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Chair: The Honourable John McKay





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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ)):** Welcome, everyone.

It is 11:00 a.m. and I see that we have quorum. I therefore call the meeting to order.

I am replacing Mr. McKay today, but I will also be speaking as a member of the committee, and I will take my turn as usual.

I confirm that the witnesses have done the appropriate sound checks.

I would like to officially bid you welcome to the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on October 6, the committee is continuing its study on Arctic security. Today, we will be looking at the issue of geopolitical competition in the Arctic and its repercussions on international security and cooperation.

I would like to welcome the first group of witnesses. Today, we have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Aurel Braun, who is a professor at the University of Toronto, and Mr. Stéphane Roussel, a professor with the National School of Public Administration. They are participating virtually.

I will now ask both witnesses to make their opening statements.

Professor Braun, you will have the floor for five minutes as soon as your microphone is turned on.

[*English*]

**Dr. Aurel Braun (Professor, University of Toronto, As an Individual):** Thank you.

Can you hear me now?

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** We hear you very well. Whenever you're ready.

[*English*]

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Thank you so much.

A vast and forbidding region that is also enormously important strategically, the Arctic holds as much as 25% of the fossil fuel reserves in the world. Among western states, however, the Arctic has hardly been a centre of geostrategic interest, and policies have often been driven by noble hopes and limited attention.

In Canada, to some the far north is too far, too large and environmentally too hostile to attract foreign conquest or significant interference. It has been tempting, then, to view the Arctic in terms of a zone of peace and co-operation, where the priorities are cultural exchanges, rescue operations and aviation regulations.

Unfortunately, to state an inconvenient truth, this attempt to segregate the region from global geopolitics has been a naive amalgam, a mirage of wishful western thinking and Russian manipulation. I would respectfully suggest that we have no choice but to face a harsh geopolitical reality: Any attempt to separate the international from the regional risks creating a dangerous illusion.

There are three major areas of concern in the Arctic that are deeply interrelated: the political, the economic-environmental and the military. In all of these Russia plays an outsized role that has been complicated further by climate change and the evolution of Russian-Chinese relations.

Certainly we do need to appreciate that Russia, the largest Arctic state, has legitimate concerns and interests. No other country has as significant a percentage of its population or derives as much of its GDP from resource extraction and shipping in the region. Compare at least 20% of GDP for Russia in contrast to less than 1% for the U.S. The Russian threat, however, derives from motives and ambitions that go far beyond these legitimate national interests.

First, from a political perspective, Russia, which has an increasingly repressive personalist regime, is seized by four intertwined actual and pending crises that are key motor forces shaping foreign policy: a political legitimacy crisis, an economic crisis, a national identity crisis and a succession crisis. Combined, these motor forces shape a Russian foreign policy that seeks to compensate for the failure of the Putin regime to create a successful modern state by creating diversionary “external successes”; thus, domestic repression foreshadows external aggression.

Second, with an economy that is so highly dependent on energy extraction, with over 60% of exports consisting of fossil fuels, Russia has made the Arctic central both to its economy and to its political and military strategy. Though Moscow pays lip service to global climate concerns, it has been an extremely poor custodian of the fragile ecosystem of the Arctic. It has engaged in massive and risky exploration, especially with funding help and direct involvement from China. As climate change has indeed induced a significant decline in the amount and the thickness of sea ice, Russia has ignored the threats and focused exclusively on economic opportunity, stressing Arctic energy extraction and navigation. Moreover, Moscow overall, in a predictable progression, has moved from pipeline diplomacy to weaponizing energy.

Third, despite Putin's reassurances about not militarizing the Arctic as well as some western assumptions of Arctic military exceptionalism, Russian military doctrine going back to 2014 shows exactly the opposite. From a new generation of nuclear weapons to its most advanced anti-aircraft system, Russia has been engaging in a massive military buildup, having more bases north of the Arctic Circle than do all other countries combined and with more heavy icebreakers than all other states.

• (1105)

In conclusion, ostracizing Russia in the Arctic Council recognizes Russian aggressiveness but is far from sufficient. As long as Russia remains a dictatorship with a failed economy that looks for political legitimacy via foreign adventures, as long as it is so energy-dependent, as long as it continues to drift from junior Chinese partner to a Beijing vassal, Moscow poses a growing threat that should be addressed with prudence but not with panic. Canada needs to, one, have a permanent rather than just a persistent military presence in the Arctic; two, achieve a qualitative edge in the face of Russian numerical superiority; and three, with allies, including Sweden and Finland, build a credible northern regional military capability. Security and sovereignty are central concerns in light of 21st century geopolitics, and there is no magical solution. There is little choice—

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** I'm sorry, Professor Braun. I hate doing this, even more so than our usual chair, but I have to interrupt you because your five minutes are up. I hope that you will get a chance to talk more on the subject during the round of questions.

Professor Roussel, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** I understand.

[*Translation*]

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel (Professor, National School of Public Administration, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the committee and the clerk for inviting me. It is always a great pleasure and an honour to contribute to the ongoing work and discussions of the House of Commons.

I would just like to say at the outset that I am not a specialist on Russia. My main field of research is Canadian foreign and defence policy, especially in the Arctic, and I've been working on these issues for 15 years now.

My statement will be based on three main points that I will try to make in four minutes.

At the end of February and the beginning of March, I received many calls from journalists, mainly from the francophone media, who were expressing their concerns on Canada's vulnerability in the Arctic and the possibility that the international tensions caused by the war in Ukraine would have an impact on the Canadian Arctic.

The first thing that I have to say on this issue is that I am optimistic. I do not believe that Canada's military interests in the Arctic are threatened, whether it be in the short or medium term. I do not believe that the hostilities and tensions with Russia will have a direct and immediate impact on Canadian interests in the Arctic.

Russia has not staked any claims to Canadian territory. In my opinion, Russia has no strategic interest in claiming Canadian territory. If ever that were to happen, it would be an attack on Canadian territory as per article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. If it ever came to be, we'd be worrying about much more than just the Arctic.

In the short and medium term, however, Russia does represent a threat to Canada, especially in terms of disinformation and cyber attacks. I don't have any major concerns when it comes to the Arctic, however.

My second point, which is linked to the numerous calls I fielded from journalists, is to remind committee members that Canadians are very much concerned with issues related to the Arctic. It is a question of national identity. To be Canadian is to love the Arctic and to worry about it, so much so that any hint of a threat, even if it is far away and up to a certain point made up, will whip up public opinion. The committee should be aware of these strong feelings and potentially disproportionate reactions.

That brings me to my third point. If you were to ask me to give advice or direction to the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence on the Arctic right now, it would be to carry on doing what the CAF and the department have been doing for the past 20 years. Their main concern should be the impact of climate change in the Arctic and the increased human activity that will follow. Tourism, economic activity, support to the communities, all this will increase over the next decades. The Canadian Armed Forces are usually the main tool used by the government to act in a region as isolated as this one, which means that there will be more calls upon the armed forces and more pressure on them.

In conclusion, last week you heard the Chief of the Defence staff who reminded us that the Canadian Armed Forces are lacking recruits and that they had a lot of difficulty increasing their capacity to provide the services expected by the government. This pressure will continue, even more so because there is a demand now in southern Canada for these services also. I think that is the main challenge that we will face over the next few years, and it directly concerns the Canadian Arctic.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1110)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you. You were able to make all your points and still have 30 seconds left over.

We will now proceed to our first round of questions. Mr. Zimmer will have the floor for six minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for appearing.

My questions will be for Professor Braun.

Thank you for your testimony. I agree with your three points. You talked about a permanent presence; you talked about a qualitative approach; and you talked about working with allies to build up strength in the region.

I was up in Inuvik and Iqaluit just last summer. You know, Liberal hot air really won't cut it anymore. It's been seven years. We're still seeing a huge lack of infrastructure and huge lack of security delivered on the ground in the Arctic.

Are you familiar with the green hangar situation in Inuvik?

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** I do not know the specifics of it.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Let me explain.

The green hangar is the hangar the Canadian Armed Forces have used for the last decades to house our air-to-air refuelling tanker when it's up there, the CC-130. In 2021, this Liberal government, which talks a big game about security, deemed it no longer necessary.

Right now that hangar sits empty in Inuvik, and we're getting into the winter here and the snow is flying up there. We don't have access to that hangar for our CC-130 to refuel our CF-18s. What that means is that at -40° conditions, it takes at least two to three hours to even get that air-to-air refuelling tanker up to speed, so any kind of quick response is really off the table. If you don't know and you're not familiar with it, I challenge you to look up a little bit about it.

Currently that NORAD asset, which is key in the north—as we know, Inuvik is the key NORAD base in the Arctic—is up for sale. We've had some interested buyers look at it, namely the Chinese and the Americans, so I guess my question to you is this: How can Canadians believe anything this government says around what it's doing to support Arctic security? We see promises from this government, but very little delivered.

Please respond.

• (1115)

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** I'm not going to get into any partisan politics, but what I would point out is that we have to be very careful how we define a threat from Russia. If we ask whether there is a threat that Russia would massively invade the Canadian north, that is not what is likely to happen.

We need to take a nuanced approach, and this is what's really essential. In many ways, Russia presents a spectrum of threats. This is why we have to have a response capability, one that is effective and one that does not present Canada as a soft or a tempting target. Those were the last parts of what I was going to say in my presentation.

Let me give you an example. Russia is claiming sovereignty over the waters above the Lomonosov and the Mendeleev ridges. This would cover an area of about 1.2 million square kilometres of the Arctic. What if they acted unilaterally? What would we do about that? Navigation through the northern sea route is becoming more possible with climate change. How would that impinge upon Canadian sovereignty?

Russian—

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Professor Braun, I have only a few minutes left, so I'll ask you another question.

I'm very familiar with the competing sovereignty claims around the seabed as well. Russia has made a claim for what we deem to be our Arctic seabed. You talked about it before, even environmentally.

We need to be able to assert ourselves. If Putin decides to set up a drilling rig 200 nautical miles off our shores, we need to be able to act and to do so decisively. I understand what you're saying. Maybe you don't think it's a threat, but they're currently invading a country.

This is from a source on the ground:

Our weather is changing rapidly. As a precursor to the fall, rains and fogs are starting. At present, the most critical NORAD base in Canada does not have any hangarage, parking, C-130 air-to-air refuellers. The A310 AAR—air-to-air refueller—cannot land in Inuvik. The C-295 SAR is not operational. [There is] insufficient fuel. As of yesterday, four airports in Nunavut, one of which is Resolute Bay—a regional hub—are short of aviation fuel.

This hardly sounds like the lead NORAD base in Canada, as our Minister Anand would reassure us. I've asked her questions in the House about this before. She says it's all great in the north. Does that sound like Inuvik is ready for any kind of response in the north?

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Unfortunately, Canada has neglected its hard power for quite some time now. Given the geopolitics today, we can ill afford to do that.

Whether we're looking at general issues or at the specifics you have mentioned, all of those need to be addressed, and they need to be addressed pretty urgently, because as much as soft power is important, soft power operates together with hard power.

Russia is an aggressive dictatorship. It is backed up by China, and China is becoming increasingly interested in the Arctic. They want to make sure there's maximum extraction and a maximum amount of control by Russia with the help of China. China has talked about a polar silk road. We therefore have to confront that reality.

As much as I would like us to shift as much spending as possible to education and health care, we have little choice but to have a military capacity that is effective and credible.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Thank you, Professor Braun.

All I would add is that we think of this as a threat, and we're here in Ottawa. It's an even more profound threat if you actually live in the Arctic.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you, Mr. Zimmer.

We now go over to Ms. Lambropoulos, from the Liberal Party, who has six minutes.

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

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today and for answering our questions.

Mr. Roussel, you stated that in the coming years and decades, population numbers and tourism in the Arctic will increase, probably because of climate change and other factors. You also spoke of the fact that the Canadian Armed Forces are having a hard time retaining their members and attracting new ones.

In terms of the Canadian Armed Forces' strategy in the Arctic, what potential role do you see for indigenous peoples who are already in the Arctic? Could you tell us more about that?

• (1120)

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Absolutely.

I thank you for the question.

First of all, I would like to say that we already well served. I'm referring to the Canadian Rangers, who support the Canadian Armed Forces by serving as guides and mentors in the North. This organization works extremely well and has major social and economic benefits. The Canadian Rangers are for the most part members of the local communities, which builds up strong links, especially within those communities. The Canadian Armed Forces and local communities enjoy an excellent relationship thanks to this organization. There's a consensus on the fact that the Canadian Rangers are important and that they have to be maintained.

The problem is possibly one of growth. The organization is probably operating at full capacity and it would be difficult to add any new patrols and responsibilities. I don't think we need to establish new relationships, but rather cultivate the ones we already have. We should continue to gain as much as we can from the knowledge that these communities have in the regions they call home and the concerns that they can communicate to the Canadian Rangers and to

certain bodies, such as this committee. Moreover, I hope that the committee will invite representatives from these communities as witnesses.

However, for the time being, I would say that it is the communities that we should be asking advice from on what more we can do right now. I also believe that things are going exceedingly well with the Canadian Rangers.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Why do you think that operations are at full capacity and that we can't increase them? It is because of the number of Rangers?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** That is correct. The organization currently has 5,000 Rangers, and patrols are made up of 20 to 30 members, depending on the size of the communities. We quickly reach the maximum number of people who can or want to be part of the Canadian Rangers.

Many communities want to be included in the Rangers' patrols. In many cases, these communities contact the Rangers command to ask for a new patrol for them. However, in my view, at this point the benefits would be marginal at best.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** So it is vital to maintain that relationship and use it to try to improve—

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** That relationship should be strengthened, absolutely.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** All right. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Braun, my next question will go to you.

You spoke a lot about the threat of Russia and what may come in the Arctic in the years to come, based on how much they rely on the Arctic. You also spoke about the northern military capability of other western countries in terms of protecting the Arctic. You said that Canada should work with its partners in order to build a northern front, I guess, that could counter Russia in the event of an escalation intention between the countries.

Can you speak a bit as to what you think Canada should be doing with its partners in order to build that capability?

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much for that question.

Again, I want to emphasize that we have to look at the Russian threat not in terms of a kind of standard military invasion, because that can be easily dismissed. That's not how threats manifest themselves, and this is not necessarily how Russia acts. It is something that we need to understand across the entire spectrum, and because we have been co-operating with other countries, because we are a member of NATO, because we are a member of NORAD....

NATO now will be enlarging, and I'm quite confident that Sweden and Finland will be members. They're almost there. We're just waiting for Turkey, basically, to decide that this is a good idea, so we have to consider the best way to make our collective defence posture more effective.

Years ago I testified before this committee, and I strongly urged that we get fifth-generation fighters so that we'd have a qualitative edge. Now that has become even more important, and we're in the process of getting that edge.

Of the other Nordic states, the western Nordic states—

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Dr. Braun, I am sorry to have to cut you off once again, but unfortunately Ms. Lambropoulos' time is up. Please hold that thought. You might be able to come back to it in response to another question.

I will now begin my own six-minute round by thanking our two witnesses.

Let me start with you, Dr. Roussel. You mentioned at the outset that you were not really concerned by a potential Russian military threat in the Arctic. We know that Russia is not going to plant its flag on Canadian soil to claim it for itself anytime soon.

However, I would like you to expand on that, more specifically on the economic aspect, the passage of ships in our territorial waters, and the political claims. Since these could ultimately lead to a more militaristic approach, is that situation not cause for concern?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Thank you for the question.

Let me come back to something I mentioned very quickly in my opening remarks. The immediate threat is posed by disinformation and cyberattacks that disrupt computer systems. We have seen a number of such attacks, which are believed to have come from Russia. Those threats also target the Arctic, because the Internet connections in many of those communities are vulnerable to these types of attacks. You would be well advised to keep this in mind when you examine current threats, especially those of a political nature.

If you are referring to an increase of activities of a political nature in the north, then I would say that yes, it is a much more plausible situation. I am talking about demonstrations of force, military operations or other similar things to create an impression. The appropriate response to an increase of activities that are potentially political or that aim to prove a point is what we are already doing: performing Canadian Armed Forces exercises in the north and implementing monitoring systems so that we know who is engaging in economic or criminal activities, and where. We have to be able to detect these types of activities. Acting is one thing, but we have to be able to identify the problems.

That being said, my recommendation would be that the Canadian Armed Forces act as a quasi-police force to ensure a government presence, act as authority figures and make sure that the law is enforced on Canadian soil. It is not a military defence role, but it is extremely important nonetheless.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you.

I will continue along the same lines as Ms. Lambropoulos.

You mentioned the shortage of recruits that the Canadian Armed Forces are currently facing. There have been recent cuts in operations deemed unnecessary, and we do not know if other cuts will be

made in the future. You also spoke of the pressure put on the forces related to the high demand for their services in southern Canada.

In the event of a lack of effective capacity on the ground, how would the Arctic rank in terms of priorities? Would resources be taken away from the Arctic and be reassigned further south, or vice versa? How do you think the resources would be used?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** I would give priority to the Arctic. In the south of Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces should be a last resort, when other options no longer exist. However, that is not what we have seen over the past few years, or even decades. Provinces often call in the military for additional support very quickly due to public pressure. It was the case, for example, with the floods in Montérégie or when hurricane Fiona hit the Maritimes. The public quickly urged the provinces to call the army to the rescue.

However, southern Canada has other resources to fall back on before calling in the Canadian Armed Forces. That is not the case in the North. First of all, conditions are extremely difficult, and there are simply not enough resources to face an environmental disaster, a major air crash or a shipwreck, for example. Only the Canadian Armed Forces have the necessary resources.

Therefore, I am inclined to say that even if the pressures are stronger in the south, the north should take precedence because there are very few alternatives compared to the south.

• (1130)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** I have one last question for you, Dr. Roussel.

Dr. Braun, I will wait for my second round to ask you my questions.

Dr. Roussel, you mentioned public opinion in your opening remarks, saying that people are interested in what is happening in the Arctic, which makes protecting that region all the more important.

First, do you think people are sufficiently informed about the Arctic? Second, is there a risk of large state actors like Russia spreading misinformation?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** The answer is yes.

First off, I would say that people are perhaps not sufficiently informed. The Arctic is never top of mind for most people, and the vast majority of Canadians will never set foot in that region. Only 5% or 6% of Canadians can say that they have actually been there.

The sensitivity comes from the fact that the vast majority of Canadians, across linguistic and regional boundaries, identify the Arctic as being typically Canadian. That is where the sensibility comes from.

Public awareness of this subject could certainly be improved. However, I would not want the information provided to be alarmist and lead people to believe that the Arctic is under threat by foreign powers and that we should deploy troops over there to counter external threats. That would divert attention away from the actual issues.

We have to take care of Arctic communities and be mindful of the increased human activity that is taking place and will continue to take place in the region. That is what we should focus on, in my view. If we put too much emphasis on some far-off, external threat that is, in my opinion, not very likely to actually occur, we run the risk of driving public opinion down the wrong path and generating requests for things that are not currently necessary.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you.

My NDP colleague, Ms. Mathysen, now has the floor for six minutes.

[English]

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

Professor Roussel, we've been discussing a lot that need for infrastructure to be put into the Arctic and how the military brings that forward. My concern has been that some of the benefits for people living in the Arctic would be secondary and that the primary role, of course, is defence. Could you explain how we can avoid that—

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Mathysen, but Mr. May has a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.):** No, it's just a technical issue. The French interpretation was coming across on the English channel.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** If I speak to you in English right now, is it...?

[Translation]

I am told that the issue has been fixed.

I am sorry for cutting you off, Ms. Mathysen. I will add a few seconds to your time.

[English]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Thank you so much.

Can we ensure that spending is balanced out to give priority to the people in the Arctic so that they actually fully benefit from it? How do we find that balance and do that?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Thanks for your question.

Actually, it's really difficult to find that balance, because the needs are so great that everything should be a priority. That's a problem. A lot of the infrastructure could have a dual use, in the sense that if you build a deepwater port or if you build some airstrips, they could be used by military, but they could also be used

for civilian activities, so a lot of the infrastructure could be prioritized without problems.

Actually, my concern is exactly the message I gave in my previous answer, which is that if we're putting too much emphasis on the distant threat and we're putting our eggs in the military basket, that could be a problem and we could face exactly the problem you exposed, in the sense that we would be neglecting local communities for something possible but not necessarily likely in the future.

My answer is to try to find infrastructure that could have dual use and to prioritize that. However, everything is a priority, and that's a real problem.

• (1135)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** It's true, right? If people don't have adequate housing in the north, how are we expected to rely upon the Rangers to continue to live there and work there? You were talking about that increase of policing, of detection, but ultimately, if the infrastructure isn't there in terms of simple broadband, how are you supposed to do that, given the technology required? I understand that, if that's what you're pointing to.

In terms of climate change or how the government needs to alter its thinking in terms of building infrastructure, both to impact the community and to be beneficial by lessening the negative impacts of climate change, can you expand on that as well?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** I want to come back to one of your remarks about needs like housing and broadening the Internet. Actually, this is not a Department of National Defence issue. There's a strategy in Canada about Internet development, and I think there were some mistakes made regarding the Arctic, but it's not in this committee that we can discuss this, because it's not a DND matter.

The problem with climate change.... Pardon me; one of the multiple problems with climate change is that it will affect much of the infrastructure, including DND infrastructure. That's why DND put climate change as one of the top issues they're facing. It will just increase the needs, and it will directly affect the community there.

One of my hopes, maybe I can say, although some don't like it, is that since many private interests will be interested in developing the Arctic for economic or other reasons, they could support or complete the government efforts in the region. I'm not necessarily trusting all of free enterprise to meet all of the demands, but it may help.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** To do that building in the way that they need to, how would the government ultimately then protect against those private interests? How would you see that going forward?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question? There was a gap.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** I'm sorry. In terms of that role of the private sector, how does the government ensure that it protects the north and the people in the Arctic? From what you're saying, it may be a bit helpful, and yet you have to be careful about it. What are the big pitfalls that you would see?



**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Again, for this question, I'm not sure that this is the right place to answer it. Before, we were sometimes forgetting that there's another level of government that is involved here. Part of the Arctic is in Quebec, and many of these questions, including on housing and health care and all those questions, are provincial issues.

In the territories, even territories that have a very different status from provinces, I think we should ask the question you just raised to these levels of government and to the local communities. Actually, that's for them to answer that question. It's not necessarily for us in the south to deal with these questions.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** That could involve full consultation coming from the ground up, not from the top down. Is that a problem within DND?

I have five seconds, so answer very quickly, please.

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Yes, we need to have more consultation, and it's not necessarily a DND matter.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much.

We will now begin the second round of questions.

We have 20 minutes left to ask 25 minutes worth of questions. I propose to divide the time proportionally: Conservatives and Liberals will have four minutes each; Bloc Québécois and NDP, two minutes each; then a final round of four minutes each for Conservatives and Liberals.

I now give the floor to my Conservative colleague, Mrs. Kramp-Neuman, for four minutes.

[English]

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, thank you to the witnesses for being with us here today, not with us in the room but virtually. Thank you for your comments.

I'm going to start by suggesting that the strength of our armed forces is in significant decline. Unless we recruit, retain and train, I am fearful that we're going to be continuing down a very dark path.

It's quite obvious that we're extremely short of the goals projected by this government's plan of being "strong" and "secure" and "engaged", which was calling for personnel levels to rise to just over 71,500. We lack modern equipment, and that certainly doesn't help. We lack a cohesive vision for Canadian foreign policy and for the military investments needed to back up that foreign policy. It's not just the lack of material support in terms of our equipment: I want to home in on the lack of trained personnel in the military.

On my question, I'd like to start with Professor Braun.

In your opinion, what is broken and how can we fix it before it's too late?

• (1140)

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Well, there are a great many things broken, but one thing that really worries me is that we are spending a lot of time trying to reassure ourselves that there's no real external threat. We look at this kind of binary approach, thinking that if we spend on the military, we can't spend on social welfare needs in the north, which are indeed important.

I wish I could share the sanguine outlook of my colleague, Professor Roussel, but that is not the reality in the international system. This kind of Arctic exceptionalism is not tenable. We have to face the reality that we have to spend more altogether. We have to be able to do both. We have to take care of the aboriginal people and their needs, but we also have to take a long-range view of our defence commitments and defence requirements.

We saw, when we tried to help Ukraine, that we were so down on our equipment that our cupboards were basically bare. We'd run down our capacity.

We are a major international player, a G7 country. We have the ability to do more. It takes sacrifice and it takes commitment and it's not going to be easy, but we can't just have this kind of false assurance that there's some future threat that is undefined, that is not significant. When we look at the international system, if we spend a bit of time on Russian military doctrine and look at the behaviour of China, it's time to have a reality check.

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

Shifting gears a little bit and keeping the focus on the military presence in the Arctic, we recognize that a lot of the military presence is centred in the eastern Arctic. Is the lack of substantial military presence in the western Arctic an issue, in your opinion? If so, what steps could our government take to address the capability gap?

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Please answer in 30 seconds or less.

[English]

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Is the question for Dr. Braun or for me?

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:** I only have 30 seconds. I'm open to your answering the question, Professor Roussel.

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** The answer for this is to develop a very mobile capacity in the Arctic: long-range patrol aircraft or things like this. We don't have any infrastructure in the Arctic, or very significant infrastructure, so we need to develop a broader way to monitor what's happening up there. The east and west both need that, but I think the issues are more present in the eastern Arctic than in the west, for now.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much.

Mr. Fisher, from the Liberal Party, now has the floor for four minutes.

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

[English]

Thank you to our two esteemed witnesses for their testimony today.

We talked a lot about Russia. Professor Braun, I'm interested in why Canada should be concerned about China's presence and activity in the Arctic. I'm interested in their intentions and maybe what factors are driving their interest.

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Thank you very much for that question.

Russia has a very powerful military presence and a growing one in the Arctic, but they are working with a rather small economy. Russia is but a remnant of a former superpower. Its economy is not really much bigger than that of Italy's economy, so it needs Chinese help.

China needs energy. China needs to trade. China understands that the Arctic is important because there are so many fossil fuels in that region, and it has been supporting Russian exploration. It has become involved directly. China wants to see if they can develop the northern sea route, because that will cut down 30% of the time and distance of shipping things from Asia to Europe. That would dramatically increase the export potential of China.

China has resources. China has a large economy. China has funds to spare, and they have become increasingly involved. More than that, the relationship between China and Russia has been changing from an unequal partnership to where Russia may become more and more of a vassal state, in which case China would dictate according to its own needs, which is to have unbridled exploration for resources in the Arctic. That would be very dangerous for us, ecologically and ultimately strategically. They would like to have control with Russia of the northern sea route, and that would present another kind of danger to us.

This is why I think it's essential that we look at the danger coming in that area in a sophisticated way, rather than defining it in terms of a standard military operation or just looking at cyberwarfare, which is not necessarily the primary threat—not even in the immediate term.

• (1145)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Thank you, Professor.

Do you see China respecting or accepting the legal and political status quo?

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** We have little indication to believe that. All we have to look at is China's international behaviour and the way they are proceeding towards Taiwan.

As I noted, this idea that has been pushed by what I called “crude realism”—that it doesn't really matter what happens domestically in

the country, and it's how they behave internationally—I think is not viable. What we are learning is that domestic repression foreshadows external aggression very often. When we look at China and the increasing repression, not just with the Uighurs but also with the prosecution of the Falun Gong and now with Xi Jinping getting an extra term, it is very worrisome. I do not have a great deal of confidence that China will respect international legality.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Professor, I was going to ask you a question along the lines of what Madam Lambropoulos was saying about multilateral co-operation. You were cut off because you ran out of time, and now I'm running out of time, so it looks as though I'm not going to get a chance to get to that and allow you to finish your comments on Sweden and Finland and their co-operation with Canada. I'm sorry about that.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you.

It is now my turn for two minutes.

Dr. Braun, Dr. Roussel told us that he was relatively optimistic from a military standpoint and that he believes the probability of a Russian invasion to be low.

You mentioned Russia's dependence on fossil fuels, which are abundant in the Arctic. Do you share Dr. Roussel's optimism on the military side, and do you also think that there is no immediate risk of a Russian attack?

[English]

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** Thank you. I'm trying to just understand exactly the question. Are you asking me if I share the confidence that Mr. Roussel has that Russia is not an immediate threat or a medium threat? Is that the question?

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** That is correct.

We understand that Russia can be an economic threat, but what about a military threat?

[English]

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** I wish I could share the sanguine approach that was outlined by Professor Roussel and that we could just proceed as we have been doing. I think that's a mistake. I think we really need to upgrade our military.

I think the Russian threat is significant. We already see prodding and probing of our air defences. We also need to recognize that since we are a member of NATO, any action by Russia against NATO states—and Finland and Sweden are going to become NATO states—would involve Canada. We need to be able to do our part in the joint defence of NATO, and that involves having capacity.

I'm very concerned about this rather blithe dismissal of the Russian threat as something that is indeterminate, distant and insignificant, or the notion that Canada, as one of—

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** I am sorry, Dr. Braun, but I have to cut you off once again to give the floor to my NDP colleague.

Ms. Mathysen, you have two minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Thank you.

Professor Roussel, you were talking about staying the course, continuing on with the status quo, as we look at North American defence and our involvement in NORAD and so on, I believe. Could you expand on that a little bit more? I have only two minutes.

Also, could you talk about the consequences or the benefits of what others are suggesting in terms of buying more weaponry or purchasing more military equipment and so on?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** There are two parts to my answer.

First, we should keep going with what we're doing. NORAD modernization and the North Warning System modernization are crucial, and we should go ahead with these. We should also fix the infrastructure in the north. I think some of you mentioned all of the problems we would have on the ground to be operational. We should at least keep what we already announced and go on with it. In Canada we are really good at making announcements and then not making them real.

Second, if you want to protect the ground in the Arctic with the Canadian Forces, if there's suddenly a trip coming and appearing in the Arctic, there's actually nothing you or I can do on this. It would take decades—and it's far beyond all of the resources we can find—to create a serious and solid defence in the north. Actually, our interests are much more in Europe.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much, Dr. Roussel.

We will now begin our last round of questions.

My Conservative colleague, Mrs. Gallant, has the floor for four minutes.

[*English*]

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

According to my colleague Mr. Zimmer, China's already actively shopping for a refuelling base in our Arctic, and Canada actually has a “for sale” sign out.

Given that Communist China is already going after Taiwan and rattling sabres in other areas, what concrete steps should we be taking at this point? What Arctic assets and capabilities does China have that we should be concerned about?

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** Who is the question addressed to?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** That was for Dr. Braun.

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** What we have learned in our relationship with China is that we have to be extremely careful, whether it's with Huawei or with other elements of the economic relationship. We need to understand that China is not driven only by economic concerns; it is also driven very much by political concerns. We have to think in an integrated fashion. Consequently, we need to be wary about handing anything over to China that could be dual-purpose.

China's actions in the Arctic are not predominantly military per se, but they're acting together with Russia, and Russia has heavy and growing military investment. This is why I'm afraid that we can't just proceed as we have, because we have not been doing very well. We can't have this kind of notion that we are going to be deploying 100,000 troops in the frozen north. Rather we need a sophisticated approach in terms of the aircraft systems we have. We need integration with our allies in terms of getting over-the-horizon radars as quickly and capably as possible, and we need to develop an ability to defend against hypersonic weapons.

All of that will involve a very large investment. I wish we had a choice and we did not have to spend it, but that's not the geopolitical reality of the 21st century.

• (1155)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Earlier this week, we had a panel that said the threat from Russian aggression comes not from land in the Arctic but rather from aerospace and maritime domains. Do you agree with this assessment?

If there's one thing we should be doing immediately in terms of Canadian assets in the Arctic, what would that be?

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** We need the air capacity. We need icebreakers. We need to have exercises on Canadian shores.

A lot of this messaging is perception, making sure that Canada is not viewed as a soft target. Norway, for example, has held a naval exercise, Cold Response. We should very seriously consider having those kinds of exercises in Canada as well, to send a message.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Okay.

Would you please complete your opening statement? You were cut off there in the very beginning. You had something important to say.

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** It was the last sentence, basically.

There is little choice but to have an unwavering commitment, a major investment in hard power and consequent economic sacrifices, to make certain that Canada is never viewed as a soft and tempting target.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much, Dr. Braun.

Ms. O'Connell, from the Liberal Party, now has four minutes.

[English]

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

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

I just want to follow up on some of the comments made by the Conservatives about the so-called “hot air”.

Did Russia and China become a threat in the Arctic starting in late 2015? Did infrastructure exist in the Arctic and just cease to exist in 2015? Were there NATO exercises? Were there icebreakers? Was there infrastructure? Were there personnel stationed in the Arctic who just vanished in 2015? Perhaps the hot air and the political nature that the Conservatives want to build is in fact to distract from the fact that successive governments have had to make choices.

You both have spoken about the spending choices, which I think is a fair comment and should be looked at; however, the suggestion that somehow all of this work, all of this infrastructure, all of these threats, only began once our government took over and that all of these things had been done....

We heard in previous panels that simply to build infrastructure in the Arctic takes years and years of planning to deal with the type of infrastructure that is needed in those conditions. The fact that the Conservatives like to pretend that all of this existed and only changed once they were no longer in office is simply not true.

Perhaps we could speak about where we are and where we need to go. Successive governments have not made those investments, and the hot air is coming from the Conservative side. Perhaps we could stick to the point of building up our capabilities and ensuring Arctic sovereignty and protection instead of revisionist history.

Can you talk about the threat that existed prior to 2015 and the long-standing infrastructure capability needs that we need to start making those investments in?

Either witness can answer.

**Dr. Aurel Braun:** If I may just say so, I have no desire to get into partisan politics, nor do I think it's helpful to get into recriminations. I think we need to be forward-looking.

The reality is that I think there are very significant threats that have been building up. These are growing threats, and sometimes there are very difficult choices that we have to face. We have to make those choices and make those kinds of sacrifices.

In taking that forward-looking approach, what I would advocate is that we move as quickly as possible and that we don't just continue to do things the way we did. We have to understand the new reality. We have that capacity. Canadians deserve that.

• (1200)

[Translation]

**Dr. Stéphane Roussel:** If I may, I would like to add to my colleague's answer.

Up to now, no Canadian government, even during war times, has been able to find a satisfying solution to the issues facing a region

as large as the Arctic. The Canadian Armed Forces' current situation, including in the Arctic, is normal. It is not unusual in the least. It is something that we have been experiencing for a very long time.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you. That is the end of our time with this panel.

Dr. Braun and Dr. Roussel, thank you for your presence and your availability. What you have told this committee will be very helpful and will inform our upcoming work and the drafting of our report. We are very grateful to you.

I will now suspend the meeting briefly to welcome the second panel.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1205)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Colleagues, please take your seats for the second hour of this meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

I thank the witnesses for their patience.

We are now ready to continue with Mr. Michael Byers, professor at the University of British Columbia and Canada research chair in global politics and international law. He is joining us in person.

Welcome, Professor Byers.

Afterwards, we will hear from Mr. Whitney Lackenbauer, professor at Trent University and Canada research chair in the study of the Canadian north.

Gentlemen, you have five minutes each for your opening statement.

Professor Byers, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Michael Byers (Professor, Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law, University of British Columbia, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon everyone. I am pleased to be with you today.

[English]

I want to begin by thanking the clerk of this committee for having noticed two days ago that I was going to be in Ottawa today and therefore available to testify in person. It makes all the difference to see you face to face.

Thank you for the work that you've done, especially through the tough years of the pandemic.

I was able to hear the testimony of the witnesses on the previous panel and I want to both agree and disagree with them.

I want to agree that Russia is a significant security threat to Canada, including in the Arctic, and has been since the 1950s. Through long-range bombers carrying nuclear warheads through to the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles and through today to the development of cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles, Russia is a threat to North American security—absolutely.

Given the behaviour of the Putin regime, that threat is greater now than it has been at any point since 1962. We live in dangerous times in terms of the Russian threat to North America. That's where I agree with one of the previous panellists, and before I move on to other issues, I will talk a bit about how we can help to deal with that threat or manage that threat.

In terms of managing the threat from Russia, which is now through the ICBMs, cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles, Russia is far too advanced with its technology for us to have the capacity to shoot those things down, nor indeed is the United States capable of shooting them down. The reason we have our radar surveillance in the Arctic is to preserve the ability of our American friends and neighbours to launch in the event of a Russian first strike. This is the preservation of mutually assured destruction.

The North Warning System is about that. It's not about protecting us in the sense of attacking the incoming Russian missiles; it's protecting us by providing us with the assurance that Russia will be destroyed if they launch at North America. We need to upgrade the North Warning System to provide continued surveillance and assistance to our American allies. That includes over-the-horizon radar, absolutely. We need to preserve the mutually assured destruction that has protected us since the 1960s in terms of the nuclear deterrent. Those radar stations in the north are our biggest contribution to North American security.

In terms of the other dimensions of Arctic security, most of the action right now is in the European Arctic. It's in the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. The preponderance of Russia's military strength, its non-army military strength—naval, air force, ICBMs—is in northwestern Russia in the Russian Arctic, predominantly on the Kola Peninsula. Their access to the world's oceans is through the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. gap, and NATO naval forces and air forces are very active in dealing with Russian activity in that area. In just the last few days, they conducted major exercises with their nuclear forces, including missiles on land, submarine-based missiles and nuclear bomber capacity. They tested that just a few days ago.

I had the opportunity to spend some time with the commander of the U.S. Second Fleet in September 2019, and he told me that already then, in September of 2019, the level of Russian submarine activity was comparable to what he saw as the commander of a U.S. attack submarine in the latter part of the Cold War. There is activity there. Canada has a role to play. Our frigates have a role to play with other NATO naval forces in that theatre. Our long-range surveillance aircraft have a role to play in that theatre and do play a role.

• (1210)

Turning to the Canadian Arctic, Russia is not going to invade the Canadian Arctic. Think about it: Practically speaking, Russia is already losing a war against the Ukrainian military. Russia already owns half of the Arctic, incontestably. Russia doesn't need any North American Arctic, and Russia would lose very badly, faced with the combined response capability of NATO, including the United States, so an invasion, in terms of attempting to conquer territory, is just not on their cards. I agree with Professor Roussel here.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you, Professor Byers.

Professor Lackenbauer, you have five minutes.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Professor, Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North, Trent University, As an Individual):** Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to offer some opening remarks.

[*English*]

Since Russia launched its brutal further invasion of Ukraine in February, we've witnessed the further spillover of international tensions into regional circumpolar affairs, which raises fundamental questions about our commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Arctic. Accordingly, we need to be more careful than ever to base our decisions on well-grounded assumptions and evidence about Arctic defence and security.

First, we often talk about the Arctic as if it's a single geopolitical space. Some issues and threats are truly circumpolar in orientation, but other aspects are best considered through a sub-regional perspective.

As Professor Byers just said, there are specific threats to the European Arctic that are substantively different from threats facing the Canadian Arctic. For example, the threat posed by Russian land forces along the borders with the Nordic states represents a very different situation from what we face in Canada. We can't lose sight of this.

I also think there's important analytic value in distinguishing between threats passing through or over the Arctic rather than threats to or in the Arctic.

The first category is on threats that pass through or over the Arctic to strike a target outside of the region. These are things like cruise missiles, hyperkinetic glide vehicles, ballistic missiles, bombers and submarines. It's notable that these weapons and delivery systems are not primarily oriented at striking Arctic targets; they're geared toward global balance of power and deterrence, and thus best situated on the international level of analysis.

That stated, they do have an Arctic nexus, because we have invested in or are investing further in Arctic capabilities to detect, deter and defend against these global threats. However, to suggest that these defences against these “through” threats are about defending the Arctic rather than about defending the North American homeland more generally is a misrepresentation. This has not fundamentally changed since February. I think we're best to consider these through threats broadly, as part of integrated deterrence. Here is where the NORAD modernization focus on creating a layered, all-domain defensive ecosystem intersects with Arctic defence and security.

The second category is on threats to the Arctic, so threats that emanate from outside of the Canadian Arctic and threaten our Arctic. Some theoretical threats are kinetic military threats. We might think of Alert or Thule as obvious targets in the case of a general world war, given their strategic significance.

I don't typically consider traditional military threats as the most acute security threats to the North American Arctic. Instead, I think of foreign interference, including misinformation campaigns designed to undermine the credibility of the Canadian state or to polarize debate on sensitive issues and widen existing fault lines, intending to destabilize our democratic societies. This category could also include a below-the-threshold attack on a piece of critical infrastructure that is designed to create panic to force the Government of Canada to redirect resources in efforts to deal with that problem. We've seen Russia cutting pipelines and cables on the seabed near Norway. Again, this category of threats to the Arctic also includes climate change in a broad sense, as well as pandemics.

How do we see our primary strategic competitors as representing current or potential security threats to the Arctic? I think this depends on the sector and domain of security that we're looking at.

It's important to note that most Arctic states assess a relatively low risk of armed conflict in the Arctic compared to other regions, but recognize that forms of interstate competition are already occurring below the threshold of armed conflict. After all, hybrid warfare, cyber-attacks, cyber-espionage and disinformation campaigns have become central pillars of Russian and Chinese approaches to strategic competition and warfare. We face complex and sophisticated economic-based threats from both state and non-state actors, which I'm happy to discuss further.

From my perspective, I agree with Professor Byers. I don't think there's a greater likelihood of interstate conflict arising over Arctic disputes over resources, Arctic boundaries, Arctic state sovereignty or commercial access to shipping lanes than there was nine months ago or even five years ago. I'm increasingly concerned about the spillover of Arctic dynamics into the region. This highlights the importance of considering how we can maintain Arctic peace and civility while supporting our principled stand against Russian aggression, and how Canada can, in concert with our allies, avoid an increasingly destabilizing security dilemma vis-à-vis Russia in the Arctic.

Finally, what are the threats in the Canadian Arctic?

From my vantage point, I see most of the challenges in the region as primarily on the soft security and safety side of the opera-

tional mission spectrum, meaning threats associated with environmental and climate change as well as major air disasters or maritime disasters. Other threats in the Arctic include the impacts of climate change on Arctic military operations and to critical infrastructure, including defence installations.

What do I prioritize coming out of this?

First is making smart defence investments that align defence and security needs with the well-established priorities of territorial, provincial and indigenous governments. Priority areas include communications infrastructure; improvements to airfields, ports and harbour facilities; and sensor systems that enhance our domain awareness in both environmental and human dimensions.

• (1215)

Addressing infrastructure deficits in the north that create vulnerabilities in the security sphere should be synchronized wherever possible, in order to address persistent social, health and economic inequities in the region. This requires that the Government of Canada do things differently from the way it has done things in the past.

Second is the importance of strategic messaging. How do we carefully calibrate our message to ensure we're projecting unity, strength and confidence with clarity, precision and consistency? In this sense, I see integrated deterrence as a source of regional stability.

Third is the desire to improve domain—

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Please present your last priority quickly, Dr. Lackenbauer.

[*English*]

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I'm happy to make that later, during the question and answer period. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to the first round of questions.

I'll give the floor to Mr. Kelly of the Conservative Party. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

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

Professor Lackenbauer, I will begin with you.

You talked about the necessity of detection, deterrence and defence, or the role the Arctic plays in detection, deterrence and defence against a variety of threats to North American security.

Could you identify some of the shortcomings? What is the state of our ability to detect and deter and to defend the North American continent within our study of Arctic defence?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

I think our ability to defend against all threats, at the current moment, is limited, but this doesn't cause me undue alarm. As we heard from the chief of the defence staff a few days ago, it's about looking over the horizon to the future. We need to make investments now to anticipate potential limitations and make sure we are preparing to defend against threats that are emerging.

Improved domain awareness and information dominance are key in this regard. What this means is gathering, analyzing and sharing information at the speed of relevance, not only among decision-makers within Canada but also among our allies and partners. Here is where I think Canada can and should seek a leadership role.

Second, along these lines we need to synchronize our Arctic-related homeland defence efforts with our allies. This allows us to credibly and collaboratively address shared threats to, through and in, in a rational, proportionate and resource-effective manner, while reinforcing the—

• (1220)

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** If I may interject, General Eyre outlined a series of serious threats posed by Russia and China. He gave a medium-term horizon. He talked about 15 years and that kind of thing. We had other testimony from other analysts who suggested that was wildly, or at least significantly, understated, and that threats are much more immediate.

Going back to what General Eyre said, we don't know what authoritarian single rulers like Putin or Xi will do. We cannot predict that, but we know what they say and we can judge their actions. Putin telegraphed that he would invade Ukraine, and he did. China has declared itself an Arctic power, or at least a growing Arctic power. If these are their stated aims, do we not have to take seriously the threats before us? If so, what are the immediate steps we should take in defence to enhance our ability to detect, deter and defend?

I will let you answer that, but I will also let Professor Byers answer.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I think the key is to implement a lot of what has been committed to by successive governments. Many of the fundamentals are in place. It means working with our American allies to ensure we reinforce our premier partnership in North America, and within the NATO context, to make sure we have fuller situational awareness. It means making sure we have the fixed-wing interceptor capability delivered and an ability to leverage the wonderful sensor systems coming online, such as the dual class of Arctic and offshore patrol vessels.

At the same time, it's important for us to distinguish between Russia and China as Arctic actors. Yes, they are both authoritarian regimes, and yes, they are both threats and strategic competitors

globally, but in assessing the risks in the Arctic context, it will benefit us to parse them.

By no means should we be complacent or apathetic or not take the threats seriously, but we should recognize who is being called upon to address the threats and—

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** I'm going to get Professor Byers in, and I'm really limited for time. I'd like Professor Byers to get in, and then I'll have one more question.

Go ahead quickly, sir.

**Mr. Michael Byers:** What do we need in terms of surveillance?

We have very good space-based surveillance right now with the RADARSAT Constellation, three satellites launched in 2019. They have a seven-year lifespan, and the procurement for the replacement needs to be set in motion now. Those are our eyes in the sky in the Arctic. They can see at night through clouds. They were built for Arctic security. RADARSAT Constellation renewal is absolutely top of my list.

Second, our Aurora long-range patrol aircraft are 40 years old. They're still doing a great job, including in the North Sea with NATO forces, but we should be renewing those.

Then in terms of being able to respond to smaller incidents, for search and rescue or harassment activities by Russia—not invasion, but harassment activities by Russia—our Cormorant search and rescue helicopters are amazing platforms. Again, a mid-life renewal needs to be set in motion.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Thank you for that answer.

Finally—I have under a minute—China has declared itself a near-Arctic state. We've had different analysts—including, in fact, General Eyre—refer to Russia as becoming a Chinese vassal. This is the word we've heard around this table, so I don't know that we can separate the two as Russia continues to flounder in its horrible invasion of Ukraine.

To what extent will we see these two act together—Russia, which has made claims to the Canadian territorial seabed, and China, which has declared itself a near-Arctic state?

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I can answer very—

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** I'm sorry for interrupting you, Mr. Byers. It's a very interesting question, but a response will have to be given in the next round of questions, unfortunately. Perhaps other members will ask that question during their turn.

Mr. May, you now have the floor for six minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Bryan May:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be directing my questions to Professor Lackenbauer.

Professor, you had a third point. Were you able to get that third point out in your first round, or would you like to take a few moments to do that?

• (1225)

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I'll just make my quick summary point, which was about ensuring that we're synchronizing our Arctic-related homeland defence efforts with those of our allies and with Canadian partners, including northern partners.

We need to remember that the Kremlin's foremost goal is to fragment our alliances and our partnerships with like-minded Arctic states or within our states. We have to ensure exactly the opposite—that our relationships within Canada and with our allies are stronger than ever. For that reason, we as a country need to be very clear as to what our messages about Arctic defence and security are and where we're particularly interested in investing in broader collective defence efforts, and we need to make sure that we're proportionate.

**Mr. Bryan May:** That's a good segue into my first question to you, sir. It's about the Arctic Council.

Why should the Arctic Council be more concerned about China's opting out as opposed to its continued participation?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Thank you.

I think there are actually a lot of misconceptions about what has been going on with the Arctic Council since late February. First of all, it has not been suspended. The like-minded Arctic states—and you notice I did not say “Arctic 7”, because I wish that term would be completely excised from the conversation these days—have chosen to put a pause on their involvement for the time being.

To me, this is appropriate because the emphasis is on Russia to make things right, to allow institutions like the Arctic Council to be reinvigorated. The reality is that there is no Arctic Council without Russia being involved, given that the intent of Canada and other countries that created it was for to be something that all of the circumpolar partners could be part of.

However, I agree very much, Mr. May, that we have to be really careful. The primary effect of this pause that I am worried about concerns all of the fantastic science that the Arctic Council does and the gaps that are going to emerge if we don't resume that science. My second concern is for the permanent participants, this being an absolutely innovative forum for indigenous engagement in international affairs, and how this pause is curtailing the ability of Canadian indigenous peoples and their transnational kin to contribute to and inform the Arctic discussion.

Again, I think there are some concerns with respect to how long the Arctic Council will remain on pause and how long observers like China are willing to wait, but to me that consideration is secondary or tertiary to the other considerations that are out there.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Thank you.

In your opinion, sir, how can the federal government work better with northern and indigenous communities to advance Arctic security specifically?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Thank you.

There are a series of existing mechanisms. For example, the differentiated Inuit Nunangat space and the opportunities associated with the Inuit-Crown partnership committee over the last number of years are a really opportune space for working on collaboration and alignment of priorities and co-development of implementation efforts between Inuit leadership and the federal government. Otherwise, I think there are mechanisms for information sharing and knowledge sharing through constellations like the Arctic security working group, as well as established territorial mechanisms and indigenous governments.

I think the key here is recognizing that this requires doing things differently and not just bringing in northern partners to inform them about what's already been decided upon. We have to truly ensure that these northern partners are empowered with information proactively so that they can sit down and we can actually figure out where those alignments are of interest.

**Mr. Bryan May:** What are the areas of security policy where indigenous knowledge would be particularly useful?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** One of the reasons I articulated the “through, to and in” concept is that everything relating to threats in the Arctic, in my mind, should be led, wherever possible, by northern rights holders and northern stakeholders. When we're talking about threats to the Arctic at those tables, there must be northern representation in the spirit of “nothing about us without us”. When we're looking at some of those threats in the Arctic, those are tables where northern rights holders should have seats if they wish to avail themselves of them. Otherwise, these might be conversations in areas of expertise where they're willing to look to the Government of Canada to cover that space on behalf of northerners and all Canadians.

In essence, I think it's really important to have this clarity on what we're talking about to help ensure that northerners can choose which spaces, which tables, they choose to be at.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Madam Chair, how much time do I have left?

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** You have a minute left.

• (1230)

[English]

**Mr. Bryan May:** That's not a ton of time. I will just say thank you to both of our witnesses here.

Mr. Lackenbauer, do you have any other final thoughts on the issue of the Arctic Council?



**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** As much as there's pressure to act on this right now, we're still dealing with such a state of uncertainty that I think we're wise to have adopted the posture that we have of re-engaging and reinvigorating certain projects under the auspices of the Arctic Council that do not involve Russia and in essence preserving the integrity of this high-level forum until such a time as there may be opportunity to re-engage and build it forward into what the Arctic Council should be.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much. Dr. Lackenbauer and Mr. May.

[English]

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

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Now it's my turn to take the floor for six minutes.

I'd like to go back to Mr. Kelly's questions and also look at the kind of co-operation that there may be between Russia and China with respect to the Arctic and, from their perspective, the constraints that come with that collaboration.

I'd like to hear what both of you have to say about the pros and cons of China and Russia's view of co-operation in the Arctic, and the fact that China might stop accepting the status quo on the Arctic situation and challenge it.

I'll ask you to start, Mr. Byers.

[English]

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I'll respond in English because it's my better language.

China and Russia are not friends. They are allies of convenience. At the moment, China is purchasing vast amounts of Russian resources at bargain basement prices and then selling them onward for enormous profits. It's selling oil and gas to the European Union at very significant profit for China, so it's taking advantage of the situation.

They are not friends in the way that Canada and the United States are friends, and one could foresee in future a Chinese invasion of the Russian far east to seize territory and gain resources. I don't see that relationship becoming much closer in terms of trust or in terms of integrating their militaries. However, obviously, Russia is the weaker power, and China is rapidly becoming more powerful, so we do need to watch this.

We also need to watch India, which is providing far too much support to Russia, and let me just say this: Turkey has surprised me by sticking to its NATO alliance commitments, so good for Turkey. However, it's very mobile.

In terms of China in the Arctic, China's principal interests in the Arctic in the last decade have been access to shipping and access to resources. In terms of resources, until recently it was very welcome in the Arctic states in terms of foreign investment and in terms of trade.

I come from Vancouver. If you look at Vancouver harbour, you see that it's full of ships carrying Canadian resources to China. This is not something that's changed radically in the last few years. In terms of shipping routes—and most people don't know this—China does not oppose Canada's legal position in the Northwest Passage. It's been very clear to Chinese shippers that it expects Chinese shipping companies to follow Canadian rules.

Is it a global threat in terms of its increasing power and the centralization of authority in President Xi Jinping? Absolutely. That's a major concern. Is it a threat to the Canadian Arctic? It's not an imminent one. However, I mentioned harassment earlier—not an invasion, but harassment. Russia and potentially China could begin to cause problems. The Russians have been messing around with sub-sea cables in the Norwegian Arctic, for instance, and flying drones near oil platforms. We could see low-level harassment in the Canadian Arctic, so we do need to step up our surveillance capabilities. We do need to support the Canadian Rangers on the missions that they do outside of communities. We need to keep our eyes on what's happening, but we don't need a massive military buildup in anticipation of an invasion. That would be a diversion of resources away from the real theatre, which is the European theatre right now.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you, Mr. Byers.

Dr. Lackenbauer, I'd also like to hear your thoughts on the same question.

• (1235)

[English]

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Yes, Madam Chair, I definitely concur with most of the points.

I think we want to parse Chinese interest in the Russian shipping and resource sectors as yielding somewhat different outcomes. We have seen Chinese investment in the liquefied natural gas sector, particularly in the Yamal Peninsula with the Yamal-2 project, which is the one example of Chinese investment in the Arctic on a grand scale.

What's also telling is that despite all of the win-win rhetoric and enthusiasm from Beijing towards Moscow's development aspirations for the northern sea route, the actual money invested in building up infrastructure along that route or building up the transportation arteries to connect the northern sea route to Eurasian markets is actually very modest. I think this speaks to the fact that this is largely a transactional relationship to date.

As Canadians, we also need to remember that as much as we have the Arctic as part of our identity, as Professor Roussel said a few moments ago, so does Russia. They're very proud, so the notion that somehow China would be treated as an equal within the Russian Arctic I think is something very unpalatable to the Russian psyche.

In some respects, I'm also concerned that we need to be careful. China does represent risks in our Arctic and elsewhere in particular sectors—influence through economic activities and concerns about science and research security—but we have to be careful not to elevate them to the status of a peer competitor in the Arctic itself. They are not an Arctic state. They have none of the sovereignty or rights associated with being an Arctic state. It's really important that we don't elevate them up to a stature within this discussion that quite frankly they don't deserve and they don't warrant, based upon what their rights and footprint are within the region.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you so much.

I'll now give the floor to Lindsay Mathyssen of the NDP for six minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to both witnesses today.

Before I move on to my other point, Mr. Lackenbauer, you have written an article about why China is not in fact that peer competitor in the Arctic. Do you think you could submit that to the committee so that it can be considered within our report?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** It would be my pleasure.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen:** Thank you very much.

We've heard very different points of view on that threat and what Canada's reaction needs to be to that threat, in terms of building up offensive weaponry versus sticking to the status quo and domain awareness. Of course, in the long run, the key concern is, where does that path lead?

I'd like to hear from both witnesses, maybe from Professor Byers first and then from Professor Lackenbauer.

**Mr. Michael Byers:** The committee probably knows this: The White House released a U.S. Arctic strategy in the last couple of weeks. I highly commend it. It's not in its entirety appropriate for Canada, but I would say that much of its substance can guide us and that a partnership is necessary with the United States on many of these issues.

In that context, I would say that we do have an ongoing dispute with the United States concerning the legal status of the Northwest Passage. We demonstrated just a couple of months ago our ability to resolve Arctic disputes with allies; I'm talking about the maritime boundaries settlement and the Hans Island settlement with Denmark. Given the increased Russian threat and the long-term challenge of China, this might be an opportune moment for us to sit down with the Americans and talk about the Northwest Passage in an open-minded way to see if we can tie up that ongoing point of difference between Canada and the United States.

In terms of the larger situation in the Canadian Arctic, again, we need to maintain and build our search and rescue capacity, our ability to get places quickly to save lives and to, if necessary, board a non-compliant civilian vessel in the Northwest Passage. The Cormorant search and rescue helicopters are fabulous for that.

As well, we need to renew some of our existing capability before it ages out—the RADARSAT Constellation, the Aurora long-range patrol vessels—and I would suggest that we need to make sure that our fighter jets, including our next-generation fighter jets, are able to operate across the Arctic. That will involve some improvements in runways and ground infrastructure and all of that for when they come online.

There are a lot of small things that can be done, but my big response to your question is that it's the U.S.-Canada relationship: Let's work with them as much as we can to see if we can resolve the difference.

● (1240)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen:** Go ahead, Professor Lackenbauer.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I will focus directly on what you asked about offensive capability. The way I would phrase it is like this: How do we avoid the security dilemma that occurs when we make investments in defence that are interpreted by an adversary or competitor as something that in turn threatens them and encourages them to make an increased investment and triggers what might be an arms race or a security spiral?

In this particular case, I think it is important for us to go in soberly and to recognize that Russia does have legitimate sovereignty and sovereign rights in a large part of the Arctic. It does have defence concerns. Given where it has chosen to position a lot of its deterrence capabilities and defence capabilities, largely relating to global power issues, and having chosen to invest in the Arctic, particularly in the Kola Peninsula, means that NATO is perceived as a threat to the Russian Arctic in a way that I don't think Russia is perceived as a threat to the Canadian Arctic.

Being appreciative of that to me makes it absolutely essential that we get strategic messaging right and that we're very careful in explaining that investments in NATO are investments in a defensive alliance, not an offensive one. When Moscow chooses to go and construct narratives suggesting that NATO is a threat to Russia, this has no founding in what NATO really is.

I think it's also very important to think about ensuring that we manage this security situation in the Arctic for fear that it will invite outsiders. I was struck by the Chinese ambassador to Iceland, who made a final intervention in response to a NATO official at the Arctic Circle assembly in Reykjavik a few weeks ago. He said that China has obligations to look to theoretical military roles in the Arctic because, as a Security Council member, it might have an obligation to intervene if things get out of hand.

That's something I'm going to have to chew on for a long time. That's not a future I would welcome under any scenario, but to me it amplifies the importance of the Arctic states' managing this issue to the best of our abilities and not inviting the rest of the world to come.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much. This concludes the first round of questions.

Once again, there are more questions than time, so I'm going to cut the time for each of the speakers by 20%. The time will be divided as follows: four minutes for the Conservatives, four minutes for the Liberals, two minutes for the Bloc, two minutes for the NDP, four minutes for the Conservatives and, lastly, four minutes for the Liberals.

We'll start with the Conservative Party of Canada and Mr. Zimmer, for four minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll be asking my questions of Professor Lackenbauer.

You spoke a lot about the non-military threat that Russia potentially doesn't pose to the Arctic, but let's speak about some of the things you spoke about just recently.

You criticized Chinese claims to the Arctic in what you just mentioned. I'll also bring up that the Russians have also claimed 705,000 square kilometres of what we recognize in Canada as Canadian territory. That's Arctic seabed that has a lot of resources. Russia has said that it's theirs. It made this claim at the UN many years ago. These are two very strong countries that have made a very real threat.

I'm just going to quote from the document that was referred to by my colleague Mr. Kelly previously. This is China's own document on Arctic policy:

China is an important stakeholder in Arctic affairs. Geographically, China is a "Near-Arctic State", one of the continental States that are closest to the Arctic Circle. The natural conditions of the Arctic and their changes have a direct impact on China's climate system and ecological environment, and, in turn, on its economic interests in agriculture, forestry, fishery, marine industry and other sectors.

The reason I bring that up is to bring you back to the question of why we're here today talking about Arctic security. Seeing that there are these two very real claims, two very real assertions in the Arctic, do you think it's necessary to have a sufficient military presence in the Arctic? I'm not even talking about a buildup for a potential invasion; I'm just talking of a presence and a basis on which to assert ourselves and our sovereignty.

• (1245)

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I'd say, first of all, when we're talking about extending continental shelves, this is not territory. We're talking about sovereign rights to resources on the seabed or below the seabed. I think it's problematic to talk about this as territory, because it sets out the wrong concept of what we're dealing with.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** That's fair enough.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** I was actually reassured that Russia has continued to adhere to the established process under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to submit their scientific research in support of their particular position to the Convention on the Law of the Sea—

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Let's get to the question. Let's talk about the presence of security, for terminology reasons, for the Arctic seabed. Let's just keep going.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** There is no presence built into articles 76 and 77 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. Presence has nothing to do with establishing your extended continental shelf. That already belongs to you as a coastal state. We're dealing with overlap.

In terms of China as a near-Arctic state—thank you for that question—very simply, we need to continually remind China that “near-Arctic state” is an idea with no legal status whatsoever. They only have international rights as an international actor, like everybody else in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the Arctic. They have no special status between the Arctic states and other states; they are simply not Arctic states.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Professor, in theory you're correct, but what if Russia and China decide they are going to assert themselves?

Again, going back to my original question, do Canadians...? I have been up to the north. This might be a topic that's of concern to us; it might be fifth on the list, and further down in the lower half of our country, but if you live in the north, this threat is very real, and it's at your front door. They very much take it as a threat to their personal security and their people's security.

Going back to my question, do we not have to have some kind of strength in the north, and again, on the topic of the day here at committee, sufficient strength to be able to assert our Arctic security?

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** That's a very good question. Unfortunately, we won't have time to answer it. We're coming to the end of the four minutes, and I have to give the floor to Ms. Lambropoulos of the Liberal Party.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

I would like to thank both of our witnesses for being here to answer some of our questions today.

I'm going to start with Mr. Lackenbauer, but both witnesses can chime in if they feel like it.

Both of you mentioned that Russia is not a direct threat at the moment to our Canadian Arctic. Of course, other witnesses, and I think all Canadians, can understand that climate change is real and that it has a real impact in the Arctic and the north.

The reality will be changing in the near future. This was perhaps not an attractive place in the past, but as it becomes warmer and more attractive, it is possibly going to trigger more conflict in this area by Russia. I understand that we're not necessarily at the top of Russia's list of countries to get into conflict with, but I believe most of the members of our Parliament have been banned from Russia based on our interventions with Ukraine.

Can you comment on that, what the future might look like, and how we can prepare ourselves for that type of situation?

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Thank you, Ms. Lambropoulos.

First of all, I think we have to prepare for many future contingencies and possibilities. Ultimately, at the end of the day, I turn to our military and security experts to determine the balance of probabilities and risks, because we're always managing risks.

Climate change is the existential threat to humanity. We're seeing its impacts most directly and urgently playing out in the Arctic right now. Where I see that affecting our defence posture is on questions around the Canadian Armed Forces as representing essential capabilities to deal with the emergencies in the north. We need to be able to respond, as a country, to humanitarian and environmental disasters of greater magnitude and frequency. I think this brings up pretty fundamental questions about whether we have the right force mix and structures to address these missions, in addition to operations across the spectrum of competition.

In essence, I see climate change as representing a clear and present danger to many of my friends in the north in a day-to-day way. That requires us to develop the right capabilities now, and at the same time to anticipate what stressors on the environment might bring in terms of the competition changing going forward, and potentially different patterns of activities or risks that we should be anticipating.

The fact that Canada has offered to host the NATO centre of excellence on climate and security in Montreal, to me, is a step in the right direction by our being leaders in understanding and anticipating some of those drivers and dynamics.

• (1250)

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you.

Mr. Byers, I'll allow you to comment as well. You mentioned that you believe we should be doing more on search and rescue in the north and that we should make sure that the proper infrastructure is in place in order to help people get from one place to another and help in that way to better prepare.

Would you like to go a little further into detail?

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I have two initial points.

I'm proud to be on the Russian sanctions list also.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I think I was the first Canadian academic to be so honoured. It probably has something to do with calling Vladimir Putin a war criminal in *The Globe and Mail*.

I carry no brief for Russia. It is a threat to Canada, and that includes in the Arctic.

With respect to nuclear missiles, including cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles, we do need that over-the-horizon radar. It could be a threat in terms of low-level harassment, interfering with communications, for instance, or disinformation campaigns in Arctic communities. The sorts of things Russia does against the west in general can happen in the Arctic. That's why we need to maintain our surveillance capability, especially from space.

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Unfortunately, I have to interrupt you there.

I want to move on to a new topic in the remaining two minutes. In fact, I'd like to pick up on something you said earlier in response to a question. You said that China has an interest in keeping the Northwest Passage open, for purely economic reasons.

I'd like to hear from both witnesses on Russia's view of the north as a gateway. Does Russia want to keep it open, as China does, or does Russia consider it to be a private preserve?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I think I'll take this first because, of the two witnesses, I'm the international lawyer, although Professor Lackenbauer knows a heck of a lot about international law.

Russia has the same position concerning the legal status of its Arctic straits as Canada has with respect to the legal status of our Northwest Passage. It has the same principal opponent, in terms of the legal claim, in the United States. That's why the dispute is an awkward thing for Canada and the United States to have in the current situation, when we're effectively supporting a belligerent in a war against Russia.

Again, I call for Canada to have open-minded discussions—not negotiations, but open-minded discussions—with the United States on the Northwest Passage.

I will say something else that I think Professor Lackenbauer will support; he's effectively said this. It's that there will be a time when we need to re-engage with Russia—in other words, when Vladimir Putin is gone—and the Arctic is a place where we will be able to start that re-engagement. To the degree that we can avoid an escalation of rhetoric, the so-called security dilemma, that's probably a good thing.

Again, I carry no brief for Russia. Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, and Russia does pose a very significant security threat to North America in terms of nuclear weapons, so let's keep our eye on that ball.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much. Unfortunately, I have to interrupt you there to give the floor to Mr. Zimmer, who has four minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I guess in response to Professor Lackenbauer—

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Sorry, I made a mistake. It will be the next round. I'm new to the chair. I forgot my colleague Ms. Mathysen of the NDP. I'm sorry about that.

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen. You have two minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** You get one.

I want to follow along with what Professor Byers was just saying in terms of re-establishing at some point the communications with Russia. There were some conversations about potentially pushing Russia into...not pushing it into the arms of China, but ultimately seeing it turning to China more. How do we avoid that?

That's for both witnesses.

• (1255)

**Mr. Michael Byers:** I think we make it very clear to both China and India that picking sides on the Ukraine war is not in their long-term interests. Through that, China's giving the kind of support that draws Russia into its orbit is not in China's long-term interest, given the centrality of the west-China relationship in the future of our world.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** It's really important for us not to distort the fact that Russia does have sovereignty and sovereign rights as an Arctic state and China does not. It should be affirmed that there are deep-seated differences between China's interpretation of its role in the Arctic and that of all of the Arctic states, including Russia. It's a very straightforward narrative that upholds our primacy of rules-based international order and suggests that within the Arctic, our desire is to not have Russia break the rules-based regional order and that we share a common set of concerns about the roles China may play in putting into question stability and order in the Arctic, stability and order that primarily serve the interests of the Arctic states and Arctic residents, particularly Arctic indigenous peoples.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much.

Mr. Zimmer, you have four minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is in response to Professor Lackenbauer.

You seem to not see the need to have a presence in the Arctic for the reasons you give. Theoretically, they can't do it. However, we see Ukraine being invaded, based on a previous theory that it could

happen, and sad to say, lawyers couldn't keep an invading Russian army out of Ukraine.

I'll ask Professor Byers what I had asked before.

Russian and Chinese claims in the Arctic are growing stronger. Their assertions are getting stronger. What does Canada need to do—and you've alluded to it before in your previous comments—to be seen strong enough by these two countries to push back against those threats?

**Mr. Michael Byers:** The most obvious thing is something that we are doing in terms of standing with our NATO allies against Russia in Ukraine. NATO is much stronger than it was before February 24, and that's a really good thing. Canada is there. We need to continue that stance as a central pillar in the NATO alliance. That's the strongest signal we can send.

In terms of the Arctic, we need to maintain and improve our capability to see what's going on there. That's the first step. In addition to that, we need to improve our ability to get to places quickly with small numbers of personnel to deal with harassment situations and search and rescue situations. It's a very, very big region. It's very hostile. We need the ability to get small numbers of troops or search and rescue technicians to places quickly and reliably, and then we build, if necessary, into long-term investments along with our other NATO partners.

Building those kinds of long-term investments is a decades-long exercise. We should focus on the immediate, which is the NATO alliance facing Russia in Ukraine and on the entire frontier up to northern Norway. In addition to that, we should improve our ability to see what's going on in airspace, including space, as well as tracking potential missiles and tracking what's happening on the ground.

Those are investments we can get to work on right now. We need to upgrade the North Warning System. We need the next procurement for the RADARSAT Constellation. Those are my two top items. Let's make sure that our glasses are new and clear in the Arctic.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Thank you.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** If I may respond, I do think we need a military presence in the Arctic. The question is, how much, and how proportionate is it to the threat environment that we place in the Arctic specifically?

I would argue that Canada can best defend the Arctic by investing smartly in homeland defence overall and in a forward presence in Europe. We need to ensure that we, as we've done historically, defend against threats and defeat them before they manifest themselves in North America. This includes making sure we invest in ready, agile and southern-based expeditionary capabilities, as we might call them—in this case, expeditionary within our country—to be able to deploy southern troops to deliver kinetic effects where needed in the Canadian Arctic.

This goes to General Eyre's comments about persistent presence versus permanent presence. We have the permanent presence in the form of the Canadian Rangers in the communities. What I'm advocating is figuring out what the right persistent presence looks like and how the best-calibrated proportionate investments can be made to ensure we have the necessary defence at the time of relevance over various time horizons.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you very much.

We are concluding this round with Darren Fisher for four minutes.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you again, gentlemen.

In the last hour, Madame Lambropoulos touched on a topic with one of our witnesses. I tried to find time to talk to Professor Braun about this and then ran out of time.

I'll now take the opportunity to see if I can get some thoughts from Professor Byers on multilateral co-operation. How can we participate in better countering any influence, whether it be Russian or Chinese, while working with our allies? We also talked in the last hour about Sweden and Finland and their presumed ascension to NATO.

Professor Byers, how can we work with our partners and allies?

**Mr. Michael Byers:** We can do it in thousands of different respects.

This is a time for like-minded countries to pull together. You can go from everywhere, from the United Nations down to bilateral co-operation. You can integrate military capabilities to build a system rooted in the west that stands for the rule of law internationally, and for peace and co-operation, partly because that makes us stronger as a collectivity and partly because it sends a signal.

One reason I'm sure Canada and Denmark resolved their maritime boundary and Hans Island disputes was to send a signal to the rest of the world that this is how civilized countries resolve their territorial differences. It's through negotiation, not invasion.

I could go on. We need to strengthen the trading regime and fight back against the forces of provincialism and nationalism, or the idea that everyone can only act in their own best interest. We need to see the western alliances as something truly cohesive.

What I'm arguing for here is our need to do what we've done since February. Western countries have been pulling together and standing up. It's been truly remarkable. Everyone thought NATO was dead, especially during the last American administration, but see how it's come back and stood up for democracy and freedom in Ukraine. We just need to build on that.

Across the board, our diplomats should be charged with finding every opportunity for co-operation with our friends, not needlessly antagonizing our opponents. Let's keep the Arctic Council suspended so that when there's a new Russian government, we can start up again. Let's keep the international space station going; it's a place where Russia is actually co-operating with the west.

There are a few things we can try to stabilize, but the big thing is for the west to pull together.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** That would be an incredible spot to finish, but I think I still have a minute, so I'm going to give Professor Lackenbauer a chance to chime in on that. Hopefully he's as inspiring as you are.

**Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer:** Thanks. I hope so as well.

I see a singular opportunity: the importance of small and medium powers, like Canada and the Nordic countries, sending signals in this climate of global competition, which great powers cannot.

I see this as a moment for Canada to work bilaterally or multilaterally in smaller groups of like-minded countries, play a role in signalling our solidarity and bring a dose of sobriety to some of the debates flourishing right now. That starts with focusing on what we mean when we talk about Arctic security and defence versus great power competition more broadly and really refining our messaging with like-minded states and NATO allies to ensure we are bolstering collective defence and integrated deterrence in the European Arctic, the north Atlantic and the North American Arctic.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Christine Normandin):** Thank you so much. That ends the question round.

I'd like to thank Mr. Byers and Dr. Lackenbauer for being with us and their considerable input to the committee. Again, this will inform our thinking for the future.

I want to make it clear to the regular chair of the committee that I took absolutely no pleasure in interrupting the witnesses or my fellow members during question period.

Let's take a quick look at what we have planned for the next few meetings.

On Tuesday, we'll continue our study on Arctic security by looking at the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defence Command, or NORAD. We expect to have representatives from NORAD and academics.

Further to the motion that the committee recently adopted, an invitation has been formally extended to the Canadian Armed Forces,

the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We are waiting for their response.

Another important point is that our friendly clerk is waiting for your security information for access to the Pentagon.

Since there's nothing else, the meeting is adjourned.

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