counterpart about sharing information with parliamentarians. I believe this committee should be granted security classifications so that we can share with you, in more detail, some of the activities, intelligence and the like that are ongoing. That's a personal opinion, but I think the country would be better for it.

Mr. James Bezan: It's an opinion I share and one I've articulated many times over the years that I've been on this committee.

Richard Shimooka, who was at this committee, said:

Public understanding of the military is at an all-time low and contributes to the lack of support. This is in part due to the lack of open information available and the adversarial relationship that has developed between government and outside bodies over access to information.

Just to add to that, I think we have to make sure that ATIPs are happening in a more efficient manner. We know for a fact that some

of my own ATIPs that were submitted in the past were outstanding for over five years. I had five over the five years and some were up to seven years old. Four of them were finally acted upon because Bill Matthews and Bill Blair showed up at committee and heard the complaints. Now, four out of five have all of a sudden magically been answered.

We have heard from former serving and current serving members about the challenges they've had with everything from ATIPs to the Military Grievances External Review Committee. The Information Commissioner herself, who you know has taken the Department of National Defence and the minister to court on three separate occasions, says that the issues are the same and haven't changed much. She worked at the Military Grievances External Review Committee over 10 years ago.

Have you had conversations with the minister and deputy minister on the need to prioritize information and the fact that, as we know, we don't have all the appointees sitting at the committee right now? If we're going to properly represent and stand up for our troops, that grievance committee, one, has to be more quick to act and, two, has to have a full slate of committee members.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: There two aspects to that.

First, on the ATIP piece, I agree that we must do better. There are a number of lines of effort that we are working on on the department side to speed things up, whether from a technological and information management perspective or from a process and personnel capacity perspective.

You asked about conversations. Tomorrow, at the defence management committee, which is co-chaired by me and the deputy minister, this is one of the agenda items. Our corporate secretary will be briefing us on how we're going to make things better in the numerous lines of effort.

On your question with respect to the committee, yes, we need to ensure that they have the capacity, but we also need to make sure that we're giving them the right grievances to review so that we are not overwhelming them with grievances, and that their much-valued capacity is targeted to the highest payoff grievances.

I'm going to ask General Simoneau to speak to this.

• (1655)

Mr. James Bezan: Just before we move on—

The Chair: Nobody is going to move on. We're well past six minutes.

Ms. Lapointe, congratulations on your permanent appointment to this committee. You have six minutes.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Thank you.

General, transparency is not only about disclosing information; it's also about ensuring that it's easily accessible and understandable to the public. How does the Canadian Armed Forces communicate information about its activities, expenditures and decision-making processes in a really clear and transparent way?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: In terms of expenditures, those are more on the departmental side under the purview of the deputy minister, and they are clearly articulated in the annual reports that we publish for Parliament. I don't know if he had the opportunity during his testimony here to speak in more detail on that, but that's probably the best source of that type of detailed financial information. It's really outside of my realm of responsibility.

In terms of our own activities, within the realm of force protection and operational security, we need to continue to showcase the great work that our people are doing around the world and in this country. Every time I go out and meet with our people, whether it's overseas on operations or here at home, I am inspired. In fact, as they embark on some very important operations, whether it is our mission in Latvia or training the Ukrainian armed forces, many of them tell me that this is the most meaningful thing they have done in their lives.

We need to get that message out. We need to continue to get that message out to Canadians. I don't think the Canadian Armed Forces can do this alone. I would ask committee members—in fact, all of our elected parliamentarians—to get out and talk about the necessity of supporting our Canadian Armed Forces.

As the situation in the world becomes more difficult, I believe that the Government of Canada is going to call upon the Canadian Armed Forces more and more. What is needed is a whole-of-society effort to make sure that we have the institution in place, and the understanding of that institution in place, to address those challenges of the future.

What we need more of in this country—and I've been saying this to a number of groups, as late as when I did my third speech of the day about an hour and a half ago—is a national security dialogue, not to spread fear but to raise the awareness of the realities of the security situation out there. Everybody in this room and listening in can help in that endeavour.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: In your opening remarks, you talked about modernizing your systems and changing the way you deal with people. As an example, you cited a significant improvement in the backlog of grievance files. Can you talk to us about how you'll ensure that this is a sustainable improvement and not a one-time improvement?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I'm going to turn to the expert, General Simoneau. He briefed me yesterday about how he's going to ensure that those lessons are moved into the centre of expertise.

Major-General Erick Simoneau (Chief of Staff, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): We ran a pilot project, as mentioned by the chief of the defence staff, and we operated as a board, bringing together around the table all the subject matter experts to find more timely tools to solve the grievances. We intend to formulate a centre of expertise that will replicate what the board did to get through a high number of grievances in three weeks. In three

weeks, we pretty much significantly cleared the backlog, as mentioned by the CDS, and I think espousing that new way of doing business will enable us to move much faster for our members.

● (1700)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: General, can you discuss the challenges and obstacles that you encountered in your efforts to improve transparency within the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces and how you're addressing those challenges?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I think the issue is the same as it is for many of the other challenges we face. It's one of a culture of risk intolerance. We must be more willing to take some short-term risks for long-term gain. We saw that very clearly in the efforts that General Simoneau led to address these grievances.

We have a cultural tendency to aim for a 100% solution that is completely airtight legally but that will take forever. No. Let's go for an 80% or 90% solution since speed is of the essence. That same principle can be applied to so much that we are facing.

The Chair: You still have about 50 seconds.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: All right.

Looking ahead, what are the priorities for further enhancing transparency within the department?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: In terms of priorities, it's making or streamlining our ATIP process to make sure it is much more responsive. It is making our grievance process much more responsive and transparent in our communication with the grievors so that they understand where their grievance sits. It is also continuing to make sure that we communicate the message of the great work that we're doing around the country.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

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

I would also like to take a few seconds to thank you, General Eyre, for always generously attending our committee meetings and for your responses, which have helped us make sound recommendations. We're sorry to see you go, but we wish you every success in your future endeavours. I hope that you'll be back again before the end of the parliamentary session.

My question is quite long. I hope that it's relatively clear, regardless. Please take as much time as you need to answer it. This question was inspired by a question that a military member asked me.

He told me that there had been three independent reviews of the grievance process, but that there were still delays and backlogs and that the process was cumbersome. He also told me that an old federal decision confirmed that the military members weren't tied to the Crown by any employment contract. As a result, the grievance process, no matter how it's changed, will always remain internal within the Canadian Armed Forces. There will never be any possibility of external recourse.

Isn't this a matter of looking at the issue in the wrong way? Should the process for hiring military members also be reviewed? Should the fact that they aren't necessarily public servants and that they don't have employment contracts or recourse other than through internal channels be reviewed? Could a review of this process also be part of the discussion on how to improve the grievance process?

I think that we already started this discussion with Minister Blair. We talked about the possibility of a two-year trial period for recruits, to see whether they like military service and to give them the chance to leave. There already seems to be a move towards reviewing the current approach.

Would it be a good idea to also look at how military members are hired and tied to their jobs? Could the study on grievances explore this option?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Mr. Chair, that's a good question.

I don't know whether there's a link between the recruitment and job training periods and our grievance system. Personally, I find it hard to see.

However, I must add that members who have a grievance, after the end of the process, still have the right to judicial review outside the Canadian Armed Forces.

I would like to hear General Simoneau's thoughts on the matter.

• (1705)

MGen Erick Simoneau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would simply add that our job is codified within the National Defence Act. We aren't like public servants, but there's a good framework for what we do.

The grievance system isn't unique to the Canadian Armed Forces, as the chief of the defence staff just said. You can still go to federal court afterwards. We want to ensure that the members can go to federal court to resolve their issues. The process must be faster than before.

The member who spoke to you about delays is right. There are always delays. That's completely true. However, we're currently solving this exact problem by digitizing the grievance system and changing the way it works. We're completely overhauling the system so that, once members have gone through the initial and final authorities, they can turn to the federal courts as quickly as possible to resolve the issue and have their needs met.

Some of them have legitimate grievances. Sometimes, we just aren't able to resolve them, so we need to give them the chance to use these avenues of recourse.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Mr. Chair, our judge advocate general would also like to add something.

BGen Rob Holman (Judge Advocate General, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): I gather that your question concerns the relationship between the Crown and the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, right? Under constitutional law, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows Parliament to review this relationship.

As General Simoneau said, this is set out in common law, but also in the National Defence Act. It's an idea worth studying.

Ms. Christine Normandin: That's worth noting. The goal is to find every possible avenue. On that note, I have a sub-question.

One of the military's criticisms pointed to the fact that, ultimately, the chief of the defence staff has the final remedial authority. However, when a case goes to the Federal Court, the process is extremely long.

Should the remedial authority also be available to other entities outside the military when a grievance is accepted?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Mr. Chair, I'm responsible for discipline and good conduct within the forces. This is my responsibility as chief of the defence staff. In my opinion, we need to keep these responsibilities within the forces, as an institution, to ensure that we can continue to lead the forces.

Do you have anything to add?

MGen Erick Simoneau: I would add, General, that this is simply the value of the committee we were talking about earlier. It gives us good advice. The advice is unbiased, unfiltered and quite useful to us. Having often spoken to the chief of the defence staff about grievances—

[English]

The Chair: Unfortunately, we'll have to leave it there.

Thank you, Madam Normandin.

Ms. Mathysen, you have six minutes.

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

A lot of the questions that have been asked already were similar to mine, in that the cause of those delays is, unfortunately, at the feet of the link of final authority. For four to five years things are held there.

In terms of the wait during which grievances aren't resolved and the stress and trauma that this can cause, that has a long-lasting impact. That is certainly something we have to address from a government perspective as well.

In terms of moving out and away from the chain of command with the final authority—I know you spoke of it a bit—does any other option exist? You talked about streamlining, but is there any other option you haven't mentioned yet?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: As I mentioned in the last session, once the decision is made by the final authority, the member, the griever, has the right to a judicial review, which is external to the organization. That is one avenue as well.

In terms of looking at other models, I'm not sure if the team has done that or not.

• (1710)

MGen Erick Simoneau: We've done that. We are inspired to a great degree by the public service in the way they operate and the way they try to solve things through informal resolution. They bring all the subject matter experts around the table. That's how we operated with the board for the pilot project. We were inspired by our public service colleagues. We truly accepted that those delays were unacceptable, and we were trying to solve this. That's when we brought in our public service colleagues.

I think the big backlogs, as we've known them, are a thing of the past. I'm very confident that we're transforming the system in the right direction.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: One of the things we've consistently heard from a lot of the external forces, the checks and balances, the offices that are supposed to keep our government overall but certainly DND accountable, such as the Information Commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner, the ombudsman himself.... We had a scathing report in 2023 from the Military Police Complaints Commission stating that there was a refusal to release necessary information and that many of these offices do not have the jurisdictional teeth or enforcement to do so. I've tried to bring that forward in a piece of legislation to provide the ombudsman with independence.

I'd like to hear your opinion on whether independence is important, and on what further aspect of those teeth, to ensure that we're as transparent as we possibly can be, is important. Where do we need to go with that?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I will admit that I do not have a strong opinion or strong view either way about the reporting mechanism for organizations like the ombudsman. I do know and am proud to tell you that we have a good, solid relationship. We meet frequently and value the input of these various independent actors.

I just had the opportunity to review a draft report that the ombudsman is going to come out with related to what we're discussing here, and I'm very supportive of it. When we meet, the list of issues we hear from our members and the challenges they face is virtually the same.

In terms of the Military Police Complaints Commission and its annual report, this is a case of two reasonable actors having a disagreement on certain things, like what constitutes a policing-related complaint, or the access or releasability of information when it's protected by solicitor-client privilege. They're asking for the courts to determine where that line is. This is a rational way of addressing the challenge.

In terms of the degree of independence—whether they report to the minister or to Parliament—I am not convinced either way that this would affect their investigations. I am happy with the relationship that I have with them, and I value their advice.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: One of the main concerns from the Military Police Complaints Commission is that they can't even access the information. What about that issue? That's one of the biggest problems. There is no good relationship in the release of and access to information, let alone in the rest of that process.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Given that it's before the courts, I can't really comment on it.

I don't know if the JAG has more perspective.

BGen Rob Holman: Similarly, I can't comment.

The one thing I would emphasize is the important role that the MPCC plays in ensuring that Canadians and members of the Canadian Armed Forces are confident that military police are acting in a professional and independent way. Resolving those issues is important. I think we have to respect the fact that they've chosen the courts to do that.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We have to respect it, but also try to avoid it in the first place.

The Chair: Thank you.

That brings us to our second round, which is five minutes.

Go ahead, Mrs. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): General Eyre, on October 18, 2022, I asked you how the military's vaccine mandate was impacting recruitment and retention. In the interest of transparency, and given that Health Canada is no longer authorizing AstraZeneca COVID shots, will you kindly provide this committee with all the legal opinions that you told the Canadian press you received in addition to the August 27, 2021, briefing memo presented to you by Lieutenant-General Trevor Cadieu?

• (1715)

The Chair: Let me intervene on that point. Generally, legal memos are protected by solicitor-client confidentiality. I'd be interested in the JAG's opinion as to whether that is reasonable.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: If it's possible, Mr. Chair, for us to have them, that would be really helpful. I want to prevent a raft of new grievances by asking for the recent directives and any CANFORGENS that have been sent out requiring that new recruits must have COVID shots before being deployed to a unit after passing basic training.

The Chair: Let's resolve this issue as to whether the undertaking being asked for is within the legal competence of solicitor-client privilege. I'd be interested in solving that issue. It's a legitimate question, but it's not necessarily something that a client is in a position to release the solicitor from.

If I could get your opinion, General Holman, I'd be grateful.

BGen Rob Holman: I'm not the committee's lawyer, unfortunately. However, it's generally understood that for legal advice given to the Crown, the client in that space and the person who can make determinations as to whether or not to waive solicitor-client privilege are at least at the ministerial level and generally at the Governor in Council level.

It's not an undertaking that the CDS could give under the circumstances.

The Chair: The waiving of confidentiality would lie with the minister in this case. Okay. I appreciate that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you for your intervention, Mr. Chair. I hope you add the time that you just used.

The Chair: I stopped your clock. Don't worry.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

On Tuesday, Global News reported that CANSOFCOM had a change of command without any public announcements. Why did CAF wait until after Global News reported that Brigadier-General Steve Hunter had taken over from Major-General Steve Boivin to announce the news?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: To correct the record, a news release was prepared. I'm not sure of the exact timing. I imagine it went out concurrently, but it had nothing to do with any particular news outlet releasing a story about it. There was nothing to hide there.

We are working on making a deliberate transition of changes of command, as is normal at this time of year. Because some of the promotions are still pending based on some government decisions, we have not released the entire general and flag officers plot yet because it hasn't been finalized. As we take a look at having a very deliberate transition, this is the first of a number of moves, as is normal.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: How would you advise your successor to ensure that the CAF is more transparent?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I think getting out and giving Canadians an accurate picture of the security environment, the challenges we face and the successes we have on a regular basis is important. I will be advising my successor to come to this committee when invited, not that they would have a choice. It's about getting out and encouraging others to communicate with Canadians. However, it can't all be communication from the CDS. In fact, often our most credible spokespeople are our most junior ranks.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I have a few more quick questions.

In your opening remarks, you asked about Petawawa. I wanted to let you know that there's a little crisis going on there now. You mentioned that fitness was important, including fitness activity with a league. Despite all the regiments in golf, the entire golf course is being shut down. That's not to mention what it's doing to the children of deployed personnel who do not have transportation off the base to engage in activities. When you're retired, or even before that, look into that. It's a self-sustaining entity, and it's really important to that community.

We heard that some ATIP requesters who are currently serving faced reprisals from their superiors for simply requesting information. What do you have to say to service members facing this abuse,

and what do you have to say for superiors who are currently committing this misdeed?

• (1720)

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Any allegations of that need to be reported and investigated. My one comment is that this would be unacceptable.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Colonel Vihar Joshi told the committee that it would increase transparency to have all of the grievances come to him "as discretionary or mandatory" to receive an independent review and opinion before a final authority. We heard the opposite from you. Can you explain the contradiction?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: It's a question of capacity, speed and responsiveness. It's about getting to grievances that truly need to be reviewed by the committee versus those that can be informally resolved.

I know that General Simoneau has looked at this in detail, so I'll ask him to add his comments.

The Chair: Do so very briefly, please.

MGen Erick Simoneau: All I would add is that we truly value their input and we want to focus them on the important files. About 40% of the files are going to them, which are mostly on compensation, benefits, harassment and health care. That's where we need them the most, to have an unfiltered, unbiased point of view to offer us.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gallant.

Ms. Lambropoulos, you have five minutes.

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

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

General Eyre, thank you very much for your service to our country. I wish you all the best in your retirement.

The CAF has undertaken several significant and far-reaching reforms under your leadership. I'm wondering if you can tell us which ones are the most significant as of late and which ones members would have already noticed taking place.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: That's a big question. We've undertaken so many change efforts over the course of the last number of years, whether it's on the reconstitution of our forces or growing our numbers. From that perspective, I'm very proud that over the course of the last fiscal year, we've grown both our regular and our reserve forces after three years of shrinking. I'm cautiously optimistic that the changes we've made in our system and continue to make in recruiting and retention are bearing fruit.

In terms of continuing to evolve our culture, we've discussed one aspect of it—grievance modernization. That needs to continue as well. Very shortly, you'll see a culture evolution strategy being published, along with a comprehensive implementation plan for all the various external reviews that we've had. In time, those will be addressed. You've seen a number of them being brought forward already.

The change is from a focus on regulating ourselves out of a problem to one that's value-based. What I mean by that is tied to the publication of "Trusted to Serve". These are the values to which we aspire. We are not going to be able to put a regulation in place for everything. As opposed to sinking to the level of the regulations we put in place, we are aspiring to the values that we articulate. That is a significant change in approach.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I agree. I think you've said it well.

A while ago, on April 17, we had a witness come before this committee who talked about the fact that Officer X, who he didn't name, had a 14-year history of sexual misconduct within the forces and recently got a promotion. When we talk about the necessity of changing the culture, hopefully that is taken into account and bad behaviour is not rewarded but punished.

How can you ensure, or how can a future general ensure, that these changes are made and actually have an impact on making sure that this doesn't happen again?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: This goes back to my opening comments on the analogy of going to the gym. We must be continuous in our efforts to address conduct, address issues and address challenges that are not aligned with our core values.

I'm the FA for the specific case that you brought up. It's been kept at arm's length from me, but I'm aware of those allegations. It will be coming in front of me in due course. I know that General Simoneau is more *au fait* with that case.

In general, our society continues to rapidly evolve. You could argue that there's been more societal change in the last 10 years than in the last 50 combined. What that means for us as we strive to reflect the values and changing nature of Canadian society is that we have to continue to change and evolve as well. There's no end state for this. There's a steady state of change, continuous change.

• (1725)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I have one minute left. There's not much that I can ask and you can answer within a minute, but I'll insist that this is, I think, the biggest change that needs to be made. It couldn't have been said better by that witness when he explained that people are more afraid of being truthful, honest and good than they are of being bad, because the bad keeps getting rewarded.

I think that's the underlying thing that needs to change within the CAF. Do you agree with that statement?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: It's my observation that our members are now much more willing to come forward than they were in the past. For me that is one sign that we are making positive change. It's not going to happen overnight, but as long as we identify those pockets

of resistance and keep moving forward... We have to, as I said, keep moving, keep our foot on the gas and keep it as an area of focus.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lambropoulos.

Madam Normandin, you have two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

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

It recently came to light that the Canada Border Services Agency lost the equivalent of 12,000 access to information requests during an information technology update. Has this also affected the Department of National Defence? Has the department looked into the matter, to ensure that it doesn't happen again?

I would like to know whether the Department of National Defence has taken any precautions to prevent a similar issue from arising.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Mr. Chair, since I'm not familiar with this incident, I can't comment on it.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I would like to come back to the grievance issue.

I have heard some stories. For example, non-commissioned officers would say that a number of grievances had already been lodged against them, and that others could be lodged if people weren't satisfied. We sometimes heard this. However, I understand that a great deal of work has been done in this area since then.

Even if a number of grievances are lodged and handled promptly, won't a negative response or insufficient remedy encourage people to take grievances lightly?

The fact that a grievance doesn't necessarily frighten a military member is an issue. Will the grievance be resolved? How?

Is there anything to that effect in Bill C-66, which we'll be studying shortly?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: Mr. Chair, in a situation of this nature, a leader has nothing to be proud of. In my opinion, communication is the key to avoiding grievances. According to the committee, most grievances stem from a lack of communication. I think that it's vital to communicate better with peers, subordinates and superiors.

MGen Erick Simoneau: Mr. Chair, I want to add that people don't file a grievance against someone else. They file it for themselves, because they have been affected by a situation.

We're currently digitizing the entire system. When someone accesses the system from their telephone, the message goes directly to the commanding officer of the unit and the centre of expertise referred to by the chief of the defence staff.

That way, the member is given direct priority. It's no longer acceptable for someone to disregard a grievance. It's a very toxic culture. It's no longer acceptable.

We must also ensure that the right levels in the chain of command are—

• (1730)

[English]

The Chair: Unfortunately, I have to leave it there, Madam Normandin.

You have two and a half minutes, Madam Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: To follow the last round of questions, I want to take this one forward, as this may be your last appearance. I certainly do appreciate your service. I'm very grateful.

I want to talk about the new piece of legislation that was borne out of the Arbour report, Bill C-66. One major change that I'm hoping will make a change is not a new position but a change for the provost marshal, which will supposedly be taken out of the chain of command. However, so much within the chain of command, as discussed today, is part of the problem of cover-ups, punishment and not dealing with the situation.

Can you give us your opinion on how that specific change within Bill C-66 will make a difference and tell us your potential concerns? Then we can add them to a further study later.

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I think it's more a question of perception of independence as opposed to actual independence. Regardless, it's going to be same the process that's used to appoint the JAG, who is a GIC appointee.

Rob, you may have more to add on that.

BGen Rob Holman: The chief is correct. What Bill C-66 attempts to address for the provost marshal general is about perception. Even under the current scheme, once the provost marshal is appointed by the chief of the defence staff, they can still only be removed for cause upon the recommendation of an independent inquiry committee following a public inquiry. The basics of that scheme will remain in place under Bill C-66, but with the additional perceptual piece that comes with the Governor in Council being the appointing authority rather than the chief of the defence staff. There would be a complete removal of the role of the chain of command in the appointment of the CFPM.

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you all for appearing today.

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

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you for your service to Canada and to Canadians. I appreciate the testimony you've given to this committee.

On the point raised by Madam Lambropoulos around the notion we have heard at this committee that many consider there to be more career risk to doing the right thing than there is to suppressing information, we had testimony from Patrick White, who said:

I struggled to find the name of a single senior member of the forces who has been held accountable for anything other than their own personal conduct. In other words, has anyone been relieved of command for the 2,000 sexual assaults that occurred in the last year or the year before that? We're still dealing with these problems eight years after Operation Honour.

Where are the leadership and accountability for the pervasiveness of sexual misconduct?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: I have seen mid-level commanders and higher-level commanders given remedial measures and administrative action for mishandling cases and not taking appropriate action. That perception, while it may be prevalent, is changing as tangible actions, when required, are being taken.

Mr. Pat Kelly: You said in response to an earlier question that it is unacceptable for reprisals to take place when people file grievances, yet we've heard from other witnesses that reprisals are subtle and are difficult to document or track, like one member just happens to not get the promotion that another member gets. Members are left to wonder what motivates any of a number of micro.... Promotion is a big thing, but there is a whole series of much smaller decisions that, in total, look like reprisals.

How will you address that? It's fair to say it's unacceptable. How would you recommend your successor ensure that reprisals do not happen?

• (1735)

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: The Canadian Armed Forces is very much a human organization. What the member is talking about is human behaviour, whether it's reprisals, personality conflict or the like. This is a wider problem. This is a wider challenge than just reprisals. It's how we deal with each other. It's how an individual leads.

You mentioned promotions. We are striving to ensure that promotion boards have wide representation so that it's not the voice of just one person that carries the day. As we change the way we train leaders, we can have much more of an emotional intelligence approach, have much more of a sense of not having a cookie-cutter solution for leading subordinates and have an understanding of power dynamics, which is now being incorporated into our leadership training. These are a myriad of human condition issues that we are addressing so that we can be a better organization.

There is not just one silver bullet for this; there's not just one solution. We have to continue to advance this on multiple fronts.

Mr. Pat Kelly: The committee also heard that complaining to the Information Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner is not an exception to getting information; it's part of the process. You will not get your information unless you make a complaint. In other words, information is not proactively given, and that delay is a built-in tactic to suppress information.

Does this testimony indicate a properly functioning access to information system? What has been done to address this?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: There are a number of aspects to that, which I was actually surprised to find out about in our own system. For example, with retirement—not that I'm interested in this at this point—it used to be the case that to get your medical records, you had to put in an ATIP request. In 2018, that was changed.

It's about the requirement or the desire to have your own personnel records. We are changing that as well, as we speak. That will be something that we discuss—

Mr. Pat Kelly: We have only a moment left.

The change was made in 2018, but is the problem solved? Do people get their information?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: That was for medical records, and yes, that has been changed.

On the issue with personnel records—and some are quite thick—that is being changed. Actually, I mentioned the briefing that the DM and I are going to have tomorrow, and that's one of the aspects being discussed.

These are some of the proactive types of changes we need to make.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

For final questions, we have Mr. Collins.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

General, congratulations on a very distinguished career. I have a sneaking suspicion that whatever you do next will involve giving back to society as well. I appreciate your service and all that you've done for us.

Let me start with some of the comments you opened with. You talked about the institution being on an upswing. You also talked about the incredible pace of change that the Canadian Armed Forces has witnessed. It's 10 years of change that we probably would have seen over the last 50 years, which I think is very telling of what kinds of changes have occurred in a very short period of time.

It's human nature, though, that there are oftentimes small pockets of people who resist change. That's just how things are. We're dealing with a big institution. It's not a small office environment where we're changing the rules and there are a couple of people we need to get on board. We're talking about thousands of people in an institution that's been around for a long time.

When you're in the process of trying to change the culture of the institution in an accelerated time frame and you have resistance, what kind of advice do you give to whoever fills your shoes next on how to deal with the small group of people who just can't see the path forward?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: This issue has popped up over the course of my tenure, with the pockets of resistance that you talked about. If those pockets cannot be brought along, cannot be educated—and often it's a case of education—and refuse to change for the betterment of the institution, they have to move along. That has happened in a number of cases. We talk about accountability, and I've seen some leaders removed because of that, because of their own attitudes, which are not aligned with the values we are espousing.

We talk about culture too. We need to be careful about change, because it's not complete. There are certain aspects to our culture that we absolutely have to retain—the willingness to put yourself in harm's way to protect others, the willingness to leave your family behind and go to the other side of the world to do good for this country and the willingness to follow orders and do what is asked of you. Those fundamentals we absolutely have to retain as part of who we are and as part of operational effectiveness, to deliver for

Canada. However, there are other aspects, the harmful aspects. We have to continually identify and address those.

● (1740)

Mr. Chad Collins: You also talked about the grievance process, and you said that it has to be timely and responsive. I'm very familiar, as I think some other people around the table are, with how unions operate. Often when we see a spike in the number of grievances and those grievances are prolonged through the process that they go through—whatever process they fall under—it can impact morale. We've heard testimony at committee that people have complained about the length of time that this takes.

How do you address morale when we don't live up to the standards and timelines that we advertise when it comes to these situations?

Gen Wayne D. Eyre: The efforts of the pilot project that General Simoneau has led over the last number of months have shed some light on some potential going forward. As we stand up this centre of expertise and digitize the process, it will allow us to illuminate areas of concern, whether in policy or unit. As General Simoneau briefed me yesterday, a number of specific organizations had a higher proportion of grievances, which means that we need to intervene and take action.

Having that type of queuing, if you will—think of it as your intelligence feed to do some targeted engagements—is going to help us identify the pockets of resistance that we talked about before, not just individuals and pockets of individuals, but policies that aren't necessarily meeting the intent. Unfortunately, with some policies our hands are tied. I get quite frustrated when a grievance comes across my desk and I find a person is aggrieved, but there's nothing I can do about it because the policy is held at Treasury Board, for example. In fact, the ombudsman's report that's coming out is going to address just that. That's why I'm so keen to see it.

That type of granular analytics is going to be quite useful for the institution.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Collins.

Unfortunately, I have to suspend, General Eyre. On behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for your willingness to appear before the committee. You have always been a thoughtful, intelligent representative of the forces, and I particularly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

You spoke earlier about the relationship between the military and civilian oversight. This committee represents in part civilian oversight, and there are countries that do not have civilian oversight in their military and it's easily lost. I appreciate your recognition that there's an important role this committee plays in that whole aspect of civilian oversight.

I also recognize that it is our joint responsibility to communicate the importance of what you and the people in your command do on a daily basis for our nation. It is not well appreciated, and I think we all need to pick up our game. I adopt Mr. Bezan's comments about the level of secrecy, confidentiality or security. It's hard to communicate if you only see part of the story, and I think that's something we need to address.

General Eyre, over the years that you've been appearing before this committee, you've shown a willingness to stand up for your organization and for the values that underpin our nation. I want to thank you for that, and if I may, on behalf of the committee—the committee has no budget at all—I'll present this to you. It is the Speaker's whisky.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Colleagues, we'll suspend for a minute or two and continue on with our second hour.

• (1745) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1745)

The Chair: The meeting is now back.

Pursuant to a motion adopted by the committee on November 2, we're resuming the study on space defence.

Joining us for this hour is Christian Leuprecht, professor at RMC, a familiar face at this committee, and Thomas Hughes, post-doctoral fellow, Frank McKenna school, Mount Allison University.

I'm going to ask each of you for an opening five-minute statement. Since appearing by video conference is always more of a task than being here in person, I'm going to ask Thomas Hughes to go first, please.

You have five minutes, sir.

• (1750)

Mr. Thomas Hughes (Post-Doctoral Fellow, Frank McKenna School of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Mount Allison University, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, everybody. It is a privilege to provide comments to this committee.

The space domain is a complex defence issue, but it's important to appreciate that, although we discuss space, the space domain is in itself an enabler. That is, actions in the space domain facilitate civilian and military actions in other domains. Consequently, thinking about the space domain and defence requires us to consider not only what happens in space, but the ripple effects of actions within the space domain. Similarly, the space domain is inherently connected to earth, and conflict related to the space domain may be most effectively prosecuted by targeting components of the space architecture that are not actually in space.

The space domain is likely to have particular significance for Canada due to the Arctic. Satellite-based communications are vital, and it is difficult to conceive of comprehensive surveillance of Canada's Arctic territory without leveraging the space domain. This also provides an opportunity for Canada to develop capabilities in the space domain that are intended to enhance our awareness of, and ability to facilitate and support activity in, the Arctic.

From this foundation, I will draw your attention to three practical and conceptual challenges.

The first is the dual-use issue. That is, satellites can perform roles that have both military and civilian functions. Thus, satellites

that are actually intended for malign use may be plausibly denied by using the cover of a civilian function. For example, at a very basic level, imagery of Arctic ice taken from space can be used for scientific research or to assist in military planning. Alternatively, tracking objects in space could be done to ensure that existing satellites are not in conflicting orbits or to generate targeting coordinates to facilitate the use of an anti-satellite missile.

Conversely, this raises the difficulty of demonstrating that a satellite is solely intended for benign purposes, increasing the possibility of unintended escalation. While existing surveillance capabilities provide us with a strong understanding of when objects are put into space and who is responsible for their launch, the intended function of these objects and the way in which data that they collect is intended to be used is rather more difficult to discern. The consequent inability to unequivocally differentiate between military and civilian space infrastructure adds a political element to the existing conversation about protecting our space-related assets from attack. Addressing this lacuna through national technical means and potentially an international confidence-building regime that generates greater clarity on the function of objects in the space domain is vital.

The second is the necessary interconnection of private industry and state interests in space. Private industry has been crucial to using the space domain for both civilian and military purposes, developing physical infrastructure and engaging in research. This also represents a political and operational challenge. An overreliance on private industry may make it difficult for Canada and its partners and allies to pursue their space-related goals at the speed of need and to ensure consistent function at critical junctures. The restrictions on the use of Starlink following its provision to the Ukrainian armed forces are a reminder of this potential challenge. In addition, the sensitive nature of information that may be required by defence departments from or about the space domain complicates the interface with private industry, raising challenges in data collection and dissemination.

Third, as we develop our use of the space domain, it is also important to consider how this changes others' understanding of our vulnerabilities and capabilities. Generating an awareness of how others view our actions in the space domain is crucial for enabling us to maintain an effective deterrent posture without being seen as an aggressor. However, the ability to hamper adversaries from using the space domain to support their military operations is a vital capability. To be clear, we need to abide by existing regulations and understand the ethical implications of any defence-related activity in the space domain. Nevertheless, ensuring that we have an awareness of the role of the space domain in our adversaries' military doctrine and the capability to disrupt their use of the space domain, potentially through interdicting communication between ground stations and objects in space rather than targeting the latter directly, is a crucial aspect of future military capability, particularly as the Canadian Armed Forces moves towards a pan-domain approach to operations.

Thank you.

• (1755)

The Chair: Thank you.

Professor Leuprecht, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Prof. Christian Leuprecht (Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, As an Individual): Mr. Chair, members, thank you for your invitation.

I'll be speaking in English, but I can answer your questions in the official language of your choice.

[*English*]

Picture the following scenario. China wants to fire a shot across the proverbial bow, but instead of targeting U.S. infrastructure, which would risk drawing a strong response, China targets a Canadian satellite. China has several capabilities to do so, including anti-satellite missiles and a robotic arm, which China demonstrated in 2022 it can use to move a satellite out of geosynchronous orbit. Would this constitute an attack on the continent, on Canada or on NATO? The space domain falls outside of the transatlantic theatre.

Canada needs clear and definitive answers to these questions to deter malign actors with the capabilities, intent and demonstrated will to target Canadian and allied assets in space. Deterrence also depends on a qualitative overmatch of adversarial capabilities, and space depends on Canada's ability to conduct multidomain warfare.

All that presents a formidable challenge for CAF readiness and capabilities.

In real dollars, today's CAF has roughly as much funding as it did at the end of the Cold War, and the staff contingent is about one-third smaller, yet its tasks have vastly expanded, in part because it now has two additional domains. In addition to land, sea and air, it has cyber and space. In a globally integrated threat environment, cyber and space are highly dynamic domains that are integral to the four core functions of DND, which are reassuring allies and citizens, deterring conflict, being able to fight and protecting Canadians.

Canadian civilian and military communications, national security and a wide array of civilian and military functions and operations depend on space. This is especially true in the north and in the Arctic, which are disproportionately dependent on space capabilities.

China has deployed anti-access and area denial systems along its archipelago. Canada must do likewise in the Arctic. That's because the Arctic has a critical vulnerability, where A2/AD is heavily dependent on space assets. In other words, space defence is Arctic defence, Arctic defence is continental defence and continental defence is allied defence, because it secures extended deterrence, including extended nuclear deterrence.

Canada's a regional partner anchor for the Arctic, and Canada's ability to defend NATO's northern flank ultimately depends on space. Adversaries understand this, which is precisely why malign actors are actively challenging our ability to dominate and control the space domain. In other words, strategic rivalry is on full display in space, and whoever controls space is bound to control the 21st century.

• (1800)

There are four key takeaways.

First, if the government is actually serious about a values-based foreign policy, then Canada should be joining the ongoing U.S. effort to bolster the outer space treaty, to which both Russia and China are signatories. This established, functional regime's deterioration or abrogation would run fundamentally counter to Canada's values and interests.

Canada must support approaches that regulate not just space capabilities, but also how these capabilities are used. Canada must make multilateral space diplomacy a top priority. In years to come, there will be two new UN open-ended working groups, with one for each approach.

Second, Canada needs a whole-of-government approach to space to forge a coherent national strategy. However, with limited resources, the execution of a space defence strategy requires Canada to double down on collaboration with allies and the private sector. See the "Combined Space Operations Vision 2031", which is the Five Eyes effort with France and Germany that was submitted to the committee. Our space policy framework dates back to 2014.

Third, space is a prime example of why cultural evolution matters to the CAF. When the U.S. stood up Space Command, it was quite unlike other commands. Its institutional culture is flat and it recruited from other services. Space Command is heavily civilian because the skill sets required are not really found in the military.

Fourth, modern militaries cannot operate without space technologies, capabilities and data. In the event of a conflict, Canadian space defence capabilities will afford allies strategic depth and have a key multiplier effect on allies. Canada's support to Ukraine in the form of geostrategic intelligence is one indication.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Allison, you have six minutes. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Christian, I'm going to start with you. That seems to make sense. It seems obvious that we should be spending time and money on space, because trying to police or manage the Arctic seems almost impossible from a physical asset point of view.

What kind of money are we looking at here? When you talk about flat budgets, having the same type of budget we had after the Cold War and the shrinking number of forces members, where do you even start in trying to prioritize that? We all know the Arctic is important. We all know that everything you said makes complete and total sense. Where do we start?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I'll give a short answer so you can come back with more challenges on this.

Ultimately, given the challenges the defence force has, and given that we have a pretty good defence policy update but no real means the government has laid out to effectively resource that, I think we need to focus disproportionately on asymmetric capabilities, which is to say cyber and space, precisely because of the strategic depth argument that I made and precisely because it has a force multiplier effect for NATO's northern flank and, ultimately, for continental Arctic and Canadian sovereignty.

My worry is that we're having too much debate about the conventional domains because that's what we can all see and that's what many parliamentarians like because it brings money and resources into their ridings. We're not having enough of a conversation about cyber and space and the disproportionate allocation in this heavily resource-constrained environment. That's also going to have a multiplier effect for Canadian prosperity, Canadian innovation and the DIANA accelerator that Canada is hosting on behalf of NATO. There are a lot of second-order effects if we focus more on that conversation.

Mr. Dean Allison: You're saying that we should be doing all of the above, meaning we should be working with the U.S. on treaties, with the Five Eyes and with the private sector. You mentioned the concerns about that, but where should the money be spent? Is it directly through Defence or in collaboration in trying to wheel with other partners?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: What I submitted to the committee—the Five Eyes German-French initiative, with a clear vision for 2031—is where we need to put our resources. If you read that document, I think it is the best short-form articulation I have found of the challenges and how we can work together to draw clear red lines, deter our adversaries and enable the capabilities we need in everything from fighting forest fires to ensuring continuity of communications, civilian assets and the like.

I think we have a very clear target, and given that Canada has signed on to it, the challenge is how we translate it into effective outcomes. As you know, Canada often has perfunctory announcements about defence, and then we have trouble meeting them. Here's one commitment that, if we allocate our resources and capabilities effectively, we can actually meet. It will offer us a disproportionate payoff and some reputational assets among our key Five Eyes allies, plus France and Germany. This is easier from a multi-lateral perspective because you have seven countries playing together as opposed to all of NATO, for instance.

• (1805)

Mr. Dean Allison: Between China and Russia, who are you concerned with more in this whole race in space? China has been coming on strong. What keeps you awake at night about those countries and why?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: That's a terrific question. If I could only find it, I have a nice little synopsis on that.

The basic point is that we put a lot of emphasis on Russia and Russian claims of potentially putting nuclear weapons into space. Yes, we should be concerned about that, but nuclear weapons are 70-year-old technology. The Chinese have very disruptive technologies that they've demonstrated and know how to use and deploy. That robo-arm was a real wake-up for the U.S. and the allied defence community. The ability to displace a satellite out of orbit is a pretty sophisticated capability. It's an ability to target disruption rather than this one big bang-and-boom approach that Russia takes.

China has the second-most number of satellites after only the United States, and China has demonstrated that it is a clear peer rival in its investments and capabilities. Where we have disproportionate leverage—and the United States understands this—is by playing together with long-standing key allies that have long-developed space capabilities and investing strategically in those. Of course, the innovation is going to come from private sector investment, which we then need to translate into dual-use and military applications. The problem is that our processes in Canada for doing that are so long. If you look at the U.S., it has changed its defence procurement mechanism precisely to be able to accelerate that exponentially. This is one more reason why we really need to look at our procurement system, which, of course, is one of the department's priorities.

Mr. Dean Allison: I guess if we're going to meet our NATO commitment, we should be investing in Canadian companies. If we're going to be committing money towards defence and towards those numbers, we should be investing in Canadian companies versus other companies.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Add up the defence policy update. I don't know why the government didn't put this out there, but in my view of the defence policy update, if the government is serious about resourcing it, it gets us to 2% or more. Why we're underplaying our hand with the defence policy update, which I think is a pretty good update, I'm not quite sure.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allison.

Mr. Fillmore, you have six minutes.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Thanks very much, Chair.

Thanks very much to the witnesses for your time and for bringing your expertise to the committee today.

In the framing of the study that you're now contributing to, the committee acknowledged that we don't know what we don't know. I'd like to use the next five or six minutes, whatever the chair is giving us right now, to ask you both to educate the committee on the importance of Arctic defence in the context of space.

Could I ask you both to keep in mind as you answer your questions what the role of industry is in this? Could you frame in your responses, somewhere along the way, a recommendation that the committee could include in its report?

Perhaps we can go in the order that we heard from the speakers and start with Dr. Hughes. I'll try to keep the time split in half, with three minutes each.

Mr. Thomas Hughes: They're big questions, but to be brief, on the importance of Arctic defence in the context of space, I completely agree with Professor Leuprecht's conceptualization. Arctic defence is one of the niche capabilities that Canada provides, in my opinion. I think it's useful for Canada, given the current security context, to focus on some of the niche capabilities that it has. The Arctic, therefore, offers an opportunity for Canada to engage in that process.

As I said in my initial comments, for Canada to have a comprehensive defence of its Arctic territory, it is absolutely fundamental to leverage the space domain. This means communications to start with, and secondly, surveillance, whether that's using the new remotely piloted SkyGuardian aircraft, which are due to come into operation in 2028 and will require satellite communication to function, or using satellite imagery itself. We cannot surveil the Arctic and have domain awareness of the Arctic without the ability to operate in space.

That will require, in my opinion, Canada to engage with international partners, particularly Sweden. I think it's an interesting additional partner that hasn't been mentioned so far. I know that relationship is already built and is already strong, and I think that should probably be leveraged further.

In terms of private industry, private industry is simply critical. Private industry has the expertise and the capability to produce what the Canadian Armed Forces requires. The challenge, as always, is ensuring that private industry, which is necessarily operating with a different framework of meaning, if you like, from the government, is on the same page so that we can work in parallel. We can, but that's not something that happens automatically.

• (1810)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you.

Dr. Leuprecht, I'd like to move to you. I remember that you said in your remarks that "space defence is Arctic defence". You had more in that long sentence, and perhaps that will help to frame your response.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: To reiterate that sentence, space defence is Arctic defence, Arctic defence is ultimately continental defence and continental defence is defending the northern flank of NATO. The NATO centre of gravity, with the addition of Sweden and Finland, has shifted north. The northern flank has become more important.

The really important thing, which I think Canada has always done a terribly poor job of articulating, is that investments in Arctic security are investments in NATO and NATO collective defence. Collective defence depends on U.S. extended deterrence and U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. If the continent is not secure, then it means the United States' ability to deter adversaries is not secure. However, for some reason, repeated governments on both sides have not, in my view, articulated that effectively to the Canadian public and especially to our allies and partners. We still articulate

them as somehow separate entities. You can see how the defence policy update was rolled out with this emphasis on the Arctic.

The three things that I would reiterate are more than just where we put the resources. One is inexpensive allocation, but I'm concerned that in multilateral diplomacy, we have very limited resources. As you know, the government of the day decides, and the government has decided to constrain the resources of the departments further. The government has decided to put its multilateral efforts in a separate treaty process. It's a democratic government. It gets to do what it decides to do. However, I think it needs to be all hands on deck when it comes to multilateral space diplomacy because that is existential to Canadian defence and to allied and continental defence for the reasons I just explained.

In terms of the whole-of-government approach, the defence policy framework dates back to 2014. A lot has changed in space since 2014. If we have very scarce resources, both in government and in collaboration with industry, we need to marshal those resources for maximum effect and efficiency in terms of outputs and outcomes. If we don't have an updated framework, we can't marshal the resources we have.

On the defence capability side, thinking about the people who actually do this, it's a classic example of where the Canadian Armed Forces needs extremely high-level, high-quality skill sets. There has been a clear change over the last 30 years in the people you need to recruit. It's not that there are not enough people coming through the doors. There are enough people coming through the doors. It's about the quality of the people the Canadian Armed Forces needs. They are not able to get through the doors, especially in these very high-end capabilities.

Here we need opportunities for lateral entry from the civilian private sector and from other government departments. It's just taken me two years to get someone from a different formation to come work in our formation. That's within the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence. We are not agile when it comes to personnel.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fillmore.

Madam Normandin, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

My first question is for Mr. Hughes.

You spoke about the difficulty of establishing private and military use of space. Do we know what proportion is public and what proportion is private? Is there a trend? For example, is the private sector winning the space war, or is the military or public sector winning it? I would like an order of magnitude.

Mr. Thomas Hughes: Thank you for your questions.

[English]

Putting an absolute number on that is very difficult, the primary problem being that, as I suggested, a lot of the space infrastructure and satellites can be used for both civilian and military functions. A particular object or satellite may be performing a completely civilian role for a time and a season. If the government to which that satellite belongs decides to change that function or, perhaps more specifically, decides to use the data that the satellite is collecting for a military purpose, then there's no way we can stop that from happening, so I am somewhat reluctant to put a figure on military versus civilian. I think that is part of the challenge of operating in and understanding the space domain and the threat environment that is in the space domain.

In terms of private versus government, to take your question a little further, I think it is useful to see the breakdown by country, because the Chinese government obviously has a different relationship with Chinese private industry from what the United States has with U.S. private industry. Again, that raises the challenge of the dual-use problem and the public-private interface. I suggest that in the United States in particular, the private industry has a lead in what it is providing—we've seen that with SpaceX and Boeing in recent years—but a significant proportion of the need is also driven by armed forces. Again, I hesitate to put a number on that, but it's perhaps more useful to think broadly about what capabilities the United States and Canada require in space and whether those capabilities are being met.

• (1815)

[Translation]

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

My other question is for Mr. Leuprecht.

You already spoke a bit about the risk that Canada faces, in relation to its allies, by continuing to underfund the space sector. I want to hear more about this. You already touched on the Arctic issue and how we need to work with the United States on deterrence. We know that we're fairly dependent on what type of intelligence the United States wants to share with us.

How else could we risk damaging Canada's reputation, for example, in relation to our allies, if we continue to underfund the space sector?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Thank you for the question, Ms. Normandin.

I'll give you a concrete example.

Civil flights in the Baltic states must now be diverted and turned around as a result of interference from Russian GPS signals in civil aviation. At a number of Baltic airports, aircraft can only land with the help of satellites.

We have the same issue in Canada's Far North. At many airports, aircraft can only land with the help of satellites. Russia is close enough to do the same thing in Canada's Far North. If the Russians want to, they can now exploit significant vulnerabilities in the Far North, given their ability to interfere with signals in GPS systems for civil and military aviation. I think that this constitutes a significant vulnerability that we should address on a priority basis.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I have another question for you.

You touched on the issue of applying article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in space. The issue is that satellites can't easily be linked to continents. However, I want to know whether we also have the same issue with cybersecurity, where the challenge lies in connecting an activity to a perpetrator.

Do we have the same issue in space? Is it hard to know who, for example, might have destroyed or pirated a satellite?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I would say that the challenge of assigning responsibility isn't that significant. The issue is that we can't assign responsibility in the way that we're used to from a legal perspective, so beyond a reasonable doubt.

In general, our intelligence capabilities mean that we know the perpetrators of these activities, especially when it comes to Russian involvement. The Russians, by and large, don't hide their activities. On the contrary, they want us to know that their interference has caused the major chaos. Ultimately, the Russian strategy is to see the world burn.

• (1820)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

Ms. Mathysen, you have six minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: That was quite an end point.

In terms of the commercialization of space, Dr. Hughes, I certainly have my concerns about the movement that we've seen away from government-funded space exploration like the International Space Station and the accords it has provided and the move toward the commercialization of space.

In the last meeting we had on this, there was a belief that in the building of peace and diplomacy, commercial interests could do that just as easily, if not better, than governments had in the past. From that commercial side, through regulation, government would still have a say in how they moved forward. Can I get your thoughts on that?

Mr. Thomas Hughes: Certainly.

In terms of regulations, commercial entities obviously have a significant interest in maintaining space as a peaceful domain. It's entirely antithetical to what most companies would be looking to achieve if regulation were sufficiently loose to facilitate aggression within the space domain.

I would suggest that ultimately regulation will come from states. If it is going to be effective, as Dr. Leuprecht mentioned, it will have to come through a state-based framework. The commercialization of space will fall under the jurisdiction of state government. If a state government has understood itself to be under threat from a commercial satellite, then I would suggest that this will not prevent it from disrupting that satellite and disrupting space operations.

While private industry should be heavily involved in what is happening in the space domain, and while having a partnership with commercial organizations to understand what is happening in the space domain is important, ultimately, regulation will have to come, in my opinion, from individual states.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: This certainly isn't new, and governments haven't done, as of yet, any monitoring of that power dynamic and monopoly situation, as we see with SpaceX. Is that correct? The American government is now exclusively working to build hundreds of spy satellites with SpaceX, and we saw what happened in Ukraine.

Is the fact that government hasn't moved in that direction concerning? Can we be concerned that governments will? What are we seeing in that respect?

Mr. Thomas Hughes: I share your concern. Again, the frameworks within which those commercial organizations are operating will differ from those of individual states. State governments, particularly Canada and its partners and allies, will require very robust agreements with those commercial entities. I am not fundamentally convinced that this will ever be entirely sufficient. Ultimately, the state will have to rely on an entity that has potentially different interests. That's unless we end up constricting ourselves to only working with companies from our own states, and I don't think that would be particularly helpful.

That commercialization component does concern me. Fundamentally, Canada, with its allies and partners, really needs to articulate its point of need in the space domain to understand what capabilities are required and to understand who is best positioned to provide those. Part of the conversation around who is best positioned to provide them is about understanding the interests of the private entity behind them.

I share your concern. I think the issues with Starlink in Ukraine should act as a wake-up call, if you like, for that potential future challenge.

The Chair: You have about 20 seconds left.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: This is open to both of you as academics. How does it further impact academia's access to research when it's fully commercialized or dominated by only one company?

• (1825)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We have 20 minutes, so that's four minutes each. We're in a four-minute round.

Go ahead, Mrs. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: My questions are for Professor Leuprecht.

Were an adversary to spoof the U.S. GPS satellite system that we use, describe the impact it would have on our weapons and navigation systems.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: That's a great question. I don't need to describe it to you. You just need to look at the conflict between Israel and Hamas. You can see what happens when, on a large scale, entities end up jamming global positioning systems and the disruption that causes to civilian life. You have a real-life laboratory. In addition, it's not just the capability to disrupt. Of course, China, with its BeiDou constellation, has its own GPS capabilities, so it is not reliant on the North American system.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What about our weapons systems?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Redundancy is key, and I'll give you an analogy in an area where we've made adjustments. Russia has, for over a decade, actively been jamming, as you probably know, NATO vessels. That is why, until about 2015 or so, the U.S. Navy relied entirely on GPS systems and why the U.S. Navy went back to star navigation, the capability to operate without GPS.

One of the risks that we currently have is a single point of failure if all we do is rely on U.S.-based GPS capabilities. That is why redundancy is important and why multidomain capabilities are important. It's so that, as we do in any other domain of warfare, we never have just one single system on which we are reliant. I'm concerned about the overreliance in Canada on potential single points of failure in space.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Don't we have a backup the way the U.S. Navy has the star navigation system?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I'd better let the Canadian Armed Forces speak to the redundancy capabilities we have.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: When Russia deploys an anti-satellite weapon into space, such as putting multiple nuclear weapons in orbit, does Canada or any ally have the right to disable the weapon if it poses an imminent threat to our satellites?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I'm afraid I don't have an answer for you. You'd need to ask the JAG about the international law constraints and our own legal constraints.

As I pointed out in my opening statement, I'm concerned that we in Canada have not done enough heavy lifting to precisely answer these types of questions—what our response would be and what our co-operation would be, both with the United States and among other allied partners, in particular middle-power partners. If the United States is busy in other conflicts, we need to be able to respond with other partners.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Were a foreign adversary to hack into a satellite or a satellite network to disable or hijack it, would that constitute an act of war? What type of response would be justified on the part of Canada or any other nation this happened to that's a signatory to the outer space treaty?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: To my best understanding, the problem is that the answers to precisely these questions are currently ambiguous. For instance, NATO article 5 is not clear if it would apply, under what circumstances it would apply and what aspects, other than the five space treaties to which Canada is a signatory, would apply in this domain. This is precisely why the UN has proposed an open-ended working group on capabilities and a separate one on behaviours. There is a problem of agreement on the parameters of those working groups, but I'm confident that they will get off the ground in the very near future. Canada, of course, needs to be prepared to be a very active player, as hard as it's going to be to get an international consensus.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gallant.

Mrs. Lalonde, I think you're deferring your time to Mr. Fillmore.

Mr. Fillmore, you have four minutes.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thanks very much, Chair.

I'd like to go a little further on the topic raised by Ms. Mathysen, if I could.

We've heard from Dr. Hughes about what we'll call the ambiguities in the legal framework governing space security and very likely the development of shared behavioural norms, which just came up in the last question.

Dr. Leuprecht, you said that Canada must join the ongoing effort to bolster the U.S. space treaty and that multilateral diplomacy has to be a priority. Historically, space treaties have been negotiated between nation states, but as we've heard this evening, the private sector is having a more and more active role in space. It seems like the place we need to get to is where private entities and the industry sector are participating in these treaties. Is there any precedent? Do we have any tools that can help the private sector involve themselves in the treaties, such as the one you've mentioned?

Maybe we can start with Dr. Leuprecht and then go to Dr. Hughes if there's time.

• (1830)

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I have a short answer for you. It is actually one of the strengths that Canada has. Because we're smaller, it's much easier for government departments and agencies to talk to one another and for us to talk to both non-governmental organizations and the private sector to forge a common way forward in how we harness that. We have a comparative advantage to the United States, where, of course, it is a rather large behemoth to try to figure out where the bus is going and to get everybody on that bus.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: In the work that you recommend we undertake with the United States on updating the space treaty, is there a role for the private sector to be present at the table?

It's to either one of you.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I'll defer on that question in the sense that I don't know enough about the technicalities of how space treaties are negotiated.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Dr. Hughes, is there anything you'd like to add in answer to that?

Mr. Thomas Hughes: Just to build a bit on Dr. Leuprecht's point, I suggest that for international discussions, a place at the table is probably not the place for private industry. However, it absolutely is the case that private industry should be heavily involved when the negotiating positions are being created by the states, because as we heard in this conversation, private industry has been so heavily involved in the development of space technology and space capabilities that having them as part of that discussion, to an extent, is going to be critical.

Also, to point to the recommendations you suggested, the first recommendation I have is that we simply need a clear articulation of our needs with regard to defence in the space domain. It is such a huge topic and brings together so many different facets of Canadian life that the articulation is not there at the moment. We have a broad collection of understandings of the consequences of action in the space domain, and to bring them together into a coherent package will be very useful.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you both very much. I think I'm probably out of time.

The Chair: You weren't, but you are now.

You have a minute and a half, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

Mr. Leuprecht, in your remarks, you emphasized the need to regulate not just space capabilities, but also how these capabilities are used. We've seen that, with dual-use, it's extremely challenging. Satellite imagery of the territory can be used for military purposes.

As a result, I would like you to talk about the real possibility of regulating its use, especially since some people will want to use it for malicious purposes. One example is China, which is already doing this in the Arctic with the *Xue Long* icebreaker. Satellite imagery is being used for scientific reasons in order to conceal military purposes. It's hard to know what exactly is going on.

Is it realistic to want to regulate the use of space?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: Yes, Ms. Normandin.

I believe that we have a strong incentive to do so. This incentive is the space economy, meaning the resources found in space. The space economy is currently worth \$600 billion a year. By 2035, the space economy is expected to be worth \$1.8 trillion, in particular as a result of resource development.

I believe that, before deploying the technological resources needed to take advantage of the space economy, it's necessary to establish international regulations and standards for the use of these capabilities and the dual-use of these technological resources.

• (1835)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

Ms. Mathysen, you have a minute and a half.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Dr. Leuprecht, you sent us “Combined Space Operations Vision 2031”. It states, “Some nations have developed capabilities designed to deny, degrade, and disrupt access to and utilization of space-based capabilities.” Then it talks about the goal of “collaboration across a range of measures, such as: developing requirements for current and future systems to counter hostile space activities and to deter, deny, or defeat attacks or interference with the space enterprise”.

If we're looking back at history, horrific ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons exist today because they're a product of a cycle of anti-missile defence systems. They spur innovation, and that creates bigger weapons in the arms race. This is the final frontier, if we want to get geeky about it, so how do we not make the same mistakes in space as we have here on earth? How do we deter? How do we find diplomacy in the current world we live in?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: We have a peer competitor, a strategic rival, in China, which is able to compete at scale in space with the United States and with the western alliance. The effort of China, of course, is to disrupt the status quo of the rules-based order, not just on earth, but in cyberspace and in space. Of course, Canada, as a middle power, has a key interest in preserving the status quo, and that's why Canada has a keen interest in establishing clear behavioural norms. I think the incentive is space mining precisely because that's where the opportunity is the same for China as it is for all other countries. I think one of the opportunities Canada has is to ensure, for instance, equal access to space. How do we get other countries to come on board with our approaches to space? We ensure equal access to space and we ensure ethical access to space.

The Chair: We'll have to leave the answer there. Thank you.

Mr. Bezan, you have four minutes.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to both our witnesses.

You're talking about increasing space diplomacy with our adversaries, and I'm sure you mean Russia and the People's Republic of China. I looked at the outer space treaty, which was signed in 1967 with the U.S.S.R. Technically that's not Russia, but you hope Russia is still going to abide by it. Of course, Russia is talking about using nuclear weapons in space.

Do we trust the Russian Federation or Vladimir Putin and the People's Republic of China to actually honour any treaty that they sign?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: My argument would be that there needs to be a two-level effort. There's the effort that we just talked about of building international norms, which Canada has traditionally done well, but which in the cyber domain, for instance, for 25 years has not gotten us anywhere. In the absence of international norms, we need to work on deterrence and we need to work on capabilities for certain elements of punishment, whether it's kinetic or non-kinetic, for countries that cross over certain red lines. We also need to do that outside of U.S. leadership.

Mr. James Bezan: Do you think the Russian Federation or the People's Republic of China is going to sign it? You're familiar with the Budapest memorandum, I'm sure. Russia didn't honour that when they invaded Ukraine. I'm sure you're familiar with the Minsk I and Minsk II treaties. The Russian Federation never honoured

those. They were supposed to be in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and were supposed to reduce the overall nuclear arsenal they had, but instead they've ramped up the production of nuclear weapons. Then Beijing signed with the United Kingdom the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which was supposed to be good until 2047, and they walked away from it in 2014.

Why would we trust them to sign this when they're both very interested in having a strategic advantage in space?

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: That's why we're in front of the national defence committee and not the foreign affairs committee. It's precisely because we need those deterrence capabilities. The other way to do that, if we can't agree on norms, is to forge norms. Then our adversaries know there are very real consequences on which we are prepared to follow through if they cross certain red lines.

Thomas might have something to say on this as well.

• (1840)

Mr. Thomas Hughes: Thank you.

It's a fascinating question, and I would suggest that the first answer, and short answer, is no, we cannot assume that simply because rules are in place they will be followed. It is worth noting that Russia and China have both proposed some forms of rules in space. It's also worth noting that Russia has rejected the approach of norms regarding space activities and suggested that a fully legal regime would be more appropriate. My inclination is that Russia, in particular, will use the rules to the extent that they benefit Russia. If we are going to develop a rules-based framework, which I do think would be helpful, we have to bear in mind that Russia must see it as being at least of parallel benefit to them as to what they consider to be their peers.

The key point in the whole conversation around space military activity, in my opinion, is verification. If we can create a framework of rules that facilitate some form of verification that we are confident provides us with sufficient information on the capabilities that Russia and China are deploying and attempting to deploy, and from there develop an understanding of their intent in the space domain, then those rules and regulations can be useful in their own right, even if we also need to augment them by the deterrence function that Dr. Leuprecht mentioned in his response.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we'll have to leave the answer there. Thank you.

Mrs. Lalonde, you have four minutes.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to say thank you to both of our witnesses for being here. I was very happy to see that we were undertaking a study on space defence. I think you are validating the notion of why this is so important, particularly at this committee.

There were references to space defence being an emerging domain. Certainly, developments are occurring at an increasingly rapid pace. We're talking about the dollar figure, but also the reality of where it brings us.

I would like to know from both of you whether there are barriers to researching space defence as an emerging domain and whether there's a lack of information on existing research data or sources to rely on.

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: There are two points on that.

If you look at Australia, it has the Centre for Space Governance. We have nothing comparable in this country, so we need to generate the capabilities to see what our interests are and how we assert them in a multilateral governance framework. It is something we have not quite grasped, and it requires government leadership.

The other point is my concern about research security. Ms. Mathysen, Madame Normandin and others have talked about research investments and capabilities. The government has finally put forward a framework on research security, but of course, it does not include any private sector actors in China. It only includes public sector research and military intelligence institutions. We need to understand that if we're going to invest in research in space in this country, we need to provide adequate research security. Adequate research security means we can't collaborate or let people collaborate with Chinese entities that are going to leverage the dual-use capabilities that Canadian taxpayers are paying for to advance Chinese capabilities in space.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Thomas Hughes: To add to that point briefly, funding incentivization is going to be critical here as well. If we are going to have meaningful research, particularly around space defence in the academic realm and around laws governing the military component of space, the funding needs to be there for that to happen. Where does that incentivization come from? The ability of scholars to engage in that research process requires that those funds are available as well.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much.

I'll leave you both to very quickly share a key recommendation that we could bring forward as part of this study we're doing on space defence.

• (1845)

Prof. Christian Leuprecht: I recommend a higher risk tolerance for the government to invest in research capabilities, a willingness

to fail and fail quickly, and a subvention for the private sector. We've built some of that in defence, but we've been very reticent in allowing that investment to go toward space capabilities.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Go ahead, Dr. Hughes.

Mr. Thomas Hughes: I would reiterate my point about the fundamental understanding and articulation of needs regarding space. A second recommendation from there is understanding Canada's niche capabilities and opportunities within the multilateral defence framework.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Lalonde.

Unfortunately, I have to gavel this meeting to a close. You've raised some really interesting points, which I hope the committee will have an opportunity to explore.

Before I adjourn, I'll just note that we are meeting with Minister Pistorius from the German defence ministry on Friday at 12:15 in room 125-B of West Block. I would like to exchange a gift with him. I'd appreciate it if someone was in a position to move a motion to do so.

Go ahead, Mrs. Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Chair, it would be my pleasure to help you with this.

With the will of the committee, I move:

That, in relation to the committee's informal meeting with the German Minister of Defence, the committee cover the cost of a gift for the German Defence Minister.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

Colleagues, the next meeting is on Wednesday, May 22. We will be dealing with the procurement report, so you will have lots of time to read it. On May 27, we have Minister Blair on the mains. On May 29, we will go on to procurement consideration, but there will also be a Latvian delegation with whom we're having lunch.

Go ahead, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Originally, Minister Blair was going to be here on May 22. We've delayed it five days. Will that have an impact on our ability to report back?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. James Bezan: What's the date for—

The Chair: It's the 31st.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay.

The Chair: With that, the meeting is adjourned.

Again, thank you to both of you for your participation.

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