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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Good morning, or good afternoon at your end.

I'd like to welcome you all to the defence committee this morning: Ambassador Buck, Canada's permanent representative to NATO; Lieutenant-General Hainse, Canada's military representative to NATO; and Lieutenant-General Whitecross, the commandant of the NATO Defense College, along with the officials in the back and staff. Thank you for appearing today.

We're going to continue the conversation we started when we were in Belgium back in September. As you know, we kind of went off and spent some time focusing on the crisis in Ukraine, and have circled back to our NATO study.

I'll begin by giving the floor to Ambassador Buck for her opening remarks.

Her Excellency Kerry Buck (Ambassador, Canada's Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council (NATO), Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

My name is Kerry Buck, and I am Canada's permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council. As you mentioned, I had the chance to meet some of you in Brussels, in the fall. I must say what an honour it is to appear before you today, alongside Lieutenant-General Hainse and Lieutenant-General Whitecross. I hope our discussion will inform your study on NATO.

What I'd like to do is highlight some of the challenges the alliance faces and explain Canada's participation in and contribution to Euro-Atlantic security. For nearly 70 years, NATO's goal has remained the same: to preserve peace and safeguard our collective security. That role is as relevant as ever. Today's security challenges—be they Russia's military adventurism, extremism and terrorism in Iraq and Syria, North Korea's nuclear testing, or the increasing use of cyber-attacks—are putting our rules-based international order to the test.

As a trading nation with a global focus, Canada without question understands the importance of establishing a stable and predictable international order based on the fundamental principles of territorial integrity, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Having strong international institutions like NATO is very much in our

national interest, as Minister Freeland pointed out in her address to Parliament on Canada's foreign policy priorities, in June.

Canada's defence policy, entitled *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, shows that Canada and the Canadian Forces can greatly contribute to peace, stability, and prosperity in the world. That contribution includes support for diplomacy, development, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, capacity building, and the implementation of the global women, peace and security agenda.

[English]

As a last resort, it also includes the use of force alongside allies and in accordance with international law. A robust commitment to NATO's article 5 also remains at the heart of Canada's national security policy. It is this unity that makes NATO unique and binds the European and North American partnership. In today's world, trans-Atlantic co-operation is needed more than ever, and NATO is a force multiplier.

While NATO's purpose has not changed since 1949, the security environment has become increasingly complex and the alliance has had to adapt. This has meant reinforcing its deterrence and defence posture to prevent aggression against allies. NATO also projects stability beyond its territory by building security capabilities with partners, and working more closely with like-minded international actors, the United Nations and the EU in particular.

Following Russia's aggression in Ukraine and build up of forces and capabilities along the alliance's periphery, NATO has embarked on the most significant reinforcement of its collective defence since the end of the Cold War. At the Warsaw summit in July 2016, leaders agreed on an enhanced forward presence, centred on four battle groups deployed to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

Canada, as you know, committed to lead a multinational battle group in Latvia comprising troops from Albania, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. This is a major undertaking that puts us in the company of the United Kingdom, who leads in Estonia, Germany in Lithuania, and the United States in Poland. Canada also regularly contributes aircraft for NATO air policing, including Iceland and Romania in 2017 and 2018, and a frigate in support of maritime patrols in European waters.

NATO's approach is defensive in nature. It responds to Russia's violation of international borders in eastern Ukraine, and the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea. Canada fully subscribes to NATO's two-track approach to Russia: deterrence and dialogue. To quote the NATO Secretary-General, this can be summarized as follows:

NATO continues to seek a more constructive and predictable relationship with Russia.... And encourage[s] Russia to act within the norms and rules of the international community. Transparency and predictability are critical.

As NATO is working to reinforce its deterrence posture toward Russia, it remains open to meaningful dialogue to help diffuse tension and potentials for misunderstanding.

• (0850)

Looking beyond Russia, it's become apparent that NATO's collective security can only be assured by having stable neighbours on its borders. This is why NATO formally joined the global coalition against Daesh and why it remains engaged in training Afghan security forces to prevent that country from again becoming a safe haven for terrorism. NATO is also increasing its support for partners across the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to help them enhance their resilience and provide for their own security. Outside of the NATO construct, but still contributing to allied security, Canada is providing training, advice, and assistance to Iraqi security forces and capacity-building support to regional forces, and is conducting air operations in Iraq and Syria through the provision of tanker support, maritime surveillance, and tactical transport.

Beyond the military effort, there's a broad consensus that the struggle to defeat Daesh requires a long-term, multi-pronged approach. That's why Canada's integrated and comprehensive response to the crisis in Iraq and Syria, close to \$3 billion over three years, leverages and focuses Canadian humanitarian, stabilization, and development expertise where we can make a real difference, including in the region.

Lastly, I want to touch on the North Atlantic. Canadians know that the North Atlantic is the vital link between Europe and North America. We also know that Russia is investing heavily in military modernization, including by improving capabilities to operate in the North Atlantic. That is why NATO agreed at the 2016 Warsaw summit to strengthen NATO's maritime posture and situational awareness in the North Atlantic. Work is ongoing with NATO to fulfill this commitment, and there's a key role for Canada to play in this issue with NATO to maintain the safety of the lines of communication across the Atlantic, vital to the security and prosperity of Canadians.

Looking ahead, there will be a NATO leaders' summit in Brussels in this summer. As we prepare, we're focused on the future of the alliance, how Canada can contribute to shaping it, and what we will gain from it. Clearly, we will seek to maintain unity. For almost 70 years the allies, including Canada as a founding member, have stood shoulder to shoulder. This unity is our strongest deterrent to aggression. We will continue to ensure that NATO is fit for purpose and remains capable of responding to today's and tomorrow's threats as they arise and evolve in complexity. We will contribute to NATO's efforts to project stability in the fight against terror as we build defence capacity in Iraq and as we continue to support reform in

Ukraine. We will also continue to identify ways in which to advance issues related to inclusive security at NATO.

Going into the 2018 summit, we expect NATO to bring forward a new action plan on women, peace, and security. NATO has come a long way in implementing gender perspectives in its public outreach, pre-deployment training, and partner education, for example, but there's more to do. Our intent for the action plan is to reinforce several areas, including increasing the number of women in allied militaries and in international deployments, building partner nations' defence capacity to implement UNSC Resolution 1325, and increasing the number of women in NATO staff, for example. Canada works hard at all levels of NATO to promote the women, peace, and security agenda, and in many ways we're seen as a leading ally in that regard.

The NATO summit this summer will move forward our work on deterrence and defence and discuss alliance modernization, NATO-EU cooperation, and the threat environment. As I said, Canada's core priority is to highlight how Canada is an indispensable ally to NATO, and how NATO is indispensable to Canada's security and prosperity.

Thank you.

• (0855)

The Chair: Ambassador, I'm going to turn the floor over to Lieutenant-General Hainse.

You have the floor.

Lieutenant-General Marquis Hainse (Lieutenant-General, Canadian Military Representative at NATO, Department of National Defence): Good morning. I'm pleased to be able to be at this committee today. Thank you for the invitation.

I would like to start by stating my role as a representative of the chief of the defence staff on a permanent basis at NATO. I fill two main functions. First of all, I represent the chief of the defence staff on the military committee at NATO, which works to provide military advice by consensus to the North Atlantic Council. Secondly, I support Canada's permanent representative to NATO, Ambassador Buck, by providing military advice to shape discussion and initiatives at NATO on behalf of the chief of the defence staff. In both of these functions my focus is on providing the best military advice to support political decision-making in line with Canadian interests.

Ambassador Buck has given you a strategic overview of NATO's current areas of focus. From a military perspective, I can describe the two main tasks as ensuring the success of current operations and making sure we are prepared to face the next security challenge.

In its 2010 Strategic Concept, NATO identified its three core tasks: collective defence, crisis management, and co-operative security. Allied militaries have a role to play in supporting each of these tasks.

[Translation]

For the 20 years leading up to 2014, NATO was focused mainly on crisis management outside the alliance territory—in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan, for example. However, since Russia's adoption of a more assertive and aggressive posture—most starkly demonstrated by its illegal annexation of Crimea—coupled with an increasingly complex security environment characterized by terrorism, hybrid threats, and climate-related challenges, to only name a few, there has been a more balanced approach to all three core tasks.

As such, collective defence has received renewed attention due to the potential threats posed to NATO territory by both Russia and increased terrorism. At the same time, co-operative security is also being bolstered because the allies have recognized that projecting stability to partner countries beyond NATO's borders also contributes to making the alliance more secure.

Canada has a long history of providing valued military contributions to NATO operations, and it continues to do so. Currently we are providing Canadian Armed Forces personnel and capabilities to missions across the three core tasks.

[English]

To be more specific, NATO's renewed focus on collective defence is clear in the decision taken at the 2016 Warsaw summit to strengthen the alliance's deterrence and defence posture.

As Ambassador Buck explained, Canada is playing a lead role in supporting collective defence by serving as a framework nation of the multinational battle group in Latvia as part of NATO's enhanced forward presence. This is a significant contribution on many levels.

First of all, it sends a very strong signal of alliance unity when North American allies send soldiers to deter and defend against attack in Europe. Secondly, the battle group that Canada leads currently includes contributions from six other allies plus the host nation, Latvia. More than any other enhanced forward presence battle group, this shows a commitment to working with other allies and improving interoperability among forces. Finally, this contribution represents the first persistent Canadian military presence in Europe since we withdrew our force from Germany in the early 1990s following the end of the Cold War, and this return to Europe has been noticed by our allies.

Under the Canadian Armed Forces' Operation Reassurance, we fulfill our previously mentioned forward presence commitment to Latvia, and we also contribute a frigate to NATO's standing level force on a rotational basis, as well as regularly providing fighter aircraft to conduct air policing in Iceland and Romania.

In terms of Canada's military contribution to another core task, namely crisis management, Canada's recent history shows its strong commitment to NATO's effort to bring stability, considering post- or prior engagements in Afghanistan and Libya. We also continue to contribute to NATO's KFOR mission in Kosovo.

Turning now to co-operative security, the military has a role to play in helping partner countries build their own capacity to face and withstand security challenges. The Canadian Armed Forces are currently playing a very strong role in building military capability in Ukraine, a NATO partner. We're also providing training to that force

encountering improvised explosive devices and disposing of explosive ordnances under NATO's training and capacity-building program in that country.

• (0900)

[Translation]

As I said earlier in my statement, apart from current operations, my other priority, as the Chief of the Defence Staff's representative to NATO and a permanent member of NATO's Military Committee, is making sure that NATO is prepared militarily for the next security challenge. Without going into too much detail, this means making sure that the alliance has the structures and mechanisms in place to be able to plan operations, integrate forces from many nations, and command and control them. It also means identifying the kinds of capabilities we need both now and in the future.

As Canada's defence policy has highlighted, Canada rarely operates alone. Strong partnerships with allies and international organizations, including NATO, are critical to ensure that we are prepared to deal with the complexity of today's security environment.

To sum up, I would like to offer a few thoughts on Canada's role within NATO's military structures, and what it means for the Canadian Armed Forces. First of all, Canada is a well-respected ally around the table, and the recognized professionalism of our armed forces means that we are taken seriously when we speak. We have a strong history of showing solidarity with our allies and of answering the call when it comes, which gives us credibility. From a military perspective, we will continue to be involved in both deterrence and defence, and the projecting stability agenda, these being key NATO priorities for the foreseeable future.

[English]

Let me close by stating that our participation in NATO, whether in representing Canada at the military committee, or serving on multinational teams in the international military staff or on one of NATO's strategic commands, gives us influence in a strong political-military alliance that has stood the test of time and has proven its adaptability.

I count myself as fortunate to be able to support the chief of the defence staff and Ambassador Buck in representing the Government of Canada as we shape the future of this alliance.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to give the floor to you, General Whitecross.

Lieutenant-General Christine Whitecross (Commandant, NATO Defense College, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

I am Lieutenant-General Whitecross, and I have been commandant of the NATO Defense College since November 29, 2016.

I am responsible for accomplishing the missions set out by the NATO Military Committee, which I will outline in more detail momentarily.

[*English*]

The NATO Defense College, or NDC, is a unique academic institution, the only one of its kind in the alliance. Originally located in Paris, it was founded in 1951 by General Eisenhower, who saw the need to “develop individuals, both on the military and the civilian side, who will have a thorough grasp of the many complicated factors which are involved in...creating an adequate defence posture for the North Atlantic Treaty area”.

Policy guidance for the college is set out in the military committee document, as noted by the North Atlantic Council in July of 2016. The mission of the college is to contribute to the effectiveness and cohesion of the alliance by developing its role as a major centre of education, outreach, and research on transatlantic security issues.

To foster forward and creative strategic thinking on the key issues facing the alliance, the NATO Defense College is directed to do the following three high-level tasks.

The first is to provide senior-level education and bring together senior-level military and civilian officials to interact on NATO issues in a unique, diverse, and multicultural setting while cultivating multinational consensus-building and providing opportunities for multinational networking. Second, the college engages in comprehensive outreach and support of alliance strategic objectives. Third, the college conducts strategic security studies and research in support of the alliance's wider goals. In executing the NDC mission, the principles of academic freedom are respected, ensured, and extended to faculty, staff, and course members.

Organizationally within NATO, the NDC is an agency of the military committee and is directed by the commandant. The education and research activities of the college are coordinated with Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk and allied command operations near Mons, Belgium, which are both represented on the NDC's academic advisory board.

● (0905)

[*Translation*]

The NDC staff is composed of approximately 130 military members and civilians from 20 NATO nations and a non-NATO contribution from Switzerland. The academic program is not delivered through a permanent faculty, but instead the NDC receives lectures from high-level academic, governmental, and military speakers.

[*English*]

This allows the NDC program both to remain current and to constantly evolve. Of note, and what makes the NATO Defense College both unique and gives it a competitive edge over national defence and security institutions, is that the NDC curriculum is solely focused on NATO business.

We educate 21st century leaders by taking military officers and civilian officials out of their comfort zones on intellectual, personal, national, and professional levels in order to enable them to learn more about the other world views in a culturally rich environment. We help course participants develop and refine their communication and negotiation skills—and for many of those, not in their first language—and, most important, to build consensus. Study provides a fair amount of general intellectual capital and imparts a certain degree of intellectual humility, a good quality in those who may be charged in the future with some very weighty responsibilities.

[*Translation*]

Lastly, course members learn not only from books and professors, but also from each other, and they create their own professional networks.

The NDC offers two long courses and a series of shorter and modular courses.

[*English*]

In brief, the senior course is 20 weeks in length and aims to better prepare colonels and lieutenant-colonels and equivalent-level civilian officials of the alliance, the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean dialogue, the Istanbul cooperation initiative, and selected contact countries for senior appointments in NATO and multinational staffs or NATO-related duties in their capitals. The NATO regional co-operation course is 10 weeks in length and aims to link issues of concern to both the Mediterranean dialogue and the Istanbul cooperation initiative nations, and to NATO, and to develop mutual understanding and networking amongst participants.

[*Translation*]

The course is open to officers of the rank of brigadier-general to lieutenant-colonel and to civilian officials and diplomats of equivalent rank from relevant ministries such as defence, foreign affairs, and others concerned with strategic security issues. NDC also has a similar short course for one to three star officers and civilians of equivalent rank.

[*English*]

The NATO Defense College successfully executes its triple mission of education, research, and outreach, providing excellent educational products, a solid research program, and a focused outreach effort.

A significant undertaking is under way to develop a strategic plan to better link these three tasks together. This plan will guide NDC evolution to ensure alignment to the military committee's guidance through a set of cascading goals, tasks, and objectives benchmarked to key performance indicators.

[*Translation*]

Work on the development of the NDC strategic plan commenced in earnest in 2017, and will continue through 2018, to be brought for approval to the Military Committee and ultimately the North Atlantic Council, to ensure that NDC continues to serve the needs of the alliance and its constituent nations into the future.

[*English*]

In terms of attendance trends, evaluation of the root causes is still required. However, although the NDC is seeing a significant increase in interest by partner nations, there is a stagnation in the numbers of NATO nations participating, with the level at 16 to 19 out of the 29 nations.

For the last two senior courses, approximately 20% of the seats were filled by civilian course participants, including diplomats. An ongoing challenge and particular area of focus, given its nexus with the women, peace, and security agenda, is that the number of female course members remains low, at 11% and 6% for the two most recent senior courses. There were even fewer on the NATO regional co-operation course, although that is to be expected due to the relatively fewer numbers of women from the countries attending this course, which is aimed at participants from our partner nations in and around the gulf and the MENA region.

The NATO Defense College is working to encourage the participation of more women in the courses offered, and on staff. By the very nature of its multinational staff and course participants, the NATO Defense College reflects a high degree of diversity, cutting across the boundaries of nationality, service, level, experience, gender, religion, culture, and more. I consider this diversity to be both a strength and a force multiplier.

● (0910)

[*Translation*]

As noted in my direction and guidance for 2018, I am committed to ensuring NDC is a respectful workplace, promoting teamwork, mutual respect, and fairness for all. I believe this respectful workplace is fundamental for an educational environment, and will contribute to one that encourages a growing participation by women.

[*English*]

Secondly, consistent with NATO's acknowledgement that gender perspectives are an important consideration—in the long term to achieve gender equality, and in the short term to help commanders at all levels make decisions to achieve operational effectiveness—general perspectives will be accounted for in all three NDC missions of education, outreach, and research. I have designated a gender adviser at the NDC to move us down the road of gender mainstreaming.

Thirdly, I personally take every opportunity to encourage dialogue related to the WPS agenda. In the fall of 2017, the NATO Defense College co-sponsored a workshop with Queen's University on gender perspectives. As you know, it is not only about integrating women, as gender perspectives are not synonymous with women's perspectives. They consider the needs of and impacts of men and women, boys and girls, noting that the word gender itself no longer has a binary meaning.

I also had the opportunity to deliver the keynote address on gender mainstreaming at the European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The audience was more than 100 early- to mid-career security sector professionals from approximately 50 countries in Europe, Eurasia, the Pacific region, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa.

The NATO Defense College is also in discussion with the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and Allied Command Transformation, to host their annual discipline conference.

Thank you.

The Chair: I would like to thank all three of you for your opening remarks.

We will go to the first round of questions, which are seven minutes.

I am going to turn the floor over to Mr. Robillard. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Good morning everyone.

We recognize that there is ongoing debate about whether NATO's target of allocating 2% of GDP to defence spending is an accurate way to assess burden sharing within NATO. Would other metrics provide a more meaningful assessment of the extent to which NATO countries are investing adequate human, material, and financial resources in NATO and the manner in which they are actually contributing to NATO's combat readiness and effectiveness?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Can you hear me?

[*English*]

The Chair: Try that again. I think we may have audio now.

Go ahead, Ambassador.

Ms. Kerry Buck: All right.

The Chair: Yes, we have you now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kerry Buck: Mr. Robillard, as you said, the 2% metric is a way to measure the allies' contribution, but other methods and metrics are possible.

[*English*]

In sum, we look at cash capabilities and contributions. The capability, interoperability, agility, and capacity to deploy troops who are trained and able to do the job is the key thing for NATO and the alliance. Canada has always been there. We've participated in every NATO mission and operation throughout NATO's long history.

The 2% metric, as I said, is one of those metrics. It measures the overall percentage of defence spending, as you know, against GDP. Canada's new defence policy—"Strong, Secure, Engaged"—has injected significant new resources into Canada's defence plans. This significant investment is recognized by our allies.

For 2017, Canada is estimated to have spent roughly 1.31% of its GDP on defence. We rank 15th among NATO members in this regard. However, if you look at us per capita, for instance, we're ranked 6th. We make a healthy contribution to NATO, and we have reversed the decline in defence spending, which was the pledge made at Warsaw.

More importantly, as I said, we are also investing more under "Strong, Secure, Engaged" in our capabilities. NATO's target is to spend 20% of defence expenditure on major equipment by 2020, and under "Strong, Secure, Engaged", it's forecast to reach 32.2%. There are other metrics as well, but I won't go into the details of those.

My main message is that Canada has respected troops and capabilities, and we deploy highly trained, highly capable troops when NATO needs them.

• (0915)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: On the same topic, would the use of metrics other than the proportion of GDP allocated to defence spending help NATO to improve its assessment of the extent to which and the ways in which individual NATO countries are making a contribution?

LGen Marquis Hainse: If I may, I'd like to answer that question, Mr. Chair.

In response to your question, the ambassador talked about financial, capability, and military contributions. I'd like to discuss the capability component in greater detail.

NATO has a capability planning process that is reviewed every four years. The last review was done in 2015, and the next review will begin in 2019.

The capability planning process has five steps. The first is to identify the threat and the environment. The second is to determine the requirements, with regard to the environment. Once the military requirements have been identified, targets are set for each nation to make sure the requirements are adequately met. Clearly, target setting takes into account the country's wealth, military capability, force size, and so forth. This very important element is considered in addition to the 2% metric. Canada and the 28 other NATO countries are subject to that process. In 2019, another process will be initiated.

It's worth noting that the current process began in 2015, following the events in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Therefore, collective defence became a higher priority, further increasing the requirements in terms of nation capability. For instance, Canada was given hundreds of targets that it must agree to and achieve within 10 to 20 years.

[English]

The Chair: You have about 40 seconds left for a question and an answer, if you can make that happen.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Impossible.

The Chair: Okay. There will be lots of time, so we'll be able to circle back. I'm going to have to yield the floor to Mr. Yurdiga.

You have the floor.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for joining us this morning.

Actions in eastern Ukraine and its military activities along the eastern flank, growing instability in the Middle East and in North Africa, a threat of transnational terrorism, hybrid warfare, North Korea's ballistic missile program, the list goes on and on.... What should NATO's prime focus be at this time, and does NATO have enough resources in place to be effective?

Ms. Kerry Buck: NATO's prime focus has to be to respond to any threat from any direction at any time. I'll argue that NATO has the capabilities to do so; but NATO, as with any organization, is an organization that adapts, and NATO is also adapting to those threats.

Let me back up a minute. After the end of the Cold War, NATO's focus, as General Hainse said, had shifted very much to out-of-area crisis management operations. There was a certain peace dividend in Euro-Atlantic space and there was less focus on collective defence. With 2014—and you mentioned the illegal annexation of Crimea—it was clear that NATO had to return to collective defence, so it did so. It tripled the size of the NATO response force. It installed a number of smaller headquarters throughout not just the eastern flank, but also the eastern and southeastern flanks, to connect national forces to NATO forces. It constructed the VJTF, the very high-readiness joint task force, a kind of spearhead force; and it put the four new battle groups into the eastern flank—Poland and the Baltics—where Canada is a framework nation, as I mentioned.

NATO has done a lot on collective defence. Many of those decisions, for example, the battle groups in the east, were taken at the Warsaw summit. As we head into the summit this summer, we will be doing what I call "consolidating" those elements and ensuring that there are adequate follow-on forces, reinforcements, and military mobility to strengthen that presence. But can it do the job? Yes, it can.

As NATO focused again on collective defence, it was still very much engaged in out-of-area activity, but there has been a shift there. NATO is still engaged in Afghanistan; it's longest running mission. At the same time, there was a recognition that NATO and its allies could do more to project stability outside of NATO's periphery, using some other means than large-scale operations, through a combination of defence capacity building, what we call "projecting stability". As a result, there's been much more done, for instance, in Ukraine, in Georgia, in Jordan, and around NATO's periphery to help project that stability.

You asked what the prime focus was, and NATO has to do it all. As I said, there's been a real sea change since 2014, and NATO has adapted to meet that change in the security environment. There's also consolidation. At the forthcoming summit, we expect there will likely be an adaptation of the NATO command structure, more on projecting stability, more on defence capacity building, including in places such as Iraq, and more consolidation of NATO's deterrence posture on the eastern flank, and in the southeast as well, with Romania and Bulgaria

Thank you.

• (0920)

Mr. David Yurdiga: Just considering the ever-increasing conflicts worldwide, how important is it for countries like Canada to live up to their commitments of 2% GDP on military spending?

Ms. Kerry Buck: As I said in my answer to the first question, capability in terms of contributions is a part of measuring a country's contribution to international peace and security. Canada has been there in one way or the other and has participated and contributed to every NATO mission, operation, and activity since NATO's founding.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Thank you.

My next question refers to the newly created PESCO. Some think there will be competition for resources. How will PESCO and NATO co-operate when their mandates overlap?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Since the alliance was founded, there has been a sense, at least in the U.S.—and this is from the very first years of the alliance—that Europe needed to get to a place where Europe would contribute more to Euro-Atlantic security. The creation of a number of new tools inside the European Union to do more on defence and security, frankly, are very welcome. It's PESCO plus a number of other tools that they are developing, such as the European defence fund, etc. If it means there will be more interoperability... For instance, across Europe there will be too many tank systems to achieve interoperability. If there's a way of doing R and D procurement, capability, development, and deployments that make the European system more efficient and ensure Europe contributes more to European defence, that's all very good news.

There had been some early concerns that there would be competition between NATO and the EU, but I'm very happy to say there has been significant progress on that front with the NATO-EU very rich menu of co-operation across a whole span of activities including capability, development, and deployments. Those were concretized in a joint declaration at the Warsaw summit, and we have since expanded the menu of co-operation with NATO-EU.

Canada has a special place in that because we concluded CETA with Europe, with the EU. We have the SPA, the Strategic Partnership Agreement, in place. We have historically been contributing to European security measures as well, so we can talk to both sides at Brussels, and we do talk to both sides at Brussels about making NATO and the EU work together as the EU increases its defence capacities.

• (0925)

LGen Marquis Hainse: Can I add something to this, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: Actually, no. We're going to move on. I'm going to have to give the floor over to the next person with a question.

Mr. Fisher.

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

Lieutenant-General Hainse, Lieutenant-General Whitecross, and Ambassador Buck, welcome. Thank you very much.

I guess, Ambassador Buck, I'll be seeing you in a couple of weeks in Brussels. I'm looking forward to seeing you.

I want to touch a little bit on what Mr. Robillard started off with. As you can tell, the committee is quite interested in the whole 2% issue and the whole burden-sharing discussion. I understand that there is a standardization within NATO, an audit process, on how member countries contribute through GDP. I'm interested in that process. Until this morning, I wasn't even aware of this internal process, despite the fact that we on this committee always talk about and hear a lot about how different countries calculate their spending differently.

Are you able to fill me in a little bit on this standardization, this internal audit, within the NATO headquarters and how this occurs?

Ms. Kerry Buck: I'll start.

There's an agreed methodology to report defence expenditures. Those agreed definitions have remained largely unchanged since 1950. Overall defence expenditures are defined by NATO as payments made by national governments specifically to meet the needs of its armed forces, those of allies, or of the alliance. They're very detailed instructions, which have been agreed by the alliance underneath that broad rubric, and include the following categories: military personnel, civilian personnel, pensions, operations and maintenance. I won't go through the whole list.

There are some, I won't call them, "different" interpretations, but allies will at times structure their armed forces differently to meet their own security and defence needs. For instance, in some countries a border or coast guard would be an integral part of the armed forces. It makes defence sense for some allies to do it that way. It doesn't for Canada.

Someone said that defence expenditure is a case of apples and oranges, that there are a lot of variations, but that's not quite true. There are agreed definitions, and we use that methodology pretty consistently, and there is a push-back function too. There are conversations between the NATO international military staff, international staff, and ours to make sure that what we're all reporting on defence spending is within those guidelines. It's a very structured process with a whole lot of due diligence included.

Canada, as we went into the defence policy review and from having done many internal reviews, discovered that we had been under-reporting to NATO, so there was an increase entirely consistent with the NATO guidelines, but we sought to capture more of the Canadian defence spending at the time. That's legitimate defence spending according to NATO's definitions.

• (0930)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you for that. I appreciate it.

Coming back to the burden-sharing question, the 2%, it's easy to tell how cash and contributions can be factored into that 2%, but what about capability?

LGen Marquis Hainse: I can take this one, Mr. Chairman.

Capability is directly related to the NATO defence planning process that I explained earlier. NATO defends the planning process. As I said, it's a four-year process and it starts with five steps. The first step is talking about the environment, understanding what the environment is all about. Once that step is done, then we look at the various requirements that NATO needs to face that environment; that's step two. Then step three is the apportionment of some of those capabilities toward a nation, and this is based on the wealth, structure of its forces, and many factors. Before this capability is apportioned to various nations, a lot of dialogue happens. It does not take place in weeks, but over years, to make sure that we are apportioning the right capabilities to the right nation. Canada is subject to this like any other nation.

Last year we were doing step three, the apportionment for the 2015 process, which will allow us to be able to cover the next 10 years over the medium term, up to the next 20 years. In 2019, we'll start a new process. What was very specific or important to understand in the 2015 process is that it incorporated the renewed focus on collective defence. As a result of this, a lot of nations have been given more targets, Canada included. Canada was given something like 40 more targets than in the previous process. That's how the process works.

The other step is that we make sure that we implement the medium-term targets and then the long-term targets. Then we review the results. What has also changed this year is that all nations have to do a national report. This process is a bit beside the NATO defence planning process. A national report needs to talk about the cash, capabilities, and also the contribution that is made to NATO and to other commitments outside NATO.

Mr. Darren Fisher: It's indispensable as Ambassador Buck said.

I just got cut off.

The Chair: You may have more time at the end.

I'm going to the first question of the five-minute round.

Mr. Spengemann, you have the floor.

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

Thank you, to all our witnesses, and good afternoon.

My question is for Ambassador Buck and Lieutenant-General Whitecross. I'd like to thank you both for raising the issue of gender equality and particularly the UN Security Council Resolution 1325,

on women, peace, and security. Lieutenant-General Whitecross especially, I'd like to thank you for acknowledging the non-binary meaning of gender.

I'm wondering if I could ask both of you to drill down a bit more and give us an appreciation of the challenges, but not so much in terms of attendance numbers. I think it's a combination, of course, of the net contribution at the military level of women numerically in the armed forces of each of the allies, and also the different cultures that exist within the NATO membership on gender equality.

If one were to go into the halls of NATO headquarters and into the field missions at the moment, what appreciation would one get of an effort being under way to change the status quo? Are there any awareness campaigns that are NATO-driven or NATO-directed? Are there any budgets on gender equality or gender equity within the NATO machinery?

Lastly, what support politically, if any, could we give you to make sure that happens more expeditiously?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Maybe I'll start, and Lieutenant-General Whitecross will come in for the NDC's perspective.

There's currently a NATO action plan on women, peace, and security. It's pretty comprehensive, but going into the summit this spring, we want to increase our level of ambition. NATO has done a pretty good job on a few things. It's actually done a pretty good job on awareness raising outside of NATO, with the NATO allied publics, on the women, peace, and security agenda as well as through conversations targeted at women populations to show what NATO does and to present all the work that NATO has done on inclusion, or inclusive security as I call it.

NATO has also done pretty well in integrating a gender perspective into operations. There's mandatory pre-deployment training for instance for deployment to NATO operations. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe issued a directive for all NATO operations to integrate gender perspectives up and down the command chain. NATO has done pretty well on that front, but there's still more to do. There's also been integration of gender into NATO policies.

There are still gaps. There's more to be done on integration of gender into NATO policies. As I explained at the North Atlantic Council, Canada takes a very pragmatic approach to ensure, for instance, when an operation is in the field, that it understands the place of women in the community within which it is operating and that it understands, as NATO is doing defence capacity building, that it's in everyone's security interests to have more women trained in partner nations' armed forces. That's an area where we want to do a bit more.

Finally, there's the percentage of women both inside NATO and inside alliance militaries. Inside NATO, there's both good news and bad news. There's been a bit of backsliding in terms of the number of women in the institution, but there have been some really important senior nominations or senior appointments. General Whitecross is the first female commander of NATO Defense College. The deputy secretary general is a woman. I am Canada's first woman ambassador to NATO after 66 years.

Some improvements have been made in allied militaries. We're doing better than almost any other grouping in the world, but it's still not good enough. For instance, since 1999, there's been only a 4% increase in the number of women in allied militaries averaging up to about just under 11% in 2016. So there's more to do.

• (0935)

LGen Christine Whitecross: Do I have time to add a few things?

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I'd like to hear your views as well, please, General.

LGen Christine Whitecross: Thanks very much.

First of all, I think we need to thank Ambassador Buck for her leadership on this because there's not a day that goes by when I don't talk to her and hear about the great things she's doing on behalf of Canada and NATO. That extends to the dialogue that we're using now in the NATO Defense College, which, to be completely honest, hasn't necessarily been the case in the past. I think we can underestimate the impact the dialogue has, because in this particular case Canada also sent some very influential leaders to the NATO Defense College. I'm not talking about myself, but some of my staff. We're very thankful for that. To our NATO allies and to our partner nations, it's showing the capabilities we can add.

We're also bringing GBA, which, of course, is one of the Canadian means, to help out with the policy to ensure that there is no gender bias in their analysis. We're working on that within the NATO Defense College to make sure that it's taken into account. We have our very first gender adviser, which is a long time coming to be particularly honest. We're also working with Norfolk, Allied Command Transformation on some courses that we hope to instill within the college, whether it's in-house or online via distance learning.

If I could just add one more thing, obviously the new special representative for women, peace and Security here in NATO is a Canadian, Clare Hutchinson, and between her and Ambassador Buck, I think we're well suited going into the future.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. O'Toole.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's nice to see you again.

Thank you very much. I think all Canadians can be very proud of the exceptional leadership that we have in Europe. Thank you for joining us this morning, or this afternoon, for you. It's nice to see my old director of cadets, from RMC, General Hainse. It's nice to see you.

I have a couple of questions. One relates to Minister Freeland's comments in November that Canada was exploring the option of a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine, and that she had spoken to the U. S. special representative for Ukraine, Kurt Volker, and the UN Secretary-General about that. I'm just wondering, as we're exploring that option—and I think all sides support it, and certainly the Conservatives do—Ambassador, how might that impact, if at all, an enhanced forward presence in the various NATO operations that have been stood up with respect to Russian aggression in Ukraine?

Ms. Kerry Buck: First, on the peacekeeping proposals, any United Nations peacekeeping mission in Ukraine would have to respect that country's territorial integrity. Canada is very supportive of international efforts by Mr. Volker and others to develop a broad agreement regarding the potential establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission, provided that the mandate of such a mission recognizes Ukraine's capacity to exercise full sovereignty over its territory. In shorthand, having something along the line of contact that effectively freezes the conflict in the Donbass is not something that would achieve Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. That Russian proposal isn't acceptable to us or anyone else who's trying to work on the peacekeeping mandate. Reaching agreement on such a mandate remains challenging and I might hazard a guess that it will be challenging until at least after the Russian election. The U.S. and others are working to try to bring folks together to see if an agreement can be reached.

You asked about the impact on the forward presence in the Baltics and Poland. I don't want to engage in hypotheticals about the security impact, but NATO moved into that area because of a need. It's about deterrence and projecting the political commitment of the alliance to defend all allies. Deterrence is both a political message of unity and a message of unity that is projected through four battle groups in the Baltics and Poland. That was a decision taken and we've got a mandate for those battle groups to be part of deterrence for the next couple of years at least. Those two aren't related and I don't see NATO pulling back at all from its presence in the Baltics and Poland for the time being. Unless there's a radical shift in the security situation, I don't foresee that.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Thank you very much.

In your remarks, a few of you mentioned the 2016 Warsaw summit and the need for enhanced presence in the North Atlantic.

Building upon that, we have recently seen China express its desire to use trade routes through the Arctic, as part of its positioning as a near Arctic state. With respect to the Northwest Passage and the North Atlantic extending into the Arctic and our domestic waters, is that going to be part of an enhanced NATO presence?

General Hainse mentioned the one frigate that we generally have with the standing NATO fleet, but are there going to be air or sea assets dedicated to more polar waters, given not only the enhanced Russian military presence in their Arctic region, but certainly also the desire of the Chinese to demonstrate their presence and develop trade routes through our sovereign Arctic waters?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Maybe I will start on this. NATO has been focusing on areas of heightened threat and risk. Where we see the heightened risk is in the North Atlantic, particularly the North Atlantic in the European space. Some of that goes into the European Arctic, but we don't see an active military threat in our own Arctic that requires any NATO approach for that region. While NATO has eyes wide open on the entire space, we're focusing very much on the North Atlantic and primarily on the Greenland-Iceland-UK corridor, where we see Russia starting to project its forces from its own Arctic.

There will definitely be more maritime presence in the North Atlantic. That's an ongoing issue and an ongoing strand of work of NATO to enhance our maritime posture in a comprehensive situational awareness in the North Atlantic, but again, we're not talking about a military threat in our own Arctic right now. That's actually an area of co-operation. We and our Arctic Council allies at the table here—our NATO allies, who are members of the Arctic Council—see our Arctic with that same optic, as an area of relative co-operation.

• (0945)

The Chair: I'm going to have to stop there and move over to Ms. Alleslev.

You have the floor.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you very much. What a pleasure to have you guys here today.

I would like to focus on the NATO Defence College. Over the last five years, can you give us an idea about how many Canadians have attended the NATO Defence College, out of the total population of attendees?

LGen Christine Whitecross: Just so we're aware of the way that the NATO Defence College is populated, the number of seats given is based on the military contribution of the nations. Canada has six seats per year, so three on each of the senior courses. This is the long six-month course.

Canada has been averaging about six per year in the last 10 years, but I am pleased to say that, on the next course, we're going to have five. We had two in the last. We will have five on the course that starts in two weeks. Canada has been providing their maximum number of Canadian seats. That isn't necessarily the case with the other nations.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Excellent. About how many of those are female, just for interest's sake?

LGen Christine Whitecross: I have that as well. Over the last five years, about one-third of them were women from Canada.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Perfect. How does that compare to other nations' contribution?

LGen Christine Whitecross: To be frank, it's a lot higher. In the last two courses, we're running at about 6% to 11% of women on the course, but generally, Canada is one of the few nations that is providing women.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Outstanding.

From your perspective, how valuable—I mean, it's kind of a trick question because you are responsible for the college—or important is the college in terms of its networking, bringing people together, and its fundamental understanding of NATO and NATO priorities?

LGen Christine Whitecross: Thanks very much for that question. I'm going to tackle it in a couple of ways.

First of all, we provide more than just the senior course. Since the early 2000s, the college has also been open to our partner nations, of which there are more than 40. Whether they're from the Mediterranean dialogue, ICI nations, Gulf countries, or partnership for peace, you name it, there are a number of countries that are very much interested in coming to the NATO Defence College to learn about NATO.

What they get from it, when they depart at the end of the course, are the network opportunities for all of these other nations. I think the real uniqueness that the college provides, not just to NATO and to our partners, is that we have a group in a room, from disparate countries, who are “forced”—and I use that word in quotes—to come to consensus on issues that pertain to them personally, in terms of the regions of the world that they come from, and that pertain to NATO. So, with the influence of NATO on the regions and the regions' influence on NATO, they're forced to come to an understanding on the perspectives of the other people who are actually on the course.

This isn't necessarily something that we see in other defence colleges and universities around the globe.

• (0950)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Once upon a time, Canada had an NDC, where the N stood for National Defence College.

If we believe that this coming together, consensus-building, and educational environment for senior leaders is important within a NATO context to define NATO priorities, would it be unfair to extrapolate that, in terms of a national capability, it would also be something that would benefit us at home? Would it do that not only in terms of educating our officers in the NATO context, but also in the broader context, because the National Defence College looked at other countries that are not NATO allies?

LGen Christine Whitecross: Only because I used to be CMP and the Canadian Forces College reported to me, I'm a little bit unsure....

Ms. Leona Alleslev: The National Defence College, not the Canadian Forces College. The National Defence College for senior officers.

LGen Christine Whitecross: Right. If I can just say, the Canadian Forces College changed its curriculum to include the generals' courses, the colonels' courses for those who would be promoted into generals, what we call DP4, “developmental period four”. That includes the national security course for very senior executives in the Canadian Armed Forces, and in government—so military and civilian, to what the NATO defence—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: But it doesn't include travelling to Egypt and Japan, and meeting other senior leaders of other governments and other militaries in the same way, from a networking approach, does it?

LGen Christine Whitecross: I don't believe so, no, it doesn't.

The Chair: I'm going to turn the floor to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank our witnesses for taking the time out of their busy schedules to be with us. It's good to see you again.

I appreciated the briefings that we had when we were in Brussels at NATO headquarters. It's good to get some of this on the public record, as well, following up on those discussions.

I know that when we were in Brussels, I asked a question about Turkey as an alliance member and some of the decisions they've made recently and how that may have an impact on their relationship with NATO. In particular, they have procured some new air defence systems from Russia, which aren't interoperable with most NATO nations. In the war against ISIS, they recently attacked one of the coalition partners, the Kurdish YPJ, who have been strongly supportive of the Americans, the Brits, and others, who are all NATO members. Maybe NATO itself has been supportive of some of these Kurdish players, including the Kurdish peshmerga in Iraq, with whom Canada has been working.

How is this going to impact the relationship, with Turkey as a trusted partner? How do we visualize doing some mediation to try to get them to back down from attacking innocent civilians in the city of Afrin?

Ms. Kerry Buck: The alliance's strongest asset is unity. It's the centre of gravity for the alliance. It's a consensus-based organization. That consensus and that joint commitment to NATO and to NATO unity is really important, and Turkey is a long-standing ally. Thus it's in Canada's interest, it's in the alliance's interest, to have Turkey at the table, and they occupy a particular space as well.

Geographically, they have inroads in a region that's very important to NATO's security. They're a Muslim nation, which is an important factor as well. Turkey is an important ally in NATO, and it's in our interest to keep them as an important ally in NATO.

That doesn't mean that we don't have concerns, but we choose to express those concerns to Turkey. We choose to do it in a way that won't rupture alliance unity. For instance, on the escalation of hostilities in northwest Syria and what Turkey is calling "Operation Olive Branch", we have had briefings at the NAC by Turkey about Operation Olive Branch, and Canada has been clear and Minister Freeland issued a statement about the fact that while we recognize Turkey's legitimate security concerns, we also urge restraint, call for every possible effort to be made to protect civilians as Turkey carries out what it's carrying out in northwest Syria, and urge them to continue to focus on defeating Daesh.

We managed to deliver those messages to Turkey, where we're concerned. You mentioned the S-400, the purchase of assets from Russia, as well, and that's something we also raised with Turkey.

We work with a close ally to deliver those messages, while maintaining alliance unity.

● (0955)

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

I want to follow up a bit more about China's near-Arctic policy and development of the polar Silk Road, and the impact that it could have not just on North Atlantic security, but Arctic security.

We have a particular capability in Canada, with Arctic expertise. Maybe it's a niche where Canada could be offering to do more training and interoperations with NATO members.

Have there been any thoughts of setting up a centre of excellence? I know right now the Canadian Armed Forces are getting ready for Operation Nunavut, which is taking place in Resolute and in Cambridge Bay. Should we possibly be doing more training with NATO members and making use of our resources in the Arctic to get them better prepared to deal with potential Arctic threats from Russia and others?

Ms. Kerry Buck: On Arctic training—or I'll call it "North Atlantic training", because we really are focusing on the North Atlantic here—yes, we do have specific capabilities. So do Norway, for instance, and close NATO partners Finland and Sweden. We, NATO, have been ramping up our exercising and we've included North Atlantic partners as well.

As I said earlier, we're also focusing on more maritime, and so on, and more situational awareness around the North Atlantic.

Regarding China, there has been a lot of discussion at the North Atlantic Council about the security environment in Asia, and by "Asia" I mean all of Asia. We've had a lot of discussion, obviously, about North Korea.

When we talk about situational awareness and Russia, we will also inevitably talk about China and we have been doing more outreach to Asian partners to increase our situational awareness. However, the focus has not been on China in the Arctic, by any stretch. We've been focusing on *[Inaudible—Editor]*, and more about China's role vis-à-vis North Korea.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mark, you have the last formal question.

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

I'll direct my question to General Hainse, but if somebody else is more comfortable answering, I'm fine with that.

Canada withdrew in 2012 from the AWACS program. What was the reaction of our allies at the time?

LGen Marquis Hainse: Canada withdrew from that program, if I can go back a little bit. At that particular juncture, we were one of the founding members of the AWACS community. We were the third largest contributor to AWACS, in terms of funds and personnel. In 2011 when we announced that we were going to withdraw, it was a big surprise to me. We need to understand and remember why we were at that particular juncture. That's why we took the time to explain to our allies. Their reaction was certainly one of surprise—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Sorry if I'm interrupting you, but I'm really limited in time.

What was our rationale for doing that?

LGen Marquis Hainse: Our rationale was that at that point we were going through a strategic review, and we were looking at the least performing program. At that particular juncture, we thought that the NATO AWACS program was not doing enough out-of-area operations that we had asked to receive some support for, and we didn't. Since then, though, NATO AWACS has to do out-of-area operations.

•(1000)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Sorry. The feed here is kind of breaking up a little bit.

Could you repeat the last sentence?

LGen Marquis Hainse: At that particular juncture, NATO AWACS was not doing a lot in terms of out-of-area operations.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

But NATO is doing more now, correct?

LGen Marquis Hainse: A lot more now.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just to confirm, there have been reports suggesting that the United States has asked NATO to contribute to the program in the war against the Islamic State. Is that correct?

LGen Marquis Hainse: Yes, we do exactly that. We did provide AWACS with regard to supporting ISR in both Iraq and Syria and to Turkey, for that matter.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: When that occurred, according to Commander Paddy Teakle, it put the program in a precarious position.

Would you agree with that?

LGen Marquis Hainse: I'm not sure what you are referring to with that particular comment. I've never heard that it put the program in a precarious position. It just put the program where I think it should be. He has to understand what is happening within NATO territory, but we also need to understand what is happening at the periphery of NATO territory. This is certainly what did happen with regard to providing support in that context.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes. I was referencing a report that was in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

In any event, our role here is really to give recommendations to the government through our committee. What would your recommendation be from an operational perspective? I'm not trying to drag you into the politics of it, but from an operational perspective, can you comment on how important you think it is for Canada to be an active participant in AWACS, or not?

LGen Marquis Hainse: [Technical difficulty—Editor] I would provide you the context as far as I can, and I'm not going to take the role of the chief of defence staff, as you will understand. It is his role to provide that advice. For NATO, AWACS is clearly a very important program in providing ISR assets of what's happening in NATO territory and outside NATO territory.

The fact, clearly, right now, is that NATO is expecting all of the nations to provide at least operation and support, money, in terms of that program. We have yet to totally come to grips with this. As for Canada, it is my understanding that the government is at this point considering this. In terms of whether we should participate or not in

terms of their contribution to NATO AWACS at this particular juncture, I'm sorry, but I'll refrain from offering my open hand. I would say that NATO AWACS is going to be a very important program at this particular time.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I appreciate your candour and your honesty.

Thank you.

The Chair: That ends the formal questioning. We have a little less than 40 minutes to go. I'm going to divide the time equally amongst members with five-minute questions.

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

You have the floor.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

NATO and the United Nations share a commitment to maintaining international peace and security. Can you comment on the framework for a NATO-UN co-operation and the evolution of NATO-UN co-operation in the field?

Ms. Kerry Buck: As you said, there's a shared commitment to international peace and security, and the two organizations have been co-operating very closely in that area since the early 1990s, both in support of peace accord operations and crisis management operations. This kind of co-operation will play out in different ways. For instance, in some theatres, the UN will be more focused on post-conflict stabilization and coordination, and facilitation of some of the humanitarian and development assistance, while NATO, for instance, would be focusing more on either the harder edge security or defence capacity building.

Each organization has its area of expertise, and they share areas of expertise at times as well.

We realize that here and recognize it, so we've been enhancing the dialogue between NATO and the UN as well. We've formalized liaison arrangements. NATO has an office in New York, and the UN Secretary-General participates in the high-level segments at the General Assembly every year.

We had a meeting last week with the UNHCR special envoy on women and peace and sexual violence in conflict as well at the NAC last week for instance. That's one example.

•(1005)

Mr. David Yurdiga: Moving on to the relationship between NATO and NORAD, can you comment on that?

Ms. Kerry Buck: General Hainse may be better situated to give you more details on that. NORAD is focused on North American air defence and the supreme allied commander's area of responsibility is outside of the NORAD ambit. It's almost like a division of labour. For instance, ballistic missile defence, as we deal with it at NATO, is related to ballistic missile defence of European air space. That's NATO's ambit and SACEUR's ambit.

I'll leave it at that unless you have more detailed questions about NORAD.

LGen Marquis Hainse: This is exactly right. There's a seam between NORAD and NATO, and we do need to understand the seams and what we can and cannot do. In the future, this could be something that could be worked on a bit better. We talked about AWACS a few minutes ago. Maybe AWACS could work better from a Canadian perspective to work out the seams. We're not there yet, but this could certainly be an area that could be improved, and in terms of ballistic missile defence, clearly, there is no link at all between the two [*Inaudible—Editor*].

Mr. David Yurdiga: Thank you. That's all I have for questions.

The Chair: Mr. Spengemann, for five minutes.

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

My question is for Ambassador Buck.

I'm going to begin with a rhetorical proposition. In addition to our collective capacity within NATO, the biggest deterrent to Vladimir Putin and others who seek to threaten us is our collective belief in and preference for the values of democracy.

I wanted to sound you out from the small "p" political track. In 2018, where are we across our allies with respect to the intensity of that belief and the values of democracy and our preference for it? Where is public appreciation of the value of NATO and the work of NATO?

We've got hashtags in social media including #WeAreNATO, but is there anything else that needs to happen to make sure that we raise NATO to the level of public prominence and appreciation that it needs to be in, in 2018?

If not, again, is there anything that we can do on the political track to support that?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Thanks very much for that.

NATO is primarily a political military alliance, and I will insist on the political part of that. Quite often, in the view of the public, it's seen as primarily a military alliance—yes—but it has a big political role.

The values of democracy are written into the Washington treaty, and to be frank, inside the alliance, adherence to those principles of democracy has waxed and waned over the years. It is what it is. We're an alliance of democracies, and at times, democratic choices and other political developments inside some of the alliance has not gone in the direction of full respect for democracy, and I'm talking about the past. There have been governments inside the alliance ruled by juntas, and so on.

That doesn't detract from the weight and the value of the alliance as a political alliance, an alliance of shared values. In a way, it becomes a space where we can keep people in the tent, keep allies in the tent, and try to reinforce and re-instill those values.

You asked about the public appreciation for NATO. NATO has done a lot to help publicize what NATO's mandate is inside the alliance, and NATO has a couple of public diplomacy campaigns running right now. We learned for instance that Canadians know of NATO and know that they support NATO, but they don't know enough about what NATO does. We're not in a bad space on that

front, but the more public diplomacy by committee members, the better.

The NATO association is doing a great job of spreading good news. We're trying to focus on getting the message out to youth and out to a broader swath of the population across the alliance, not just youth but also women, to ensure that there's a greater understanding of NATO's political role as well.

•(1010)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you for that answer.

I have a very brief follow-up, Mr. Chair, in the remaining minute.

Is there a NATO budget item that speaks to the promotion of the political component of the alliance and its promotion among the member states? Are there channels that we're not tapping into as well as we could, even as parliamentarians here at home, to share with our constituencies the work and the values of NATO?

Ms. Kerry Buck: The political role of NATO runs across the whole alliance, on the military side and the civilian side. For instance, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe has a diplomatic role, as does the commandant of the NATO Defence College, and so on. The political work is supported across the budget of NATO. There's also the public diplomacy section that engages directly in public diplomacy, and they have a budget line item inside NATO as well. Then there are partnership activities that are partially funded by allies and partially funded by the alliance. These help spread the news among NATO's 40-plus partner countries about what NATO does and also help build awareness and capacity.

I don't know if I've answered your question.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's helpful, yes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that's my time.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Benson.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Hello everyone. I'm pleased to be here.

Ambassador Buck, in your view, are there any legal obstacles to Canada's signing on to the nuclear prohibition treaty?

Ms. Kerry Buck: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons goes much further than simply banning the possession of nuclear weapons on a nation's own soil. It prohibits a range of activities—the transfer, deployment, stationing, or stockpiling of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Also, it broadly prohibits any party to the treaty from assisting, encouraging, or inducing another state to engage in prohibited activities.

This means that any state that chooses to ratify the ban treaty would immediately find itself unable to support, for instance, NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements, which are a critical element of NATO's nuclear deterrence that extends to all allies, including Canada.

For these reasons, the nuclear ban treaty is fundamentally incompatible with the collective defence commitments that Canada and its allies have made and regularly reaffirmed since the founding of NATO.

That being said, a pillar or cornerstone of NATO's nuclear policy is that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are a core element of NATO's and Canada's approach to nuclear deterrence as well. It's a core part of our policy, and it has been restated and reaffirmed, for instance, in the Warsaw summit communiqué and in the North Atlantic Council's statement on the nuclear ban treaty.

In that statement we reiterated—and I don't want to get too lawyerly here—article 6 of the NPT that talks about the step-by-step and a verifiable way of achieving nuclear disarmament. Canada is actually leading one of the most viable channels to move that step-by-step approach to disarmament forward, the fissile material cut-off treaty. That's outside of NATO, obviously, but we're still firmly committed to that part.

•(1015)

Ms. Sheri Benson: Just to confirm, you're saying that there are legal obstacles to Canada being able to sign that treaty. I think in this committee we have heard from other experts that, in fact, that is not their interpretation. I just want to clarify that you're saying there are legal obstacles for Canada to be able to actually sign that treaty.

Ms. Kerry Buck: What I said is that the ratification and the signing of a nuclear ban treaty would run counter to our commitments inside NATO. I haven't worked as a lawyer for decades and it really wouldn't be a good idea for me, off the top of my head, to give a legal opinion.

Ms. Sheri Benson: Just finally, I'm wondering if you might tell this committee the status of the NATO committee on proliferation. Specifically, is this committee active, and if so, what are the measures on the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Is it talking about who is chairing the committee? Just basically give an update for the parliamentary committee on that committee.

Thank you.

Ms. Kerry Buck: What I can tell you is that, at the North Atlantic Council, both at the ambassadorial level and at the ministerial level, we have had multiple meetings of the NPG, multiple discussions of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and the nuclear deterrent.

The committee you referenced is active. It's a conversation that is very live at NATO right now.

Ms. Sheri Benson: Okay.

I have 25 seconds.

Just a quick search of the NATO website shows that the committee on proliferation organized an annual NATO conference on arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation as part of the outreach efforts. Can you provide the committee—you probably don't have enough time—with some more information on this conference, and are there some plans to hold one in 2018?

Thank you.

Ms. Kerry Buck: I think I can get back with a written answer on that one, if that's all right.

The Chair: Perfect. That would be helpful.

I am happy to circle back and give you some more time. We will have time for that.

I'm going to yield the floor to Mr. Bezan.

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

I have just a quick question for General Whitecross. It's a difficult posting you have in Rome—nothing to see there and no places to visit.

You talked about how the NATO Defense College has had to evolve and stay current, especially with the way the threat environment has changed in the last four years. In your tenure there, what have you seen of how the program has changed?

I was also just curious as to whether the NATO Defense College has seen a big change in the doctrine of how NATO operates and how you pass that on to the officers who are there for training.

LGen Christine Whitecross: This is a really difficult post in Rome, so thanks for that.

I have a couple of things. In the last year, we've undergone an academic curriculum review that looked at what kind of education the NATO Defense College provides based on the future security environment. We did that based on the fundamental documents that have come from NATO headquarters, ACT and ACO in Norfolk, and, in Mons, SACEUR.

We put those together and looked at the objectives that were currently in mind, and then we identified whether or not we needed to make changes. I'm happy to say that the curriculum review has identified a number of what I think are good, substantive changes, particularly a refocusing on Russia, for obvious reasons, in a seminar format that we hadn't done in the past, a refocusing on China, and a larger influential engagement on the MENA region in terms of the "projecting stability" pillar of NATO. In terms of the academic curriculum review, we've done that in the last year, and we're just starting to implement those changes.

We're also in the process, as I mentioned in my opening comments, of doing a strategic planning effort for the college to take it into whatever the NDC will look like in the future in the 2020-30 time frame, to make sure there aren't gaps that we're missing in our responsiveness to nations' needs in the alliance. I think there's more that the college could do, for example, in distance learning and the like. There is a huge increase in the appetite of our partners to get into some of the courses, but coming to Rome could be a bit to endure given the cost, so it's good to be able to provide another alternative. We're looking at different ways to spread the message, as it were.

On the last point in terms of the doctrine work, we're constantly in discussions with the headquarters, but within the college we also have a research division that has links to think tanks around the world in many countries, including here in the headquarters in Brussels. We're constantly relooking at how we're providing the education. As I mentioned, we don't have in-house faculty who do that. We actually take from the outside the academics, the government folks, and the military folks from around the world, and we bring them to the college so they can provide current and relevant information to the course members.

•(1020)

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

Ambassador Buck, as you know, coming up in April, the North Atlantic Treaty will have been signed 69 years ago. The articles haven't really been updated in quite some time.

Of course, we always talk about article 4 as the ability to consult, and about article 5 as an attack on one being an attack on all, but it always specifies an armed attack, but, of course, war has changed dramatically. We have cyberwarfare and we have electronic warfare, and those operations just as easily could take out air defence systems, tracking systems, and the ability to keep the security and peace within a region. There's also hybrid warfare, where now we have non-state players or people who are being used by other states, but you know, little green men, fake news, terrorist organizations....

How do we evolve as an alliance to ensure that article 5 can be used when need be in the event of our dealing with something that's not considered an armed attack, but definitely would have the same type of impact, whether it's a missile or, when you look at cyberwarfare and electronic warfare models, an invasion?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Article 5 has grown with the times. It is embedded in international humanitarian law, the law of self-defence. It's clear that this body of law has evolved over time to recognize that an armed attack can take different forms, and yet will still reach that article 5 threshold. For instance, in Warsaw, leaders recognized that a cyber attack could amount to an article 5 attack.

The challenge for NATO these days is that there's what we call a grey zone. It's that grey zone that the Russians occupy so well. For instance, General Gerasimov is the Russian chief of defence staff. His doctrine talks about a continuum of warfare wherein about two-thirds of their tools of warfare aren't armed attack. The Russians will use active campaigns of different disinformation throughout every stage of warfare. Dealing in that grey zone becomes a challenge for NATO and for other countries seeking to respond to attacks that are just below that article 5 threshold.

The good news is that there's a much deeper understanding of hybrid threats and cyber threats. NATO has done a lot, and I mean a lot, to update plans, strategies, to harden cyber infrastructure inside NATO and among allies so we can respond and prevent such attacks that fall below the article 5 threshold.

NATO has also done a lot to increase its situational awareness with a real investment in the intelligence analysis, hybrid fusion cells, active steps to counter misinformation, and to keep eyes on those hybrid or asymmetric threats that could amount to something, or to prevent them at source.

We're living this in a very real way in our battle group in Latvia. There are active and constant Russian misinformation campaigns targeting our battle group and the other battle groups in the Baltics and Poland. We've hardened our cyber capacity. We've trained our troops during pre-deployment training about preventing and not being susceptible to misinformation. We've got people at the centre of excellence, StratCom, and we're working with the centre on hybrid.

A lot is going on to respond to that grey zone and to limit the grey zone and to know when to act.

That was a long answer, I apologize.

•(1025)

The Chair: No, that was very much appreciated.

I'll let the next couple of questions run long. I think the committee needed to hear that answer, and thank you for it.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Darren Fisher, and I'll be very liberal with your time, as I will with Ms. Benson.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General Hainse, you mentioned 40 extra targets that NATO tasked Canada with. Are you able to provide a little more detail? I assume that some of that is public or you can share some of that with us.

Are you able to confirm that these 40 extra targets are reflected in our new defence policy?

LGen Marquis Hainse: As you can appreciate, sir, I'm not able to give you the details of those targets. I might have said 40, but there are actually a bit more than 40 if I compare them to the last cycle. What I can say to you is that Canada was given 222 targets this time. At this particular juncture, those 222 targets are based on two principles: the principle of fair burden sharing and the principle of "reasonable challenge" to those targets.

Fair burden-sharing, obviously, is based on what NATO, as an alliance, thinks that Canada should contribute in terms of its forces and its size and its wealth. The challenge is based on what we think Canada can do in the various time frames. As we negotiated this process with regard to those targets, and as we were going through the negotiations, the defence policy review was happening at the same time.

Is this totally in sync? Not everything is perfect. I'm not sure it is totally in sync. Was it considered? I can guarantee you that it was considered. Is there still more work to be done? There's absolutely no doubt that there's still more work to be done, but we are deeply involved in this process. At the end of the day we have accepted all of our targets. Some, again, are for the medium term. Some are for longer terms. Then we will see how these things will evolve.

That's part of the five steps. We are required to report on those every second year. We are going to report on them, and we're going to do some follow-up on those targets attributed to us. We will pay attention to what is being contributed by the other nations also, to make sure they are also responding to those targets.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

Ambassador Buck, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but you mentioned striving towards meaningful dialogue with Russia. Is there any dialogue with Russia? Is there even a conversation happening right now?

Ms. Kerry Buck: There is indeed. You will recall that at the Wales summit, NATO took a decision that it would suspend practical co-operation with Russia. That was following the illegal annexation of Crimea. Since then the Russian destabilizing activities in the Donbass have increased exponentially, so we're still very much in that situation of sending a clear message to Russia that violating those norms of international behaviour is not okay.

At the same time we need the dialogue; we need to keep the channels of dialogue open. We've met in the NATO-Russia Council three times this year. We've discussed such issues. Ukraine's always the first issue on the agenda. We've talked about Afghanistan, and we've talked about risk reduction and transparency. There was an agreement at the last NATO-Russia Council that we would exchange mutual briefings on military exercises, so the dialogue is happening.

Russia paints NATO as an adversary when it speaks to its own population, when it speaks internationally. I think it's fair to say that this dialogue with Russia certainly isn't a meeting of minds when we meet in the NATO-Russia Council, but it is a very important opportunity to express our views—at times, you can imagine, very firm views on what they're doing in Ukraine, for instance. We do meet. We expect to be continuing those meetings in the NATO-Russia Council.

There are also some military-to-military conversations between the Russian chief of defence staff and the chairman of the military committee at NATO. With the supreme allied commander in Europe, there's a plan as well for conversation there.

• (1030)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Can I just ask one more quick one?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Darren Fisher: What could Canada better do within the NATO construct?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Just for NATO?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Yes.

Ms. Kerry Buck: I'm going to start with Latvia, and I cannot overstate how important the signal was of Canada taking on that framework-nation role in Latvia. As General Hainse said, Canada's back in Europe in some kind of sustained presence. It also showed that we cared about the alliance and that we're there. Then, if I extrapolate, as I said before, we participated in very meaningful ways in every single NATO mission operation activity since the alliance began. Where the alliance needs to do new things—like ISR; cyber; women, peace, and security, inclusive security—I think it's fair to say that we're a real thought leader as well. We help push the policies, and then we show up with the right people who can do a really good job. We have very respected troops. Keep doing more of the same is what I'd say. I'm proud of it. We have real leverage here at NATO, and we've earned that.

The Chair: Ms. Benson.

Ms. Sheri Benson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ambassador Buck, could Canada, being a founding member of the alliance and already being a staunch supporter of international efforts to reduce the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, use its influence within NATO to initiate the dialogue for the nuclear prohibition treaty within the alliance? Further to that, would using the annual NATO conference on weapons of mass destruction, WMD, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation be a really good place to continue the dialogue on the nuclear prohibition treaty?

Finally, in your view, could Canada further discussions on this by hosting the next conference?

Ms. Kerry Buck: The challenge with the ban treaty is not only in relation to NATO's nuclear deterrence, but also to the non-proliferation treaty. In many respects, it undercuts the NPT and can be seen to be undercutting some of the mechanisms embedded in the NPT. Honestly, we don't think that the ban treaty is the tool to use to move forward the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. That being said, the sentiment that led to the ban treaty is a very valid one, and a core pillar of Canada's nuclear policy, forever, has been to work towards disarmament and non-proliferation. We, along with other non-nuclear weapon states, including some of those who participate in the sharing arrangements at NATO, were very clear proponents of the disarmament non-proliferation agenda here too, while benefiting from the nuclear deterrence. We sent both of those messages here inside NATO.

I have information on the conference. The last one was held in May in Finland—the NATO conference on proliferation challenges. It talked about a whole host of issues: non-proliferation regimes, regional proliferation challenges, etc. My nuclear policy officer here participated in that.

As for the next conference, an ally has already spoken to host it. I don't know the date; I believe it's in the fall. It's a conference that we participate in, but as I said, non-proliferation, disarmament, and the nuclear deterrence is a very live debate inside the alliance right now at the NAC and the subsidiary committees.

• (1035)

Ms. Sheri Benson: You may have said this, but I'm just wondering who is chairing the NATO committee on proliferation.

Ms. Kerry Buck: We have a lot of nuclear expertise here. The chair is William Alberque, a member of the NATO international staff. The deputy secretary general of NATO, Rose Gottemoeller, is a colleague of mine whom I've been working with for a long time, and she, too, is an expert in all matters nuclear, including non-proliferation and disarmament. We have a lot of expertise here.

Ms. Sheri Benson: This might be a hard question to answer in a minute.

Maybe you can speak to how Canada's interests have changed in NATO since it began in 1949.

Ms. Kerry Buck: Our interest in the international rules-based system has remained constant. How NATO expresses that has shifted over time. During the Cold War, there was a very clear focus on collective defence. With the end of the Cold War, there's been a very clear focus on out-of-area crisis management operations. Now we're back, post-2014, to a world in which we have to do it all at the same time. Coupled with that has been a rise in asymmetric threats of terrorism, for instance, for which NATO has a role to play but it has to work very carefully with its partners. NATO shifted to create over 40 partner states, for a really big network and much deeper relationships with the UN, EU, OSCE, etc.

We're still there in the middle of NATO, but NATO is shifting, and it's kind of in the middle of concentric circles of bodies and states working on international peace and security. It serves Canada's peace and security interests even more in a way.

Ms. Sheri Benson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Given the time we have left, there was the will for a couple of questions.

You can have a couple of minutes, Mr. Bezan, and the last question will go to Ms. Alleslev.

Mr. Bezan.

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

I just want to ask a quick question.

There have been some criticisms that NATO was caught a little bit flat-footed four years ago when Russia walked into Crimea with its little green men. The war in Donbass started. We did an amazing job in standing up the enhanced forward positions in the Baltics and Poland at relatively breakneck speed, but there were a lot of precursors to Russia's invasion of Crimea in Donbass.

How did we miss the signs of Russia's new imperialistic vision when they had already gone into Georgia and Ossetia, and with the Transnistria question in Moldova and the so-called Russian peacekeepers who are situated there and the destabilizing impact they're having on the region, as well as the nuclear sabre-rattling that Putin was doing throughout his tenure as president? How did we not see this coming when all signs pointed to increased not just aggression, but actual invasion of Ukraine and the destabilizing actions along the Baltics and the Polish border?

• (1040)

Ms. Kerry Buck: I wasn't ambassador to NATO at the time.

Mr. James Bezan: I appreciate that. Since you've been there, what lessons have been learned?

Ms. Kerry Buck: I was political director at the time. I was there that Friday afternoon—their morning—when Russia marched into Crimea.

I know from NATO and I know from a Canadian security perspective that we had been tracking for quite a while the shift in Russian behaviour. In 2008 they started building up their military capabilities. That came after a number of years of dropping investments in their military capabilities. They started to build back up to a level that would allow self-defence, starting in 2008, but they also started to shift their doctrine. The situation with Georgia, at the

same time, in 2008, happened in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. There were a lot of signs that Russia was perhaps not going to be the partner that the international community, or at least the west, had hoped Russia might be immediately following the fall of the Cold War.

Could we have predicted the march into Crimea? Maybe. It was obvious that it had been planned for a while. It was executed with remarkable precision.

I think the thing that's most important is how the international community reacted with force and with unity. We kept the sanctions. We put the sanctions in place very, very quickly. Russia was removed from the G8 very, very quickly. We kept those sanctions together. We've kept very hard messages from NATO. We built up on the eastern flank to show Russia that we're committed and that any messing with NATO brings down the entire alliance on Russia's head. That's had an impact on Russian behaviour.

The Chair: Thank you.

The last questioner is Ms. Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

I think I heard you say, Ambassador, but I'd like to see if I can confirm it, that education and public diplomacy about NATO are not only a NATO responsibility, but also the responsibility of parliamentarians and the general public. Did I hear you correctly?

Ms. Kerry Buck: Yes. The NATO parliamentary association is an absolutely key actor in telling Canadians how important NATO is for Canada, so thank you. I would also give a shout-out to the NATO Association of Canada and model NATO meetings. The more the merrier. We're happy to support that.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: I asked because there is a need at this point to make sure we have that communication and education.

Toward that end, General Whitecross, you mentioned think tanks. I wondered if you could give us some Canadian think tanks—if not right now, then perhaps later—that we could also be working with to expand this “thought leadership” and then public diplomacy.

LGen Christine Whitecross: Absolutely we can get you that list.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Outstanding.

Thank you.

The Chair: I'd like to thank you all for your time today. Obviously, one of the reasons the committee undertook this particular study was to highlight the importance of NATO generally and then Canada's relationship with NATO, and to better define our relationship not just in terms of spending but also capability and participation. We need to think about a whole bunch of things when we think about our relationship with NATO.

At the end of this, the intent is to provide some recommendations to the Government of Canada on how we can make it better. It sounds like things are going well, but of course we can always improve. This conversation will go a long way to that end.

Thank you very much for your time. We probably will end up seeing you again at some point.

Have a good day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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