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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): Let's call this meeting to order.

This is meeting number 35 of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

We have with us today three professors, who are probably prone to giving long-winded lectures. I apologize in advance for cutting you off at five minutes. I find that the back and forth between professor and students is much more interesting than the presentations.

I'm going to call on Professor Huebert, then Professor Kimball and Professor Massie for five minutes each, and then the balance of the hour and a half we'll devote to questions and answers.

With that, I'll call on Professor Huebert.

Thank you for making yourself available this morning.

Dr. Robert Huebert (Associate Professor, University of Calgary, As an Individual): Thank you very much for this privilege of being able to share some thoughts about what is becoming, in my view, one of the critical existential threats that Canada faces to its security. What I want to talk about in my five minutes is the increasing threat of the geopolitics to Canadian security writ large, but also Canadian security in the Arctic.

Let me begin by saying that I am seeing now a developing...what I would call the ordinance syndrome, whereby we are trying to diminish the Russian threat. I would take very strong opposition to it.

The geopolitical threat is based on three elements.

The first one is intent. We have a country, Russia, that is intent on being an expansionary power, and we see this from its treatment of Chechens, Georgians, and Ukrainians in 2014. I don't think we should underestimate what that means for Canadian security.

The second part of the geopolitical threat—and this is the one that is probably not getting the attention it deserves—is the weapon technology. The critical point of why this is a threat to Canada is that the Russians, since Putin took power in 1999, have embarked upon a policy of developing a range of not only offensive, conventionally powered weapon systems, but also nuclear-powered weapon systems. What makes it an Arctic threat is the geography of Russia. Many of these weapon systems, both in terms of their surveillance communications but also the means of delivery, are based in the north. Therefore, we are faced with a growing geopo-

litical threat that is focused on tactical nuclear weapons, something that Canada has not fully addressed at this point in time.

We also have to be aware that the Americans have become aware of this growing threat, as evidenced both by a series of strategies that they began to develop by 2016-17 and by a redevelopment of some of their key delivery systems. As a result, we are entering into a new and much more dangerous international era. I suspect that we are going to be seeing, not necessarily the breakdown of nuclear deterrence, but an increasing viability of the possibility of nuclear war fighting, because of these new weapon systems and the intent that is now developing between these two states.

Canada is at risk, for two core reasons.

First and foremost, Canada is, of course, a member of the alliance system that is arrayed against the Russian aggression. This includes both NORAD and NATO. Even if somehow we could geographically isolate ourselves from the result of any form of conflict, be it low probability but still there, any type of conflict would automatically involve us.

However, the real danger to the Canadian Arctic is that, from a defensive position, there are several scenarios we might want to explore. Of course, a limited first strike against North American bases may in fact be the route that the Russians decide to go, in essence trying to blind the Americans by a strike on Thule, and possibly Anchorage, as a means of facilitating a limited nuclear intervention in Europe.

Once again, I want to stress that this is a low probability, but we start seeing the variables coming together. That means that the probability, unfortunately, in my estimation, has increased. As a result, the biggest danger is that Canada has to ensure it is doing its part to allow for protection.

The defence against such a Russian intervention—and possibly even in the longer term, China, and we can talk about that in detail—is twofold.

First of all, we have to demonstrate to the Russians that the defence of North America is seamless, in terms of both the surveillance capability and its delivery capability. This is basically enforcing what General VanHerck, the head of NORTHCOM and NORAD, referred to as extended deterrence.

Second of all, we need to convince the Russians that our commitment is as strong as the Americans' in the defence of the North American homeland. This means, of course, getting the type of weapon systems and capabilities that will assume that in fact such a conflict is possible. The best way of avoiding such a conflict is actually defending against it.

Thank you very much. I look forward to the questions.

The Chair: Thank you. That was very professional, right within five minutes.

Professor Kimball, you have the floor, for five minutes please.

Prof. Anessa Kimball (Full Professor, Université Laval, As an Individual): I thank the standing committee for this invitation to discuss issues associated with Arctic security. These comments are drawn from an understanding of the strategic problems associated with securing the Arctic, alongside the intersecting issues and asymmetric capacities creating challenges for Canada and its partners.

Currently, what we have is a set of partially overlapping institutional arrangements that attempt to manage Arctic challenges concerning great power competition. For example, the Arctic Council's mandates are circumscribed, preventing the securitization of the region by focusing on the environmental and human security aspects. The absence of strong security institutions is shaped by distrust and a lack of confidence when it comes to compliance and monitoring of any sort of security guarantees, ergo the security dilemma.

Of course, we are concerned about Russian reactions. It goes without saying that NATO's enlargement to include Finland and Sweden would enhance multilateral security in the region for Canada and its partners. I'd be happy to speak to that in the question and answer period.

If we're looking at the strategic problems in the Arctic, we can characterize them under the following approaches. The ones we are supporting right now represent a minimal cost to mitigating issues, for example, codifying norms of behaviour in the region with respect to the environment, durable development, and the participation of the communities in the region.

Second, there are ongoing efforts to encourage the positive and discourage the negative externalities of state actions in the region, particularly when it comes to the environment.

Of course, rational institutionalists would say these are the easiest behaviours, but observance and compulsion through enforcement are a central concern that we have not addressed strategically or institutionally.

One key aspect of competition in the region is concerns over distribution, which is a central strategic problem we are trying to mitigate through institutions and agreements. This involves the protection of exclusive economic zones and the potential for the degradation of these zones with increasing commercial and military traffic in the area. Increasing militarization of the region due to great power competition significantly raises the risk of accidental crises. Moreover, Russia's demonstrated difficulty in complying with commitments, as we've seen in Ukraine around past security guarantees

and humanitarian corridors, does not make it much of a credible partner, even if a bargain could be struck.

Finally, uncertainty about future actor behaviour by both Russia and China creates more problems. For example, China has increasing interest in the region, but it is not integrated into any institutions. It is an observer to the Arctic Council, but has identified the Arctic as an increasingly important strategic region for rivalry and resource extraction. It's set to complete its heavy icebreakers by 2025, creating the potential for a polar silk road, part of its larger belt and road initiative. While some seek to tamper this discourse in China, its actions in the Arctic evidence a state seeking to secure influence and access.

Documents produced recently by the Chinese military offer a more militarized perspective, using terms such as "a game of great powers" and "a struggle over and control of global public spaces", which is how it views the Arctic.

Engaging a public goods analogy over the space signals to those states currently operating in the region that China has rights to invest in the region and create research stations concerning resource extraction. Of course, this would also enable it to gain important experience operating in the climate.

Its polar silk road offers a competing framework for development, and Chinese firms have increasingly been trying to buy territory in areas that would give them strategic access. However, China's success thus far in the region appears to be more limited than its ambitions.

There is some ambiguity concerning what China's endgame is in the Arctic. On the other hand, Russia remains quite transparent about seeking and maintaining military capabilities in the region to diversify its capacities, as it sees this region as open for competition and rivalry.

Perhaps the most crucial strategic problem pressing stakeholders is uncertainty about the future state of the world. For the last two decades, there have been claims of a slow decline of the U.S. relative to China, economically and politically. The reality is that the U.S. and many other Arctic states have sufficient capacities to jointly secure the region in a crisis. This would not be without re-tasking assets from other missions or regions. The current configuration of defence assets in the region offers a level of deterrence from ambition but is not sufficiently strong to deter incursions into the aerial and maritime spaces.

● (1110)

The Chair: Unfortunately, I'm going to have to stop you there.

We'll leave the rest for questions and answers.

Finally, Professor Massie, you have five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Dr. Justin Massie (Full Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will be speaking in French and will be using my notes to help the interpreters with their work.

According to conventional wisdom, we should consider the security environment in the Arctic as being relatively safe, with no signs of the turbulence that we see in other regions of the world, which are much more threatened by conflicts and where opportunities for cooperation are not as favourable. This has been the case for a long time, but two new trends are calling into question the assumptions that have underpinned Canadian's strategic approach, which has long been guided by the conviction that we are living in a region which is safe and free of threat.

The two trends are as follows.

Firstly, competition between the great powers has intensified, and this is clearly shown by the return of high-intensity war in Europe and competing strategies.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm feeling sympathetic for the interpreter, because she is just ripping along, as are you.

Could we go more slowly, please?

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Dr. Justin Massie: Of course. It is quite possible that I won't be able to read out my statement in full if I go more slowly. I could always provide more information to the members of the committee during the round of questions.

We are currently seeing two significant trends that weren't there previously. Firstly, competition between the major powers has intensified, as we can see by the new high-intensity war in Europe. Secondly, there have been upheavals brought about by climate change, and we have seen more domestic operations led by the Canadian Armed Forces who have provided support to civilian authorities.

These two trends are not recent. The major powers' military forces have been modernizing their technology for quite a while now, and obviously climate change is nothing new. However, the co-existence of both trends creates a threat that is forcing Canada to redirect much more of its strategic attention and its resources to its home base, and by that I mean on Canadian soil.

Historically, Canada has always had an advanced vision of security, meaning that it would intervene abroad to prevent conflicts from coming to it. Currently, these interventions are taking place on Canadian soil. This has transformed Canada's strategic thought.

I believe that the Canadian government should consider two main threats.

Firstly, climate change has led to more marine traffic in Canadian inland waters and in its exclusive economic zone, whether it be for fishing, transportation, tourism, research or military operations, and the major revisionist powers will take advantage of that.

The second threat is the strategic ambitions of revisionist states. Not only are they developing their conventional capacity to reach Canada, with tactical nuclear weapons, as mentioned earlier, as

well as hypersonic missiles, submarines and drones, but they are also using strategies that fall under the threshold of armed conflict. They are investing in critical infrastructure, such as the mining industry, including rare metals. These sectors play an important role in Canada's economic development but are very vulnerable.

While we welcome recent investments in Canada's defence capabilities as per the 2017 policy, there are still many gaps. One of the main gaps is the absence of planning, whether budgetary or operational, for replacing the fleet of Canadian submarines. These are essential to the security of Canadian waters. Whether we consider that the Northwest Passage is in Canadian or international waters, we still need that capacity. The fact that we are not planning to replace the fleet leads us to believe that we will lose that defence capacity. If we had to invest in a new fleet of nuclear submarines, as Australia is doing, the cost would be so high that we would have to use the money budgeted for other Canadian defence priority items.

I believe we should review the Canadian Armed Forces' approach in matters of defence by looking at Norway and Sweden and what they call total defence. This is a whole-of-society approach based on the resiliency of all society stakeholders, whether they be civilians, industrial and commercial actors or the military, in order to better resist in times of crisis. This approach is also based on a high and low intensity deterrent capacity that mobilizes the entire population in a multidimensional conflict, rather than stand-alone operations based on conventional and non-conventional defence.

In conclusion, you might find it odd that I am talking about threats that are not immediate, whereas there is a considerably significant threat of the war in Ukraine escalating horizontally or vertically. This is what my colleague Mr. Robert Huebert was alluding to earlier. However, the threats that I have been describing are not insignificant, given that we would have to invest right now to protect ourselves. You know as well as I do that developing defence capacity and military procurement in Canada is not something that can be done quickly. In order to gain the capacity to defend Canada and its territory in 10 or 15 years, we have to make those difficult choices today.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

I think, colleagues, we can get through three rounds. The first is a six-minute round. I have Madam Kramp-Neuman, Mr. Fisher, Madame Normandin and Madam Mathysen for six minutes each, please.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to those who spoke to us this morning. All of you have provided some good content.

I'm going to start with Professor Huebert. There are a couple of things that you acknowledged and that I would like to underscore. First, you mentioned that we need to demonstrate that our defence is seamless. I couldn't agree more. Second, you acknowledged that the best way to avoid conflict is to defend against it. Again, I couldn't underscore that more.

What I'm going to be speaking to today is the shortfalls of personnel that require urgency and priority.

My first question is for Professor Huebert. Yesterday, retired General Rick Hillier suggested that the personnel problem in our Canadian Armed Forces might be worse than the one in 10 shortages the current CDS spoke of. He suggests that the numbers he is hearing from within the military are such that we can muster a force of about 45,000 and, within that 45,000, a significant number are not operationally deployable today.

If that's accurate, it's truly staggering and it would mean that we are pushing 50% surge capacity in all areas: NORAD, NATO and other domestic deployment. If he's right, do you believe that critical shortage means the collapse of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Dr. Robert Huebert: I don't think we're at the point where we can characterize it as a collapse, but we are facing a disaster. I would agree with those who point out that our inability to meet the numbers we have set ourselves in terms of overall personnel numbers is a critical problem facing Canada, as in fact is our inability to even have that discussion about an expansion of the numbers.

It's everything. When we reflect upon what my two co-speakers are saying about what we need to do now in terms of difficult choices, we need to be preparing. Just the numbers that we officially say we're supposed to be at are problematic. When we hear, of course, these reports that the numbers are nowhere near that, that's where the crisis starts coming.

I would add that the threat we are facing is of the highest technological level. That is the type of threat. We're not talking about the boots on the ground that the Ukrainians have to deal with in terms of the actual fighting they are facing. Ours is a high-level technology threat. That means the numbers in and of themselves are important, but it also points to our inability to properly train, with the length of time that training requires, to meet these threats. I think all of this is coming together when....

Consider the fact that Russia is the major geopolitical threat that we have. They've had a GDP that on average has been less than Canada's, and yet they have created this military capability that is now destabilizing the entire international system. On the other hand, Canada, with a higher GDP, has not been able to ensure that we have adequate numbers. It points to the problem all three of us are illustrating, that we are not taking the threat seriously.

• (1120)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Thank you for that.

To complement what you're saying, I'll add a supplementary question. This committee has heard that our tenuous hold on the Arctic is not just due to the lack of material support in terms of equipment. You spoke to the trained personnel in the military and to the different levels of training for different deployments in the

military. Has this complicated our ability to project our rights and diplomatic fears? How much more can our military capabilities suffer before even allies begin to challenge our ability to project our own sovereignty in the north?

Dr. Robert Huebert: There's always a bit of a tendency for everybody to conflate sovereignty concerns with security. Let me be clear: Sovereignty is about our ability to acknowledge that these waters are internal waters and that we have complete control. That tends to be an issue of international law. The issue you're really pointing to is our ability to ensure the security of the region, both domestically and internationally.

Domestically, we're actually probably not too badly off, thanks to the rangers and our ability to be able to consolidate our understanding of how to operate. It's as soon as you get into the international and to what you point to—this conflation between sovereignty and security. The fear that Canadian policy-makers have always had to face is at what point our inability to provide for the defence of our Arctic region means our allies have to step in and do what they think is responsible. Traditionally, that has focused only on the Americans. There remains the fear—and when we look at the possible political outcomes of the American election, I think these fears are even amplified—that the Americans will simply act in the way they think is necessary.

The other part of the coin that we haven't talked about is that there has been a substantial re-arming of the Nordic countries, including in the form of Finland's and Sweden's entry into NATO, that means our Nordic allies now take northern defence that much more seriously. I think the fact that they may in fact start seeing us as not doing our part to contribute will hurt our relations with them and raise questions about how we then participate in the greater surveillance capabilities that we need to have to deter the Russians and, in the long term, the Chinese.

The Chair: You have about 15 seconds.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Okay. At this point, I would like to thank all of the witnesses.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fisher, you have six minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our academic experts who are here today. This is absolutely fascinating testimony.

Professor Huebert, you talked about Russia being the biggest geopolitical threat. I think we would all agree with that, but we've also seen that Russia's land forces have been severely diminished as a result of the invasion of Ukraine. Also, just candidly, it seems like maybe a lot of us would be surprised at their lack of success. Many of us would have thought they would end the war fairly quickly. We would see them as being certainly a massive military presence, and although I'm not suggesting that they aren't—their air and naval power is obviously still very significant—what kind of conventional threat do they realistically pose, Professor, in the global Arctic and, maybe more specifically, in the Canadian Arctic?

Dr. Robert Huebert: This is one of the favourite red herrings that many individuals who want to diminish the Russian threat to Canada often point out. It used to be a joke among some senior military leaders that the biggest threat they faced from Russia was how they were going to rescue them if they ever tried to invade any of Canada's Arctic islands or lands. The reality is that it has never been about a conventional land force invasion. I want to make it very clear: that is not what we are talking about. We did not talk about that during the Cold War and that is not the threat today. It is about aerospace, and it is about maritime.

I'd like to start off with a response to your initial premise in terms of difficulties the Russians have demonstrated in the land battle against the Ukrainians. One of the things that we have to watch and that we are all guilty of, basically, is ignoring the Russian military interventions when Canada and the western allies were involved with the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns that were being conducted. Since the time they were occurring, the Russians have maintained a series of wars, starting in 1999 against the Chechens, in 2008 against Georgia, and then again in 2014 with the Ukrainians.

If we look at the Russian way of war, they do it very differently from us. We have what the Americans refer to as "shock and awe". We like having that big punch; we use the highest tech, and the air force is intrinsically involved in all of this. What we've seen from the Russian way of war is the exact opposite. They like to bleed their enemy. They will use their least-trained troops first, and they will often come very close to what we think is a defeat, mainly to, basically, exhaust the enemy and then overwhelm them. We saw this with the Chechens and with the Georgians, and we saw this in the context of the eastern Ukraine in 2014.... Well, they did use shock and awe in the Crimea. I think the Ukrainians were not expecting the degree of intervention they saw.

We have to be very careful about drawing any conclusions, because we tend to compare it to ourselves. We say, that's not how we engage; that's not how we did it in Afghanistan and Iraq. Once again, remember, in Afghanistan we ultimately pulled out, so there are questions in terms of our utility, of how we conducted that combat. The Russians stopped Georgia from joining NATO; the Russians did succeed in putting down the Chechen revolution, and when the Russians seized Crimea they created very little international reaction. From a Russian perspective, their way of war is actually more effective than the western way of war.

Having said that, we return to the Canadian threat, and it is the aerospace and maritime. We need to be watching what the Russians did in cutting the cable to the Svalbard Islands in February of this

year. We need to be looking at the Russian capability of destroying the Nord Stream cable. That all points to an undersea capability that we're not focusing on.

As you point out in your preamble, the Russians have not been using their air force to any degree whereby we can come to any meaningful assessment of its efficiency. The air force and the navy are what we would be facing in a threat, not land forces.

• (1125)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I'll stick with Professor Huebert, but if there are comments from the other two, they can jump in.

I want to switch to remotely piloted systems and how that might change the nature of Arctic security. Also, my main question would be whether we are investing enough in this area.

Professor Huebert, could you respond for just 30 seconds or so, and then maybe give the other two witnesses a chance?

Dr. Robert Huebert: The big breakthrough that the Russians have made is in terms of their ability to use long-range underwater vehicles. The Poseidon is the best example. That was always the limiting factor. They seem to have cracked it. Are we doing anything in terms of our ability to respond? There's nothing that I've been able to detect in the open literature.

The Chair: Professor Kimball.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: Yes, I'm very much on the same page: Canada could be doing much more in terms of what Russia is doing. Again, as Dr. Huebert said, with the Nordic duo entering into NATO, this will be good for Canada. I can speak a bit to that, but it should also be quite good in terms of contributions to NATO and monitoring in the north, particularly, so there is a bit of saving us there.

The Chair: Mr. Massie.

[*Translation*]

Dr. Justin Massie: I agree that Canada has been grossly underinvesting in drones. We can see how these drones have been proving useful in the war in Ukraine right now, with the Iranian drones provided to Russia being deployed in swarms. Canada is also underinvesting in other aspects of this capacity, i.e., air defence against surveillance and strike drones that are being used by the Russians and other foreign powers.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you to all the witnesses.

My first question is for Professor Massie and Professor Kimball.

Both of you have stated that it is important to protect our exclusive economic zones as well as our inland waters, and that the increase in marine traffic is a threat. I would like to know what you have to say about our military defence capacity in these waters when, from a political standpoint, it is not clearly recognized that they belong to Canada. I am referring to the United States, which doesn't necessarily recognize all of our inland waters.

Can we make a distinction between the recognition of these zones on a political level and the military capacity to protect them?

Dr. Justin Massie: To my mind, these are not two distinct issues. If certain zones are considered inland waters, we have the duty to protect all vessels that are present there. If vessels do not ask for our permission to come into those zones, we have to intercept them. In order to be able to do so, we need some sort of constabulary force.

Obviously, this is not the position of the United States, which is the biggest world power and our main ally. Marine traffic has been increasing for 25 years, and nothing leads us to believe that it is going to decrease in the coming years. If there is a conflict about this issue, that will create tension. If Canada wishes to have the unilateral power to intercept and detect vessels in this region, whether they be commercial or military, and needs that capacity, but the American fleet wants to navigate in those waters without asking the authorization of the Canadian Forces, that will create major disputes. Whatever our capacity is, will we use it against our main ally? That question is in itself the answer.

• (1130)

Prof. Anessa Kimball: I think that even if there is sometimes tension with the Americans, we get along enough to say that we don't agree on all aspects of this issue. We can count on our allies to make sure that the shipping lanes are open to cargo boats.

We also have to remember that Canada is a member of NORAD, the bi-national command. We have access to information that allows us to know who is navigating in our marine zones.

I guess the most important thing to know is what we would do if a rival country or another actor wanted to access these zones and we didn't want them to. That scenario is probably more intriguing than a possible dispute between Canada and the United States.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I have another question for Professor Massie.

You said there were gaps, and that we need to look at funding to replace our submarines. As everyone knows, we don't have any nuclear submarines and our ice breakers don't really break ice. Some people even call them "slush breakers". All of this makes us a bit more vulnerable during the colder months.

Last week, we heard representatives from the armed forces high command, and I asked them if we were more vulnerable in winter compared to other countries who have nuclear submarines, for example. I was told that given the increase in marine traffic and the worsening climate crisis, the important thing is not necessarily to have the same materiel, but to be able to detect the presence of others, by using satellites, for example.

Do you think that is the wrong message to send when we are trying to be cognizant of current risks?

Dr. Justin Massie: I think we have to look at this issue based on timelines. In the short term, the Canadian Arctic will essentially remain much colder than the European Arctic, for example. Therefore, navigational capacities are lesser and the season is much shorter than in other regions, such as the Arctic zone above Russia. Consequently, Canada's current limited capacity is indeed a problem, but it is not a terrifying one. In 10 years' time, however, that won't be the case.

Let's go back to the issue of marine traffic. A problem will crop up when Chinese vessels will want to come to our region, claiming to carry out scientific research, and American interests will collide with Canada's. The United States considers that it is an international passage, because they have a vested interest in the Malacca Straits and other areas. It would be in their interest to consider these zones as Canadian waters when there is a foreign threat. That, however, would call into question their geostrategic position as a whole. Therein lies the dilemma.

I think this dilemma will become much more apparent in a few years. That said, as I mentioned in my statement, the time is now to make the necessary purchases in order to have the required materiel in 10 or 15 years. As we know, even if Canada would like to be able to react in crisis situations, it will take an enormous amount of time before it makes the necessary acquisitions. You just can't snap your fingers and buy some ice breakers or underwater drones. This is obvious right now, given our inability to provide the necessary weapons to Ukrainians so that they can defend themselves against the Russians.

Ms. Christine Normandin: So a short-term vision can really cause problems, given the current context.

Thank you very much, Mr. Massie.

Professor Kimball, you spoke about the possibility that Finland and Sweden will join NATO and the repercussions that would have in the Arctic. Please tell us more.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: Given the current crisis in Ukraine, Sweden is carrying out numerous patrols in the Arctic. This partner has terrific air traffic surveillance capabilities. There are good reasons to believe that these two states could work together in the North and in the Arctic.

NATO is looking more and more at what is going on in the Arctic. In its last strategic concept document, there was a section on the Arctic, and another one on China. That shows that in NATO's eyes, there are currently short and medium-term threats in certain regions that it didn't concern itself with before.

The two states that I mentioned also have conventional capacities in the Arctic, should it ever become necessary to use them, but they also have an excellent marine capacity. Canada should have more discussions with these new partners if it ever finds itself in difficulty.

● (1135)

[English]

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

[Translation]

Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

[English]

Ms. Mathysen, go ahead for six minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): To expand on those thoughts, both of you, Professor Kimball and Professor Massie, talked about the multilateral approach. You mentioned the Arctic Council of course, and NATO, and there's also NORAD.

How is Canada doing in terms of using those multilateral organizations to ultimately avoid the push forward in terms of the aggression we're seeing in the world, and what should we be doing differently within those organizations or others that you would like to mention?

Maybe Professor Kimball could go first, and then Professor Massie.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: Yes. I would say one of the things that are very important at this juncture is thinking about what Canada is going to invest in when it does NORAD modernization. In the past there was more logic to having fixed locations. Probably the future is going to involve thinking about some of these things in a more mobile sense. This will give Canada more flexibility with its capacities.

Also, it will involve thinking about how strategic defence and monitoring and all of that—the scene between NATO and NORAD and ensuring that there is better.... For what it's worth, Canada participates in these two different systems. The NATO system is somewhat under the umbrella of the United States, which provides and then diffuses most of the information, whereas with NORAD Canada is at the table, but then at one moment it would step away.

In some senses, then, some reflection needs to be done with respect to Canada in terms of what that's going to mean in the modernization piece in the future.

Dr. Justin Massie: I would add that from Canada's point of view, it is a good follower in NATO. Its strategic objective is to contribute more than it is to have any meaningful impact, I think, politically or strategically.

We've seen this in the desire simply to have a seat at the table instead of having any concrete impact with respect to its own national interest.

We see that in the limited capacity to send weapons to Ukrainians and in how we say we need to keep those in case there's a war against Russia. Russia is actually fighting that war currently in Ukraine, so that doesn't make sense to me.

We see it also with the inclusion of two new partners in NATO, Finland and Sweden, and the limited willingness to engage with these two towards developing greater partnerships. Because the deterrence of the Russian military in the Arctic will be mostly, I think, occurring in the attached region of the European Arctic, rather than in the Canadian Arctic in the short term, I think Canada needs to have that focus in mind as well. We could be much more proactive.

We also see this with its limited willingness to have any NATO involvement in the Canadian Arctic, vetoing the new NATO strategic concept and the fact that it doesn't even want to mention the Arctic in its strategic concept. I think there's a willingness to keep that just as a bilateral relationship with the United States, which I think limits Canada's capacity to engage multilaterally or bilaterally with other countries. I think that's a problem given the increasing unreliability of our southern neighbour with the coming presidential election in 2024.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: In order for Canada to have that bigger influence at all these tables.... Certainly I understand that point about being a follower and not a leader, but Canada was once a leader in different ways, such as in terms of peacekeeping.

We haven't put as many funds and we certainly haven't met our obligations in terms of peacekeeping at the UN level. Is that something that Canada could change as a policy directive in order to have a different kind of influence at that multilateral level?

Professor Massie.

● (1140)

Dr. Justin Massie: I don't think we have the capacity to re-engage in UN peace operations, that's for sure. If you look at the order of priority, defending Canada should come first. It never has, because we wanted, rather, to contribute to international security through NATO operations since its beginning in the late 1990s, and we just dismissed UN peace operations afterwards.

With the doubling of the capacity that we need to deploy to Latvia in the next three years and the shortage of personnel that we discussed before, I don't think it's even possible for us to have concurrent operations elsewhere in the world, given that we have to invest in resources—the equipment and personnel—just to defend our country. I don't think we can afford that.

I would like that as a third priority, but we need to focus on the two most important ones. Those are consuming too much of our energy to focus elsewhere.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Professor Kimball.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: I'm in agreement with that, in the sense that when you actually look at the deployment data for troops, Italy is currently the country that sends the most peacekeepers, but when you also look at Italy, for example, in NATO and other missions, it might leave a little to be desired there.

What we're seeing mostly is that the states that have more troop capacities have tended to shift them towards NATO or EU missions—obviously Canada is not in that case—but when you look, there is a substitution or a complementary going on when it comes to these NATO missions. Again, I don't think we could even create that many troops if we wanted to deploy them.

What Canada does, which I think is very understated, is it trains most of the peacekeepers from other countries. They come to Canada and get trained here. They take that knowledge back home and then they go peacekeeping. One might argue that we've gone past peacekeeping and we're kind of like the peace educators now.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We're now on to the second round of five-minute rounds. I have Mrs. Gallant, Ms. O'Connell, Madame Normandin, Ms. Mathysen, one of either Mr. Kelly or Mr. Bezan, and Ms. Lambropoulos.

Mrs. Gallant, you have five minutes, please.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Dr. Huebert, what infrastructure and equipment does Canada need to ensure its Arctic front is secure and positioned to defend itself, if need be?

Dr. Robert Huebert: We need to ensure that the forward operating bases—the airfields from which we would be operating—are able to maintain themselves 24-7, even in an Arctic environment. A crisis is not going to wait for nice weather.

Once again, there are some questions as to whether or not the capacity of the forward operating bases is such that they in fact can operate on short notice. We need to have the aircraft to operate from there. That means a decision needs to be made on actually achieving the replacement of the CF-18s we purchased in 1982. We also need to consider the possibilities of refuellers. Many of the fifth-generation fighters we're looking at—presumably the F-35, since every single one of our Nordic allies with the exception of Sweden have actually opted for that, and I assume that is where we might be going—need to have refuelling capabilities to deal with the threat that the Russians and the Chinese will be presenting in the long term.

We need to have the infrastructure to know where the threat is. That is in reference to the over-the-horizon radar. That refers to the aerospace threat.

What has been completely lacking from any discussion is how we modernize our undersea listening capabilities. Are we talking about a SOSA system, which may be prohibitively expensive? Nevertheless, it's something we have to be looking at.

We also have to be talking about how we will be moving forward in terms of our satellite capabilities. There are some discussions in the open literature to the effect that we have not yet made a decision on the replacement of the RADARSAT constellation. I hope that literature is incorrect and that, in fact, we are planning to prepare for the next RADARSAT capabilities, but it also means integrating with the Americans and the Europeans in terms of their satellite surveillance capability.

If you go right across the list, I'm afraid what we are left with is that on the upper end of any type of surveillance and at the upper

end of our response capability, literally everything is still needing to be done at this point in time.

When we hear the government making suggestions that because of the economic difficulties we are now facing, the funds will be extremely limited, I see this as one of the most difficult—or as the policy people like to say, “wicked”—problems that we have going into the future era.

• (1145)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Dr. Huebert, given that Inuvik is the epicentre of Canadian and NORAD air defence and the only military base on the Arctic Ocean, what issues or problems may arise from the termination of the hangarage contract there?

Dr. Robert Huebert: Well, remember that what they are trying to do at this point is.... It's not necessarily a termination, but it's a question of who will be moving forward in terms of the maintenance.

One of the difficulties we have as academics when we're looking at these issues is that it's difficult to get good statistics on how well these hangarages and runways have in fact been maintained. We obviously have to maintain a certain degree of government secrecy on that. Therefore, it becomes an issue for any of us to be able to say with any certainty in terms of this transition who is in fact maintaining it.

If in fact it is the existing company that has done so well at maintaining it and if it's being transferred, transfer always creates certain challenges. It is difficult for me to offer concrete acknowledgement in terms of where that is going for the future as we move forward, but I might add that when we look at it, we do in fact have another base that is supposed to be coming. That is in Nanisivik. We can see the manner in which the difficulties we've had with governments in terms of being able to build it.... Once again, I can contrast this to what the Russians have done.

We of course have to deal with the hangarage in Inuvik, as you point out. We need to deal with the fact that Nanisivik still needs to be completed, and we have to talk about the other forward operating locations that we have in Yellowknife and in one other location—my mind is blanking out where that is right now, so my apologies—and compare that to the Russians, of course, who, in the span from 1999 to 2022, have either built or renewed over 22 different military sites, bases and locations within their north. In fact, the brief I provided the committee lists the open literature in terms of where we think these various bases, airfields and capabilities are in fact located, and I remind the committee that Russia's GDP is less than Canada's.

We get into this issue of political commitment in terms of meeting the security needs that we have coming very soon, both in the immediate term and in the longer term.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

Madam Lambropoulos, you have five minutes, please.

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

I would like to thank all three professors for being with us today, answering our questions and putting the fear of God into us in terms of Russia and what maybe to expect in the future.

My first question is, do you think Canada and its Arctic allies are doing enough? Are we engaging with them enough? Are we doing enough military exercises in the Arctic, or do you think there is room for a lot more? What specifically do you have to say about that?

I will go first to Mr. Huebert.

Dr. Robert Huebert: Thank you. I can't stress enough what a critical question that is. In Canada we have completely missed the fact that, since 2017, there has been a redrawing of Nordic security.

Everybody, of course, is focused on the request of Finland and Sweden to join NATO and on barring the Turkish resistance that we see, which we hope, through the agreement that the three nations have, will be worked through.

The reality is that the Finns, the Swedes, the Norwegians and the Danes have all signed special agreements with the Americans. They have also created, and this is increasingly becoming apparent, an agreement among the four of them. Well, there are five, because they also include Iceland. This agreement is called NORDEFECO.

NORDEFECO is an agreement that is creating a shared aerospace picture. Even before Sweden and Finland made the request to join NATO, they recognized that they had to have a common operating capability.

The other thing that the Nordics have done is allow the Americans to integrate with each of them. Once again, in Canada, we did not pay much attention to this, but this summer, the Norwegians, for the first time, allowed an American attack submarine, the *Sea-wolf* to come to the port in Tromsø, and they are retrofitting that port to better facilitate the Americans.

Canada has participated in some exercises. When the Norwegians have their big Cold Response, we will send a small number of individuals over to participate. We are a more active participant in the anti-submarine exercise that is conducted by the British and the Nordics, called Dynamic Mongoose. We have been a full participant in that.

Where it is lacking and where.... Once again, we are limited by open literature, but we do not see Canada sitting down with the Nordics and the Americans and saying, "Look, we realize you're creating a new northern tier to the defence of NATO. We want to be involved." It once again gets to the "seat at the table" issue that was raised by, I believe, Dr. Kimball, in terms of the fact that Canada is not there. It speaks to the issue that Justin raises in terms of the fact that we are not at the forefront, saying that we need to unify NORAD in terms of the aerospace and maritime pictures and this emerging Nordic maritime picture. That's simply not happening.

As for the other part of the equation, we've settled our issue with the Danes over Hans Island. What I would like to see is using that relationship with the Danes and the Greenlanders to say, "Look, Thule is at the centre." Thule, of course, is part of the American anti-ballistic missile system, which will be critical in the threats we are going to be facing in the future. Canada could be saying, "Okay,

now is the time to say that we have to have some conversation with the Greenlanders and the Danes about how that works." We then use that as a means of integrating and connecting with NATO, saying, "We embrace NATO. Yes, we know we have a sovereignty issue."

I would like to add to one of the questions. All our European allies have also disagreed with how we have drawn the straight baselines to enclose the Northwest Passage. The Americans are the ones who are the most vocal, but the Europeans don't agree, by the same token.

The Europeans will respond if we're sitting there and saying we want to be a bigger part, and our northern expertise is something they need. This is, once again, something I think we can be much more forthright about, but we need to also have the capability to follow that.

• (1150)

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: At this point, I'll offer Ms. Kimball or Mr. Massie the chance to respond as well, if there's anything they would like to add.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: I would just note quickly that there are opportunities for Canada to do more on some of these outside things by joining more NATO centres of excellence. Canada is putting its first one up here in Montreal, but it's NATO's 30th. Canada, for instance, is not in the centre of excellence on energy security. It's not in the centre of excellence on northern operations. There are places where it could be profiting more from multilaterals and from our partners, but it's simply not taking advantage of those. I think there are places it could look to find this expertise and collaborate more.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you.

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

Madame Normandin, you have two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

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

Professor Huebert, you explained how important it was for Canada to have a seamless defence system, both in terms of surveillance and delivery. However, Professor Massie has told us even if we can see the drones coming, we have absolutely nothing to shoot them down with, should the situation arise.

It was also mentioned that Canada has to prove that its commitment to security is just as strong as that of the United States. I understand that we were talking about potential enemies, but wouldn't it also be important that Canada provide proof of its commitment to the United States, especially in the context of NORAD?

[English]

Dr. Robert Huebert: A critical point that we will face with America, and I think the elephant in the room that we don't mention in polite society is the prospect of the election of an individual who of course has demonstrated a reluctance to accept anything in terms of the special relationship with Canada. Once again, of course, the political nature of speculation in the United States is anyone's game.

The problem we face, though, is that over time we have had an erosion of the foundation of what we've always identified as a special relationship. This relationship, of course, politically, is important. The various meetings that the presidents and prime ministers have had historically set the tenet of that, but it's the ability to work together at the bureaucratic level that really has been the essence of why the Americans have tended to sort of see us as something different, rather than a foreign entity.

The difficulties we've had in being able to ensure that our military is updated to the standards that the Americans would like mean that becomes more problematic. It doesn't disappear. We still have very good interpersonal relations, but the special relationship gets eroded by this lack of day-to-day engagement, and it goes beyond military. It goes to economics; it goes to social policy, and so forth.

I fear that the development of the political direction that the Americans may be going in, following, of course, the November elections—but even more problematic, the presidential election—may in fact create a situation in which I guess the best phrase would be we'll be swimming upstream the whole time, ensuring that the Americans under that administration know it is in their interest to ensure good relationships. Those are the types of steps we need to be taking today, so should that election outcome occur, we are prepared for it.

I think that's one of the politically most difficult positions for us to be thinking about today.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

[English]

We have Madam Mathysen for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: In terms of where we're going, I have this.... I imagine lots of Canadians do, too, in terms of the difference between where we stand on modernizing NORAD, our operations, our fleets, our vessels and so on, versus that growth of weaponry; and, as Professor Huebert was just talking about, the reliance upon the United States to cover us in lots of ways, the historical relationship, except that historically we've pulled away from engaging in the ballistic missile defence aggressions because of that fear of an arms race.

We don't have the capacity, as I see it continuing forward, so much as we plan to compete to be the next United States—if that's what we're talking about. Ultimately, though, why does that reasoning no longer stand, or why does it still stand? I'll direct my ques-

tion, because I have very little time, to Professor Massie, just on how we hold our own without falling into that arms race argument.

Dr. Justin Massie: Looking at what the Finns are doing, I don't think they're trying to be the United States, but they're still investing much more than we are. The Norwegians and Swedes, per capita, are as well. I don't think it's the U.S. and then the rest. Some countries are doing much better, and what they're doing is defining, articulating more clearly what their national interests are instead of waiting for others to tell them what they should be doing. That's a different approach from what we're focusing on.

There's a reluctance to take the lead politically here in this country. Also, there's an aversion in the Canadian military to focusing its resources and attention on our country, because it would prevent us, given that 1.2% budget, from being elsewhere. It's being elsewhere that is ingrained in the strategic culture of, "This is how we can have the Canadian flag abroad," and, "This is how we can have influence," by leading a multinational task force in Latvia and things like that, or leading any naval deployment, as well, such as in the Asia-Pacific, where we have two frigates right now. This is what we think is in Canada's best interests, but I'm not sure these are well-spent resources. They are such finite resources, in my mind.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We have Mr. Bezan for five minutes.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank our witnesses for attending today and building upon the narrative that Canada's just not doing enough. Is that due to a lack of political leadership? Is it due to a lack of resource capability? Is it due to a lack of prioritization of investment in our Arctic security and in our entire North American defence?

I'll go right around the table. Perhaps you guys can give us a quick yes or no. I'll start with Mr. Massie here, then Mr. Huebert and Professor Kimball.

Perhaps you would start, Professor Huebert.

Dr. Justin Massie: I agree with your statement. I think we were on the right path with the 2017 defence policy; it's just not enough. It's the right direction, but it's not enough.

Now we're seeing talks about reducing the budget or not having it grow. The fact is that all of these key investments are coming in the mid-2020s and then should be present in the mid-2030s, but we know it's always delayed and always costs more.

We're not talking about reducing from 15 to 12 combat ships. These sorts of talks—I hope they're just rumours—mean that there's a reduction of capacity, not just maintenance.

The 2017 defence policy is not about growing. It's about maintaining Canada's military capacity. What we're talking about today is how we could grow that. We're not even close to that.

• (1200)

Mr. James Bezan: Professor Huebert.

Dr. Robert Huebert: There are three factors at work here.

First of all, I agree with you. I think there's an overall process in Canada, at both the political level and the country level, to be retreating to isolationism. This is something I wrote in an article in Policy Options. We see a trend that we are, in fact, as a nation, pulling away from our willingness to engage in the international arena.

There are two factors that are driving this. First of all, there is a mythology that geography protects us. There's a mythology that what happens in terms of Ukraine, Georgia or Chechnya doesn't concern us or that what will happen in Taiwan—you can place me in the category that believes that the Chinese will use military intervention to reclaim what they see as part of “the century of humiliation”, and we will see military conflict there—somehow doesn't touch upon us. We've allowed ourselves to believe that, and I think it's been encouraged by certain political leaders that somehow we're so far away that it won't really affect us.

The second factor—and the one I find the most chilling—gets to the question about an arms race that was raised before. The debate as to whether or not we are entering into an arms race actually ended in 2002 when the Chinese and the Russians made a series of military procurement decisions that are, in my estimation, moving us away from the system of nuclear deterrence into one of nuclear-war fighting. It's not just the Russians who have invested.

This is an issue. Let's face it. Canada does not want to talk about nuclear weapons. It does not want to talk about the prospect that, in fact, we seem to be entering an era in which it's not only about deterring nuclear war but also, in fact, about engaging in that type of conflict. I mean, as Herman Kahn said, how do you think of the unthinkable?

Because it is such an overwhelming issue as we try to address... The other issue that professors Massie and Kimball raised is, of course, the existential threat that climate change poses to us. How do we, both as a society and as political leadership, say, “Okay, we have to think about climate change and the fact that we're now in an era, on the basis of what we see of intent and capability, of nuclear-war fighting”? I dare say that it's such a challenging issue that the Canadian withdrawal into this pretense that geography protects us is the reason we don't think about it, and because we don't think about it, we don't act.

Mr. James Bezan: Professor Kimball.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: I would go the other way. I would say that geography traps us in some senses.

One of the things I do is show my students a ballistic missile intercept that would be fictive between Pyongyang and Washington. One of the things they notice, of course, is that there's a whole bunch of geography in there of where we live. Then we talk about how fast this happens and that as we move towards mid- or early-course intercepts, we're not talking about six minutes. We're talking about three minutes. Most of these people can't go smoke a cigarette or go to the bathroom in three minutes. Could we prevent nuclear war in that time? That's one thing we need to think about.

There's a public allergy in Canada, I think, with regard to defence spending versus foreign affairs spending. This has to do a bit with Canada's self-perceived role in the world as a multilateral

country, as a collaborator and as somebody who always goes along with the gang.

As somebody who has studied defence spending now for a long time, I think there's a misconception that it's always about spending on war. A lot of defence spending is about spending on peace. That's a lot of what NATO's defence spending is. I think there's a large misconception around that.

The Chair: We're going to have to stop there, unfortunately. I'm not sure why I always end up cutting you off, Professor Kimball, but I apologize.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: That's okay.

The Chair: You're here to deal with our allergy.

Next is Mr. Robillard, for five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Given that many countries, including the United States, do not recognize Canada's claim that the Northwest Passage is a Canadian inland waterway, what concrete measures can Canada take to protect its sovereignty in the Northwest Passage?

• (1205)

[*English*]

The Chair: To whom are you addressing the question?

Dr. Robert Huebert: If I could jump in, this is something that keeps me up at night in terms of our ability to enforce our sovereignty.

Russia is the only other country that has made similar claims regarding control of a similar waterway, in terms of what they have done for the northern sea route. However, the Russians clearly have gone beyond Canada in their claim. The northern sea route exceeds what Canada has basically claimed as a similar right of control within the Northwest Passage. Once again, the difference between Canada and Russia is that Russia has a very vigorous enforcement capability. The Russians will say no to ships that they think do not meet their standards, or for political reasons.

I'll point out that in 2017, the Chinese asked for consent to send the Chinese ship *Xue Long* through the Northwest Passage. Given the animosities that were developing between China and Canada at the time and the fact that we say we want these waters to be internal because we want to have control for the protection of Canadian security and interests, I'm left a bit curious as to why we ultimately gave that consent. I say “consent”, because in my understanding that's what we gave, as opposed to permission.

The question is, do we have the political will to actually enforce it? I've been following this for a very long time. We've been saying we're going to build a large icebreaker since September 1985, when it was announced by Joe Clark. We're still waiting to build it.

If we say we're going to build two right now... Once again, I think it illustrates that in terms of the Russian capability to enforce having countries follow their rules within the northern sea route and the Northeast Passage, we would be well advised to take a page from their book.

I believe that even though the Europeans have not accepted our straight baselines—they say we cannot draw it that way—I would add that each of the European countries has an Arctic strategy that says they want to see freedom of navigation in the newly emerging waterways of the Arctic. They don't name the Northwest Passage, but you can detect that's what they are talking about. The means by which we deter them from any action that would threaten us would be to have enforcement capability.

That is a problem we continue to have. I'd say we can trace it all the way back to the Joe Clark statement about Arctic sovereignty on September 10, 1985.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: What are China's intentions in the Arctic? What are the key factors driving China's interest in the region? How have those factors evolved over the past few decades?

Prof. Anessa Kimball: China's interests are certainly shipping traffic and resource exploration. For example, the Chinese have tried many times to buy rights in certain areas, especially for mineral extraction, but all the agreements with international companies failed after awhile. That said, the Chinese continue to look for a spot where they could establish a toehold in the region. I don't believe that they will change tack, whether it be in the short or medium term, because they see it as a new frontier where there are available resources and where they have exploration and mining rights, as do all states.

[English]

The Chair: We are—

Dr. Robert Huebert: Perhaps I could jump in just to say it's very important, because this did not get into the media in Canada. It illustrates that the Chinese security interest cannot be underestimated. This past couple of months—I can't remember the exact name or the date—a Chinese-Russian naval task force sailed into the Aleutian Island waterways. They stayed within international waters, but we have never seen the Chinese and the Russians as a joint task force coming into northern waters. What this illustrates clearly is a desire to work with the Russians. It also illustrates a desire to build capability to sail into these waters.

The second point that's not being covered is that the *Xue Long* engaged in one of the most active mappings of the Arctic region, where one presumes submarines would be sent.

Once again we can presume that when they went through the Northwest Passage, they mapped that, because that was one of the terms—that we allowed them to do scientific research. In fact, if you talk to the Americans, they have a huge concern about the effort the Chinese have been making with their two icebreakers to map the Arctic Ocean region. One can assume that in the long term that means submarine passage.

• (1210)

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

Colleagues, we have roughly 20 minutes left and 25 minutes' worth of questions, so I'm going to be a little arbitrary and cut everybody back by a minute.

Mr. Kelly, go ahead for four minutes.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Thank you. I want to continue and talk about China.

Experts, including General Eyre last week at this committee, have spoken about China's having the capability to threaten Canadian Arctic sovereignty within 20 years and, further, about the extent to which Russia is increasingly, as its fortunes continue to flag in its invasion of Ukraine, China's vassal.

Dr. Huebert, can you expand...or do you think the general is optimistic about this 20-year horizon? What are the specific timelines for threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty with respect to China?

Dr. Robert Huebert: All Canadian observers on this point will immediately change their view when the war in Taiwan begins. When the war in Taiwan begins, we will see both the international ramifications and the Chinese military capabilities. Then we will do a re-evaluation, and people will say, just as we're doing with the second phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war, "Oh, I guess we should have seen this coming."

Those such as David Mulrone and others, who are seeing it coming, have said for a long time that the threat is already here. We can talk about 20-year capabilities, but the real threat is not in terms of sovereignty. The Chinese are very careful not to publicly say anything that will undermine their sovereignty claims in terms of the South China Sea. In other words, what determines their public statements on Canadian Arctic sovereignty will be determined by what they think will help or detract from their ability on that.

The sovereignty issue they're going to avoid. The threat is security. The threat is whether the Chinese find themselves, through their actions in Taiwan, somehow involved in a military engagement with the Americans and our other Asian friends that then has spillover. Then, as Dr. Kimball so eloquently pointed out, do we find ourselves engaged in a situation in which we are sort of on the way over in terms of where these weapons are coming from?

There's a huge debate on whether the Chinese are planning to have their nuclear-powered cruise submarines come into Arctic waters. If they do—and I believe they are actively preparing for that—if the class 094s are given under-ice capabilities, it only makes sense for them to somehow figure out how to go through the very difficult Bering Strait. That's a huge problem. I acknowledge that. Coming through that, a cruise missile strike would then be made from the north to try to catch us off guard.

As Dr. Kimball points out, the time periods are very short, which means the problem is not 20 years away. They are doing the capability studies right now. They're getting those, and then it depends on when they decide to engage Taiwan.

Mr. Pat Kelly: How critical is it that Canada develop a true submarine capability, then, to match the Chinese capability that you speak of?

Dr. Robert Huebert: It's completely critical, but it's not just submarines. It's not a World War II scenario, where you have one unit. We are now in a warfare of systems, and it gets back to the point of whether or not we want to be part of the better American, Australian, Japanese surveillance capability, because that invariably ties in with what we used to refer to as the "anti-ballistic missile systems". We are looking to determine where the missiles come in and defend against these various ones.

It's submarines, but it's also actually having our Asian friends take us seriously, which means commitment, which means that as the South Koreans, Japanese, Australians and Americans develop these systems of surveillance and then react against the Chinese in the coming conflict, they are prepared for us to in fact be playing a role in that context.

Hopefully this is something that the current committee that the government has assigned to understanding the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is, in fact, addressing very seriously, because it becomes one of the critical points.

As I said, I agree with General Eyre that the Chinese will be a threat. I disagree with his timeline. I think it will be much more immediate than what he is expecting, once again, on the important dependent of Taiwan.

• (1215)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

Mr. May, you have four minutes.

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

First of all, thank you all to the witnesses today. This has been absolutely fascinating.

Professor Huebert, you talked a little about submarines. I think we agree that the capability or the influence of that capability for Canada to have submarines protect its sovereignty in the Arctic is critical, but how does that capability affect our military-to-military relationships with our allies?

Dr. Robert Huebert: Again, I would return to the fact that it is our security it's protecting.

Regarding sovereignty, it's problematic whether or how we would use a submarine in order to convince the Americans and our European friends and allies that the way we drew the straight baselines is true. I just want to be very clear on that.

However, your question is still of critical importance, because you're absolutely right. We have to have Arctic security, and we need subs. We had problems when we thought about getting nuclear-powered subs in the Mulroney era, because the Americans were reluctant to share. We see the American willingness—in fact, eagerness—to engage the British and Australians today in the sharing of technology, to demonstrate that any reservation they had in the eighties has dissipated in light of the new threats we are facing.

There would be a wholesome embracing of Canada if we were to say to the British, Australians and Americans that we want to also involve ourselves with their negotiations in development; we want to have shared resources. However, again, it comes back to the fact that it's not a question of simply saying, "Okay, we'll buy one or

two of the subs that the Australians are going to buy." It's buying into the system, because you have to have the system of integration. That then starts us off talking about something like a pseudo-NATO in the Asia-Pacific region, and would our allies be willing to...?

The big provision is that as long as we understand what the Chinese threat is and we are not seen as being unco-operatively friendly to the Chinese, as I dare say some of our past behaviour has been characterized as.... Whether or not it's true, and we'll leave that up to you to decide, that would become of the political drivers that we would be facing on this issue.

Mr. Bryan May: Thank you.

Professor Kimball, how does Canada co-operate with northern and Arctic allies on matters of international law and security, and what are those areas that we agree on and where might there be friction?

Prof. Anessa Kimball: One of the most interesting things we can do is probably go back and look at the latest agreement that was negotiated over search and rescue. This agreement dates to 2019. This gives a pretty realistic view of what countries think their capacities are in the region in some senses. This isn't a military agreement. It's basically meant to be related to just regular commerce and traversing in the region.

If you were to lay that agreement in those zones across various economic zones and look at how everything lines up, you're going to see that it's not exactly the same lines.

For example, Canada takes a slightly smaller slice in the search and rescue agreement than we say we have in terms of sovereignty. I think it speaks a bit to what we know we can do versus what we advertise that we might own. What's also interesting, for instance, is that the Norwegians take a larger slice in that agreement, in terms of areas where they would go and rescue, than what they would actually say is their piece.

There are opportunities there, but one thing we need to think about, for example, is accepting confidence-building measures if there's going to be Chinese and Russian traffic there. How can we create exercises on some of these things? They don't have to be militarized, but it's a level of understanding that we might have to work together here, so let's try to prevent a crisis.

• (1220)

The Chair: I think we're going to have to work together to keep on our timelines here. I'm sorry about that, again.

It's a short snapper. You have one and a half minutes, Madame Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: We know that there is currently a form of cooperation between allied countries, but you also mentioned, Professor Massie, that competition between the major powers has increased. Please tell us about your perspective and what you think will happen.

Then as a second question, will we see better cooperation between our allies or an erosion of that cooperation, given that more and more states are becoming interested in the Arctic?

Dr. Justin Massie: The international order as we know it is becoming fragmented. The western countries are consolidating into a bloc, with a few outliers that are starting to break away like Turkey, for example. We don't know what game Turkey is playing, actually. The bloc is based on a few key states who play a crucial role. We spoke of Japan, Australia and the United Kingdom. There's also France, which has positioned itself firmly beside the United States, of course, and other countries are trying to get closer, too. Canada, however, finds itself more on the outer flank.

Then there is the consolidation of the Sino-Russian axis. The current collapse of the Russian economy is a fantastic opportunity for the Chinese, who are buying up most of Russia's strategic infrastructure.

We are therefore seeing the creation of these two polarized groups that are increasingly on a collision course, and the outliers, such as India, Turkey and other key players, could really influence the results.

Ms. Christine Normandin: When we're talking about the Arctic, is there the same risk of seeing cooperation being eroded?

Dr. Justin Massie: We have spoken about this. There are countries cooperating with the Nordic states, but not Canada. Canada just wants its special relationship in a relationship that isn't so special. So we find ourselves hovering outside of the inner circle. In my opinion, that is really the crux of the matter, in terms of security in the Arctic.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Normandin.

[*English*]

Madam Mathysen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I think it was Mr. Huebert who mentioned that the Russian and Chinese investments into bigger weaponry and further aggression are there, and we cannot ignore that. Ultimately, there was a trigger of that, at a point in the early 2000s, against the anti-ballistic missile defence treaty. That said, that was the success of that idea, which was that cooler heads would prevail.

Who will be the cooler head, if that's not Canada's role?

I'll ask Professor Massie and then, if we have time, Professor Kimball and Professor Huebert.

Dr. Justin Massie: There's a big threat in the instability of our southern neighbour. One way to address that threat is to institution-

alize and depoliticize our military-to-military relationships and also those at other levels, like trade, institutional, cultural, etc. We should do that much more, I think, to prevent the chaos coming from a new Trumpist administration.

For instance, in all the instability, it could trade with its affinity with Russia. You can see that in its position. You can see in the Republican Party the division right now on whether the west should continue to arm the Ukrainians. You will see those divides with the far right in many countries. Canada should prevent that.

To do that, we need to institutionalize those relationships below the political level, so they exist notwithstanding who the leaders of any countries are.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

Mr. Bezan, you have four minutes.

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

I have to say that today's testimony from all three of our witnesses has been fantastic and scary all at the same time.

When you start talking about... Professor Huebert was talking about the sharing of technology with the Americans and the reason we should be part of AUKUS, the Australia, U.K. and U.S. agreement. When you look at the quad dialogue that exists between Australia, Japan, India and the United States, we're again absent from the table.

The reason the Americans are willing to share technology, not just submarine technology... If you look at our Canadian surface combatants, we're talking about putting the Aegis system on all our combat vessels. It speaks to the concern the Americans have of being able to protect North America from air-breathing threats, especially with hypersonic cruise missiles, knowing we're going to need to be more vigorous in having technology and being part of the entire solution.

Can all three of you quickly run through the list of what we need to do on the capitalization of defence technologies? What are your top five priorities, whether they're submarines, over-the-horizon or other technologies that we need to defend the Arctic.

Mr. Massie, do you want to start, and then Mr. Huebert can go?

● (1225)

Dr. Justin Massie: Some things we've said already. On the sea capabilities, whether it's submarines or unmanned, that's a definite need.

Other drones, for aerial surveillance and ISR, are fundamental for Canada. This is the niche we should invest in, because they have industrial benefits that we can then use outside of North America, but we don't. I think those are the major two.

Everything about detection...missile defence, yes.... The capacity we put on our surface combatant ships is important, but we need to have 15 and not 12. That's going to cost even more than we expect right now. Keeping those 15, I think, would be in my top five list.

Mr. James Bezan: Go ahead, Professor Huebert.

Dr. Robert Huebert: I would go for three major ones. First and foremost is all of the surveillance capabilities that we have talked about. You need to know the nature of warfare, and you need to know it this instant.

You also have to then have the response capability. The way you deter an enemy today, be it China or Russia, is by demonstrating that you can fight with your allies and that, in fact, you are not the weak link.

The third one gets to the very first question that was put to me, which is, of course, addressing the personnel crisis. We are not bringing in enough people. We are not training them properly. We are not getting to the numbers that are necessary to meet the modern threat today.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

Go ahead, Professor Kimball.

Prof. Anessa Kimball: When you compare the defence sharing agreements and classified nuclear sharing agreements that Canada has with the U.S. versus the U.S. agreements with the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, Canada has what I will call a very lightly institutionalized agreement. It could have a much deeper agreement if it wanted to jump into the pool. This would require that Canada commit to R and D, and T and E. It simply hasn't wanted to do that. If it wants to get that access, it has to be willing to make that level of commitment.

When I look at the agreements, it is extremely clear that one of the things Australia did after 9/11 was, in a period of 10 to 15 years, to become as close to the United States as Canada has been since the 1940s. They did this very purposefully, through a number of agreements, and Canada has simply missed the boat there.

The second thing I would note is that Canada really needs to think about its dual-use export regimes and bringing those regimes into closer alignment with the United States, Australia and some of those other countries. That's another way you're going to get into this relationship, so that you can get access to that information.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

For the final four minutes, we'll go to Ms. O'Connell, who has been inhaling chicken soup as we speak, because she's quite sick.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): I am. That's why, Mr. Chair, if it's okay with you, I'm going to give my time to Mr. Fisher.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Fisher, you have four minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to Ms. O'Connell.

Professor Kimball, when you were so gently cut off from your opening remarks by the chair, you were getting ready to talk about

adding two new countries to NATO, and how that may positively impact our situation in the Canadian Arctic.

I wanted to give you an opportunity, because your remarks were fabulous.... I really pricked my ears up at that comment and then, like I say, the chair chose to cut you off.

Do you want to finish those comments, or chat with us a bit about how having those partners may help us in the future?

Prof. Anessa Kimball: It's very clear that these two countries very much share some of the same principal interests that Canada does in the Arctic in terms of ensuring respectful development, protecting the environment and maritime access, but they actually have more military capability and maritime capability to navigate in the region. They also have—particularly the Swedes—impressive air capability.

It goes without saying that the Finns have some of the best intelligence-gathering capabilities in the region. There's not very much that goes on in the region that they don't know about. In fact, they're one of the major information suppliers right now to NATO about Russian activities in the Arctic. This is simply going to make that process much more streamlined. It's going to remove an actor, because they're going to be in the room. It's not going to be transferring the information.

The other thing is that here are countries that are looking for active collaboration in the region in future projects. I think Canada should be one of the countries that tries to partner up with both Sweden and Finland.

Finally, I think it would be important to say that in terms of thinking about how these states might contribute to NATO, they will be good for NATO, because I suspect that these states will want to contribute probably more than the Danes and Norwegians, which will place them probably in the top 10 contributors to NATO when you look at the civilian budget, so again this is good for Canada.

• (1230)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's great.

If there's any time left, I'd like to cede the rest to Mr. May.

The Chair: There is about a minute and a half.

Mr. Bryan May: Okay. I don't have a lot of time, so maybe this will be just a very quick question for Professor Huebert.

You've mentioned aerospace a couple of times. Do you want to wrap this up by talking about what Canada should be focusing on first and foremost when it comes to the aerospace sector?

Dr. Robert Huebert: The first is that we have to make the decision on the replacement of the F-18s. Given the fact that the Nords, Danes, Finns and British have all gone for the F-35, given its capability, I think it's clear that for a proper integration it has to be the F-35.

The second has to be the means of basing it. We need to have the communication base. We need to have the forward operating locations that in fact can function 24-7. We need a refuelling capability, and we need a response capability with the missiles we've been talking about. We need a fist that will work.

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

On behalf of the committee, I truly want to thank you for all your insights and your thoughts, even, as Mr. Bezan said, your scary thoughts. It's very helpful and informative for the committee as we engage in this study.

I again offer my insincere apologies to Professor Kimball. You live in good company, because I have in the past year cut off a British High Commissioner, a Supreme Court justice and several ministers. As I say, I offer an insincere apology—

A voice: Oh, oh!

The Chair: —and I thank all of you for your co-operation and for helping us with this.

As my colleague to the right notices, I offer insincere apologies all the time.

With that, we are suspended. We will go in camera and let our guests leave.

Thank you.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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