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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I'm calling this meeting to order. We are continuing our study of threat analysis and the Canadian Armed Forces' operational readiness to meet those threats. This has been an outstanding study and we've had outstanding witnesses, and today's panel is no exception.

Admiral Auchterlonie has a hard stop at 4:30, and there are rumours that there will be interruptions. I'm seeking unanimous consent that we will be able to continue our meeting until any vote is called in the next hour. I don't want to lose the time. I've talked to the Conservatives; I've talked to the Liberals; I haven't talked to the NDP, but I've talked to the Bloc about using the time. I need a motion for unanimous consent to carry on.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): You mean a motion to carry on until what point? When the bells start, would we go on and get ready for the vote?

The Chair: Are the bells ringing already?

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): The bells are ringing already. We started the meeting already so we can—

The Chair: I suppose we did. In theory I have to stop it unless I get unanimous consent to continue with the meeting.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Are they 30-minute bells or 15-minute bells?

The Chair: They're 30-minute bells. We might as well make use of the 30 minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Will we be given specific time in suspension to vote?

The Chair: When the whips call the vote, we have to suspend. We'll use this 30 minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): No, it's 25 minutes.

The Chair: Well, we'll use the 25 minutes or whatever it is, and then we should be good.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Does that work for these folks?

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Yes, but the whips have to talk about it.

The Chair: With that, our procedure is out of the way. We certainly squeezed that one in. I'll call on Admiral Auchterlonie first to give his five minutes and then General Wright after that. We'll go for as long as we can before we have to suspend.

I dare say, Admiral Auchterlonie, by the time we vote, that will probably be it for you, but if General Wright could stay around, that would be helpful before we empanel our next set of panellists. We'll see how that plays out. Again I apologize for all of this procedural stuff. Welcome to the ways of democracy.

Admiral Auchterlonie, please go ahead for five minutes.

Vice-Admiral J.R. Auchterlonie (Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm Vice-Admiral Bob Auchterlonie, chief of joint operations and commander of our Canadian Forces operations.

Canadian Joint Operations Command, or CJOC, is the force employer. My role is to take our forces and deploy them in operations, whether that's domestically, in North America or anywhere in the world, including on NATO, coalition or UN operations.

Since CJOC is focused on the employment of our forces, we are very aware of the threats to Canada and the threats the forces need to address. Domestically, we have just been through two years of a global health threat. We've been conducting Operation Laser, which has seen the Canadian Armed Forces involved in support of long-term care facilities, local and northern communities, and assisting other government departments with their planning logistics.

The Canadian Armed Forces also helped organize and support the distribution of vaccines across Canada, and/or deployed CAF members and other government departments around the world through Operation Vector.

Though the Canadian Armed Forces should always be considered a force of last resort, in these cases the demonstrated effects of changing climate have also created greater demand for the CAF resources and support.

It's not just natural disasters or otherwise traditional threats that pose a risk here at home. We have seen an increase in cyber-attacks in our private and public spheres. We have seen growing assertiveness and aggressiveness in the Arctic from our strategic competitors. Deliberate misinformation and disinformation strategies have been aimed at both the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadians and we have seen new and ever-emerging technologies that range from below threshold to open conflict.

Continentially, the rise of strategic competition, changing threats to the continent, the effects of climate change and the growing importance of the Canadian Arctic requires that we strengthen our domestic and continental defences. Canada and the U.S. are working together to modernize the North American Aerospace Defence Command, including strengthening situational awareness; modernizing command and control systems; enhancing the capabilities of infrastructure, particularly in the Arctic; and advancing research, development and innovation.

Also on the continental defence front, the Canadian Armed Forces have spent the last 15 years conducting Operation Caribbe, where we, alongside our U.S. and other partners in the region, have sought to suppress trafficking in international waters. Now we're seeing strategic competitors move into that region. Both Russia and China, using different methods, are working to establish themselves in the region. We saw this in Africa 10 years ago and that same playbook is unfolding before our eyes in our own hemisphere.

With respect to regional and global threats, globally Canada is supporting the existing rules-based international order and can best advance our interests through multilateralism, alliances and coalitions. Operationally, the Canadian Armed Forces seek to address these threats via our deployments in concert with allies.

Of course, Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine is the most blatant and obvious of these threats. We continue to reinforce our deployed forces in Latvia and elsewhere in Europe as part of our NATO commitments. While paused, our training mission in Ukraine—Operation Unifier—is also specifically aimed at reinforcing the Ukrainian armed forces' ability to defend itself against Russian aggression.

While the current conflict in Europe certainly has taken a lot of attention and resources, we must also keep active with the Indo-Pacific region where the future of the rules-based international order is being challenged by Beijing. Thanks to the deployment of two frigates to the Indo-Pacific in 2021, the Canadian Armed Forces has made tangible contributions, alongside like-minded nations, to uphold the rules-based international order. Of note, HMCS *Winnipeg* participated in multinational exercises with the U.K.-led *Queen Elizabeth* strike group in the South China Sea, as well as cooperative deployments with two Australian warships through the Spratly Islands.

The Canadian Armed Forces must be prepared to respond to challenges against the long-standing norms in international law that affect the rights of all nations to operate peacefully in international commons, whether on the sea or in the air. Such activities fundamentally undermine the rules-based international order, which has served us so well since the end of the Second World War. That is why we are working closely with our allies and it is why I believe

we can agree that there is significant power in working together to promote global peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Admiral.

Major-General Wright.

Major-General Michael Wright (Commander Canadian Forces Intelligence Command and Chief of Defence Intelligence, Department of National Defence): Mr. Chair, and members of Parliament, thank you very much for the invitation this afternoon to speak on global threats from the defence intelligence perspective.

Prior to addressing the topic, I'd like to briefly describe my dual role as commander of Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, or CFINTCOM, and as chief of defence intelligence. As commander of CFINTCOM, I exercise command and control over the members of the Canadian Armed Forces who work in the command, and I serve as a senior military intelligence adviser to the chief of the defence staff. As chief of defence intelligence, I am directly accountable to the deputy minister and CDS for providing oversight and policy direction to the defence intelligence enterprise to ensure its continued effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability.

Defence intelligence leverages a variety of sources to support strategic decision-makers during events such as the current situation in Ukraine, and to support deployed operations such as those in the Middle East, Latvia and everywhere else around the world where the Canadian Forces are deployed. Additionally, our relationships with allies are critical to our success. Defence intelligence activities are enabled, in large part, by collaboration with domestic and international partners.

Now, to address the topic of global threats to Canada and North America, we currently face a broad range of challenges.

Great power rivalry has once again emerged as the central feature of the international strategic environment, with a revisionist and resurgent Russia and a powerful China seeking to reshape the rules-based international order in ways that support their individual national interests and their authoritarian world views. Increasingly, we have witnessed China and Russia enhancing their strategic cooperation in the diplomatic, economic and military spheres. This co-operation is occurring in many regions around the world, including the Arctic.

Beyond China and Russia, we have seen that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between weak governance in fragile states, violent extremism and irregular migration flows, and the resultant situations are increasingly aggravated by the impacts of climate change. This will exacerbate instability in many regions of the world over the coming years.

At home, extreme weather-related events will become more severe and more frequent, including droughts, floods and fires, putting more pressure on federal resources, including, as the admiral said, the Canadian Armed Forces.

As we have all witnessed over the last two years, the emergence of new pathogens, coupled with the threat of pandemics, could also further exacerbate political, social and economic instabilities.

Cyber-threats are growing, and offensive cyber programs have been used by states to target Canadian assets, including the financial sector, critical infrastructure and democratic institutions via influence activities and propaganda, or in other words, information warfare.

Finally, state and non-state actors are investing in military technologies and weapons systems. Notably, they are increasingly pursuing their agendas using hybrid methods in the “grey zone” that exists just below the threshold of armed conflict, including foreign influence, cyber and espionage operations.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my presentation. Thank you again for the opportunity.

I look forward to questions.

The Chair: Thank you, General Wright.

The first questioner is Mr. Motz.

It's a six-minute round, but I see that we have about 18 minutes left and four people trying to do six minutes. The math doesn't work. So make it a four-minute round.

• (1545)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, to both witnesses, for your service and for being here today.

Vice-Admiral, CJOC leads most CAF operations in Canada and around the world, and that is no small task, as we know. We're here today to the threat analysis and readiness of the Canadian Armed Forces.

When looking at the threats, I want to begin with the internal or systematic threats you face that are internal, so non-violent threats, but threats that come from perhaps a lack of capacity or a lack of funding or staffing. Put another way, are you provided with the best tools to properly do the job that needs to be done?

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Your point was bang on.

As commander of CJOC, I am responsible for the command and control of our operations domestically and internationally. I receive forces from the army, navy and air force, and occasionally the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. In doing so, I'm

able to meet the commitments I have globally and domestically for the operations we're currently assigned to by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay.

Ultimately, then, whose decision is it, or what is the decision-making process, if you would please enlighten us, on when to deploy Canadian Armed Forces within Canada and around the world? Maybe you could give us a very brief overview of that.

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Domestically and internationally are two different processes. Domestically it's quite straightforward. One of the key points I think I want to pass along is that Canadian Armed Forces should be considered a force of last resort in Canada. Our provinces are strong. The union between the federal and provincial levels is quite strong. A lot of provinces have those capabilities to deal with situations generally throughout Canada.

That being said, when issues arise that are beyond the control of particular municipalities or provinces, they would then ask the federal government for support and potentially the Canadian Armed Forces. This is done through a request for assistance from the province to the federal government. That is then coordinated at the federal level through the Minister of Public Safety. Oftentimes, as you've seen in the past two years, specifically during the pandemic, the Canadian Armed Forces has been called upon to respond. We've done that on every occasion.

Internationally, it depends on where we are assigned missions based on the Government of Canada, on our alliances and working with our partners. For example, the majority of our large missions around the globe are actually done through a memorandum to cabinet. We receive authorization and authorities from government to conduct operations globally, with our partners, in various regions.

As I said, domestically it's normally through the request for assistance process through provinces, and internationally it's through the memorandum to cabinet.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much for that.

Major-General Wright, I'm looking at what the Canadian Forces national counter-intelligence unit does. It identifies, investigates and counters CAF threats by foreign intelligence services, individuals or groups engaged in terrorism, espionage, sabotage, subversion, or organized criminal activities that impact both DND and CAF. Of these, from your perspective, what are the top two or three that you would identify and/or encounter regularly?

MGen Michael Wright: I would say that the top two threats are the two threats I mentioned during my presentation—Russia and China. Both have aggressive foreign intelligence services.

Also, although it is not strictly the Canadian Forces national counter-intelligence unit that is responsible, we are also dealing with issues around ideologically motivated violent extremism within the Canadian Armed Forces. They are part of the group within the Canadian Armed Forces who is working on that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Fisher, you have four minutes, please.

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

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I certainly appreciate the expertise you're providing to our committee today. I also want to thank you for the role you have played in COVID-19 with the distribution of vaccines. I have to tell you that I'm very, very proud of our Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Motz talked about capacity and about capability. I'm curious about the Canadian capabilities we are offering to Ukraine and NATO and whether they supplement what other allies are bringing forward. I'm thinking about the coordination and the areas where Canada maybe has more capacities than some of our other allies or maybe more capability. What do we bring to the table as compared with some of our other allies?

I guess that's for you, Admiral.

• (1550)

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: I think you hit it on the head when you talked about allies. This is not Canada in isolation; this is Canada working with our allies and partners around the globe.

Specifically on this, we've been working with our partners in Ukraine since 2015 to support the Ukrainian armed forces and assist in the training of the Ukrainian armed forces. At this particular time, we're now working with our NATO partners to consolidate and support not only the Ukrainians but actually the NATO alliance.

I think my colleague Vice-Admiral Bishop, who will be up here next, is probably the most suited to talk about the NATO alliance. He's actually our Canadian military rep in NATO right now.

The fact to highlight is that it is a partnership, working with our allies and partners, to ensure the provision of support across the NATO alliance and to make sure we actually have the capabilities required by NATO to deter, shield and, if necessary, defend.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much for that.

When you think about the Canadian Armed Forces, you think about peacekeepers; certainly for decades. Under the current and what you see as the future threat environment, what does that mean for the design or the transition of the Canadian Armed Forces? You know, you think about cyber, peacekeeping, combat, training, foreign interference, misinformation—it's a different world from even five, six, or seven years ago when we were on this defence committee.

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Again, Mr. Chair, that's a great question.

Really, the question is what capability Canada has to have, not necessarily the Canadian Armed Forces. I'll just expand on that.

I think what you're seeing play out today is nations using all instruments of national power, and then the military having capabilities across all warfare domains. In terms of international power, it's about making sure that our diplomatic efforts are aligned with our military efforts, our economic efforts and our information efforts. You're seeing information and disinformation being used globally right now—and I'll turn to my colleague, Major-General Wright, for that—but the point is that all aspects of national power are being used to coalesce.

On the military side, what we're talking about is exactly as you've just said. The world has changed in the past few decades. It's no longer a fight on just the land, sea and air; you're seeing an all-domain fight. This includes the traditional domains of land, sea and air, where you need capabilities across all, plus you're seeing significant cyber activity, significant activity in space and significant activity in the information domain. The cyber domain, the space domain and the information domain are all contested domains, just like the land, sea and air.

The Chair: I'm going to stop it there.

Madame Normandin, you have for four minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

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

Vice-Admiral, thank you for being here and, more importantly, thank you for your service.

When the government sent 100 or 125 Carl Gustafs—the number varies depending on the source—apparently it delved into the units' inventory. I'd like some clarifications on that.

Did we really take from the inventory of training schools to send equipment to Ukraine?

[*English*]

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Thank you, again, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Madam, for the question. It's a great question.

When we're talking about the capabilities we're going to provide to the Ukraine, these capabilities are coming from Canada as decided by the Government of Canada. With respect to your question—are these taken out of the training system?—these are actually stocks we hold within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Decisions have been made to actually furnish these to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for their use in the conflict with Russia. They have been taken from Canadian Forces stocks, and we are working at right now to move them.

There are other considerations. As you've seen, the Government of Canada has made several announcements recently. You've seen our minister and the Prime Minister make announcements with respect to support to Ukraine. This is but one of them, and we are intending to meet that requirement.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

That brings me to a second question.

We've noticed how important it is out in the field to have modern weapons like Javelin anti-tank missiles and Stinger anti-aircraft weapons. I understand that, while they are useful and operational, the Carl Gustaf weapons are a bit more outdated.

Does Canada have what it takes to fight a conventional war, if necessary?

• (1555)

[*English*]

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Thank you again, Madam, and thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a great question.

Canada's is providing significant aid. You've seen the aid we provided, both lethal and non-lethal. That has been provided to Ukraine already, with two deliveries, which I think have been publicly broadcast. In addition, right now we are looking at other options to provide further military equipment that is within our arsenal, that is modern and capable of defeating the Russian forces if used by the Ukrainians. This is something the government is looking at right now to make sure we're providing aid. I have to say that this is not in isolation. We are working with allies and partners globally. I think you've seen the allies and partners all looking to provide Ukraine with capable equipment and the capabilities they need to support their sovereignty.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: My question has more to do with Canada's ability to undertake a conventional war.

What we're seeing in the field is, it is useful and necessary. Do we not sufficient resources to undertake a conventional war or do we have everything we need?

[*English*]

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Thank you, again, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Madam, for the question.

We're talking about the capabilities, and we're talking about whether they're sufficient to support the Ukrainians, and they are. That's why we're offering those capabilities, as are our allies.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: With all due respect, Vice-Admiral, I'm not asking if Canada has everything it needs to support the Ukrainians, but rather if Canada has everything it needs to undertake a conventional war.

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Okay.

[*English*]

We are looking not only to support Ukraine, but also to ensure that we have the capabilities within our brigades and within our armed forces moving forward, and we do. We have identified equipment to support the Ukrainians, while at the same time ensuring that we have the capabilities available for Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Normandine.

We have Madam Mathyssen for four minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Thank you so much to both the witnesses and for your service. I repeat what all my colleagues, I know, feel in terms of that support.

I want to expand on what Madame Normandin was talking about in a conversation about the necessary tools required. Minister Anand stated that we've been watching Russian escalation for months. I wanted to ask about that current state of surveillance, specifically the necessary tools, and then of course what we're going to be putting into NORAD, the equipment and improvements in investments that we'll be making in it.

MGen Michael Wright: Mr. Chair, perhaps I could take the first part of that question regarding how we've been tracking the situation in Ukraine over the past several months, because that really highlights the importance of the relationships with our allies, particularly the Five Eyes.

It was about the middle of October that we in the Five Eyes started to receive reporting of the extremely large buildup of Russian forces surrounding Ukraine. As you saw, over the course of December, January and February, a large amount of what had been highly classified intelligence was actually declassified by the originators, for the most part by the United States, to provide that to the international community to show them that what Russia was doing and that this war, this invasion, was completely the choice of Vladimir Putin.

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Thank you, Madam, for the question. I'll talk specifically about continental defence and NORAD [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the rise of strategic competition, changing threats on the continent and the effects of climate change and the growing importance of the Canadian Arctic require us to strengthen our domestic and our continental defences. I think this is what you're talking about.

We're already investing in personnel, equipment and infrastructure to support this effort, and Canada and the United States are also working together to modernize the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

Last year in late August Canada and the United States issued a joint statement identifying the four shared priorities for NORAD moving forward in terms of strengthening situational awareness; modernizing command and control systems; enhancing capabilities and infrastructure, particularly in the Arctic; and advancing research development innovation.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Canada has been a part of the calls for the International Criminal Court to investigate what's going on in the Ukraine. We're seeing a rise in destruction, of course, targeting civilians. Through that intelligence gathering and that surveillance, are we documenting the attacks on civilians? How are we doing that right now with the Russian forces?

• (1600)

MGen Michael Wright: Mr. Chair, one thing I can tell you is that the intelligence community, specifically the Five Eyes, but also NATO and all other intelligence communities with like-minded nations, are looking very closely at the resources we have. It's challenging in that we have no resources on the ground, but through a combination of geospatial intelligence, signals intelligence and all the other disciplines of closely tracking any illegal "contrary to law" of armed conflict activities that may be undertaken by Russian forces....

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I hope I can fit this in.

A lot of people who have come to this committee for this study have talked about China's watching this situation and the response by western countries to the Ukrainian conflict.

Do you believe that our response so far has given China pause or has impacted their reaction in any way?

MGen Michael Wright: Mr. Chair, I would say that prior to a week ago we were very concerned about China, in fact, wondering if China would take the opportunity to accelerate their own plans for greater control of their "near abroad", specifically Taiwan.

I would hope that with the reaction of the international community, specifically NATO and the west, that China would have given pause to any of their authoritarian plans in the future.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

That completes the first round of questions.

I have to suspend in two minutes and 54 seconds.

Colleagues, what I think we should do at this point is release Admiral Auchterlonie. I don't know about General Wright's plans.

Then we will go off to vote, or stay to vote, as the case may be, then resume as quickly as we can after the vote is made.

Is that a satisfactory procedure for all?

Okay.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Chair, would it be possible to invite General Wright to the second panel?

The Chair: Are you available, General Wright?

MGen Michael Wright: I could be available, yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: That's excellent.

We'll have three people on the panel. We'll invite Admiral Bishop and Ambassador Angell to present. Then we'll have another round of questions, and we'll run that as far as we possibly can. Is that okay?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Chair, can I get one question in with the vice-admiral before we suspend?

The Chair: We have a minute and a half.

I'll give you a 30-second question only because you're a nice guy, Todd.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I really appreciate both of our witnesses being here.

Vice-Admiral, are we prepared, and what is the plan should the war be brought to our shores, whether missiles are fired overhead, or indeed, there's an attack with missiles landing here in Canada?

The Chair: Admiral, you could be forgiven—

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I think the admiral could be forgiven for not answering that question. That is a huge question for him to answer.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Let him answer.

The Chair: Let him answer—in 15 seconds?

VAdm J.R. Auchterlonie: I will give it a short try.

I think we've already alluded to it. The fact is that we don't just work alone in Canada; we work with our allies and partners. We have a strong relationship with NORAD. We have a strong partnership with our partners in NATO, and we have a strong partnership with our other government departments in the Government of Canada, so it is not necessarily a military response but a whole-of-government response, working with our allies and partners.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Admiral Auchterlonie.

General Wright, we'll look forward to seeing you on the other side of the vote.

With that, the meeting is suspended.

• (1600)

(Pause)

• (1615)

The Chair: We are joined by Admiral Scott Bishop.

It's good to see you again, Admiral Bishop. I'm not sure how many years it has been, but it is good to see you.

Ambassador Angell, it's good to see you as well. Thank you for joining us at this late hour.

I'm advising the committee that we have a hard stop at 5:30, which I think we'll be able to achieve.

I'm recognizing Madame Normandin, who has a statement to make, and then I'll call upon the two of you for your opening statements. I appreciate General Wright's staying around for the fun.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

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

I'm going to raise the following issue, just to get it on the record. Considering the number of votes scheduled for today, I would like to bring to the attention of the clerks and all those who organize the committee schedules that we have the option of voting remotely, but we're not going to automatically take advantage of it. I may want to vote in person most of the time.

I just wanted to reiterate that, to the extent possible, schedules should not be set with the assumption that everyone will vote remotely. I believe some want to vote in person.

[*English*]

The Chair: We will miss you.

With that, I will move to Ambassador Angell for a five-minute opening statement.

On behalf of the committee, I want to recognize that you are six hours behind us and you have made special arrangements to be here. We do appreciate that. I have only a remote appreciation of how hard you are working on behalf of us all. I think we need to recognize that you are really in the centre of things these days, and we appreciate your work.

Mr. David Angell (Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Joint Delegation of Canada to NATO): Chair, thank you for your comments and for the opportunity to join you.

My name is David Angell and I am the Canadian ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO is a defensive alliance founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and rule of law. Its task is to guarantee the security of the Euro-Atlantic area and of the nearly one billion citizens of the now 30 allied countries.

Canada was an architect of NATO, which has remained a cornerstone of our security for seven decades, and we continue to play a leadership role within the alliance. For example, we have led the enhanced forward presence battle group in Latvia since its inception and we were the founding framework nation for the NATO mission in Iraq.

Our role within NATO reflects our values, including our commitments to diversity and pluralism. Recently, Canada's three most senior NATO commanders were all women, a demonstration of commitment to gender equality that no other ally can match.

NATO's strength derives from its ability to adapt in a constantly changing geostrategic environment. NATO is involved in a far-reaching reform process, NATO 2030, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A milestone in that process will be leaders' adoption, in June, of a new capstone strategic concept, which will chart a path forward for NATO for the next decade or so.

NATO's strength also draws upon the unity of its allies, all of whom committed under article 5 of the Washington treaty that an armed attack against one should be considered an attack against them all. Alliance unity and adaptability have both been evident in response to Russia's violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, NATO developed far-reaching new defence plans and arrangements to defend alliance territory and deepened its close partnership with Ukraine.

In addition, Canada trained more than 30,000 Ukrainian military personnel through our Operation Unifier and we contributed to security sector reform in Ukraine. NATO has demonstrated extraordinary unity in responding to the present crisis, offering Russia a credible diplomatic track to avert the crisis and championing unprecedented sanctions once that diplomatic option was spurned. In

addition, NATO pre-emptively implemented enhanced vigilance measures and activated its advanced planning mechanisms to shore up its deterrence posture while individual allies are providing unprecedented support to Ukraine. Throughout this crisis, the alliance has remained united and faithful to its values.

Allies are also following closely China's activities to understand their implications for Euro-Atlantic security without seeking either to cast China as an adversary or to close off co-operation in key areas such as responding to climate change. China's opacity in implementing its far-reaching military modernization is cause for concern. So, too, is China's growing military co-operation with Russia, including in joint exercises.

NATO is working to respond to these challenges in co-operation with close partners such as Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

The alliance is also working to fight terrorism as a transnational threat. The alliance has been actively engaged in the fight against ISIS and has developed an action plan to counter international terrorism, which is updated annually.

NATO also faces a global environment in which emerging and disruptive technology and hybrid activities are changing the very nature of warfare. The Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic, or DIANA, will be a concrete example of the allies working together to maintain the alliance's technological edge.

NATO and the various allies also face increased exposure to malicious activity in a world dependent on digital infrastructure and technology. To address this, the allies will need to continue to work closely together. The allies recognize the security implications of climate change as a threat amplifier and the importance of reducing military emissions, equipment and activities if we are to meet climate change targets.

Canada is also a leader in this area. At the NATO summit in Brussels in June, Prime Minister Trudeau proposed that Canada host a NATO centre of excellence on climate and security. This initiative will significantly advance the alliance's work in this critical area.

NATO has never been as relevant and united as it is today, and Canada's contribution remains essential.

[*English*]

Let me close by thanking the members of the committee and by acknowledging with particular thanks those who serve or have served as members of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association.

I look forward to responding to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ambassador Angell.

Vice-Admiral Bishop, you have five minutes.

Vice-Admiral Scott Bishop (Military Representative of Canada to NATO, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and answer your questions.

Ambassador Angell has done an excellent job giving you a high-level overview of NATO, Canada's role in NATO and some of the challenges that we face. I wanted to take a couple of minutes to vector in on what I do at NATO, to give you some context of my function here.

[*Translation*]

My name is Vice-Admiral Scott Bishop and I am the Canadian Military Representative on the Canadian Joint Delegation to NATO.

Our delegation is a joint effort of the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada.

I have several responsibilities, but my primary role is to represent the Chief of the Defence Staff on the NATO Military Committee in Brussels.

[*English*]

The military committee is the most senior of NATO's three military bodies and provides advice to the North Atlantic Council, which is NATO's highest political authority.

Of the other two military bodies, the first is Supreme Allied Commander Europe, known as SACEUR, and their staff at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, referred to as SHAPE, located in Mons, Belgium. SACEUR is responsible for the planning and execution of all of NATO's operations.

The second is the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, referred to as SACT, and their staff at Allied Command Transformation headquarters, located in Norfolk, Virginia, which we refer to as ACT. SACT is responsible for ensuring that the alliance is evolving and transforming itself to be relevant in the conflicts of the future.

In the military committee, I work with the senior military representatives of all of our alliance partners to provide military advice to the North Atlantic Council on a wide range of military issues. This includes the review and endorsement of the military planning undertaken by both SACEUR and SACT.

From a national perspective, I work closely with key stakeholders at the National Defence headquarters in Ottawa to ensure that DND and Canadian Armed Forces interests and perspectives are included in the military's planning and decision-making. We also work very closely with our Global Affairs colleagues in our joint delegation to NATO to ensure that we remain closely aligned on our national positions.

Defence diplomacy is also a key aspect of our work at NATO headquarters, and we regularly work with allies to gain support for Canada's views among the other military delegations.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, our position at NATO Headquarters gives us a privileged point of view to understand the major issues that drive the alliance. We are therefore able to relay these important considerations to Defence Headquarters in order to inform the discussions in Ottawa.

In recent times, our efforts have been focused on Canada's active contribution to NATO's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We have also focused our efforts on the following objectives: providing input into SACEUR's deterrence and defence plans; promoting greater transparency and accountability in the development of NATO's capabilities; advancing climate and security initiatives; promoting the role of women in peace and security issues; and advocating the importance of innovation within the alliance.

[*English*]

Thank you again, Chair, for the opportunity to give you a brief summary of what I do. I look forward to addressing the questions of the committee tonight.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Vice-Admiral Bishop.

We will go to the six-minute round with Madam Gallant, Madame Lambropoulos and Madame Normandin.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you, this is for His Excellency Angell. Recently, the Secretary General said that article 5 could be invoked in the event of a cyber-attack.

Would NATO need confirmed attribution for that to be triggered?

Mr. David Angell: I said in my introduction that NATO is constantly adapting. One demonstration of that is the incorporation of both cyber and space as new domains. NATO is now active across five domains, including land, sea and air.

It was decided by the alliance that a cyber-attack could trigger article 5, which is the article of the Washington treaty under which we are committed each to support each other militarily. Joint attribution would not be required, joint attribution being the public indication of who is responsible for an attack, which, for many allies, is something that's done nationally rather than on a joint basis, but there would have to be consensus, because all of NATO's decisions are done on a consensus basis, if article 5 needed to be tripped.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What would the nature of the cyber-attack have to be? Would it need to be damage to critical infrastructure? Would it have to be something that caused loss of life?

What is that threshold that needs to be met for it to be triggered?

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, the threshold would be very high. Article 5 has been triggered only once in the alliance's 72 or 73 years. That was in response to the 9/11 attack in the United States.

There is no specific written definition of the criterion that would need to be satisfied, but it would certainly involve loss of life and massive military impact. It's something we are discussing in terms of trying to codify it a bit more clearly, but it's very clear that there would be a requirement for loss of life and massive impact.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: There are growing calls for a no-fly zone in the airspace above Ukraine. Is there any way at all that allied forces could police the perimeter without becoming involved and in some way triggering a war or being considered a provocation and a pretext for Putin to go all out?

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, the Secretary General has been speaking, I think, for the vast majority of allies in expressing enormous concern at the possibility of a no-fly zone. Leaders of some of our largest allies, including the American president, have been very clear on this point as well.

The concern is that, if NATO were to be involved in the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Ukraine, first of all it would involve putting our service personnel in a position where they would risk interacting with Russian personnel linked to that. Second, it would create a situation where there was a very significant risk of escalation, so alliance leaders have been quite clear that enforcement of a no-fly zone is not something that is being considered at the moment.

• (1635)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Admiral Bishop, Turkey is looking at invoking the Montreux agreement.

I'm wondering, from Canada's standpoint, would we see that as effective? Would it be possible that in some way our naval forces would be assisting in that? How effective do you see invoking that would be?

VAdm Scott Bishop: I think it is a welcome measure. I think this is an attempt by Turkey to try to make sure that the conflict does not escalate. They're exercising the provisions of the Montreux treaty, which they're the treaty holder for, so I think it is very positive.

I don't think it is going to have a significant impact on the Royal Canadian Navy's operations in support of NATO at this time. As I understand it, there's no intention for RCN units to operate in the Black Sea.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In terms of what Canada has to contribute to this overall defence of Ukraine and our allies, is there anything that we don't have and should have, or that we should start working on, so for the future we have the capability? What further measures can we be taking now to harden the defences should the conflict spread beyond the borders of Ukraine?

VAdm Scott Bishop: NATO has been preparing since 2014 and Russia's annexation of Crimea and its first invasion of Ukraine. We've been very concerned with the potential for Russian aggression towards NATO.

There's been a lot of work done by SACEUR in terms developing plans to be able to respond to Russian aggression. Those plans are called "graduated response plans". There are five of them. All five of these plans were activated by SACEUR with the approval of the North Atlantic Council last week. That has enabled SACEUR to significantly reinforce the nations that are on the eastern flank of NATO in accordance with those plans.

A number of nations, including Canada, have taken measures to reinforce the existing forces that they maintain in those areas. For Canada, that's obviously our battle group in Latvia. The government has already announced further reinforcing capabilities for that battle group.

This is very consistent with what all of our allies are doing. New battle groups are being created in the southeastern part of the alliance, including in Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary.

These are all measures that SACEUR has taken to demonstrate to Russia NATO's resolve and intent to make sure that we keep alliance partners safe. And—

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

Madame Lambropoulos, you have six minutes, please.

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

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for being with us today to answer questions.

One main question is that if a NATO country were to attack another NATO country during this time when NATO allies have to very much be united in order to be strong in the face of Russia, how would NATO take that? What would be the way to go about it?

I'm specifically referring to Turkey not necessarily following international law and doing things according to the way they're supposed to at this point in time. They have been flying into Greek airspace, have been aggressive and are possibly taking advantage of the world looking elsewhere.

Do you have anything you can say about that?

• (1640)

VAdm Scott Bishop: I will defer to you.

Mr. David Angell: I'll be very quick and then turn it over to you, Admiral.

Mr. Chair, where we have had tensions between allies in the past, including between Turkey and Greece as an example, the Secretary General has very quickly put in place deconfliction mechanisms involving the two parties speaking offline, in this case, at a military level. These have proven to be very effective.

We are an alliance of 30 countries. Inevitably, there's a little bit of bumping into each other from time to time, but we have always, without fail over more than 70 years, found ways to deconflict the rare instances of friction between us.

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I would add that throughout the lead-up to this crisis, the consistent message from the Secretary General that all nations have adhered to is the importance of NATO unity. I would say that in the face of this blatant unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia, I don't think I've ever seen the 30 nations in NATO more united than they are right now.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Awesome. That's great to hear. Thank you.

Another question I have is when looking at the situation in Ukraine right now, I think Canadians obviously feel a lot of emotion for the Ukrainian people. It's devastating to see what's happening. They also feel fear, because they don't know what Putin's next step is and he's made some pretty big threats that if anybody gets involved we're going to see something that we've never seen in our history.

How is NATO taking these threats? What exactly are we doing and how can Canada better prepare itself if ever.... We are sending a lot of military equipment, we are helping Ukraine in the best ways that we can without going to war with Russia. In what other ways can we protect ourselves and put ourselves in a better position with regard to NATO?

Mr. David Angell: Why don't I take a run at that, Mr. Chair, and then turn to the vice-admiral.

SACEUR has implemented some extraordinarily robust deterrence measures. We are very clear, every ally, and this has been enunciated clearly by the Secretary General and by SACEUR, that every inch of alliance territory will be defended. Its very robust defensive plans, which the vice-admiral spoke to a moment ago, that are being implemented. We're moving huge numbers of troops forward, setting up much stronger defences on the eastern flank.

There are no indications at all that Russia is looking to provoke a fight with NATO, but we're a defensive alliance and we're putting in place the necessary defences.

The rhetoric about putting nuclear forces on alert has been described as reckless and it's certainly unnecessary. This is the essence of deterrence. We are a nuclear alliance and we are willing to signal our resolve to defend every inch of alliance territory.

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I think the ambassador has said it well. I have nothing to add to that.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you so much.

You represent Canada within NATO, if I understand correctly, can you say whether Canada is doing enough to be considered an equal NATO partner and what more can we be doing? There is a federal budget coming up. Is there anything with regard to NATO in particular that should be taken into account in that?

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, Canada is one of the founders of NATO and we have been in a position of leadership from the outset. It's a responsibility we take very seriously.

In the case of Ukraine, as an example, we have been out in front for many years. Our Operation Unifier was in place when it was only Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. providing training. We supported security sector reform very actively, together with a small number of allies. Within the alliance, we're an extremely creative mem-

ber. We have extraordinarily capable armed forces and we are present to do heavy lifting. Our role in Latvia and in Iraq are examples of that. Yes, we are very confident of our role within the alliance.

We're also leaders in cutting-edge issues, and the work we're doing on climate and security is an example of that. We're leaders on values issues, and the work that the vice-admiral spoke to in terms of championing women, peace and security is an example of that.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lambropoulos.

Before I call on Madame Normandin, if I don't get a unanimous resolution to proceed, we will have to end this round and end the session at Ms. Mathysen, and maybe we'll have to cut back to her.

Do I have a unanimous resolution to carry on up until the point where we have to go off and vote?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Could we possibly have a bit of time to go vote, without taking the full 30 minutes?

[*English*]

The Chair: The vote is likely going to get called at 5 o'clock. Two rounds of six minutes get us to 5 o'clock.

In order to get to a second round, I need a unanimous resolution from everyone.

Do I have a unanimous resolution?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. Good.

Madame Normandin, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I'd like to thank the two witnesses for being here and for their presentations.

I had intended to ask questions along the lines of what Ms. Gallant asked about cyberattacks. Since she already laid the groundwork, I will take the liberty of digging a little deeper.

You have established the threshold at which a cyberattack will trigger a NATO response. However, what we're seeing right now is that attacks against NATO member countries not being responded to. This happens, in part, because the rogue countries say they are not the perpetrators of the attacks, but also because the attacks don't reach the permissible retaliation threshold.

I don't want to suggest that an attack on Bridgestone, for example, would warrant a conventional military response, but would it be justified for NATO to respond with cyber operations? Would this prevent groups like Anonymous or private hackers from responding, because otherwise no one would? Could this be part of the appropriate response? If this were to occur, the response would be less severe and would save lives.

Mr. David Angell: I thank the member for her question, Mr. Chair.

I can respond. First, with respect to NATO's capabilities, we have offensive cyber capabilities, but we use them very rarely.

[English]

We're a values-based alliance and we're a defensive alliance. Engaging in the kind of irresponsible, offensive cyber-activities that we see some of our would-be adversaries engaging in is not something that we're willing to do. We have the capacity, but it's not something that we're willing to do.

What we try to do is call out through attribution, which is primarily a national responsibility. You have examples of joined-up attribution. Canada is very often part of those, and it's an approach that we support. There are allies that prefer to see national attribution, so it's something that is proceeded on a case-by-case basis. We saw it in the cyber-attacks in the UK, for example.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Following your lead, are you not concerned that some form of grumbling would set in if several private entities were attacked? If NATO were to intervene, we would know where the attack was coming from and private hackers would not be handling the response. A hacker successfully crippled the network recently in North Korea.

If NATO doesn't get involved, don't we risk losing control over these responses to groups like Anonymous?

[English]

Mr. David Angell: I'm not an expert in cyber, but in most cases the response is led by individual allies. When a country has been subject to an attack, generally they lead the response and they can turn to allies for assistance. We have put in place the capacity to provide support to allies who request it. Some allies that don't have a cyber-defence capacity as robust as that of others can ask for assistance and receive it. That is now operational.

In many instances, the response has been nationally led, and that's entirely okay.

• (1650)

The Chair: Mr. Bishop, would you like to respond?

Vadm Scott Bishop: I would like to add that NATO is an alliance of nations. Generally, NATO relies on individual nations to bring capabilities, including cyber capabilities, to support NATO. In a lot of these instances, dealing with these cyber-attacks is done on a national level by individual nations.

NATO gets involved when we get into an article 4 or an article 5 discussion about a particularly severe cyber incident that might

warrant a NATO response. NATO would look to nations that had those capabilities, including Canada, to potentially respond.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

I will continue on with the more conventional side of war. We've seen that Russia has not yet achieved air superiority in Ukraine. We believe that it hopes to do so in 15 days, but it faces ample resistance on the ground.

How can Canada help ensure air force resistance to prevent Russia from rapidly achieving air superiority?

[English]

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I can offer some words on this.

Just from a NATO perspective, there are many nations that are offering military aid to Ukraine. The kinds of aid that are being offered in some cases are quite significant, and some countries are offering weapons and systems to deal with air threats.

At this point Canada is not in that group of nations. However, from a NATO perspective, it's not a NATO function to provide military aid to Ukraine, but individual nations within NATO are providing Ukraine with military aid that spans a spectrum of capabilities.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Normandin.

I see that lights are flashing. We have a motion to carry on.

How much time do we have, Mr. Clerk, to carry on?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Grant McLaughlin): It's 29 minutes.

The Chair: We have 29 minutes.

Madam Mathysen will have six minutes, and then we'll have a truncated second round.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We continue to see Russian advances west towards the NATO countries. Those eastern borders are moving west.

If the Russians are able to hold that territory, what are the long-term consequences and considerations for NATO allies?

Mr. David Angell: I can take a first stab at it, Mr. Chair, and then turn to the vice-admiral.

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, we began to reinforce the eastern flank. The enhanced forward presence battle groups in the Baltic countries and Poland, one of which we lead, are part of that response, but there are many other elements, including air policing, that we participate in as well.

What we have begun to do in response to this new, more severe violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity is to shore up those eastern flank defences, and that will continue for as long as required, Mr. Chair. SACEUR has done an outstanding job of leading the alliance in reinforcing that flank.

We're doing this in part through setting up new eFP-like battle groups, but also through the movement of troops and a whole range of other measures. So if there is a longer-term risk to NATO's eastern flank, there will be a much longer term NATO reinforcement of that flank.

VAdm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I think it's an excellent question.

I would just highlight that NATO is in the midst of updating it's strategic concept. This is something that the leaders will decide on at the Madrid summit in June.

I think what we're seeing, regardless of how things play out in Ukraine, is going to have a significant impact on the development of that strategic concept. I think this is already generating a lot of discussion in NATO about how we need to examine our defence and deterrence posture, particularly along the eastern flank.

I think there is going to be a call from many of our allies, particularly those who are in that eastern part of the alliance, for NATO to take a serious look at a significant increase in the capabilities that NATO maintains along the borders with Russia and along NATO's eastern flank.

Those discussions are already starting, and I think this will have a significant impact on NATO regardless of the outcome in Ukraine because it has shown Russia's hand in terms of being an unpredictable and irresponsible actor on the international stage that's willing to take extraordinary and irresponsible risks and violate international law, so it is going to have an impact.

• (1655)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Canada has already made a lot of commitments through Operation Unifier and Operation Reassurance. Do those operations shift as we come into the Madrid summit or into those conversations going forward in the long term?

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, both of those plans—Operation Unifier and Operation Reassurance—offer a degree of flexibility, so that the government is able to introduce new steps within the terms of those operations as circumstances change. As with all military plans, they come up for renewal by cabinet, so the approach can be fine-tuned by cabinet. Operation Unifier was just renewed for a further three-year period, and it's deliberately flexible, so we've been able to do some training. We've been able to do a whole range of things under both of those plans, but the flexibility is there and the renewal process allows for a degree of redesign as necessary.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I'll shift a little and maybe go back to Major-General Wright, who's been patiently listening. Yesterday, we saw the targeting of the Ukrainian television stations, cutting off that communications infrastructure in an effort to silence Ukraine. Are there ways that Canada can help in that surveillance or logistical framework to repair the communications infrastructure? What logistical support can we provide? Also—and I guess this may be for a couple of the witnesses but more so for Major-General Wright—there's been a real shift, with the added pervasiveness of

social media in this conflict particularly, across the world in so many different ways. How does that change what we do on the ground?

MGen Michael Wright: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think I'll start with the last portion, how that changes things. Modern warfare has changed in that we are seeing things—and perhaps it began with the Gulf War in 1991—and events transpire in real time. Certainly I think that is good, because we are seeing the lies that were perpetrated by the Russians and President Putin being called out as lies and the fact that they are still not telling the truth through Russian media to their own citizens.

In terms of your question about repairing the television station, that's not something that falls within my scope. I'm sorry, but I can't answer that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We have a limited amount of time left. If we're going to get through a full round of questions, I think we're going to have to go down to three minutes each.

Madam Findlay.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here.

I'll be quick. Vice-Admiral Bishop, have you seen indications that Belarusian forces have entered the war on Russia's side and are moving toward Kyiv?

VAdm Scott Bishop: This is something that we are actively monitoring in NATO. I would say that we are getting extremely good support from across the different nations in the alliance, which provide the alliance with all of our intelligence. We are particularly proud of the contributions of Canadian Forces Intelligence Command. Thus far, we have not seen any of those indications, but we are very concerned about some of the open source reporting, and we are very closely watching for that.

• (1700)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Are you seeing any unusual submarine activity by Russia in the alert status of its ballistic missile submarines?

VAdm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, what I could say on that subject is that NATO is very carefully watching all aspects of Russia's military forces. NATO has a 360° view of threats facing the alliance. We are not focused solely on what is going on in Ukraine. Again, we're relying on all of our allies to provide intelligence to the alliance and looking at every area in which Russia operates.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Ambassador, how would you characterize Canada's relationship with other NATO countries on the issue of 2% of GDP funding?

Mr. David Angell: The 2% of funding issue is part of a package of commitments that leaders entered into in 2014 to work towards spending 2% of GDP on defence and commitments relating to capacity as well and to actually doing the necessary in terms of military heavy lifting. Canada continues to make a very substantial contribution in terms of actual heavy lifting and putting our troops where they need to be. Under the “Strong, Secure, Engaged” defence policy, we’ve been increasing our defence expenditure by 70% over a 10-year period, which has resulted in Canada being amongst the allies with the largest actual increase in defence expenditure. At the moment, I think about half of the allies have a plan to reach 2%. We have a commitment to increase the defence expenditure, but not over the 2% line, by 2024.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Have we met the 2%, yet, yes or no?

Mr. David Angell: No. We increased expenditure by 70%, but we do not have a plan for 2%.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Findlay.

Mr. Spengemann, you have three minutes please.

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

I would like to thank all three witnesses for being with us and for their service to our nation.

My question is for Ambassador Angell. It may in part take you back, sir, to your former role as DG for international organizations, and for human rights and democracy.

I’m looking at an Instagram post from Amnesty International issued in the last 36 hours indicating there have been attacks against civilian infrastructure, including explosive weapons strikes on a kindergarten, hospital, a restaurant and an apartment block. It indicates that cluster munitions have hit a nursery and kindergarten and multiple MLRS rockets have hit in urban areas.

In the caption to that post, Amnesty states the following:

Amnesty International’s Crisis Evidence Lab analyzed digital evidence—including photos, videos and satellite imagery of indiscriminate attacks in #Ukraine. They have verified violations of international law which could amount to war crimes.

When we’re talking about military deterrence, economic deterrence and introducing this additional deterrence of judicial accountability, how important is this evidence? How can this evidence be protected and presented in such a way that it’s credible in front of an international tribunal?

Is there a role for NATO in that respect, to either generate, preserve and protect, or communicate onward that kind of evidence in a forward-looking way to create accountability for the Putin regime for the actions it’s currently perpetrating against Ukraine?

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, the question speaks to areas of Canadian leadership over many years. It was Canada that put the protection of civilians in armed conflict on the Security Council agenda back in 1999. Canada was one of the principal champions for the creation of the International Criminal Court. This issue of

accountability has been very dear to our heart for a very long time through successive governments.

There are specialist entities that capture information for judicial purposes. I don’t know whether NATO can play a role in that. The issue of accountability for what appears to be the perpetration of war crimes is something that we will take extremely seriously. We will want to work very closely with allies and other partners to make that happen.

• (1705)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much, Ambassador.

I have limited time, but I would like to turn briefly to our two senior military officials.

Is the evidence described by Amnesty, including satellite imagery, especially if verified to be accurate, the kind of evidence that could capture potential war crimes well and serve international fora to establish and sustain accountability for these kinds of actions?

MGen Michael Wright: Mr. Chair, I’m not sure of the exact ways in which the International Criminal Court or any other organization would receive such imagery, but there is a significant amount of commercially available satellite imagery over Ukraine that could likely be used for a case such as that.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Vice-Admiral Bishop.

VAdm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I would say that it’s extremely difficult to investigate these kinds of activities without people on the ground. That is a significant limiting factor.

I think we are all seized with what we’re seeing and hearing and with some of the allegations about these potential war crimes and violations of the laws of armed conflict. We certainly would like to see these issues investigated properly at some point. In the midst of a conflict, it is always extremely difficult to conduct these types of investigation.

The Chair: Madame Normandin, you have one minute.

[Translation]

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

Recently, we’ve seen Russia threaten Finland with retaliation if it joins NATO. It is a non-member country, but still a NATO partner.

What would Canada’s position be in particular, and what would NATO’s position be in general, if Russia did indeed retaliate against Finland?

[English]

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, the choice of whether to seek to join the alliance or not is one that individual countries make. For historical reasons, neither Finland nor Sweden has chosen to seek to join the alliance. Notwithstanding that, we have very close working relationships with them. We're working especially closely with them now in view of the situation in Ukraine.

These are countries with very advanced defence capabilities. They have something to teach allied countries about the whole-of-society approaches to defence. We work extremely closely with them.

We have 40 partners and both Finland and Sweden are amongst the very closest.

The Chair: Madam Mathysen, you have one minute.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We've seen the economic sanctions that the world is putting forward working. Russian citizens, themselves, are taking action against Putin. The Ukrainians are doing an incredible job of holding them back, but we've also seen the Russians resorting to using thermobaric weapons. There was a suggestion by experts that turning to these extremes is showing a bit of desperation by Putin.

Can you comment on that and where that could lead in terms of that level of force and response?

The Chair: That question is for Admiral Bishop.

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, within the alliance, we're following the developments in Ukraine as closely as we can, based on the intelligence we're getting from nations. We're, again, all very concerned to hear about further escalation in Russian tactics and their approach to this conflict.

We would certainly be very concerned to hear or verify that Russia was intending to use thermobaric weapons based on their indiscriminate effects, and we will watch for that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Motz, you have three minutes, please.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'll start with this one first. There was a recent article that suggested that nearly half of Canada's air fleet was not serviceable to meet readiness and training standards in 2020 and 2021. Now we know that the current government has yet to be able to name a winning bid for the fighter jets and that the F-35 procurement process is already seven years in the making.

Your Excellency and Vice-Admiral Bishop, have either of you ever found yourselves in a position where you were working with our allied NATO partners trying to find other ways to assist NATO because our equipment was either not serviceable or inoperable without our allies' assistance?

• (1710)

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I can't comment on the Royal Canadian Air Force's generation of fighter aircraft and capabilities in Canada; I can talk about the NATO perspective.

I would say that Canada has been a regular contributor of fighter aircraft in support of NATO's air policing missions. Along the eastern flank, Canada has been a regular contributor to air policing in Romania. Our efforts there have been extremely well appreciated by all of our allied partners. This is an extremely important mission for NATO and in particular for nations along the eastern flank.

We follow their deployments in Romania when they're doing these missions, and we get a lot of credit from our allies for the great job that our men and women are doing in those missions.

From a NATO standpoint, I would say that we do not see any impact in terms of our ability to deliver to NATO what we have committed to NATO to deliver.

Mr. Glen Motz: You referred to air, and I know my question initially referred to air, but the question was specific to equipment beyond just air. Would you stay with the same position with all of our Canadian Armed Forces' equipment?

Vadm Scott Bishop: Again, Chair, I am talking specifically about what we see in NATO and what Canada delivers to it in terms of capability, and we do extremely well. I think one of our major strengths as a nation is the contribution we make to the alliance. The ambassador highlighted that in his opening remarks.

In terms of capabilities, we have excellent capabilities in the battle group in Latvia. I've talked about how we have excelled in the air policing mission and our leadership in the NATO mission in Iraq.

When we come to the table and we provide capabilities to NATO, we provide excellent, high-readiness capabilities that are fully mission capable. That has always been our mantra, and our allies recognize that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Mr. David Angell: I would just add, Mr. Chair, that it's also true in the naval field, where we have been leading and contributing to standing naval maritime groups very effectively.

Vadm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, I should have mentioned the navy, being as that's my service.

The Chair: Yes. I was going to say, Admiral, that it's a major failing on your part not to have mentioned your service.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Vadm Scott Bishop: Yes. We are a very consistent contributor of naval forces to NATO's standing naval forces. In fact, we are one of the few countries that consistently contribute warships to those standing naval forces. I think that also is something that gets us a lot of credit here within the NATO community.

The Chair: In the report that Mr. Motz was referring to, the navy gets a 94% in readiness for operations—so the best in class.

Madam O'Connell, you have the final three minutes, please.

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

Thank you to all for being here and for your service.

I want to follow up a question that Ms. Gallant asked earlier.

Vice-Admiral Bishop, it's my understanding that you were involved in the NATO no-fly zone and embargo against Libya. Again, following up on Ms. Gallant's earlier question about some of the information coming around, you often see, especially online, reactions to what should be done. Could you elaborate on your experience in Libya and how that then relates to a no-fly zone in Ukraine or the decision-making around that?

VAdm Scott Bishop: Mr. Chair, that's another really good question.

What we really need to keep in mind is the situations in Libya and Ukraine are two completely different situations militarily. The big issue with a no-fly zone is that you need to be able to enforce it. You need to be able to prevent the side from being able to operate aircraft in that no-fly zone.

In Ukraine it's just a completely different situation. The Russians have over 700 combat aircraft in that area. They have advanced surface-to-air missile systems. They have advanced integrated air defence systems. Any no-fly zone would almost certainly bring us in to direct conflict with the Russian military. As the Secretary General and many others have indicated, this would be a really significant potential risk of escalation of the conflict, which NATO does not want to see.

• (1715)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

Do I have time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have a little more than a minute.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Perfect. Thank you.

I know that it's been said by many, on earlier panels as well, that even though what is happening in Ukraine right now is obviously of high importance, NATO and Canada as a whole are still keeping an eye on everything else. Do you have any comment on maybe China's activities right now? We've seen that they have a newly formed friendship with Russia. We've heard testimony about whether or not that will last, and to what effect, but is there any kind of chatter about things Canada should be particularly watching for, while we're focused on Ukraine, in terms of whether they're supporting Russia in other ways? Are there things we should be watching for? I know that especially in the Arctic, Russia and China have maybe competing interests.

I'm just kind of curious on that take, if there's anything there.

Mr. David Angell: Mr. Chair, NATO in the past two years has focused a lot of attention on China to understand the implications of Chinese activities on Euro-Atlantic security. There is an enormous increase in the Chinese military capability, for example. It's being pursued with a degree of opacity that is of concern to us. But there is also a wish to work with China, for example in arms control, and we are trying to figure out how to do that.

On the situation in Ukraine, we're certainly very conscious of the summit meeting at the outset of the Olympic Games between the presidents of China and the Russian Federation, but we're also very conscious that Ukraine historically has had a good relationship with China. There is a possibility, if Ukraine can persuade them, that China can play a moderating role. I know that there have been discussions between the Ukrainian and Chinese governments.

It was interesting to watch the Chinese behaviour over the past week. They abstained in the General Assembly vote. They did not vote with Russia. They abstained in the Security Council vote. They did not vote with Russia. So there are some indications that the support that Russia was expecting to see from China may not be materializing.

We will watch this very, very carefully and with the hope that China will be able to exercise a moderating influence in the Ukraine crisis, because Russia is not listening to very many countries at this point.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Mr. Chair, could I raise a very brief point of order?

The Chair: On a point of order, Mr. Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: We're approaching the vote. I would like to again thank our witnesses for their testimony and service and also very much for their reference to the work that we're doing with women and peace and security.

I just wanted to point out to this committee, especially as defence committee, and with the historical imbalances in gender that we have faced and are continuing to work on, that we as a committee should bring better gender representation to our panels. That's a message to my colleagues as MPs and our support staff and anybody who's working with and for this committee.

Also you, gentlemen, as leaders in the organization and in our government and with NATO, if we can mobilize better gender representation, I think it will help us a great deal going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for that point.

On behalf of the committee I wanted to thank all three of you, and particularly General Wright, for your patience in being here for almost two hours. I appreciate your patience and your willingness to engage.

This concludes our meeting with extraordinarily good witnesses and information. It's been a very interesting and timely study for us. We appreciate your contribution.

Thank you.

Colleagues, before I gavel it closed, it's my intention to have a subcommittee meeting on Monday to scope out where we're going. I think all parties are in agreement.

I understand there's been a motion that's been circulated and there is unanimous agreement. Is it fair to say that?

• (1720)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: As far as I know.

The Chair: As far as you know.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Everyone said yes.

The Chair: You either have it or you don't.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Everyone said yes.

The Chair: I'm going to work on the assumption that as far as you know there is unanimous agreement to have a meeting next week.

If we do go ahead and schedule a meeting next week, I will need at the earliest possible opportunity a suggested list of witnesses and a suggested area that you want to delve into so that the clerk and the analysts can start working on lining up panels for that time.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Chair, maybe the witnesses can go because I know they're on a time difference and I feel bad.

The Chair: I thought they had left.

Particularly Vice-Admiral Bishop and Ambassador Angell, it's 11:30 where you are. I'm sure you might be looking forward to a little shut-eye.

Thank you.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you very much.

The Chair: That's the plan.

Mr. May, you have 20 seconds.

Mr. Bryan May: I had the same issue that Jennifer brought up.

My only other question would be pertaining to the time and date of that meeting. Given that it's a break week, we're all going to have other commitments that we've scheduled. I want to see if possibly Monday after the subcommittee meeting would be possible.

The Chair: We're done, unfortunately. Please feed it in to me and the clerk and we'll try to work out what is convenient.

The meeting is adjourned.

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