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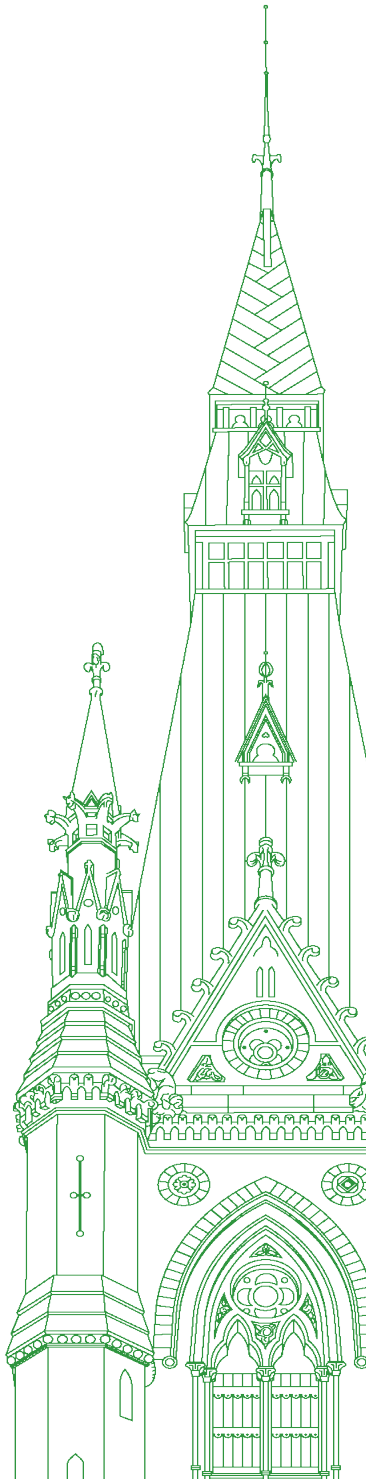
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Chair: Charles Sousa

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 46 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, January 26, 2026, the committee is meeting to begin its study on "Inflection Point 2025" and the modernization of the Canadian Army.

Folks, before we begin, I know we're all very devastated by the tragedy that happened at CFB Wainwright a few days ago. I know we share our thoughts and prayers with those who passed and wish a speedy recovery for the survivors.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format—

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Apparently, some interpretation consoles are not working properly. I don't know if that applies to the others, but I just wanted to point that out.

[*English*]

The Chair: We were having some technical issues, but we'll continue.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, with some participating remotely using the Zoom application. I will ask participants to consult the guidelines on the table. The measures there are to prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of our interpreters. For example, try not to adjust the microphone in front of you, especially when you're on. It will pick up your voice even if it looks misaligned. Don't bother touching it. It will automatically come on for you.

I will remind members and witnesses to please wait until I recognize you by name before you speak. If you wish to speak, raise your hand. For interpretation, select the appropriate channel on your earpiece. Take a moment now to prepare your earpiece and select the listening channel you need in advance in order to take full advantage of the time allotted for questions and answers. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses. We have Justin Massie, professor, Strategic Analysis Network, via video conferencing. We also have Mr. John Walsh, director of defence industrial strategy at the University of Guelph.

We'll proceed with opening statements of up to five minutes.

Mr. Massie, we will proceed with you, sir.

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

Justin Massie (Professor, Strategic Analysis Network, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will deliver my remarks in French. However, I can also answer questions in English.

Honourable members of the committee, thank you for your invitation and for giving me an opportunity to comment on "Inflection Point 2025", which is a very clear-eyed document. It explicitly acknowledges that "the Army we have is not the Army we need" and, therefore, that Canada is unable to deploy and sustain an independent brigade over an extended period, nine years after the first deployment to Latvia. It also turns the page on contribution warfare to focus on major combat operations at the divisional level. I think that goal is commendable. My remarks will therefore touch on four silences or four elements that have been left out of the strategy, even though I believe they ought to have been included.

The first silence is the United States. The word appears nowhere in the document, even though the United States' change of posture, shifting the burden of conventional defence onto its allies, is crucial for the modernization of the Canadian army, which, as the document states, seeks to "reduce strategic dependencies and to develop sovereign capabilities."

With respect to whom will these capabilities be sovereign? That's the question we should be asking. If the Canadian army is preparing to integrate a United States-led expeditionary corps, while that is not the goal of the United States, then that strategy would be poorly designed. In my opinion, it should instead read that the army must prepare for a high-intensity conflict in Europe without the direct, or even indirect, support of the United States. I think acknowledging that would significantly change the Canadian army's doctrine of employment.

The second silence is defining against whom and to what end Canada's deterrence refers to. The document refers to deterrence, but it does not define the subject of the deterrence. Activities to protect our critical infrastructure against hybrid Russian attacks on our own territory, conducting in-depth operations against Russia or supporting civilian authorities do not have the same deterrence goals. I think clarifying these areas would improve the document. Furthermore, if strategic autonomy, a term that is explicit in Canada's defence industrial strategy, is the direction the government of Canada wishes to give the Canadian Armed Forces, this means significant implications for the Canadian army's recapitalization and its doctrine of employment. However, this remains unclear in the document right now.

The third silence is mass. The document plans for 8,500 additional regular force members and 8,500 additional reserve force members by 2040. It is not clear how this matches up with the goal of increasing the Canadian Armed Forces' authorized forces strength to 81,500 members. Would that mean that a vast majority of this increase would go to the army, rather than the navy and the air force?

It is also not clear how this target matches the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO's capability targets. The document acknowledges that these targets are the basis for a proposed figure, but the NATO targets are not specified. However, I would remind members of the committee that NATO's objective is a force of 100,000 troops available within ten days, 200,000 troops available within a month and 500,000 troops available within six months. Based on proportion to population, that would mean for Canada roughly 4,000 troops within ten days, which is double the number currently deployed to Latvia, 8,500 within a month and 21,000 within six months, or nearly 34,000 troops at graduated readiness. Furthermore, if the United States were removed from the calculation, given their national defence strategy, Canada's share would climb to some 50,000 troops deployed, or a little more than three divisions.

The fourth silence is on robotization. The document acknowledges the importance of autonomous systems, but to me, it is not clear how the Canadian army will incorporate them into their ranks. In my opinion, the army should create autonomous systems battalions in each brigade and stand up a drone regiment at the divisional level as quickly as possible, for without robotic mass, the expeditionary division will not hold against Russia, as can be seen on Ukraine's battlefield.

In closing, I would like to say that it is important to reach consensus among the political parties on the future of Canada's defence policy, and I urge you to demand from the government a new defence policy that answers the questions “Inflection Point 2025” leaves open, accompanied by a ten-year investment plan validated by the Parliamentary Budget Officer and submitted each year to this committee for review.

● (1110)

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Massie.

[*English*]

Mr. Walsh, we'll go over to you for five minutes.

John Walsh (Director of Defence Industrial Strategy, University of Guelph, As an Individual): Thank you to the committee for inviting me to appear. Before my time counts against the clock, I offer my personal condolences and the condolences of the entire University of Guelph community for the recent tragic injuries and loss of life at Wainwright.

I am a professor of classics, and I have long been interested in an idea expressed in the old humanist Latin formula *arma et litterae*, or arms and letters. At its best, this tradition does not confuse the responsibilities of the soldier with those of the scholar. It recognizes that the defence of a political community and the intellectual and civic life of that community are distinct but not unrelated concerns. A society must be capable of defending itself, but it must also consider how its institutions contribute to that capacity.

The army’s strategy recognizes that modernization is, at its heart, a profoundly human undertaking. It identifies the need for greater readiness, sustainable fighting power and credible pathways for expanding the army reserve. It expressly calls for those mobilization pathways to be designed, tested and then refined. This, to me, raises a question that belongs to not only the military but also the wider country. How do we turn Canadians who are willing to serve into people who are trained, qualified and then available when the need arises?

This distinction matters. A person willing to serve is a national asset, but willingness alone does not generate military capability. There must be a system able to receive that person, provide the necessary training and bring the process to completion. My interest is in whether civilian institutions can responsibly help remove particular bottlenecks within that system. At the University of Guelph, I helped establish the serving scholars program, which supports members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are pursuing university education. My subsequent policy work has examined whether universities might make a more direct and real contribution to army reserve readiness in particular.

In a recent article, I proposed a controlled pilot in which a participating university would provide civilian facilities and services in support of an army-defined training activity. The university might provide accommodation, meals, classrooms, fitness facilities and various means of local coordination. The army would retain command, instruction, discipline, assessment and qualification. Of course, military activities requiring military establishments would remain there.

The model is intentionally modest by design. It begins with one university, one validated army requirement and one live activity. The question is whether the arrangement produces a demonstrable effect. The relevant measure is not how many people a facility can accommodate but whether the arrangements help produce additional qualifications, improve progression or release scarce military capacity for other work. If such a plan cannot demonstrate a worthwhile result at a justified cost, I would argue that it should not continue.

There is, I think, a wider civic principle here that's worthy of discussion. In a free society and in a society determined to remain free, responsibility for national defence cannot mean that every institution attempts to become a military institution. It means that civilian institutions understand their proper purposes and consider whether their capabilities can serve a legitimate public end. Constructive co-operation depends on maintaining that distinction, not erasing it.

I offer this perspective with deep and profound respect for the army's professional expertise. I am not here to tell military leaders how to organize, equip or train their forces. My contribution is to examine a civilian institutional question raised by the army's own strategy, which is whether the country's educational and perhaps other civilian capabilities can help support the generation of trained and available personnel. Any recommendation I would make, therefore, would be practical.

Where the army identifies a genuine bottleneck, Canada should be willing to test whether a civilian partnership could help remove it. The army should define the requirement. The civilian institution should establish what it can responsibly provide, and the outcome should be measured honestly.

Thank you very much.

● (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Walsh.

We're going to go to our first round of questions.

Ms. Gallant, we're going to start with you.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you.

You mentioned how Canada should partner with universities in building up the reserves, but what role could the community colleges play?

John Walsh: They could play an equal role. I speak only of universities because I'm from a university and, as a rule, I don't want to speak for others. In my discussions with college colleagues.... They have a role to play, absolutely.

Cheryl Gallant: Back when they were building up for Afghanistan, we did have our local college, Algonquin College, provide courses because they were so stretched for trainers.

I know the high school I went to and the schools where I live now have old firing ranges. They used to teach the teenagers how to do it because infantry was what was mainly stood up nearby, so it was young soldiers. Many people already knew how to shoot because they were hunters. How do you think that idea would go over? Is there a role for high schools?

John Walsh: Can I begin with an apology?

I realize I'm supposed to direct my comments through the chair.

The Chair: We're very flexible here.

John Walsh: Thank you very much.

The academic community could learn a lot from your show of flexibility, I assure you.

Voices: Oh, oh!

John Walsh: One of the ways in which such a co-operation could work is that we don't have to build from scratch. We have a lot of that infrastructure there. The member's right. More than just firing ranges, we have the institutional memory of having done this twice in the last century—where universities and colleges served as the loci of training.

My only proposal would be that we perhaps practice this while we can, before we're forced into looking at this co-operation. I would argue that we practice those relationships—find where things work, where they fail and where we need to improve—now while we have a little luxury of time, before we're doing it under constraint.

Cheryl Gallant: Is there a mechanism in place for any commanders to start interfacing with a local university?

John Walsh: I certainly would not speak for what discretion the local commanders have or who the decision-makers would be. However, I would be happy if the army were to name an owner of that problem and then identify an institution.

I'm appearing today as a private individual, so I can reference my public work elsewhere, where I proposed that the University of Guelph be that institution. If the army were to designate an owner of that problem, I think we could scale a bounded trial on a small scale and then actually measure the results.

I will tell the member that I've had great relationships with the local regiment in Guelph, the 11th Field Artillery, which has been building up a very strong relationship with the serving scholar program at the University of Guelph. In so much as I know they have discretion for these decisions, we do mean to trial, in our own way, some small use of university resources this summer in a way that is within their decision-making discretion.

Cheryl Gallant: The Prime Minister is pushing for associate membership with the EU, with the details of a potential agreement to be ironed out next week in Montreal. How will any deal help the CAF in obtaining much-needed kinetic weapons, like long-range precision strike capabilities, ground-based air defences, and drone and counterdrone capabilities?

● (1120)

John Walsh: That is outside my particular purview. I would not want to speak to the specifics of equipment procurement. I will respectfully stay within my lane, which is rare for an academic, but I intend to bring some humility today.

I'm sorry. I do love the profession and the field, but we do have our faults. I will limit my answer specifically to the human side that I've been thinking about.

Cheryl Gallant: You recommended a small pilot project to begin the experiment. Which university or college would you recommend be the first campus to host army reservists as a proving ground? How would a candidate university or college campus be evaluated on being able to be a proving ground?

John Walsh: I would propose the University of Guelph as a suitable candidate for this, largely because we have such an established relationship with the local regiments, not just the regiment in the university area—the 11th Field. It's also with the surrounding regiments: the Royal Highland Fusiliers of Canada, HMCS *Star*, a signal regiment in Hamilton that I'm forgetting—for which I will be punished—and the Lorne Scots. We have an established pathway, and the relationship is strong among the administration of the university, the military and me. I think the trust is established there.

I apologize for droning on. It is a professional problem.

As for the measures, I would leave it up to the army to measure how effectively we did this and to draw up a capability map of what we could offer. However, largely, it would be about space and physical resources to begin with, like food, accommodations and training space.

Cheryl Gallant: Speaking of drones—

The Chair: Speaking of time, we will get back to drones, I'm sure. Actually, we have two hours, so we'll have ample time to ask questions. We'll see how long it proceeds for.

We'll certainly get back to you, Ms. Gallant.

It's over to you, Mr. Malette.

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Walsh, for your testimony.

My first question is for Professor Massie.

[*Translation*]

I apologize. I'm not very fluent in French.

[*English*]

I will be asking my questions in English today.

Professor Massie, how should Canada adapt its military posture to protect Arctic sovereignty as surveillance technology, autonomous systems and the capabilities of potential adversaries evolve?

Justin Massie: Thank you for the question. Let me answer briefly in English. I may switch to French if details are harder to find.

First of all, as I said in my opening statement, it all depends on the adversary you're trying to face.

There are two aspects to deterrence in Canada. One, it is against adversaries like China and Russia that have interests antagonistic to ours. We need to be able to detect, project and survive in an environment where our adversaries.... We're seeing the Russians conducting below-the-threshold hybrid attacks in Europe very frequently and on a higher scale as the days go. We can imagine similar attacks on Canadian soil targeting our civilian infrastructure, with denial strategies saying that it is not Russians but criminal organizations or whatever. This is a strategy they're conducting right now against our European allies because our European allies are supporting Ukraine. Canada is one of the largest military supporters of Ukraine, so to think we would not be the target of such attacks would be naive.

However, there's the second aspect to this. It is the capacity of Canada to defend our country and project force on our territory without the explicit support of the United States. We have this second objective. It is to show the U.S. that we can do our part by ourselves, so there's a dual element in terms of who we're trying to deter. We have to deter the United States in a different way and say that they don't need to deploy on our land—we have this on our own. This is significant and it is very hard for the Canadian military, given the underinvestment in the last three decades.

● (1125)

Chris Malette: Thank you.

As you well know, we're trying to address that, at this point.

Given the observations you just made, are the personnel, maintenance, capacity and infrastructure in place to sustain those requirements during a prolonged international crisis, in your estimation?

Justin Massie: At this point in time, they absolutely are not. We don't have enough people, infrastructure, lift, connectivity, sea command, control capabilities, etc.

Chris Malette: Professor, I'll be more specific to my riding in the Bay of Quinte. It is home to 8 Wing at CFB Trenton, which plays a critical role—as you know—in Canada's military mobility.

Do you think we're doing enough to address this with our current acquisition of new aircraft and the robust building out of our capacity to expand that air mobility?

Justin Massie: We are on the right track. I don't want to be dismissive of the huge efforts that were made in the last close to two years now and the previous investments that were provided for those operations, but the task is so big and the time is so short that I'm afraid I cannot have a positive view on this, given that you don't build infrastructure in a second. The threat is now, and we have failed to plan accordingly. The gaps are so big that we have to do everything all at once.

I salute the new authorities that will be given to our DIA, the Defence Investment Agency, because they need to procure things quite fast, but at the same time, if we want to have capabilities that are not exclusively American, given what I said previously, it will take even more time. Again, we also have dual objectives, and by buying equipment that is not American and that is not being developed at the same scale and the same pace as our European allies.... We see this in Germany. Their plan of rearming in the next five years will grow their budget by $500 billion, and even that is not enough for them to address the threat. It's not just a question of money, then, but also a question of time.

Chris Malette: Thank you.

I don't believe I have time for another question, Mr. Chair, or do I?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Chris Malette: I have one minute. All right.

Then, thank you very much, Professor.

Quickly, I'll go to Mr. Walsh.

In my riding of Bay of Quinte, we've seen smaller companies, such as a powder coating company called Kool Koatings, find opportunities with defence supply chains. In your estimation, how can the defence industrial strategy ensure that communities like mine will benefit? I know you've spoken about the academic side of things, but on the DIS, in terms of SMEs, in that regard....

John Walsh: I thank the member for the question.

Certainly, in wearing my other hat, as the director of defence industrial strategy at the University of Guelph, I encounter this. In short—and I know time is pressing here—what I've come to learn is that particularly small businesses shouldn't have to devote a huge number of resources to be able to decipher the asks that we make of them. The RFIs and the funding proposals really exceed some of the capacities of these companies and freeze them out of the process. That's the feedback I'm getting. We need to shorten and simplify that, and speak the language of business to people who do business.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, it's over to you.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Massie, your opening remarks were very compelling. The way I understand it, you have broached a seemingly untouchable subject. At least that is my reading of it. You spoke about the fact that the word United States does not appear in the document “Inflection Point 2025”, but that on the other hand, the document appears to infer that it is nevertheless an issue. I think there's a certain section that says that the changes we are seeing now are—I've forgotten the exact term—unilateral, or at least, there is no turning back and the changes are permanent.

When it comes to the changes on the American side, you seem to imply that we should be less dependent on the United States, which is considered an ally. To what extent do you think that this shift is permanent?

● (1130)

Justin Massie: I think the shift started a few years ago and predates President Trump. People tend to see Mr. Trump as the cause, but he is the symptom of a much deeper phenomenon sweeping through the American society. Americans are no longer willing to support their allies' defence. They are sick and tired of their tax dollars paying for Japan's security, paying for South Korea's security, paying for Europe's security and paying for Canada's security. This criticism has been levelled against Canada before, not just by republican presidents, but also by democratic presidents. Members will recall that during the war in Libya, Robert Gates told Europeans that they must be able to conduct their own operations. Members will recall he was critical of Canada at the time when he said that Canada did not have a plan to meet the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 2% target. Canada signed an agreement to that effect in 2014.

The criticism has been bipartisan, but I believe that to think that in 2029, when there is a new president, there will be less pressure on Canada to defend its territory more independently, is naive.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: That is very enlightening. I think many people are experiencing an abrupt awakening with a harsh dose of reality.

I would like you to explain something else. I realize that the United States had caused shock in Canada, Europe and perhaps even other regions around the world by telling them to take care of their own business and to be autonomous. However, would we go as far as to say that even if we do the right thing, it would still abandon Canada or its European allies and that there would be no assistance?

Justin Massie: No.

There are two scenarios. In my remarks, I said that we should anticipate the direct or indirect support of the United States. We should prepare for those two options.

Indirect support, meaning not having direct contribution from the United States on the eastern front, that is, eastern Europe, is the option chosen in a bipartisan manner. Under President Obama, it became clear that it was no longer possible to have a war on two fronts. The United States does not have the capability to have two wars going on at the same time in east Asia and in eastern Europe. As such, President Barack Obama said that the United States should pull back their capabilities from Europe to refocus on east Asia. That is regardless of the president in office.

The United States may provide indirect support, that is, satellites and intelligence, a bit like what they were doing in Ukraine before they suspended their support over the last few days. I think this type of support is fairly stable, unless they have another president like Donald Trump who wants to punish someone simply because he's not happy that day.

However, to suggest that American troops will engage in combat in Latvia alongside Canadians at a time when there are concerns that in such a scenario, China could conduct a unilateral operation against Taiwan seems naive. We must prepare for the absence of direct support from the United States and perhaps even, to some extent, indirect support from them if we have to deal with an administration under Donald Trump or his successors, such as Mr. Vance or others who may emerge over the next few years.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I also understand that we must prepare for that because we cannot be sure of American support. As such, as long as we are not certain that that will materialize, we must be prepared in case that so-called support will not be available when it comes to Europe in particular.

However, I do wonder whether the situation would be a bit different when it comes to Canada. Geographically, Canada is on another continent. It's connected to American territory and as such, if we don't do the right thing to be sufficiently autonomous, isn't there an issue that Canada will become another Greenland? Could we see the force of American installations in Canada if we don't do the right thing to defend our territory?

Justin Massie: Yes, I think Greenland's case is the best analogy for Canada. The United States is doing the same thing in Canada and in Greenland. The United States is telling us that our territory is strategically located for them. Indeed, our territory is squarely part of the United States territorial defence zone, just as Greenland is for the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD radars. The United States told the people of Greenland that they could not ensure their own defence and that the United States would take on that responsibility on their behalf. That's the message that was conveyed to the people of Greenland and it's the message that may be conveyed to Canadians if we don't do enough to address these external threats.

For Canada, that means the threat is not so much a matter of being abandoned by the United States but of being the target of operations on its territory without its consent. We saw that at one point during the Second World War when there were American military bases on Canadian soil that had not been authorized by the federal government. That should therefore not be ruled out as a future possibility.

The other situation on the ground that deserves our attention is about actions on the verge of war, such as sabotage and cyberattacks, which can support criminal groups or terrorists within our borders. People can deny these types of operations and say that it's not Russia or China. How the United States would respond to such a hybrid attack on Canadian soil is not clear. Would it be like in eastern Europe? Basically, the United States ignores these hybrid attacks, which are mounting. The escalating violence in Europe is just linear. In such circumstances, could President Donald Trump say it is not Russia, because he knows President Vladimir Putin and he would never do that? That is what he is telling us now. As such, I think we have to keep this possibility in mind in Canada.

● (1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Massie.

[*English*]

Mr. Anderson, it's over to you, sir.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Thank you very much.

Professor Walsh, your idea of integrating the universities and the military is a wonderful one, and I'll be the first to champion it if you need a champion.

You started out with a Latin phrase, so I will too: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. My pronunciation sucks, but it's the thought that counts, I think.

We've heard a little bit about sovereignty here and how the United States views our sovereignty or may view our sovereignty in the future.

Would you say North American defence is our primary consideration?

John Walsh: Thank you very much for the question.

The pronunciation was excellent if we're thinking of a later ecclesiastical medieval pronunciation—well done—but the sentiment that if you “wish for peace, prepare for war” is one that defines how we're thinking today, because I'm certain that no one around these tables here has any other way of thinking.

We all wish for peace more fervently than probably words can express. In order to achieve that, we need to present a formidable deterrent, which would of course be a lethal deterrent, and we need to show our allies, permanent and drifting at times, that we can defend our own backyard.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much,

I have a very limited amount of time, and I want to ask Professor Massie the same question.

Would you say that continental defence is more important than anything else?

Justin Massie: Obviously, because of our vital national interest to protect our citizens and land and our sovereignty....

Scott Anderson: I didn't catch that.

Justin Massie: I said, absolutely, yes. Defending our territory is paramount to our national interests, more than other expeditionary operations.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

Your statement suggests that Canada may need to prepare for European operations without American intelligence, logistics, command support and some of the other things that America currently supports. Has anyone calculated what it would cost Canada to develop those capabilities independently?

I'm talking about European expeditionary capabilities and what effect those expenditures would have on our ability to finance continental defence. The PBO doesn't seem to have an idea on it. Do you, Professor Massie?

Justin Massie: To my knowledge, no one has ever done such a study.

Scott Anderson: Professor Walsh, have you?

John Walsh: To my knowledge, I'm not aware of a study.

Scott Anderson: Okay.

Are you concerned that it may drag resources away from continental defence, Professor Massie?

Justin Massie: Not to the extent to which we would be operating alongside European allies in any European contingency: The idea is not to have fully independent, operating-alone capabilities in eastern Europe, but to work alongside the Polish, the Germans, the French, the British, etc., in that contingency.

It's just that without U.S. capabilities, those capabilities would need to be developed not only by Canada but also by European allies, with which we could plug and play.

Scott Anderson: Right, but in order to plug and play at all, we're going to need to make significant infrastructure and military expenditures. Would you not say that those would take away from other NORAD requirements that we have?

● (1140)

Justin Massie: I think most of the capabilities we need to defend our continent are the same as those we need to defend the European continent.

Scott Anderson: Okay.

Justin Massie: Because of the size of the Canadian territory, you need high-altitude, long-endurance drones. You need strategic airlift. You need missiles with deep-strike capabilities. You need command and control capabilities. You need air defence systems.

All of these capabilities are also needed in Europe right now. There's little difference, I think—besides the assistance of civilian authorities—in terms of the capabilities that we need to project in the northern territory and those to project in eastern Europe.

Scott Anderson: Okay.

The government is pursuing closer European defence industrial integration through SAFE and “Readiness 2030”. Canadian SAFE contributions are 10 million pounds, including seven million pounds credited against future fees, with a further 15% change to qualifying Canadian content under specific conditions.

Do you see sufficient evidence that these arrangements will deliver military capabilities at a lower total cost, or could European industrial commitments absorb resources that would otherwise strengthen Canada's own defence capabilities?

Justin Massie: I do not believe that the SAFE arrangement is to lower the costs of our acquisitions but to diversify them and make us more resilient. Given the way that the United States is conditioning the use of its military capabilities to its European allies, there's a greater need for Europeans to develop their own European autonomy.

In that context, the rearmament that we're witnessing in Europe, especially in Germany, is significant. There's a great potential for Canada to co-develop and buy, in conjunction with its European allies, some capabilities that we need, because even if we achieve 3.5% of GDP in defence, our market will be too small to sustain it. We need to have capabilities that are shared by allies, not just by us.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Idlout, it's over to you for five minutes.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, Lib.): *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaq*. Thank you, Chair.

Tunngasugit and welcome to both witnesses. Thank you for appearing on this important study.

I'm very honoured to represent Nunavut, especially because of the focus on Arctic sovereignty and Arctic security, given our very interesting geopolitical environment.

One of our colleagues already mentioned Greenland. I'm wondering if both of you could answer what you think the readiness is in the Arctic to keep the Arctic secure in terms of supports by the Canadian Armed Forces and its relationship with the Canadian Rangers.

I'm in competition with Whitney Lackenbauer for the best, most amazed.... I think I'm the biggest fan of the Canadian Rangers, but Whitney Lackenbauer thinks he's the biggest fan. I do like to compete against him for that. We both personally know just how amazing they are and how much expertise they have about the land, about the environment, about sea conditions and about ice conditions.

What do you think about their readiness? What supports do the Canadian Rangers need in order to make sure they can be there to support the Canadian Armed Forces in keeping the Arctic secure?

Could each of you answer that, please? Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Walsh.

John Walsh: Thank you very much.

The member raises an excellent question. I think there would be a strong argument for anyone and everyone who ever had anything to do with the Canadian Rangers about who admired their capabilities more. In terms of their skills, they are essential to northern sovereignty. As with every part of our defence ecosystem, they require funding, equipment and resources.

To me, the larger question, although it's not the only question, is that our relationship with our indigenous people is an example of our potential civic resilience. One of the resources that I predict will be drained and challenged in any long conflict will be not just material resources; it will also be our resources of civic resilience and how well our society will adhere together. That will require that we address indigenous issues realistically, and not solely because of the moral responsibility. We need to approach it also as a strategic question.

I hope that answers the member's question. I thank them very much for it.

● (1145)

The Chair: Mr. Massie.

Justin Massie: I also recognize the expertise of Whitney Lackenbauer, who is a friend of mine. I would defer to his expertise on the level of readiness of the Canadian Rangers. I'm not an expert on them.

In terms of the threat that was mentioned that we're facing of below the threshold, it means targeting the population living in that territory and targeting the civilian infrastructure and energy grid that we have in the northern territories and in northern Canada. With this in consideration, it is my opinion that we would need to beef up their numbers and resources in order to address those types of threats that are looming, unfortunately, against our territory.

Lori Idlout: Do you think there's sufficient infrastructure in the Arctic to make sure that we can keep the Arctic secure?

John Walsh: In my opinion, no, not yet. Certainly, at the University of Guelph, we have researchers who are looking at real, meaningful ways of developing infrastructure for the defence, in the sense that defence means to deter and defeat incursions, but also then to establish stronger relationships and ties between the people so that our concern for the Arctic is not just when southern Canada's sovereignty is threatened. We also have a deep and genuine commitment to northern sovereignty on its own terms and for its own purposes.

Lori Idlout: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Justin Massie: I agree with this in the sense that there's not enough at this point in time, but I think there's a willingness to increase the money for infrastructure. Unfortunately, infrastructure in northern Canada is more expensive and takes longer to develop. This is not something we can address very quickly.

Hopefully, the investment we make on the military side will have positive side effects on the civilian population living there so that they can benefit from those investments in terms of infrastructure, human security, electricity, potable water, etc. We need the population to have similar living conditions to those we have in southern Canada for us to maintain sovereignty in our territory.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you. That will be all.

[*English*]

Monsieur Barsalou-Duval, it's over to you.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I will continue that discussion with you, Mr. Massie.

There is a lot of reference in the document and in your opening remarks to the so-called “sovereign capabilities”. What, exactly, does “sovereign capabilities” mean? Does this include the capabilities that already exist or the capabilities we produce? For me, there is an important distinction between the two. Can you clarify that point for me?

Justin Massie: If I refer to Canada's defence industrial strategy released in February, the issue here is more a matter of the capabilities being developed. As such, “sovereign capabilities” are the capabilities for which we have the resources to upgrade and maintain operational conditions. The point is that today's military capabilities could be obsolete within one year if they are not upgraded because today's large capabilities have more to do with software than materiel. We have seen how Russian and Ukrainian capabilities are evolving when it comes to drones, with modifications being introduced every three months. As such, “sovereign capabilities” are the capabilities to make these upgrades without needing to ask the neighbour or an ally to provide upgrades.

It's also the capacity to repair and to have spare parts, among other things, otherwise, hundreds or even thousands of them will be lost. Thus, it's also about production capacity.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: At the same time, and you can confirm or dispel what I am saying, I have the feeling that often, even that right now, there is some sort of tension between defence objectives and procurement objectives, or at least the government's objectives. On the defence side, I somehow feel that they would like to have the best equipment available. However, I have a feeling that right now, a balance must be struck; on the one hand, the goal might be to find the best equipment possible, but on the other hand, if the equipment is out of their control in every circumstance, one might ask if that is actually the best equipment.

How can a balance between these two elements be struck? We may have the best equipment, but ultimately, as you said, the equipment cannot be upgraded, repaired or modernized. In that case, what good is it? Is it really the right choice?

● (1150)

Justin Massie: No, being vulnerable and dependent is not the right choice, and Europeans have realized that. Anyone who wants to purchase Patriot systems today will have to wait several years before they can get them. Even if they are next on the list, the United States can say they need the systems somewhere else, because it has a war in the Middle East that calls for stocks that it may not have envisioned. If the United States runs out of munitions to wage war in Iran, just imagine how it would run out for a war with China.

In that context, the notion advanced by Europeans is not necessarily to bring an end to procurement from the United States, but to develop their own capabilities or to develop their own production capacity under American licencing, and they can control the production, the spare parts and maintain capabilities or opt for alternative options.

I think that is the choice for Canada. It's not about ending its special relationship with the United States. It's about being more resilient by diversifying its capabilities and increasing production on its own soil to master its destiny.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Massie.

[*English*]

Mr. Kibble, it's over to you, sir.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor Massie, I will start my questions with you.

You mentioned the threats of Russia and China. Are there others? I don't know if I understood your earlier statement. Are you suggesting the U.S. would not assist Canada?

Justin Massie: It is unclear to me the extent to which the United States would recognize a hybrid attack below the threshold by a foreign government on our soil, given their reaction to the same types of attacks that are ongoing in Europe. The U.S. reaction at this point in time is lacklustre to say the least.

Jeff Kibble: Okay. Thank you for clarifying—

Justin Massie: This is the question. It's not about the conventional military threat or the ballistic missile threat against Canada.

Jeff Kibble: That's perfect. I appreciate the clarification. That helps me.

You put Canada's NATO share between 34,000 and up to 50,000 without the U.S., yet the plan that we're looking into is a division of only 15,000, so there's a bit of a gap there. Why is it only one division? In your opinion, does the threat require more? I mean, your own NATO requirements would be more than one division, so what are your thoughts on that?

Justin Massie: The NATO requirements are provided to the Canadian government but are not disclosed to this Parliament. This is in contrast to Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands, where they publish NATO capability targets for their own countries. We do not. I think that is lacking in our understanding of what NATO requires from us. The numbers I'm projecting are based on the per population distribution, and maybe we have a different arrangement. Maybe we are expected to provide fewer land brigades and more aircraft, for instance, or more ships, etc., but we do not know.

Given that ignorance or that lack of information, the numbers I'm projecting are simply to raise the awareness of the members of this committee to ask questions on why we need *x* number of troops. How does it meet these targets that we are not aware of?

Jeff Kibble: Thank you for clarifying and being very open about how you came to those numbers. I think it's quite shocking, and I hope that the government releases those numbers so that we can have better accountability to make sure that we're meeting our plans. This would also, of course, require assessing the threat and then the requirements to determine the amounts needed.

You also said in your statement that the army is taking 61% of the proposed growth, so what would that leave? In my quick calculation, it would leave the navy and the air force very tight. Without even knowing what NATO requires of Canada, would that cause you concern? What do you think the solution would be to make sure that all the services have the critical personnel they need?

Justin Massie: The numbers I came up with in my statement are based on the numbers that we've witnessed in the press of growing the authorized strength of the Canadian Armed Forces to 85,500 troops. If 8,500 go to the army, then a significant portion of the increase would go to the army. It's unclear to me why that would be a priority vis-à-vis the number of sailors or people in the air force. I was pointing out the lack of explanation on that growth. I think the lack of information is also because those numbers, the increased authorized strength, have not been made official by the Canadian government.

We've been speculating for more than a year now on a mobilization plan in Canada. We still have yet to hear about a new defence policy that may provide clarity on this. The objective in the “Inflection Point" document is 2040. It's unclear to me if the current growth of the CAF in general is for 2040, 2035 or another date, so I'm just trying to square those numbers.

● (1155)

Jeff Kibble: In my remaining time, if I could, you talked about a 10-year plan and coming to committee. What would you like to see in that 10-year plan? Could you answer very quickly and leave me enough time for my next question?

Justin Massie: That would be detailed budgets. We don't do defence in four to five years. We need more than 10 years. This is what other countries do. These are the sorts of capabilities we need to invest in right now in research and development so that in 10 years, when we want to buy something, it's made in Canada because we started investing in it 10 years ago.

Jeff Kibble: It's fair to say that if we had a better assessment of what the threat was and better knowledge of what NATO required, then we could come up with a plan as to what we'd need to procure and what numbers we'd need.

Justin Massie: I agree, yes.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you.

Quickly, in my last couple of seconds, could you speak about recruitment? It doesn't seem to be matching any of these numbers. We know that recruitment rates have dropped. Pass rates are only 77%, and I've heard as low as 55%.

What do you think we need to do to fix that and increase the recruitment to meet these numbers when we're not even sure what those numbers should be?

Justin Massie: The last numbers I saw this summer showed an increase in people joining the regular and reserve forces. We have better numbers now, but we're still short of the targets we've given ourselves. We've extended the deadline to meet those targets. I think more efforts need to be made on this, but we're seeing, I think, positive developments in the last couple of months.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor.

Mr. Earle, you have five minutes, sir.

Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Chair, thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Massie, welcome.

[*English*]

Mr. Walsh, thank you and welcome.

I appreciated the conversation with you, Mr. Walsh, before the committee began. I'd like to keep my questions in that conversational format, the way we were doing it earlier.

I've certainly enjoyed taking in all of the testimony this morning, and I commend you both for how you've presented to us with great detail.

In your comments, Mr. Walsh, you talked about readiness. You talked about fighter power and establishing pathways. You've looked at the things that we've done—after all, that's what this study is about—or the things that we're doing. Do you believe the work that we've undertaken will assist in advancing readiness, building up that fighter power and establishing new pathways or building on existing pathways that may exist?

John Walsh: In short, yes, I think we are making progress, largely in the fact that we're identifying what the problems are, which is a really important place to start.

I'm not here proposing to anyone that I have answers to all these questions. Perhaps what I have is actually a question itself. Sometimes the questions in these situations, I think, are the most important starting points. We have some luxury of time to try things.

Historically, we know.... The photographs at almost every university across this country will show huge numbers of troops. Should we need to do this, this is the path we're going to take. I would say let's practice. Let's rehearse. Let's build those relationships. Let's test those old pathways. They're dusty, but let's blow them off and see how they work today.

What we're going to need here is trusting relationships between institutions that have, tragically, alienated themselves one from the other. Academia and the armed forces are natural partners, as old Latin mottos tell us, but since the 1960s, they have drifted apart. We need to make sure that the mind and the might of this nation are reunited.

The universities have research potential to address questions about drones and technology. I heard a phrase recently that is guiding every single one of my thoughts, and that is, we do not need our soldiers ever going into a fair fight. We need to make sure they have the best and most lethal equipment that we can develop through the universities so that I do not have to build another war memorial at the University of Guelph. That's, in essence, my answer to every question that will be posed to me.

● (1200)

Philip Earle: Thank you.

I have a couple more questions.

I want to touch on the Canadian Rangers, and I want to talk a little bit about geography.

Before I go there, you made a comment about civilian institutions and barriers. In a short snippet, in consideration of time, identify some of those barriers that might exist to prevent a vision such as your own.

John Walsh: They're cultural barriers more than anything else. There is a lack of trust. There is, rightfully, suspicion of universities and civilian institutions from the armed forces, and there is concern from within civilian institutions that is born of complete ignorance. Largely, it is a matter of education. What we need is a galvanizing reason to work together. We need to clarify what this threat is and that it's real.

Philip Earle: Thank you.

I have two minutes left, so one question is for you and one is for Monsieur Massie.

With regard to the Canadian Rangers, and coming from the north and knowing the importance of what my colleague has talked about today and so often, I'm preoccupied with the junior rangers. In many northern communities, we're seeing a population decrease. People are becoming older, and that's natural.

How do we use a system similar to what you're describing to get junior rangers embedded into education at the school level that either takes them into military careers or will train them for future adult Canadian Ranger careers? Do you have any ideas you'd like to share on that?

John Walsh: I do. It's to speak to motivation, to galvanize people around purpose and to motivate young people to see the value in their contributions.

Philip Earle: Mr. Massie, my question for you is going to be around geography.

I come from Labrador. We have a very significant military base there known as 5 Wing Goose Bay. When I look at the Atlantic coast, I recognize that the military installation there and the area it covers for our country holds the two-o'clock position to Europe.

How important are that piece of infrastructure and the work done there to the defence and sovereignty of Canada and the potential future or current threats that may exist?

Justin Massie: I believe it is an important location for deployment in Europe. I could not speak specifically about the territory you come from, but in general, when you look at the U.S. interest towards Greenland, it is for the same reasons: If you look geographically towards Russia, it is an important location to install radars, to install capabilities, to project forces and to project also drone and counterdrone capabilities. I'm not sure exactly what land the Canadian Army plans to locate our deep-strike capabilities that we plan to procure, but dispersion throughout the Canadian territory and towards a source of threat will be key. Perhaps your riding could be one of the locations that is deemed appropriate for those missions.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor.

Mr. Bezan, we go over to you, sir.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank both our witnesses for joining us today. It's a great way to kick off this study on “Inflection Point 2025”.

Mr. Walsh, I really do appreciate your comments. We want to make sure our young men and women who serve in uniform aren't going into a fair fight. We want them to have the upper hand and not come home in coffins. We want to make sure that they are out there, winning and defending Canada. I think that was very sobering testimony, and I want to make sure we see it reflected in our report at the end of all of this study.

You talk about using universities and colleges as a way to generate new reservists who may turn into future soldiers, aircrew and, of course, sailors on a full-time basis. We already have the regular officer training program. I don't know that we need to turn everybody into an officer by going through the university system. How would you envision the Canadian Armed Forces making use of our civilian universities in a way that will generate those reservists, support those reservists, provide some financial incentives for them to be training at the university level and to use what they learn at school for their own career advancements, and also that it's applicable to being a member of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Right now, most of the people go through RMC, Royal Roads and, to some degree, a bit, in Saint-Jean to be officers, but we need more of the non-commissioned members as well. How do you visualize the Canadian Armed Forces using universities? You talked about a test pilot at the University of Guelph or somewhere. I'd like to get your information on that.

● (1205)

John Walsh: Thank you very much for that excellent question.

With all due respect to my friends and colleagues who are officers in the Canadian Army, I think that even they would tell you that the backbone of the fighting force of the Canadian Army is the non-commissioned members. At the University of Guelph, we are graduating master corporals, master bombardiers and sergeants with master's degrees, and I—

James Bezan: They don't have access to the ROTP.

John Walsh: No, they don't. Of course, I would humbly submit that we could expand those programs and also look to, let's say, an Australian model, with embedded regiments within universities to help meet these requirements.

With all humility, my simple answer would be, “Ask the Canadian Armed Forces.” It seems like a straightforward answer, but I would ask them what they want us to do. Then we would pivot and divert our resources to meet their needs. They would be the ultimate evaluator of whether this was successful or not.

In the qualified, bounded study I propose, there would be very specific test measures that would be quantifiable at the end to see, first, did we produce capability, and second, do we allow existing resources to be targeted towards areas of extreme need? This would be directed by the armed forces, implemented by the university.

James Bezan: Reserves 2000 has been advocating for this for over 20 years now, and the Canadian Army hasn't picked up the ball on this at all.

John Walsh: I'm certainly not here to criticize the Canadian Army, but those are the facts as they stand. We live in a time of national seriousness, and I think that, perhaps, we can put past moments when we were slow or hesitant to act behind us, and look forward with a fresh start and say, “Let's find pathways.” If they fail, we learn a wonderful lesson. If my entire proposal is without merit, then that's a success as well because we can move on and leave it alone. I think there's value in the attempt.

James Bezan: Thank you.

Professor Massie, I really appreciate your providing us with your written submission and your comments since then. As usual, you've given us a very clear critique of what's before us and how we can improve upon it. I think it's good that we're actually doing this first, before we hear from the military brass.

You talked about the lack of knowledge we as Canadians have about the plan NATO has for Canada. You're making assumptions about where we might end up with troop commitments—if it is an army base that we have to supply in defence of Europe under NATO. A lot of Canadians don't understand the threats we're facing.

How would you grade the government on actually relaying to Canadians that this is the threat, this is why we need to invest so heavily into the Canadian Armed Forces, and this is what we need to mobilize people to come and join the Canadian military?

Justin Massie: Like in everything, I think it could be done better. We can always be better at what we do.

James Bezan: You grade papers all the time.

Justin Massie: Exactly. They always need improvement, including my own.

Better communication could be done in terms of the threats we're facing and contingencies we're planning for. Hopefully, the new defence policy that people in DND are working on at this point in time will make that argument. I would encourage them to consult outside of the small circle of people who are working on that document, to make sure that stakeholders and people who go in the media every day, like me, have access to such discussions, because the way we talk to Canadians is not just through an official document on a website but through actually talking to them through media and, at this point, on social media. I think the communication strategy, especially with people below 35 years old, is key. They get their information not from the websites or traditional media, but from social media. Those communication efforts also need to be more nimble, agile and targeted toward those people we would like to have awareness of what those threats are and what it implies for them.

● (1210)

The Chair: Thank you, Professor.

Mr. Watchorn, you have five minutes, sir.

[*Translation*]

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank both our witnesses for joining us today.

Professor Massie, as you know, we are currently working on Bill C-40 in Parliament. The bill creates a Crown corporation for defence. This is somewhat a modernized version of the model used for the Defence Investment Agency.

I would like to hear your opinion on how you see this model. What progress has been made over the past 18 months?

Justin Massie: A lot of progress has been made in the sense that military procurement has been done at an unprecedented pace, with the exception of the forces acquired during the war in Afghanistan, when Canadian forces were dying on the battlefield. Helicopters and tanks were purchased very quickly. There is a sense of urgency and I think we have to commend the agency's efforts.

I think the powers granted in order to get things done even faster are a step in the right direction, but in my opinion, two key elements have been left out.

First, if the goal is to develop sovereign capabilities, the agency must be more than a procurement agency. The agency must make plans and conduct defence-related research and development so that if the government wants to purchase something in five, 10 or 15 years, the item would have been developed in Canada, in companies, universities and Canadian centres for innovation. That is what France's Direction générale de l'armement does. Sweden does that. South Korea does that. They have not split research and development from procurement as though they don't go together. They look at that as proper multi-year planning. From a strategic standpoint, that element is missing in Canada.

Second, I think accountability is missing. A lot of power can be given in an emergency, like we are now. Everyone recognizes that, but at the same time, accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened to ensure we are moving in the right direction and that the authorities given to the agency when it comes to military procurement don't make things more opaque or less transparent.

Tim Watchorn: I would say that the model we are proposing will make that possible thanks to the board of directors and the minister, who is directly responsible for everything that will be procured or used by the new Crown corporation.

Bill C-40 also includes options to invest up to $1 billion in Canadian companies to develop sovereign capabilities. What do you think of opportunities to invest directly in Canada to create technologies and to support its defence industrial base?

Justin Massie: That is crucial. Industries need multi-year plans. They need to know where to invest when it comes to their infrastructure, research and development, recruiting engineers and capacity building. It's about sending a clear message about where Canada wants to be and about the forces the country wishes to have in 2035–2040 to allow investment in these capabilities today.

We are seeing a good connection when it comes to some acquisitions. We have seen that with the drone hub that has been established. We know that autonomous systems, for example, will be central to the modernization, but the needs of each of these systems, whether it is first-person view drones, medium-altitude long-endurance drones or others have not been defined. Businesses don't have a clear insight into what the Canadian Armed Forces will need in 2032. It's about those kinds of details. Perhaps that has been done in private and I don't have access to that, but what I've heard in conversations with businesses is that they would like to have a bit more clarity about the plan moving forward. We're not looking at just a three to five-year time frame; we're talking about 10 years, as I have recommended.

Tim Watchorn: I'm glad you brought up the issue of drones. In Mirabel, we have a secure defence innovation hub dedicated to unmanned systems, or drones. It is in my neck of the woods. Drone development takes place there.

I've read you brief. You talk about standing up drone brigades within each unit. I would like you to expand your thoughts on that a little bit to see how you see incorporating that within “Inflection Point 2025”.

Justin Massie: I'm saying that based on the lessons learned from the war in Ukraine, because if we have to deal with Russia—there is a plan for combat operations in Latvia, where troops have been deployed—which is the same adversary, presumably Russians would have a similar approach to what they have in Ukraine. I think that's the starting point.

A look at how Ukrainians are conducting their operations shows that there is a 50-kilometre no man's land devoid of clustered human movement at the threat of lethal drone strike. The area is under constant surveillance to detect any movement.

As such, the idea that we are going to stand up combat manoeuvre units with several tanks and infantry regimes, which will move around freely, undetected, doesn't strike me as realistic. They will face a different scenario. Over the past few weeks, Ukraine's operation Vivaldi has shown that they have focused their strikes against their adversary and they have been able to execute tightly focused manoeuvres in theatres of operation.

Therefore, the modernization of the Canadian Armed Forces must be designed accordingly if we picture ourselves dealing with the kind of threats Ukraine faces on a daily basis.

● (1215)

Tim Watchorn: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have the floor, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Walsh, you have advocated a lot for the use of civilian facilities in a military context. You have said that existing facilities should be put to use and that we should look at how they can contribute to defence. I have a question that might take that a bit further for you.

Do you think that in a context where the risk of high-intensity conflict is growing, some type of plan should be developed on how to make greater use of civilian infrastructure to rapidly scale up the strength and number of troops in the event of a high-intensity conflict? I'm not necessarily saying that should be done immediately, but I don't know whether such a plan exists. If none exists, do you think one should be prepared?

[*English*]

John Walsh: Thank you for the question. With permission, I'll respond in English.

In very short order...yes. Certainly, our Nordic partners speak of all-of-society or whole-of-society defence, and I think that's an approach we should certainly consider in Canada. The risk will be borne by every part of society, so it's time for every part of society to think about putting its shoulder to the wheel in meaningful ways, and not only in a practical sense.

It's not only at the edges of our borders where we will be vulnerable. We'll be vulnerable internally, where we will fracture or there will be threats to our internal cohesion. By mobilizing civilian infrastructure towards the defence and putting it in the fight, my argument would be that society would cohere so that under threat and with expected losses, our society and our civic institutions would prove more resilient. Of course, our civic resilience will be targeted, and our democratic resilience will be targeted as well.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you.

I would imagine that planning would involve an enormous amount of work. I also think that ought to be in place.

You have made a lot of arguments about the importance of the Guelph institution where you work. Do you think there are other civilian or university facilities that could be used from a more immediate perspective or with which partnerships could be pursued, including in Quebec?

[*English*]

John Walsh: Thank you very much for the question.

I think we've seen proof of that. I hate to draw upon the recent tragedy in Wainwright, but it gives us a very instructive example of how civilian infrastructure came to the support of the armed forces in a moment of extreme crisis. I grant to everyone here that this will be an extraordinary amount of work, but if people are not afraid to put on a uniform and stand in front of an enemy, then I'm not afraid of an enormous amount of work. Let's begin that work now while we have a little bit of time and leisure.

I know from conversations with colleagues that universities in Quebec are already adopting similar ideas. I do not pretend for a moment that I am the only university professor to look at an empty university campus in summer and suggest that something useful could be there. I like to be generous to my colleagues; I've learned that level of civility and collegiality this morning from you.

If I am the only one, then let us prove that by example. I know something about Canadians: When we see something that works, we will adopt it.

● (1220)

The Chair: Professor Walsh, thank you. That was well said.

I'm going to go to Ms. Gallant.

I think you had a few questions to ask.

Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to go to Mr. Massie.

Cyber-defence is also a key focus for the “Inflection Point 2025” plan. In any potential deal with the EU, how would this government negotiate to strengthen our capability?

Justin Massie: First of all, we need sovereign cloud capabilities, and we need to have access to our own data. That is the key. Digital sovereignty is the backbone of any new modern military. The arms race is more on the software side than on the hardware side at this point in time. That sovereignty does not need to be purely national. If we end up with 27 European national sovereignties, plus Canadian, American and Japanese sovereignties, that will not work. We need allied interoperability in these with open source.

Digital capabilities and cyberspace capabilities are key so that everybody can plug in and use their drones, their aircraft, their radar systems, etc., rather than having one key leader determining and being the oil in the motor, as we had with the United States in the past decades. I think this is where the Europeans are moving forward.

Cheryl Gallant: Do you believe that the current pace of the government's initiative to modernize the CAF is prepared for any major combat operation if any hostilities were to break out?

Justin Massie: It would depend on when it were to break out. If it were to break out today, no. The current plan has us ready in about 2034 or 2035. Unfortunately, we do not control when the Russians might attack NATO territory, if at all. We obviously do not control our adversaries.

This is the time problem I mentioned before. Because of the lack of planning and the underinvestment in the last decades, we're not ready today to sustain an attritional war or an industrial war. The mass and volume that would be required in Iran, in Ukraine and in a potential contingency in Taiwan is huge. We do not have the industrial or technological mass, in terms of people, at this point in time to face such stress.

Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

To either or both of you, to what extent is academia included in defence research, development and production with respect to the industrial military complex and government partnership?

John Walsh: I'll take that question to start. It is an excellent one.

The answer is “not enough.” Increasingly, at conferences and expos—I've just come from the Best Defence Conference in London, Ontario—I see that the army in particular is making those connections and asking to make those connections. This is where academia needs to listen, hear, respond and offer a very simple proposition. Academia is never good at simple propositions, I assure you. We are good at complexity, which has its value too.

The simple proposition should be this: Tell us what you need, and we will use the research facilities and the talent that we have. We will combine into consortia, as the University of Guelph has recently done in joining a consortium of five universities to be called SODIN, or southern Ontario defence innovation network.

Come with a problem. We will put together a team, talent and resources, and then we will solve that problem for you in as fast and timely a way as possible. We will test it and bench it, and then take it to industry for scalability.

Cheryl Gallant: Professor Massie, go ahead.

Justin Massie: I have the privilege of leading one of the nine networks that is funded by DND through the MINDS program. I need to salute that program. However, the money allocated to that program is inadequate. Basically, it helps me hire a secretary.

This is the type of money we have in defence, whereas if you look at Norway, Sweden and countries smaller than Canada, they fully fund think tanks dedicated to defence issues. They have full-time researchers with Ph.D.s working on defence, and they want to have centres of excellence on their own national defence priorities. This is something we need to develop to foster a connection among academics, the military, civilians and public servants, as well as industry, in those facilities and those think tanks.

This should be something Canada looks for, because all of the problems we're discussing now are also knowledge problems, communication problems and threat-awareness problems. Think tanks address those issues through their public work.

● (1225)

Cheryl Gallant: In other countries, I've seen them add in industry, academia and government people working in the same spot on equipment and capabilities.

Other than university and college campuses and other assets we've mentioned before, what civilian resources can the CAF commandeer to support their operations in the case of an in-Canada emergency or an armed threat on Canadian soil?

John Walsh: I will answer the question, if I may, Mr. Chair.

Every part of Canadian society has a role to play. I'm from the University of Guelph, so on the agri-food supply, maintaining food supply will be essential. Critical resources from the civic side will include emergency response management. I would argue that we need to plan on a local level with municipalities. This is not just federal or provincial. This is a municipal endeavour as well. We should have municipal preparedness so that we can absorb an initial shock, resupply our troops and then re-engage with decisive force through mobilization plans.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Walsh.

Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

Ms. Lapointe, we'll go over to you.

[*Translation*]

Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Massie, the government's strategy gives priority to joint procurement from non-American allies under initiatives such as the SAFE instrument. How does this type of co-development with allies help Canada strengthen its influence within NATO while maintaining its national sovereignty?

Justin Massie: First, the SAFE instrument is simply a budget line. It might help us to negotiate contracts with other countries—the first one was with Poland, and so the drone initiative is commendable—but these contracts have to be negotiated constantly.

I think the summit scheduled to take place in Montreal in a week's time can enhance defence co-operation with Europe to enhance consideration of Canadian businesses as partners for European firms during the co-development process. In fact, the issue is not just the Buy American Act. Europe is also advancing a similar policy. Protectionism is everywhere. Canada must have the ability to integrate European production chains.

Co-development, as we have seen with Ukraine, is critical. For some countries like Denmark, much of the support provided to Ukraine does not consist in purchasing domestic equipment for donation to Ukraine. Instead, it involves investing in Ukraine's industrial sector through a Danish company to undertake joint co-development. That way, they have access to technological innovation. We have just started that in Canada, and this is commendable. However, the volume must be increased significantly when it comes to our long-range strike capabilities, deep precision strike capabilities as well as our air defence systems, command, control and sovereign cloud capabilities, which I spoke to earlier.

Europe, Ukraine and Canada are all moving in the same direction on these elements. Co-development makes it possible to share research and development costs while also strengthening the resilience of spare part production, repairs, engineering workforce and capabilities. Obviously, in a conflict, our industrial sites would come under enemy action. If a single industry is responsible for manufacturing one critical component and it is compromised, the entire system will collapse. As such, I think the idea of centralizing production in some specific locations is misguided when it comes to resilience in the event of a high-intensity conflict.

Viviane Lapointe: Given the joint steel action fund and federal support for projects in the Ring of Fire region, which were announced yesterday by Prime Minister Carney and Doug Ford, what will be the most significant downstream benefits of these two measures on Canada's capacity to develop and strengthen its sovereign defence capabilities by building on Canadian inputs?

Justin Massie: I think this type of material and critical minerals generally are some of the biggest leverages when it comes to our allies. These resources are underutilized, underdeveloped and underprocessed in our own country. That is something we can offer.

Furthermore, the requirement to buy from Canadian suppliers for procurements funded by Canadian tax dollars is also an effective way to support our economy. Obviously, our allies may criticize us and claim we are advancing our own protectionism. However, if this is done from a mutual objective perspective with our allies, I think everyone stands to benefit because we have the natural resources that are not available to our European, Japanese and South Korean allies.

● (1230)

Viviane Lapointe: Thank you, Mr. Massie.

[*English*]

Mr. Walsh, you've proposed that transferring pre-enrolment functions such as physical fitness preparation, medical screening supports and administrative paperwork to civilian institutions would drastically reduce backlogs. Could you elaborate on how leveraging universities' administrative efficiency could help the Canadian Armed Forces onboard young volunteers faster than the current state?

John Walsh: Certainly. I concede up front that large numbers of anecdotes do not eventually make data, but I've had enough discussions with people involved in recruiting to identify—as I think others within the Canadian Armed Forces have—that these are bottlenecks.

Universities are skilled at a couple of things. One is taking in large numbers of people on a regular schedule. The other is keeping track of data. I think some of these non-military choke points could certainly be very effectively contracted out. Conducting force tests and these things that don't require someone to have advanced military training could be offered by universities, which would deliver more effectively and in a streamlined way larger numbers of people to undergo their military qualifications training.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lapointe.

I commend the witnesses and the members for a very informed discussion as we kick off this study.

We have another half an hour before us. I'm going to see if we can fit in another two rounds.

I'm going to begin what is probably the last section with Mr. Anderson.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

This question is for both of you, but I'll start with Professor Massie.

Your statement asks what sovereignty means if the Canadian Army continues to operate a brigade integrated into an American corps, but even the European NATO countries depend heavily on American strategic intelligence, airlifts, logistics and so on. If Canada cannot realistically reproduce these capabilities independently, what degree of strategic autonomy is actually achievable? Would it be more useful to distinguish between sovereign decision-making and complete operational independence?

I ask this question in the context of having just met with a large communications hyperscaler. It brought a bunch of small technology firms with it. The small technology firms were telling us they do what they do very well. One of them had firefighting equipment that gives readings of a forest fire in real time as opposed to a day later. They do what they do very well, but there are other things that they are also responsible for that they don't do but they let a large hyperscaler do.

If we preclude any sort of outside interference or help, are we able to develop these technologies on our own?

Justin Massie: It depends always on the timing, obviously. On achieving strategic autonomy in Europe right now, they're aiming for the late 2030s. I think this is when they believe they could be ready, given the time and underspending they've lived over the last decades, with Germany being the leading financial contributor there to European security.

I think Canada cannot achieve it alone, obviously. The question, though, shouldn't just be, what's being done from A to Z in Canada? You can have, for instance, U.S. foreign investment in your company, but who owns the intellectual property? Who owns the capacity to innovate and to upgrade the capabilities? Can you increase the production in your own country, or do you need to have the approval of U.S. departments? Can you employ the forces on your own, or do you need to ask permission?

What the Europeans are realizing, with the use and the withholding of the use of Starlink right now, and also with ballistic missile alerts, is that they cannot trust that they will be provided with the information in a time of need. You can be assured, then, that Europeans are now developing alternatives because they know they cannot trust that sort of information. You're right. They cannot do it today, but it will take time.

● (1235)

Scott Anderson: If the Europeans do it, the Europeans are not Canadians. Are we simply transferring our sovereignty from the United States—as it's posited here—to Europe?

Justin Massie: If we do the same as we did for the last 70 years, which was to externalize our decision-making, our production, our innovation to a foreign country, yes, we will be changing one dependency for another. If we're doing it smartly with co-development, by owning IPs, identifying those capabilities we really want to have as sovereign and those we can co-develop with others, that would be smart.

When you look at the 10 sovereign capabilities listed in the DIS, they're very vague. It's unclear to us the extent of the sovereignty we need. Is it 100%, 50% or 20% and on which elements? What does “AI” mean? What does “drone” mean? These are very vague terms. We need to be much clearer, much more precise on the segments we need to defend our own country. Then, where can we co-develop with other countries on some capabilities?

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much. You seem almost as confused as the PBO about the direction we're going in.

Dr. Walsh, do you have anything to add to that question? I have another one for you.

John Walsh: I would, in very short terms, which will be refreshing for me.

One is, I think, in my own mind, the difference between defence and sovereignty, which we've discussed. “Defence” I take as a short-term force posture we present to our adversaries. “Sovereignty,“ in my mind, is a much longer-horizon proposition that involves how we present our capabilities also to our allies so that they do not then encroach upon our friendship and take it as a liberty.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

I have a question for you.

You have a very classical interpretation of society and its relation to the military. You're talking about a cultural shift and about the universities being an incremental part of that. As a larger cultural shift, what things do you see that we should be doing as a society?

John Walsh: I do have a classical influence, and that's the by-product of a four-year Ph.D., I assure you.

Here, let me get a little esoteric, which is—

Scott Anderson: I agree with that.

John Walsh: Thank you.

Gosh, I wish someone would have told my parents that when I started this, but anyway—

Voices: Oh, oh!

John Walsh: Full disclosure, my dad's an Ivey Ph.D. This would have been a shock to him.

To be serious for a minute, we speak of nations as though they're real, tangible. They're not. They're a collection of ideas and beliefs that we hold together. The essential binding, then, is a narrative that we tell each other. The country of Canada is different from the geographical land mass upon which we sit. The land mass needs defending, and it's the country, which is the idea, that will do it, so we need to be able to tell each other the idea that will sustain us in conflict.

We need to make sure that we are not afraid of words like “patriot”, that these are common words we are proud to say—“sovereignty”, “defence”—and mean them. We need to begin discussing seriously the qualities that make this country the greatest place on earth to live and something worth defending, not only by the bravest women and men we've ever produced but also by every single person up and down, from grade school to the retirement home. We all need to contribute in our own small ways to the defence of this country so that our future sovereignty will be assured.

Scott Anderson: Thank you so much.

If I have more 15 seconds—

The Chair: Actually, Mr. Anderson, I'm going to go to Ms. Romanado. I'm sorry.

It was very well said. I appreciate that exchange. We're quoting you. I've been taking copious notes.

It's over to you, Ms. Romanado.

Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne—Greenfield Park, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, I'd like to thank both witnesses for being here today.

I am absolutely excited because not only am I the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence and a mother of two serving members, but I also spent my career at a CEGEP and a university. To have this panel is *du vrai bonbon* for me.

One of my first questions will be for you, Professor Walsh. You mentioned a lot of the problems with respect to cultural barriers and suspicions. I worked at a university in Quebec. There was a lot of sensitivity about whether or not universities should be doing research on defence and security. There were a lot of sensitivities around that.

One of my colleagues brought up using high school facilities to do firing practice and so on. We have a law in Quebec called Anastasia's law, which prevents academic institutions from having weapons on their premises because of a mass shooting at a CEGEP. It does add some complexity in terms of what universities and colleges can do.

I also worked at a CEGEP that had a good relationship with the 52nd ambulance division. The CEGEP where I worked, Champlain, had an agreement that we would do training of the reserve force on weekends and during the summer. We could use the nursing facilities for the reserve force.

There are possibilities for creating those relationships between an institution and individual reserves or units. Would you agree that we could absolutely start developing this a little more in terms of opening up universities' willingness to work with the CAF? Would you say that an accurate assessment is to also change that mindset?

● (1240)

John Walsh: I would agree, Mr. Chair, with the member wholeheartedly. I will engage in some personal narrative as the answer.

When we began the serving scholar program at the University of Guelph, we faced all of those same concerns.

All of those concerns are born of ignorance—and I do not mean this in the pejorative way that sometimes the word is used but rather in its literal sense. It is the alienation between the head and the heart of this nation that's created that. Again, I'm not suggesting that overnight we put an entire BMQ onto a university that hasn't seen someone in a uniform in 50 years. That would be jarring and counterproductive.

Over time at the University of Guelph, we've been very successful in reintegrating these two essential parts of the strength of this country. Again, we began with a Remembrance Day ceremony that involved two uniformed members in an honour guard with arms. Just recently, we conducted a change of command for the 11th Field Artillery Regiment on university grounds with 150 troops, a full band and howitzers.

The appearance of uniformed personnel at the University of Guelph is normal, as it absolutely should be. Our members, with permission and with desire, can graduate in uniform if they wish. They can have their names, ranks and unit affiliations read. Through these act, which I know then also require permissions for uniforms, so they hate me.... However, there is a huge educational component to this. It shows the public that this is their army. These are—

Sherry Romanado: On that note—

John Walsh: Please, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Sherry Romanado: I have a lot of questions. I could fill the next half an hour.

We have a program for non-commissioned members in the Canadian Armed Forces, where they can transfer from the NCM stream to the officer stream. It's the UTPNCM program, where we can pay for the education of NCMs to go into the.... You have the regular officer training program, but if you happen to be an NCM and want to go back to university, we have that program.

Do you think that could be something we could augment in terms of offering it to more NCMs to allow them to go back to university?

The flip of that is that during the spring economic statement, we also said we were going to increase the amount of funding for reservists for skilled training. Could that be something that we partner with colleges and universities on to make sure that we have that direct stream with universities for the NCMs who want to go back to school or for the officers who cannot go to RMC because it doesn't offer the program? I mean, there's no medical school at RMC, so they're going to go to McGill, the University of Toronto or wherever.

What can we do to work closely with universities, using the existing programs or funding streams that we have for both reserves and the regular force to be able to go back to school or get that additional training?

John Walsh: The answer I'll give today is yes, refreshingly. I will, of course, have to qualify that. Of course governments can play an enormous role in directing policy with funding. It's a great incentive, and it directs behaviour.

Sherry Romanado: On that same note, what are your thoughts with respect to the announcement about the DISH? We have the defence innovation secure hubs. Professor Massie also mentioned the DISH, and also the centres of excellence.

This is the first time we're actually creating secure hubs where we're bringing researchers, start-ups and the CAF into one space and saying, here's a problem, work on it and figure it out. It's the first time we're actually doing this, and I'm extremely excited.

What should we be doing to augment this?

John Walsh: Do more, simplify the process and speed the process. I'm not saying to do that in a reckless way. Process is important. There's nothing more important than making sure we get all of these decisions right, but let's try to find efficiencies where we can.

We're involved in many of those research calls and challenges to universities. Some of them may be coming before some of you, and it's an excellent way. One of the great difficulties is—I don't need to explain federalism to everyone in the room—a provincially mandated education system trying to integrate with the federal need. NSERC and SSHRC are examples of how to do this. We can do it, and funding is a great way.

● (1245)

The Chair: Ms. Romanado, thank you.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Massie, our entire discussion today is on the issue of scaling up. At least that's a positive starting point in the sense that there is a recognition that there is a need to scale up. However, we have limited resources to do that. We don't have the money and unfortunately, we may not have the same kind resources available south of the border.

With that in mind, if we look at what is happening in Ukraine, for example, we can see that they have come up against a more formidable and stronger adversary. Nevertheless, they have resisted and even held their ground. Lately, it seems they have succeeded in reclaiming parts of the territory they had lost. We are also seeing similar developments in the Middle East, with some kind of concept of an asymmetrical war in the sense that a smaller power is pushing back a stronger power.

Ukraine appears to have developed a low-cost model. In other words, they have opted to select the least expensive equipment capable of inflicting maximum financial damage on the opponent.

To what extent can the lessons from the low-cost model and the asymmetrical war be replicated in the vision the Canadian army should have, in a context where historically, the focus has been on smaller units with excellent equipment, but the current context demands more units with more equipment, capable of facing adversaries that may be more powerful than us?

Justin Massie: It's a balance between low cost and high cost. It's not exclusively low cost. For example, in its war economy, Russia is using inexpensive drones to saturate air defence systems, and then launch ballistic missiles on the capital, and that causes more destruction. The damage is visible, especially when the strikes occur without advance warning, which has not been available as the country has been cut off from American intelligence. The idea is not simply to donate drones with a low explosive payload because that would have a limited impact on the adversary. This must be done in combination with a more general operational context. As such, it is a matter of striking the right balance between the two. For Canada, the balance will depend on the decision made regarding our deep strike capabilities. We must develop capabilities that achieve the right balance in terms of range, because our geography means that reaching an adversary requires far longer trajectories than a few dozen kilometres. The speed across arctic zones can create system navigation challenges for radar and thermal and infrared imaging. Thus, in this context, we need the right balance between inexpensive large production capabilities and the ability to penetrate an adversary's air defence systems.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: It also seems that there were some concessions on quality at some point. Sometimes, does it have to do with looking for perfection at all cost? Sometimes, it doesn't amount to a very high price. Would this type of reasoning apply to the Canadian army?

Justin Massie: Ukraine has inexpensive equipment because they have not received more expensive equipment. If Ukraine were given F-35s, they would take them. If they were given Tomahawk missiles, they would take them. If they were given Taurus missiles, they would take them. There is no doubt that they would also like to have formidable or expensive capabilities, but at the same time, they need to have saturation capabilities, otherwise the missiles will not reach their targets or will have a limited impact.

We need to strike that balance when it comes to the Canadian military. Each soldier must be equipped with inexpensive drones so they can scan their environment and determine whether they are in danger. However, the artillery, brigade or battalion I am proposing when it comes to drones must have deep-strike capabilities and have significant impact on the ground. Only the combination of these two elements will have a decisive impact on the ground.

● (1250)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Massie. That is all.

[*English*]

We have 10 minutes left.

We're going to proceed with Mr. Kibble and then Mr. Malette.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor Walsh, I'm going to quote you. You said, “fair fight” and “best” equipment. I really liked hearing that. The best equipment is obviously produced by our allies. Of course, Canadian-made equipment is very important in supporting the industry and the economy in Canada. Would you agree with a procurement philosophy, based on your statement, that puts best equipment over Canadian-made?

John Walsh: I would equate the two. “Best” in this case does mean Canadian-made. I'm not trying to be sophisticated in that answer, but “best” here means something that we make. We know our own needs and, of course, we want to supply those and make sure we maintain those supply chains as well. Some of that will be beyond our capability. At the moment, we're not going to build the sub itself, but let's make sure we put as much Canadian platform on it as possible.

Jeff Kibble: That's if possible. If that's not possible, you would still prioritize the best equipment we can have even if it's not Canadian-made.

John Walsh: I would. “Best” takes in a lot of factors.

Jeff Kibble: I want to explore the education aspect, which is really fascinating.

Our trained effective strength has gone up slightly in the last year. We're taking 192,000 applicants. It's down to 1,500 recruits, which is down to 8,000 passing. At attrition rates, it equals very slow growth, and it would probably take about 20 years to field a full division. I'm sure you're well aware of Royal Roads University now standing up and....

Concerning the pilot that you're proposing, is it going to be full recruit training? A guy or a girl comes in and then they go out as a.... Is this just for higher education, or is it something in between?

John Walsh: I have had these conversations around tables before with members in the Canadian Armed Forces. I defer always to my original position. I'm not going to tell them what they need. I'm going to listen. One of the—

Jeff Kibble: Could it be done?

John Walsh: It could be done.

Jeff Kibble: You could run a full recruit training with higher education and everything all together.

John Walsh: We could. We've done it in the past, and we could do it again.

Jeff Kibble: What would that cost at some institution, say, perhaps, University of Guelph, to pick one randomly?

John Walsh: Yes, it's a random cost. I cannot report the number to you today, because the study is currently ongoing. We are costing out what it would cost for a 40-member trial.

Jeff Kibble: I wouldn't have quoted you on it either way. Thank you.

I think this is really compelling, because we are having such struggles to recruit at the rate that we've identified we needed.

You also mentioned a threat that isn't in the “Inflection Point” report: internal fracture. Obviously, this is quite concerning for everybody. In my opinion, it should be an inflection point. It calls for a manoeuvre or a deployable division of 15,000. It calls for a domestic division, but it doesn't say how big and what its role should be.

Is it just firefighting and domestic emergency response, or is this a full armed division? What do you think it should be, knowing, I think we all agree, this risk of internal fracture?

John Walsh: Mr. Chair, I assure you that I'm not being evasive here in my answers, but it's not for people in blue pinstripe suits to tell people in green uniforms what they should do with the troops they get.

I understand that the basic idea is that the reserve would defend the homeland and then the regular force would fight overseas. This would also be dictated by our adversaries. They will determine how we fight any future conflict. We prepare as much as we can for a specific end goal, but I think what we need to practise is agility so we can respond to threats.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you.

Professor Massie, maybe you could speak to that for us as well.

Justin Massie: Yes.

I don't believe the Canadian Army should have as its priority doing operations against the Canadian population, first of all. I think the homeland division should be about natural crises, catastrophes, which are growing at this point in time, and about securing communities. I think we should always be reluctant to use the armed forces against the Canadian population. If you're suggesting protests or events like we've witnessed in Ottawa—

Jeff Kibble: I just want to clarify. I was not suggesting using it against the Canadian population—absolutely not. However, a risk of internal fractures or challenges.... You even mentioned the U.S. not supporting Canada. You were concerned about that. That is what I suggest it would deal with.

I have one more quick question. I'll start, again, with Professor Walsh. You can both have a crack at it, as time allows.

We talked about drones and division numbers. We didn't talk about tanks. In fact, “Inflection Point” doesn't talk about tanks. It's very evasive about specific threats and requirements. The government has not released what the NATO requirements are, while other governments have.

How do we, as a committee, best judge the validity of something like “Inflection Point” without this information? How do we judge what we actually need? Is it one division or three? Is it 12 submarines or four submarines or 15 submarines?

Perhaps Professor Walsh can answer quickly, and then Professor Massie.

● (1255)

John Walsh: I'd like to answer that, but I'd like to clear the contemporaneous record as well. If I gave anyone the impression that I advocate for the use of the Canadian Armed Forces against the Canadian population, I have misrepresented myself entirely. Civic cohesion is a civic duty, and civilian institutions will maintain the cohesion of the population.

Thanks for clearing that up. In fact, I was so startled by this that I almost forgot the second part of the question.

Allow me to answer a question with a question. I've avoided doing that for two hours and deserve congratulations.

When do we ever have enough equipment? When do we ever have sufficient levels of defence? When are we ever secure enough? When is our sovereignty...? These questions can never be answered. If it's two divisions, give us four. If it's *x* number of tanks, give us two times *x* plus the exponent of 10. There is never an end goal in which we are secure enough in our sovereignty.

That would be my answer.

The Chair: Mr. Walsh, thank you very much.

I'm sensitive to the time, Mr. Kibble.

I'm only going to give you three minutes, Mr. Malette, because I have some House duties here.

Chris Malette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe I have one question for both of our witnesses here today. I'll begin with Professor Massie.

Earlier in your testimony, you mentioned something to the effect that there are vague descriptions or goals in the DIS in some regard. Could you expand on that? It was at the tail end of that particular piece of your testimony. I'm interested in hearing where you were going on that.

Justin Massie: I was referring to the 10 sovereign capabilities in the DIS that are generally defined, such as AI and autonomous systems—capabilities that are general. When you talk about autonomous systems, it can mean a whole bunch of things. This is something we're clarifying.

I'm organizing a workshop with people in CAF to specify the segments and capabilities that should be sovereign: significant, partial and what we could forego. We need to be clear on this because the cost of having fully national sovereign capabilities is higher, obviously, than when you co-develop with other countries and share the costs.

Chris Malette: Okay.

In the same vein, Professor Walsh, as a director of the DIS, what is your take on that assessment?

John Walsh: Our threats will always remain undefined and vague, so what we need to present is a certainty and a clarity of resolve. Much of our deterrence factor will be a unified country in which civic institutions, industry and the defence ecosystem stand side by side and present, to whatever threat emerges, a certainty that Canada will unite and fight back hard.

Chris Malette: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much to both witnesses for attending today and for your informed discussions. It's a great beginning to the study. I think I share with all of our members around the table an appreciation for your input and your concern, because all of us share the same desire to improve as we move forward.

Once again, thank you to the witnesses.

Folks, I have a bit of housekeeping before we adjourn. Is it agreed that the proposed budget in the amount of $500 for the briefing on the situation in Ukraine be adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Is it agreed that the proposed budget in the amount of $500 for the briefing by the DND and CAF ombudsman on his report be adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's great. Thank you again, everyone. Have a great day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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