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Chair

The Honourable Peter Kent

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• (1600)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC)): Colleagues, because of time considerations and the vicissitudes of parliamentary procedure, we will get under way immediately.

As you know, we are here to consider the supplementary estimates (C) 2014-15, vote 1c under the Communications Security Establishment and vote 1c under National Defence, referred to this committee on Thursday, February 19, 2015.

We have two witnesses appearing before us today: the Hon. Jason Kenney, P.C., MP, Minister of National Defence; and the Hon. Julian Fantino, P.C., MP, the Associate Minister of National Defence.

We will begin with opening statements.

Mr. Harris, on a point of order.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Looking at the hour we're beginning here, I would suggest that we either get a commitment from the minister to stay for a full hour of our committee meeting today or that we dispense with opening remarks and get straight to the questions. He's here to deal with questions on the estimates. We have questions that we'd like to ask, and I'm sure the government members can ask whatever questions they need to ask to elicit the answers the minister wants to give.

The Chair: I understand that we are operating under time constraints. I understand that the minister has an obligation at 5 o'clock.

Mr. Bezan, you're responding to the point of order?

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): It's not a point of order. I would just say that it is in our routine proceedings that witnesses be allowed to give opening remarks, and I wish we'd respect our routine proceedings and move on that basis.

Mr. Jack Harris: It is a point of order, and it has to do with the order of business and the fact that we've been deprived of half an hour as a result of the vote.

Mr. James Bezan: That's the nature of the business here.

Mr. Jack Harris: The minister may have a commitment at 5 o'clock, but what could be more important than speaking before this committee?

The Chair: Mr. Harris, we're here to consider the supplementary estimates.

Mr. James Bezan: I think we need to move on.

The Chair: The time frame within which we can consider the supplementary estimates is now. The minister has indicated that he will be returning to discuss the main estimates, but we will proceed now.

Minister Kenney, your opening remarks, please.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence): Thank you very much, Chair.

Just for greater clarity, I would be happy to come back to committee after the next vote. I think we're participating in another vote, but I have to leave this building by about 5:25 for an important speech that has been planned with a group from all across Canada, so I could come back until 5:25.

The Chair: Well, thank you. We'll see how the clock stands at the end of the vote.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, colleagues. It's a great honour to be in your midst for the first time in my capacity as Minister for National Defence. As I said on my very first day in this post, there is no greater privilege and honour than to serve with our men and women in uniform. I come from a long history of military service in my own family, including my own father who was a jet fighter pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, so this position is the highest honour and privilege of my life, to be honest.

I look forward to working with all of you who I know share my commitment and dedication to the Canadian Armed Forces and their critically important mission.

I'm delighted to be joined here by my associate minister, Julian Fantino; as well as senior associate deputy minister, Bill Jones; our chief financial officer, Claude Rochette; acting vice-chief, Major-General John Madower; and the chief of the Communications Security Establishment, Greta Bossenmaier.

As I said, this is my first time before you, and before I begin my statement on the supplementary estimates, colleagues, let me reiterate our shared condolences to the family of Sergeant Andrew Doiron, who I met yesterday at the ramp repatriation ceremony with His Excellency the Governor General at CFB Trenton. I know that all of our thoughts are with him and his comrades.

I was so impressed to see a large squad of his comrades from the Canadian Special Operations Regiment and JTF2 attending the ramp ceremony and expressing their ongoing determination to serve Canada, including their support for our mission against ISIL in Iraq.

Looking back, Mr. Chair, 2014 will prove to have been a pivotal year for domestic and international security. We saw, of course, Russia's brazen *de facto* invasion of Ukraine; the spread of the terrorist death cult known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in the Middle East; and of course the murders of two members of the Canadian Armed Forces right here at home.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

We see growing international instability, which is becoming a growing threat both to Canadians and to Canadian interests abroad. It is incumbent upon us to play our part when it comes to contributing to international peace and security. Doing so often means deployed operations, which by their very nature incur incremental costs.

[*English*]

It's in this context that I come before you today.

In the supplementary estimates (C), the Department of National Defence is requesting an additional \$142.3 million in spending authorities. Of this amount, \$138.1 million will cover additional costs for overseas operations, the bulk of which, \$122.6 million, to be precise, is dedicated to Operation Impact. That is our contribution to the multinational coalition against ISIL in the Republic of Iraq.

Operation Impact consists of approximately 600 personnel, six CF-18 fighters, one CC-150 Polaris aerial refueller, and two CP-140 Aurora reconnaissance aircraft. This newly modernized equipment is doing tremendous work with the coalition. We also have members of our special operations forces, as I just mentioned, advising and assisting local forces, particularly the Kurdish peshmerga in the Erbil region of the Kurdish part of northern Iraq.

[*Translation*]

The majority of the costs identified under Op Impact—approximately \$73.6 million—are for aircraft and ammunition costs. This includes fuel, operation and maintenance, spare parts, ammunition and in-service support.

The assets covered in this cost also include the deployed aircraft I mentioned a moment ago, as well as the C-17 Globemaster and the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft that are sustaining the mission. This number also includes \$8.8 million in personnel costs, such as certain allowances granted to deployed members, including hardship and risk allowances. Other personnel-related costs, such as incidentals and ground transportation for personnel transiting to and from theatre, total \$2.2 million.

Meals and accommodation costs for personnel while in theatre total \$34.2 million.

Moreover, other costs, such as camp set-up fees, the re-supply of general consumable material, and other miscellaneous amenities and local purchases total \$3.3 million.

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, I can tell the committee that the coalition against ISIL is having a real impact. Where last year ISIL roamed unfettered, gaining more territory day by day, they can no longer do so. They can no longer move in large-scale troop movements. They are no

longer gaining territory in Iraq. They are, instead, losing territory there. Air strikes are having a demonstrable impact upon their command and control capabilities, as well as removing key equipment and personnel from the battlefield. When they do go on the offensive—that is to say, when ISIL does—they take significant losses.

We have reports that they are moving increasing amounts of their armoured equipment and heavy equipment from Iraq into Syria in order to move them away from the allied air campaign.

As you know, the most recent news is that “An Iraqi security force mission against ISIL in Tikrit has apparently been successful in pushing them back and ISIL is on the retreat. This is all good news, but yet more needs to be done.”

Mr. Chair, the department is also requesting \$17 million in incremental costs for Operation Reassurance. That is our contribution to NATO assurance measures in central and eastern Europe, to send a clear message to Vladimir Putin that we stand with our NATO allies against his intimidation of the sovereign nations of central and eastern Europe that are our NATO allies.

This op's impact includes military activities such as Baltic air policing—four Canadian Hornets have been involved in those activities—infantry ground training exercises, of course, and the presence, currently, of the HMCS *Fredericton* in the Black Sea.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, in addition to funding for the two major operations currently underway, you will see that the supplementary estimates also include provisions for several other areas.

We are requesting \$3 million for the Canadian Armed Forces advertising campaign, to ensure our recruiting targets are met and our military is well placed to fulfill its missions in Canada and around the world.

[*English*]

I just want to add a little point here. We often hear parliamentarians gross up every dollar spent by the Government of Canada on advertising and characterize it as partisan.

Mr. Chair, every single government in modern Canada has had a budget for Canadian Armed Forces advertising for recruitment purposes. It's an essential part of our recruitment strategy, and that of every other modern military.

I would ask members, if they want to be intellectually honest about this, to reflect the fact that this is normal CAF recruitment advertising, not what is mis-characterized as partisan or political advertising.

[Translation]

Also, \$1.75 million will go towards site remediation work, as the department takes our responsibilities as property holders and environmental stewards very seriously.

[English]

I would note that the estimates also include \$2.5 million in transfers to other organizations: \$1.39 million to Shared Services Canada for costs associated with access to rapid and secure satellite communications; and \$461,000 to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council to support joint research grant projects.

If approved, these funds would raise National Defence's total spending authorities to over \$20 billion this fiscal year, an increase from just over \$19.9 billion in supplementary estimates (B). Just to give this some context, it would be an increase from the forces budget in 2005, which was then a little over \$14 billion; so a 27% increase in the past nine years.

These estimates demonstrate the government's steadfast commitment to ensuring that the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces will always have the equipment and resources they need to get the job done that we have asked of them.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to any questions you may have. I believe Minister Fantino may have his own remarks.

I'm sorry for speaking so quickly to the translators, but I'm trying to respect your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Kenney.

Minister Fantino, please.

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee today. I'm pleased to be here with Minister Kenney and, of course, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and officials as well.

Like Minister Kenney, I would like to preface my remarks by extending my condolences to the family of Sergeant Doiron, who was tragically killed in Iraq this past Friday. His death is a sombre reminder that the pursuit of international peace and security is not without risk. I wish to also extend a speedy recovery to his colleagues who were wounded during the incident.

It's a privilege to be here as Associate Minister of National Defence. I'm honoured to return to this department, working with great people, endeavouring to serve great causes on behalf of our country and free nations.

My role as Associate Minister of National Defence encompasses a number of very specific areas. First, it involves making sure our sovereignty is exercised in the north. The role of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces in the Arctic is clearly defined by the Canada First defence strategy. With increased commercial shipping, natural resource exploration, and tourism in the north, it is ever more critical that National Defence has the right surveillance and monitoring capabilities, emergency response options, and

appropriate policies in place to enable the Canadian Armed Forces to fulfill its responsibilities in the Arctic.

Another major responsibility of my portfolio is information technology security and foreign intelligence, which serve to defend our nation's security, values, and interests. While this environment might be more abstract, its effect is unequivocally tangible. The Internet and communications technologies have transformed almost every aspect of our lives. These advances in how we communicate with each other have in fact produced incredible opportunities, but have also meant new vulnerabilities and challenges.

While the Department of Public Safety maintains the lead for implementing the Government of Canada's cyber-security strategy, the Communications Security Establishment, or CSE, has a vital role in protecting and defending federal government systems. National Defence also plays a supporting role, and has great interest in protecting its systems against cyber-threats given the military's reliance on cyberspace to enable its operations. As we have seen recently, cyberspace is progressively more of a target for both terrorists and malicious cyber-actors. Government of Canada networks are attacked millions of times every single day. Some of these provoking acts are done by foreign states like Russia, which seek to expand their influence at the expense of Canadian interests. We must remain vigilant and we must protect Canadian sovereignty from those who would do us harm.

Finally, Mr. Chair and members, let me turn to the relatively minor housekeeping items in the estimates before you that pertain to the Communications Security Establishment. You will note the transfer of two generators to Canadian Forces Base Trenton from CSE in the amount of \$600,000. These generators were no longer required by CSE after the construction of the new headquarters. There was also a \$10,000 transfer from Public Works to CSE for reimbursement on the transformation of pay administration. For the safety and privacy of its employees, CSE will use its own payroll system rather than be integrated into the government-wide system.

With that, Mr. Chair and members, I will bring my remarks to a close. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.

● (1615)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Fantino.

We will begin our questions with Mr. Chisu, please.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, ministers, for appearing in front of the committee.

Minister Kenney, thank you especially for appearing before this committee today, and congratulations on your appointment.

Seeing that this is the national defence committee, could you please explain to us and all Canadians why it is so important, from a national defence perspective, to have members from our Canadian Armed Forces abroad contributing to the fight against ISIL?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Chair, before doing so, I've neglected to mention the presence of Commodore Scott Bishop, who is here as well.

Sorry, Commodore, I didn't see you at the end of the table there.

Mr. Chisu, thank you for that question.

We know that the phenomena of jihadist terrorism is not new. This is a uniquely pernicious form of violence and political instability that ranges all the way from West Africa and Nigeria, with Boko Haram, down to militias in Mindanao in the southern Philippines, in an arc of violence that claims hundreds of victims, often every day, and that seeks increasingly to project its dystopian vision of a caliphate, based on a violent application of 7th century sharia legal concepts, throughout the world.

What is unique with the so-called ISIL movement, or in Arabic "Daesh", is that it has explicitly declared itself the caliphate, an idea that is unfortunately very seductive to many radicalized individuals who are attracted to this dystopian idea. This is why the number of people willing to risk or sacrifice their lives for this so-called caliphate has continued to increase.

We—and when I say "we" I mean the civilized world—must do everything that we can to ensure that this movement does not have the capacity to metastasize from a pseudostate into a real state. Had the world not taken action with the coalition beginning last fall, had ISIL been able to continue gaining territory in Iraq by taking advantage of certain weaknesses in that country, had it been able to take possession of oilfields and other cities—they took possession of the second-largest city in Iraq, the ancient Mesopotamian capital of Mosul—and had they been able to continue doing this, their prestige as a movement would have grown. Their capacity to recruit individuals and their resources and finances would have increased, and they would be posing a very serious, perhaps existential, threat to security in the Middle East.

Let us not forget that most of the militants who have joined Daesh are people who have come from other countries—all the way from West Africa, to North America, to Western Europe, etc.—and many of these people pose a security risk to us should they return home. We believe there is not an insignificant number of Canadians participating in the jihadi campaign of Daesh. It is incumbent upon us, at the very least, to contain this death cult, as I characterize it, to prevent it from gaining new territory and additional resources, to degrade its capabilities, and ultimately in partnership with our allies in the Middle East to destroy it. That will send an important message to those who might be inspired to Daesh's message of radicalization that it is not in fact the realization of this dystopian dream of the caliphate, and that it is just a bunch of rag-tag thugs.

•(1620)

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Minister, in your opinion, why is it so important that Canada participate in this mission as a member of an international coalition?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Obviously with our limited resources and our geographic remoteness, we have limited capabilities to contain and degrade an organization like this operating in the Middle East. However, we do have a role to play, as your question suggests, with our allies. So we are there, and there are actually over 60 countries that have joined in one form or another the international coalition against ISIL, against Daesh. Our Chief of the Defence Staff, General Lawson, recently attended a meeting in Riyadh with his counterparts from those more than 60 countries. Approximately 24 of those countries are engaged in active military operations in Iraq and/or in Syria against Daesh. The tradition of Canada is that when our security is threatened, when there is a serious, destabilizing threat to global security such as this, our values dictate, and in this case our interests require, that we play a role and not sit on the sidelines.

I would remind you, Mr. Chisu, that we are taking a whole-of-government approach to the menace of Daesh. We are doing so through what is, I believe, the world's sixth largest humanitarian aid contribution to the internally displaced persons of Iraq. Through our diplomatic efforts, Minister Nicholson just visited Baghdad and Erbil, as well as Amman and Abu Dhabi, to discuss our political efforts in the containment of ISIL. Our encouragement to the Iraqi government and parliamentarians to unify and avoid sectarian divisions in confronting ISIL, but we believe there is an essential military component to this. The military dimension is not sufficient, but it is necessary.

The Chair: Thank you.

Time is up, Mr. Chisu.

Mr. Harris, please.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister Kenny, for joining us today, and for agreeing to stay for a full hour despite the fact that we, unfortunately, often have the bells ringing during these committee meetings at this time of day.

Congratulations on your appointment as minister.

I will have to start with a question about your communications to the public in the form of Twitter. Shouldn't the public of Canada really expect that when the Minister of National Defence communicates in this way, it be based in reality and not on some mistaken understanding of what's going on in other parts of the world? Can we expect that? And, sir, would you be prepared to refrain from these kinds of offensive and erroneous propaganda attempts in the future?

•(1625)

Mr. James Bezan: Point of order.

The Chair: Point of order, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: I'll leave it to the minister whether or not he wants to respond to that.

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't think he needs to be protected by you, does he?

Mr. James Bezan: I would say that it's not relevant to the supplementary estimates (C) that we're studying at this point in time. I leave it to your discretion, or the minister's discretion if he wishes to respond to this question.

Mr. Jack Harris: To that point of order, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: We're talking about providing an additional \$122.6 million to continue the—

Mr. James Bezan: I don't know how a Twitter account fits into that.

Mr. Jack Harris: And communications by the Minister of National Defence on matters of this nature are certainly relevant, but I hope that time won't be included in mine.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

I will leave it to the minister to decide whether or not to reply.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

I'm happy that he asked the question, which was should the Minister of National Defence not ensure that communications, such as on social media, are accurate? Absolutely, Mr. Chairman. I think one of the most important reasons for our Operation Impact is to protect the innocent, including women and children, from the sexual slavery and human trafficking of ISIL. That was the point of the message to which the member refers.

According to the United Nations human rights commissioner, ISIL is guilty of abductions, rape, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women and children, victimizing at least 7,000 Yazidi women and girls, including children as young as eight, who have been systematically raped and sold into sexual slavery. Regrettably, all of these people are being sold into sexual slavery by ISIL as a fundraising mechanism throughout the broader Middle East. It's not only Yazidi women and children, but Christian women and children, Kurds, and minorities, any of those who are deemed to be enemies by ISIL. As soon as they take a village, a town, a city, ISIL regards these women and children—

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the minister not to take up all the time with a very long answer?

The Chair: Mr. Harris, you asked a question.

Mr. Jack Harris: I asked whether he would be prepared to be accurate in the future.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Chairman, I stand by that message, delivered on International Women's Day, that we are there, in part, to defend the women and children of Iraq.

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Minister, you started partly with expressing your condolences to the family of Sergeant Doiron. I have already, on many occasions, done that publicly and would do so again today.

Part of the investigation into his death is being conducted by the military police and I wonder if you could share with us your confidence or otherwise in the military police conducting that investigation in light of the report to you of the Military Police Complaints Commission that was released yesterday, but which was in the hands of the government since last May. All of those recommendations and findings would have been known to your government.

Do you have confidence in the military police investigative team doing that work? Secondly, are you prepared to follow the

recommendations of the civilian oversight that's there, over which you have authority, of course, and the responsibility to do? Are you prepared to do that? Do you have confidence in them, or should there be other assistance to the military police in conducting this investigation?

Mr. James Bezan: On a point of order, again, there is nothing in the supplementary estimates (C) that relates to the Military Police Complaints Commission report, and I would suggest under the order of relevance to this day that Mr. Harris come back to supplementary estimates (C).

Again, if the minister wants to, he could respond, though he never mentioned this report in his opening comments.

I don't know how you make this a relevant question.

The Chair: Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: To that point of order, Mr. Chair, I don't know if the minister actually desires and wants Mr. Bezan to try to defend him from questions from the opposition.

Mr. James Bezan: No, I'm talking about proper procedures of the House—

Mr. Jack Harris: Maybe he's only hoping to use up my time—

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chairman—

The Chair: Gentlemen—

Mr. Jack Harris: —and I hope that will be taken from it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Bezan does have a point, but again, I leave it to the minister whether or not he wishes to respond.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Chair.

I want to acknowledge Mr. Harris for his long-standing concern and interest in the Langridge investigation. There is no doubt that this whole affair has been mishandled, as the report tabled by the chair of the Military Police Complaints Commission yesterday demonstrates.

I have not yet had a chance to read the report, as it is longer than 1,000 pages. I have reviewed a summary of its recommendations and look forward to meeting with the provost marshal to discuss the findings and recommendations.

The government did not have the recommendations a year ago. There was an interim report. We have not yet had a chance to digest the 1,000-page report, which indicated that a number of the allegations were not substantiated. However, it did indicate that there was wrongdoing and incompetence on the part of the military police, in many instances. This is unacceptable, and the committee has my clear assurance that I will work with the provost marshal and the military to accept any course of action necessary to ensure that these errors are not repeated in the future.

● (1630)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Colleagues, you will notice that the bells are calling us to a vote in 30 minutes. The Standing Orders provide for suspension or adjournment, but with the unanimous consent of this committee, I believe we could carry on for at least 15 minutes. Do I have it?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: For 15 minutes.

The Chair: Mr. Harris, you have three minutes remaining.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Minister, I would like to advise you of a media report earlier this week from military sources suggesting that the preparations by special forces for expansion have already been made, establishing logistics and medical support in northern Iraq that would be required for an expansion of the mission. In light of this information and the sad death of Sergeant Doiron and the other casualties, are further casualties being anticipated? Is this being done in anticipation of Canada's increasing the number of boots on the ground?

Hon. Jason Kenney: I'm not familiar with that report or any additional assets in support of our SOF personnel in northern Iraq, and I can tell you that there is no planning to increase the commitment of 69 special operators in that region. If you ask are we anticipating more casualties, we certainly hope not. There is of course an inherent risk in any military deployment, as Mr. Harris will well know. Of course, that's why we have to ensure that there's appropriate support for our troops. But I'm not aware of any increase in infrastructure. We certainly have no intention of increasing the number of SOF operators in the region.

Mr. Jack Harris: Is there any contemplation being given to changes in the instructions to our forces to stick to the notion of aiding, assisting, and training, and avoiding the combat zones that we've had?

Hon. Jason Kenney: You've accurately described the current rules of engagement that were reflected in the motion that was adopted in Parliament last fall. The government has not yet taken a final decision on potential renewal or extension of the mission, so I would have to ask the member to wait until that decision is taken. We will certainly report it to Parliament in the form of a motion.

Mr. Jack Harris: You spoke today in the House, and we've heard other reports about the activities of the Iraqi forces—not the Kurdish force, but the Iraqi forces—operating against Tikrit. One of the other reports we're getting is that the Saudis are complaining that the Iraqis are being commanded by revolutionary guards from Iran and that the Shia militias are receiving that...

Are we now then the allies of the Iranian national guards in this battle, and was this anticipated by the government? How do we coordinate, or not, with the Iranian revolutionary guard's commanders in the operations in northern Iraq?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you. That's a very good question.

Mr. Chair, we have no intention of cooperating with IRG commanders. Our relationship there is at the invitation of the Republic of Iraq and also the Kurdish regional government. We are dealing most directly with Iraqi security force commanders and Kurdish peshmerga commanders.

Obviously Canada has many concerns about the nature and intentions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and clearly we do not want our anti-ISIL mission, Operation Impact, to turn into a sectarian division within Iraq. We encourage the Iraqi government to work with all of its communities to ensure there's a unified front, including both Shia and Sunni, against the threat of ISIL.

• (1635)

The Chair: That is time, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Norlock, please.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and through you to the witnesses, thank you for attending today.

Minister Kenney, I'm going to try to be succinct, in the hopes that you will expand on the following question. I'm referring to Operation Reassurance. Why are we in eastern Europe? What assistance are we providing, along with our allies, to the good people of Ukraine and area, in terms of radar and satellite images, non-lethal equipment, and financial aid?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Norlock.

Following Vladimir Putin's illegal defacto invasion of Ukraine, first with Crimea and laterally in parts of eastern Ukraine, Canada together with our NATO allies decided it was important to send a message, literally of reassurance, to our NATO allies, particularly those bordering on or in the proximity of Russia. One of the reasons for this is that Vladimir Putin has used the presence of a Russophone, ethnically Russian population in eastern Ukraine and Crimea as the pretext for his defacto invasion of those areas, claiming that he is protecting the interests of those minorities.

You will be aware that there are also Russian ethnic and Russian language-speaking minorities in other countries of eastern and central Europe, including most notably the Baltic countries, which have very limited ability to defend themselves against Russia given their small size and resources.

Consequently, it was the view of the alliance that we should together send a strong message of our determination to respect the alliance. Through a series of joint exercises, including one in which we are involved called Baltic air policing, we are sending... These are very small countries, the Baltic states. They have populations of under three million in each case. They don't have significant air assets. Baltic air policing, which is one dimension of Operation Reassurance, sends a message to the Russian air force and to Vladimir Putin that we are patrolling the skies over the Baltic states.

Our joint infantry training exercises in Poland, where we have some 250 Canadian infantry men and women, demonstrates our presence in the eastern side of Poland close to Russia, indicating that it is part of NATO territory, as does the presence of the HMCS *Fredericton* in the Black Sea. The *Fredericton* re-entered the Black Sea on Monday of this week. Immediately following that, two Russian naval vessels were tracking the movements of the *Fredericton*, and there were Russian jet fighters that, to use the colloquial expression, “buzzed”, or flew at low altitude over the *Fredericton*.

I think that's a success. The Russians know we are there as part of NATO. We're not going away, and the message is don't even think about further destabilizing, particularly the NATO areas of eastern and central Europe.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

Could you talk a little bit about why we are increasing our assistance, in particular by sending radar images and satellite images, and why we have chosen the kind of aid we have, such as non-lethal equipment and financial aid?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Certainly.

The support provided to Ukraine by Canada that you have just mentioned is outside the context of Operation Reassurance, which is strictly within the NATO space. You've mentioned other support that have we provided bilaterally to our friends in Ukraine. Most recently, the Government of Canada signed a memorandum of understanding with Ukraine to provide images obtained from our RADARSAT-2 satellite in various sites of eastern Ukraine that can help the Ukrainian military command identify foreign movements, including heavy equipment, in eastern Ukraine. This is something that President Poroshenko specifically requested of us when he visited Ottawa in September.

Similarly, we provided several tonnes of non-kinetic military equipment in the fall, including Canadian Armed Forces surplus winter gear, which I understand has been hugely helpful to the Ukrainian forces, and non-kinetic equipment like night vision goggles. These things have, I believe, helped to save lives. We should also mention that we are actively exploring a number of potential training missions for Canadian forces in Ukraine, together with our allies in the United States. We have joined the contact group on military questions that the United States and the United Kingdom established with Ukraine. We are actively involved in scoping out possibilities for training missions there.

• (1640)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Since we're dealing with supplements, I noticed that Operation Reassurance is somewhere around \$34 million in the supplementary category. I wonder if you could tell us what that encompasses. I noticed that some of the major costs are those that would be incurred in any operation, such as food and fuel. I wonder if you could comment on those costs.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Just to be clear, the supplementary (C) request for Operation Reassurance activities is \$17 million, of which \$13.3 million is for general costs, particularly ship operating costs, fuel and food for the *Fredericton*, and \$3.7 million in contingency costs. Those are the major costs that we are seeking to cover in supplementary estimates (C).

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you.

I wonder if you could make a few short comments with regard to the discussion in the media surrounding economic sanctions as part of our total, shall we say, efforts to dissuade Mr. Putin from further expansion into eastern Europe. I wonder if you could talk about that.

The Chair: Briefly please.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Canada has been imposing sanctions on Russia, Russian companies, and individuals for several months, as well as on people closely associated with the regime who have been banned from travelling to Canada, and a number of Russian corporations that we believe are involved in what I would call the Russian military industrial complex. We've imposed financial sanctions on them and on some Russian banks that we believe have been involved, indirectly at least, in the de facto invasion of the Crimean eastern Ukraine.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Ms. Murray, by the clock on the wall I would say, unfortunately, you have about four minutes, please.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Okay. I have seven minutes worth to ask, so I'll ask some later.

I just want some clarification about the supplementary C number of \$122 million.

In your comments, you noted that Operation Impact consists of approximately 600 personnel. You then noted that we also have members of special operation forces, which implies that's in addition to the 600, whereas your note on February 19 said that these funds are for an average of 600. Is that to mean that the special operations forces are not included in the assessment of the supplementary incremental costs?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Thank you. The 600 personnel that I referred to are associated with the RCAF air mission based in Kuwait. Then of course there's the additional 69 special ops personnel near Erbil. There is \$8.8 million in personnel costs associated with the hardship and risk allowances, and \$2.2 million in other personnel-related costs, such as incidentals, and ground transport of personnel, etc.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Yes, but this says it's for the 600. It does not say for the 600 and the special operations forces. I'm asking whether the incremental costs of the special operations forces are not in this \$122 million.

Hon. Jason Kenney: They are included. Both the SOF and RCAF dimensions of Operation Impact are included in the \$122 million.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, thank you.

Secondly, when do these incremental date from?

Hon. Jason Kenney: This dates from the beginning of our commitment in October of last year through to the end of this fiscal year.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, so it doesn't include the special operations forces aspect of the mission that happened in September.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes, I think there might be some initial costs for the setup of the SOF mission that were covered in the previous estimates.

• (1645)

Ms. Joyce Murray: I'm asking these questions because, as we know, the Parliamentary Budget Officer claimed to have done very conservative estimating, and at the high end of his range it was \$40-million plus, more than you have—

Hon. Jason Kenney: Could I clarify?

Ms. Joyce Murray: Could I ask that you table the department's estimated costs for each of the categories that the Parliamentary Budget Officer utilized and be clear whether those start at the very beginning of the mission's costs?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Sure. In principle, yes. I would ask, Ms. Murray, that you maybe specify in writing exactly what you're referring to so I can be sure that I respond as accurately as possible.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay. All right.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I would just say that I think the PBO's report included his full estimate of costs of the mission. What I'm presenting here is up to the end of the fiscal—

Ms. Joyce Murray: No, it was incremental. These were incremental.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes, thank you, but what I'm presenting is up to the end of the fiscal year. If we were to end the mission at the end of March, there would be additional costs that we have not included here in repatriating people and equipment, and restoring that.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Does this include the original deployment of all of the forces and the equipment over...?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Does it include the additional costs of the preparation for a second deployment?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Are there other incremental costs that were covered by the original budget envelope for the ministry, and so were not, therefore, needed as supplemental funds?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Rochette.

Colonel Claude Rochette (Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance and Corporate Services, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Thank you, Chair.

This previous estimates were prepared last September and encompass the deployment of the forces, including their redeployment if the operation finishes at the end of the fiscal year in March. We have \$18 million there for redeployment included in that cost.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay. So there are no incremental costs that were covered by the general budget; they are all included in the supplement.

Col Claude Rochette: They're included in this.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Murray, we will call time now. That gives us about 10 minutes to get back for votes. You will have three minutes remaining when we return as quickly as possible after votes, please.

We'll now suspend.

• (1645)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

Welcome back, ministers and staff.

Ms. Murray, you have three minutes remaining, please.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Thank you for clarifying some of the contradictory information in your materials.

I'd like to ask the minister whether you personally feel that your department has the financial resources it needs for the men and women of Canada's armed forces to do the job we ask of them.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes, I do, of course. Any military could use additional resources. I know our forces could use additional resources, but put this in perspective. Since 2006, the overall budget for DND has increased by 27%, higher than inflation or economic growth—

Ms. Joyce Murray: Excuse me, Mr. Minister, thank you for your answer. I heard your answer. Yes, thank you.

One of the myths that the government has been promoting is stable, increased funding for 20 years. However, in 2010, the freezes and cuts started. The reality is that between 2007 and 2014, an average of 23% of vote 5 funds were not spent, were deliberately clawed back. That's compared with an average under the previous government of 2% of funds being lapsed.

So can the minister explain why \$8 billion of defence funding was lapsed while our military is left without adequate equipment, training cycles have been slashed, and inadequate mental health professionals have been hired to care for those wounded in Afghanistan?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Chair, I would characterize that as a loaded question, most of whose premises I disagree with. For example, the member characterized lapses as deliberate clawbacks. Every department ends up spending less than their authorized amount. That's prudent fiscal management by managers. If there was a lower ratio of lapsing under the previous government, it's probably because the military budget was so much smaller. It was down to \$12 billion for several years there, so they had to do as best they could with very meagre resources in that period.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Chair: Thirty seconds, please, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Joyce Murray: The Prime Minister stated in 2008 that if Canada is to be taken seriously in the world, it needs the capacity to act, so I'd like to ask the minister whether reducing the military expenditure to an all-time low of 1% of GDP is part of the plan of increasing Canada's capacity to defend our values and interests abroad?

Hon. Jason Kenney: The truth is the opposite of your characterization, Ms. Murray. The all-time low was when it reached under 0.7% GDP under the previous Liberal government, as opposed to the 1.2% to which this government increased it. We've given DND a 2% annual escalator. No other department enjoys that. This is at a time when virtually all of our major allies are cutting their military budgets in absolute terms, while we are actually increasing ours.

Ms. Joyce Murray: I think that's inaccurate information on the part of the Minister.

The Chair: Time, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Gallant, please.

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

It just never ceases to amaze me how a person who likes to talk about slashing and cutting talks about our expenditures when, after the decade of darkness when they were spending again, it was half of what we're spending now. In terms of lapses, we're not going to pay for something we haven't received, unlike the Liberals did in the sponsorship program.

My first question is for Minister Fantino, who mentioned during his presentation that there was a \$10,000 transfer from Public Works for a new pay administration, separate and apart from that of the rest of the government. Why is that necessary?

• (1720)

Hon. Julian Fantino: Mr. Chair and members, I'm sure that members understand that CSE has three mandates under which it operates: IT security, foreign signals, and intelligence and assistance. These activities play a vital role in the protection of Canadians and Canadian interests here at home and abroad. For personal security reasons, CSE has chosen to continue to administer the pay of its employees independently of other departments. This means that it has opted out of integrating with the government-wide Phoenix pay system and consolidated its compensation service in the public service pay centre. That's \$10,500 previously transferred out of the CSE budget line that is being reinstated.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Are they implying, though, that the payroll in general is subject to breaches? Why would they need something special over and above the rest of the employees of the government?

Hon. Julian Fantino: It's very simply the nature of the work that they do and the fact that they need to have this added protection in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. It does in fact conform to the whole theme of what CSE does, its people, and its vulnerabilities.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Minister Kenney, you mentioned Daesh. For people who may be tuning in today who don't know what that means, would you share that with us?

Hon. Jason Kenney: That's the Arabic name for the organization that currently goes by the Islamic State. That's what they call themselves, previously known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham. It's the same organization.

The reason I use Daesh is that they regard it as pejorative.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The death cult is even a better description of what they do.

Hon. Jason Kenney: There are many descriptions, but I can tell you that this organization is so depraved that even al Qaeda has condemned some of their tactics.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: That leads to my next question. We see, as you described, Boko Haram across northeast Africa, and we almost have a total front that's swarming upward toward Europe across the Middle East as well as north Africa, and then again al Shabaab in other parts of Africa.

There has been discussion about links between al Qaeda and some of these other groups that were splitting off, but is anyone seriously looking at there being an overall umbrella organization that is orchestrating all of these separately or together?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Al Qaeda, certainly, played a kind of a coordinating role for organizations of this nature. I believe the consensus view of security experts is that Daesh or ISIL has sought basically to take over al-Qaeda's leadership role as a coordinating intelligence, if you will, with these various streams of jihadist violence.

For example, just this past week, Boko Haram, the vicious jihadist terror organization operating in northern Nigeria that has become notorious for having kidnapped several hundred Christian girls and selling them into sexual slavery, and for bombing dozens of churches and murdering tens of thousands of individuals, issued a statement indicating its affiliation with Daesh, with ISIL.

Similarly, you will recall the grotesque beheading of 21 Coptic Christians on a beach in Libya. When you talk about being close to Europe, that's frankly a day sail from Italy.

We don't believe that the people who committed that act are moving necessarily from Syria into Iraq to Libya, but rather these were jihadists already in Libya, by and large, who essentially are affiliating themselves.

This was the point I made in the answer to the very first question. Daesh, or ISIL, by promoting this idea of the caliphate, has become a very seductive idea to movements and individuals who share these distorted ideas. That's why some of them are seeking to affiliate themselves with ISIL, with Daesh.

In the southern Philippines, in Mindanao, where there has been a long-time insurgency by Islamist groups who, for example, bombed a school bus last December, even some of those Islamist groups have declared their affinity to Daesh.

That's why the fight against this organization in the Middle East has hugely important symbolic and, therefore, strategic implications across all of those countries.

• (1725)

The Chair: Minister, thank you for accommodating the disruption in timing this afternoon. I understand from your staff that you have to go, and we appreciate your willingness to return to discuss the main estimates in the next month.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Anytime. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Shall vote 1c under Communications Security Establishment carry?

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT
Vote 1c—Program expenditures.....\$1

(Vote 1c agreed to)

The Chair: Shall vote 1c under National Defence carry?

NATIONAL DEFENCE
Vote 1c—Operating expenditures.....\$143,330,098

(Vote 1c agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the Chair report vote 1c under Communications Security Establishment and vote 1c under National Defence to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

I look forward to the next opportunity to meet the ministers and staff.

The meeting is adjourned.

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