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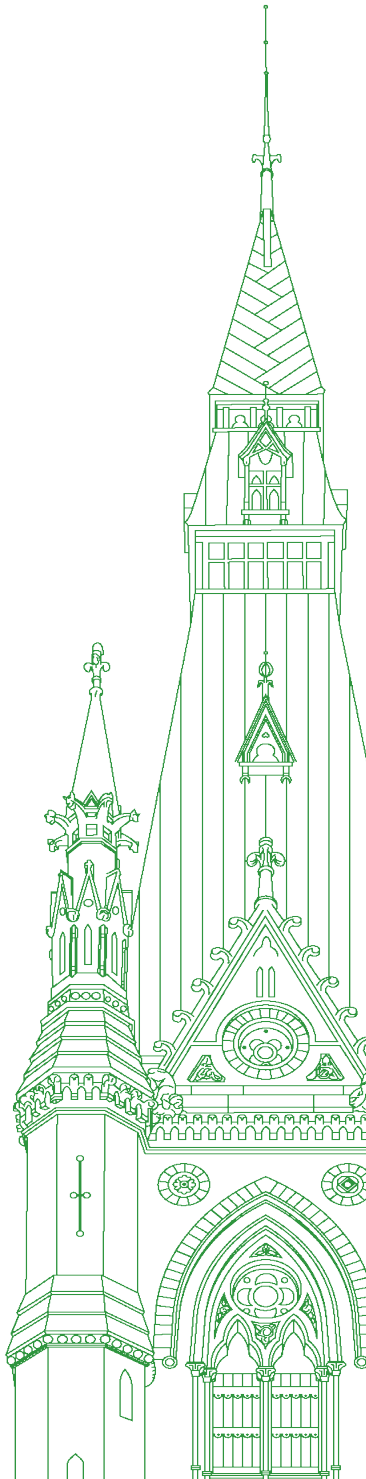
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Chair: Charles Sousa

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (1540)

[*English*]

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

Welcome to meeting number 47 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 continue its study on “Inflection Point 2025” and the modernization of the Canadian Army.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. Members are attending in person and attending remotely by using the Zoom application.

Before we begin, I will ask participants to consult the guidelines on the table to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of our interpreters.

As a reminder to the members and witnesses, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. For interpretation, use the earpiece and select the appropriate channel.

I remind witnesses that the committee members will ask questions in French and English, so please take a moment now to prepare your earpiece and select the listening channel that you need.

Again, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

I would welcome—

Yes, go ahead, Mr. Kibble.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): We're happy to have a new witness with us today, but I was wondering why there was no notice of meeting circulated prior to our meeting today on the—

The Chair: We had asked all three witnesses to appear. Two had agreed and one was pending. I gave the clerk authority to allow the third witness if he appeared at the last minute, because I think it's important for us to have a thorough discussion. I was about to address that right now.

Jeff Kibble: Okay, thank you. I'm absolutely happy to have another witness.

The Chair: Mr. Kibble is referring to our additional witness, retired Lieutenant-General Mike Rouleau. He was on our list of those who were requested to attend. He's attending, and we very much welcome his attendance today. We need to have a full discussion around these issues, and the more experience there is in those matters, the better it is for all of us.

Also attending are retired Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare and retired Lieutenant-General Michel Maisonneuve.

We're going to start with Michel Maisonneuve. You have up to five minutes to give your opening remarks.

[*Translation*]

Lieutenant-General (Retired) Michel Maisonneuve (As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be with you once again today.

First of all, I want to offer my sincere condolences to the families and friends of the young soldiers who died or were injured at Wainwright last week.

[*English*]

God bless these soldiers. As you know, they pledged to serve their country, holding up their side of the moral contract up to and including being prepared to sacrifice their lives, just as my wife, I and two of my children have done for some 90 years in total and counting. What we as Canadians must do now is hold up our side of that contract and make sure that our military have all they need to win our wars and to defend Canada.

[*Translation*]

As a former army officer, I am aware of the army commander's restructuring initiative, but I was not consulted on it. Therefore, these remarks are mine alone.

[*English*]

I've read “Inflection Point” and I get the idea behind what our commander is doing. I have faith in him personally as an officer who has demonstrated incredible bravery and leadership in war.

I also know from personal experience in helping to stand up NATO's allied command transformation that doing a restructure while continuing to fulfill your operational mission is like changing tires on a moving vehicle. It's challenging and exhausting.

In these short remarks, I will raise just three issues, with apologies to Clint Eastwood: the good, the bad and the ugly.

First is the good. For the regular force, the positives are apparent to me. Placing the three regular force brigades under one division headquarters provides Canada with its first fighting higher formation in many years.

We did this on a few occasions in the 1980s, when we brought the three Canada-based regular brigades to Wainwright or Gagetown for manoeuvres. Right now, we only simulate this with computers.

Moving forward, our officers and soldiers will learn to work within a divisional structure, and we will be able to operate on that basis independently or alongside our allies.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Secondly, a division commander for the three brigades will undoubtedly help generate forces for our international commitments, such as the one in Latvia, which will provide greater flexibility.

[*English*]

Third, putting all reserve brigades together means the division commander will be able to focus directly on reserve issues. I also hear that grouping some units, as has happened in Ontario, is helping to achieve mass, especially on exercise, in terms of soldiers, officers and equipment.

Second, we have the bad.

There are challenges, especially with the defence of Canada division.

[*Translation*]

First, commanding a huge reserve division deployed across a country the size of Canada will be a challenge. There are 10 brigade groups in Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver, in addition to all the Ranger groups in the north. The organization is extremely flat and geographically dispersed.

[*English*]

Second, and more importantly, the same issues with the reserves are all still in existence. There's a lack of resources, insufficient regular force support, a lack of consultation by the regular force, no legislated job protection, no mobilization strategy and, for the tactical grouping initiative, the time constraint on leadership teams.

The reserves must be nurtured, especially if we want them to be effective in the defence of Canada role.

Finally, here's the ugly.

First, overall, the Canadian Armed Forces are still in deep trouble. Recruiting is still an issue, no matter what you have been hearing. Adhering to old, inflexible methods, such as position restrictions and focusing on DEI quotas instead of meritocracy, will never fix recruiting. In fact, as we are in crisis mode, it is dangerous.

Second, there are too many recruiting and training bottlenecks. The recruiting and training system was built to ensure the steady state of the armed forces, not to build it up.

Third, the army is too small. Protecting Canada, which is an enormous G7 nation, and contributing to operations around the world require much larger forces, both regular and reserve.

Fourth, army units are too small. Positions are restricted and there's no backup. It also forces commanders to group units to bring them up to strength for deployment. If we really mean to fix our Canadian Armed Forces, we need to stop restricting positions, fill our units completely and, indeed, start building above our establishment.

[*Translation*]

The consequence of these facts is that it is difficult to do more at this time. Moreover, integrating new equipment, such as drones, and new tactics will be very difficult.

Thank you. I am ready to answer your questions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, General Maisonneuve. I appreciate it.

Stuart Beare, it's over to you for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Lieutenant-General (Retired) Stuart Beare (As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your personal commitment as parliamentarians to serving Canada and Canadians. There are many ways to serve the country, and I thank you for your service.

I thank your committee for promoting and supporting our ability to effectively defend and ensure the safety and security of Canadians and Canada in the world as it is today and as it is becoming.

[*English*]

Thank you for informing the essential support for and investment needed in our armed forces and in our men and women in uniform, today and to come, so that they can deliver on that defence, on that safety and on that security, notwithstanding the challenges and the potential violence our adversaries will throw at us and at the nations with whom we share so much in vital national interests and values.

I didn't seek to be here. I received the invitation when I was overseas, but on reflection, I decided to accept for a few reasons. I'll share those.

Why? Like you and so many others, I care intensely about the reality and the nature of the military threats to Canada and to Canadians. These are real threats that are the most severe in consequence that I've seen since the Cold War. These are threats to our alliance and partnerships, to our inner Arctic and to our nation. These are threats manifesting today by Putin, Russia and their aiders and abettors. These are grey-zone threats today and material threats to come from other major military powers like China.

I accepted because the need to deter major adversarial military powers is back. If deterrence fails, so too is the need to be able to prevail in what doctrine calls major combat operations or what we would typically and simply call war. Providing options for crisis response to domestic emergencies or to regional conflicts is no longer the high bar for our armed forces. Their core business has returned to military deterrence. That means the ability to prevail against adversaries in wars of scale across domains—land, sea, air, space and cyber—and across geographies. In July, Prime Minister Carney described a cross-geography crescent of defence from the homeland to our Arctic, Europe's high north and our forces in the Baltics as one example of that cross-geography view.

I accepted as well because, for the first time in my military and post-military service, I hear a Prime Minister who gets that. I see a government and Canadians who are investing in that. I see the real potential for our military to be reimagined and rebuilt with the mission to deter war and, should deterrence fail, to prevail in war, as the imperative and the driving force for that investment and for that change.

I didn't accept because I have any specific responsibility or authority to speak on behalf of our army or armed forces, let alone do I have any specific insights in policy formulation, defence programming or strategic and operational planning.

I observe that you as a committee are unified in the idea that Canada and Canadians need to be defended in the world as it is and as it is becoming, not as we might necessarily like it to be. The enemy and mother nature get a vote.

I hope that the idea of Canada's armed forces being capable of effective deterrence in and across all domains and across geographies is a non-partisan idea. I hope that so too is the idea that should deterrence fail, our military and our nation must be able to prevail in a fight at home, in our Arctic and abroad against major-power military adversaries.

Finally, on the topic of today, which is our army's modernization, as our army commander states it, the army we have indeed needs to become the army Canada needs. I'm grateful that parliamentarians are engaged in unpacking that and I hope they will be championing that as well.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (1550)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beare.

I have five minutes for you, Monsieur Rouleau.

[*Translation*]

Lieutenant-General (Retired) Mike Rouleau (As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Members of the committee, it is a pleasure to be here with you today. Furthermore, I want to echo General Maisonneuve's comments regarding last week's incident in Wainwright.

[*English*]

Thank you for the opportunity to offer some views today on a very important topic to all Canadians, Canadian Army modernization.

My comments are informed by my experiences working in the army staff as the director of capability integration in force development for the forces, as commander of both special forces and joint operations command and finally as vice chief of the defence staff responsible for the defence services program.

I lived as a change leader in CAF trying to accelerate the pace of change within a rigid system designed for a different era, one designed for exquisite, long lead-time systems, a system over-engineered over time, designed more to not fail than to succeed and a system where process often dominated over outcomes.

Prime Minister Carney's defence investment is welcome at a time when the rules-based international order is fracturing, so he has done the essential thing, which is drive the political will into the system, and now the hard thing is refashioning the machinery of government to realize the Prime Minister's intent. My comments relate to this.

There is no surrogate for land troops holding ground on your worst day. Canada needs a strong army if it wants credible deterrence and flexible response options, a networked, resilient and lethal army that possesses a high-low mix of capabilities within a balanced CAF. In the context of a 3.5% Canadian Armed Forces, this means an affordably modernized and sustainable army in concert with all other CAF elements and services.

After ostensibly 50 years of managing tight budgets, CAF now finds itself closer to 1939, when time and not money is the real enemy. We all need to be seized with urgency to get the house in order as quickly as possible. I would offer that velocity is the new coin of the realm for modernizing with new technologies moving forward.

The central question for me will always be the best investment balance for the army as one element of a balanced joint force. More money is good, but spending whatever monies are available better should be the goal.

I offer three quick insights in that regard, informed by my last four-plus years in industry.

Number one, CAF-DND Canada must endeavour to better understand the defence industry's ecosystem, or, said otherwise, things I wish I had known when I was in uniform. Industry spans original equipment manufacturers to small and medium-sized businesses with new sovereign venture-backed start-ups entering the realm. To realize our defence industrial strategy goals, Canada needs to mobilize the full ecosystem in different ways for different reasons. OEMs, largely foreign owned but with important Canadian entities, offer the type of scale, supply chain resilience and global research and development that simply can't be matched by a growing Canadian sovereign defence industrial base.

I would note that companies like Dell invest $5 billion globally in technology R and D, just to give you a reference point.

These original equipment manufacturers need small and medium-sized businesses and start-ups like Dominion Dynamics and Sentinel R&D for edge, innovation, creativity, speed and downstream integration of major systems that are built by OEMs.

The second point is more collaboration and trust in partnering earlier and often. The innovation ecosystem needs to be overhauled to be more agile and better capitalized in a venture capital-style innovation engine to accelerate the discovery, development and deployment of emerging technology. We need to short-circuit the Ottawa set and connect tech experts with soldiers to iterate, fail, improve and land capabilities that the army needs. Industry needs to not sell individual black boxes, but they themselves need to come together in consortia and partnership to deliver more comprehensive solutions to the client.

All of this requires a certain change in culture and risk aperture vis-à-vis industry. Fixed mental models, many bosses but not one and fallacies of sunk cost must adapt if we are to have a C.D. Howe moment in this country and modernize at pace. I know that establishing the Defence Investment Agency as a Crown corporation is a very positive decision.

The last point, very briefly, is accountability. Canada needs to hold industry to account for delivering what it said it would, and industry needs better strategic commitments and predictability to allow them to invest and survive as the system shifts.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

● (1555)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, and thank you to all the lieutenant-generals for appearing today and taking the time to share some of their experiences with us.

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

We're going to start with Mr. Kibble.

You have up to six minutes, sir.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General Maisonneuve, for acknowledging the tragedy that happened in Wainwright. I know that it weighs heavily on all of us here.

I'd also like to thank all of you for your collective years of service. They really have defined what the army has done, and now we have the opportunity to draw on your knowledge to help us go forward with what the army will do and will be able to do. I appreciate your sage comments and some of the sound recommendations you gave, and I hope we all take advantage of this opportunity to pick your brains, so to speak.

There are lots of topics I'd like to address, but I'd really like to focus on recruiting today.

General Maisonneuve, we have a trained effective strength right now of 71,500. The forces have managed to recruit a bit and start approaching that number, but with now adding this new 15,000-strong division, what do you think the trained effective strength should be?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve:

Obviously, I've heard different numbers bandied about, such as 100,000 for the regular force and at least 100,000 for the reserves. I've written myself that at least 100,000 for the regular force and more for the reserves—I'd say even double that for reserves—would start to approach what we require.

I've always thought also, though, that you need to sit back and ask what we need to defend Canada. Let's start from a blank sheet of paper. How many units in all services are needed and how much equipment, etc.? Start listing it. You can figure out from that what we really need. Then look at what we have now and decide to go to what we need.

It's hard to put a number on it, but certainly what we have now is not enough.

The problem with recruiting is that it's the same old methods. I don't care what you're hearing from here or from there when you're hearing that we've met our goals and we've met our numbers. To get beyond where we are is going to require flexibility.

We recruit right now, and I mentioned this, on the basis of positions that need to be filled. I just had two young men here in the Niagara area who wanted to join the reserves as officers. They were told, “We're sorry. We don't have any officer positions, so we can't bring you in.” How silly. This is, again, a bureaucratic method of trying to do business.

As my friend Mike Rouleau was saying, using the old rigid ways is not going to fix what we are trying to do right now.

● (1600)

Jeff Kibble: You're speaking about rigid ways, yet we're finding that the pass rate, the success rate, has dropped from 85% to 77%, as reported by Lieutenant-Colonel Kieley, and now I've heard reports from multiple sources that the success rate has dropped to 55%. There are lots of people who are enrolling....

What do we need to do to fix recruiting so that we can recruit not just our current trained effective strength but achieve these much greater numbers?

I have one more question after that, if I have time.

Thank you.

LGen (Ret’d) Michel Maisonneuve: One of the things I have always said is that we need to start promoting service as an honourable thing to do. All we're hearing about is.... In fact, we're not hearing about the honour of service. Our country needs to come together and say that joining the armed forces and wearing that flag on your shoulder is the greatest thing you can do for your country.

We could have a national service program for young people. I signed a letter to the Prime Minister, which has not been responded to yet, about a national service program—not a national military service program, but a national service program. Of course, one component would be military service.

These are all initiatives, and some of them are coming from the people, as opposed to being pushed by the government. There's a lot we could do.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you very much.

I want to move back a bit from recruiting to determining how many divisions we actually need.

I like the goal that “Inflection Point” is aiming for, but have we actually assessed, in your opinion, the actual threat and how many divisions we need? Is it only one? Is it seven?

To determine what we need for recruiting, we first need to determine the divisions. What metric do we use to determine that, and how many divisions do you think we need, based on those metrics?

LGen (Ret’d) Michel Maisonneuve: I haven't been in the military for 20 years now, so it's hard for me to judge with the new threats and so on that are ongoing.

I would say that there are very smart people right now in National Defence who do that kind of work. They sit back and look at what we in Canada believe are threats to our country, to our allies and to the values that we wish to defend across the world, and they're able to put this together.

I can't give you a number, but starting with at least one division is a good way forward. Then let's see what else we need, and hopefully we will build from there.

Again, we're talking about a regular force division and one reserve division. Is that enough? I don't believe it is, but I can't tell you a number.

Jeff Kibble: Thank you very much. I have one more quick question, as time allows.

We're seeing in recruiting right now that people are arriving without language training or without fitness training. At the fitness test they do a couple weeks into basic training, they're losing 10% of the people just on that test.

I appreciate your national service program as one initiative to achieve the recruiting that we need. I think it's an excellent idea. What other suggestions would you have to improve recruiting so that the enrolment numbers turn into passed and trained recruits who can then join and serve?

LGen (Ret’d) Michel Maisonneuve: What I'm seeing right now is that it's much easier to say no than to say yes and try to help people get through.

A lot of our young people are interested in joining. You just need to make them consider the idea in the first place, as opposed to not even thinking about it.

I really think that's where we need to go. We need a program going from the Governor General to the Prime Minister and down to all cabinet ministers and all the way down to every one of you, as members of Parliament, to promote service to the country. That would go a long way, I believe.

● (1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kibble and Mr. Maisonneuve.

We will go over to Ms. Lapointe for six minutes.

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

I do want to thank and acknowledge the three witnesses who are before us today. This is such an important study that we're doing. The calibre of witnesses here is certainly going to help us a great deal in this study.

I have a question that I'd like all three of you to answer. Since last year, where would you say have been the largest gains made in terms of Canadian combat readiness?

I'll start with you, Mr. Beare.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare:

Without having the privilege of direct observation, but by observation from a distance, I'd say the gains that have been pursued and pseudo-realized the most in the army are around our posture in Latvia. That posture includes a knowledge of what we don't have and still need to achieve, the realization of what it really takes to be an effective forward-deployed force in a period of strategic deterrence. The demonstrable capacity to fight alongside allies is a very real undertaking, with very real leadership focus and very real investment.

I'll qualify it, though, with General Mike's comment about speed. It's not fast enough. We have only so much time before the strategic picture in Europe can change again and result in threats manifested in that region, with Russia, in this particular case, as an adversary.

I know gains are being made. The speed's not enough yet.

Viviane Lapointe: Lieutenant-General Rouleau, would you comment?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau:

Like my colleagues here, I'm not part of the system now, so I don't have specifics. I think I would answer that by saying that I haven't noted any substantial gains.

You have to be careful when you get to 2% and a big part of that 2% is a pay raise to the troops. While I think the troops should be very fairly compensated, you have to watch the people costs. I would venture to say that the people costs in the armed forces now probably represent between 55% and the high fifties of the defence services program. From every dollar you get, you're spending 55¢ or more for your people. That's something that has to be kept in mind in the context of the personnel pillar, equipment, readiness and infrastructure.

Some of the investments in things like DefenceX, which is the enterprise resource platform for the military, represent very deep potential longer-term gains that will be materially important to operational readiness. Some of the deep technology investments in over-the-horizon radar, short-circuiting and big capital projects are net wins. Shaving five to 10 years off the submarine program was a big win. Those are good.

I have heard that there's a Canadian all-domain defence plan emerging from the joint operations command and Lieutenant-General Boivin, which I think will be very material.

The last thing that I would say on this is to beware of the colour of money. It is one thing to want to invest in the Canadian Armed Forces from a vote 5 capital perspective. It's a laudable goal. We should be doing that for up to 20% of the defence services program. However, if vote 1 operations and maintenance, or opex, are overly constrained, you are chewing into muscle fibre. A military needs to train. Training, professional development and professional military education are how the force understands how to fight. New equipment is good, but operations, maintenance and training must persist.

Thank you.

Viviane Lapointe: Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

LGen (Rt'd) Michel Maisonneuve: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I would echo my two colleagues' comments.

On the first one from General Beare, I think he's right to speak about speed and making sure that things quicken up, looking at Latvia as perhaps a positive development and, let's just say, an example of fairly good operational capability. However, I also would say that we need to understand that Latvia is the major commitment we have internationally, and it takes the entire Canadian Armed Forces to support that commitment. It's not the right way to be doing business.

I would prefer to look at the issues we're finding now with some very simple things, such as ammunition. Have we started producing ammunition? Have we started to replenish our stocks, a lot of which we gave to Ukraine? Have we started to buy spare parts so that our tanks can be effective? There's a horrendous level of vehicles off-road right now in Canada, and I dare say also in Latvia, although I have no recent information about that one.

As General Rouleau said, it's hard to identify anything very positive from that point of view.

I will come back to the personnel aspect. You can have all the great equipment you want, but if you don't have the personnel first of all—program managers to buy it, technicians to maintain it, pilots to fly it, officers to command it and so forth—then it's impossible. You can't be operationally capable. I haven't seen that much in terms of operational output and capability right now.

● (1610)

The Chair: Generals, thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Lapointe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for six minutes.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for being with us today. It is very informative. I will try to summarize what they said, but it will not be exhaustive. In any case, that isn't the intention either.

I get the impression that they largely agree on certain elements that, from what I gather, point to the need for a culture change within the armed forces, not only with respect to operational rigidity, but also with respect to recruitment.

I also note that Mr. Maisonneuve seems to indicate that the recruitment targets should be even more ambitious than they currently are, while Mr. Rouleau expressed some concern about how much the workforce will eat into defence operating costs. How do we balance these two elements?

I understand that there is a desire to grow. On the one hand, there seems to be a consensus that the size of the armed forces is too small. On the other hand, giving salary increases and hiring a lot of people may leave less room for other investments, whether in training, operations or the acquisition of equipment on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Rouleau, you can go first.

LGen (Rt'd) Mike Rouleau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

You're asking about the tension between the cost of people and the size of the military that's required.

I would make the point to the committee that relative size of an army is not necessarily the question. In World War II, the U.S. had an ambition to get to 100 divisions, and they never quite achieved that. Relative size is something that doesn't really get you anywhere in the discussion.

The question is about your mass and your persistence in the battle space. These two factors determine the ability of an army, in this case, to operate. Mass is changing. We used to buy big, exquisite systems—air defence systems, a fighter jet or a ship. Moving forward, mass is about attritable technology—intelligent, attritable mass. You see in the Persian Gulf that $25,000 Shahed drones are being downed by $3-million air defence missiles. The calculus of that warfare makes no sense for the west. That is what needs to be rebalanced. You're seeing entrants come into the Canadian marketplace that are producing intelligent, attritable mass. These are things that cost orders of magnitude less than what we've been used to.

When we think of the army, we need to be thinking about mass and persistence. You get persistence with cheap technologies that you can keep refurbishing. Much like in World War II, the allies made the courageous decision to go with the Sherman tank, which was much less engineered than the German tanks, but it could be produced at scale. I think that's the way we need to be thinking.

How big does the army need to be? I don't know, but I do know it needs to be able to scale quickly in times of an urgent crisis, and it needs a cadre of very professional soldiers, regular and reserve, who can underpin that growth.

● (1615)

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I really like your answer because that's what I was going to talk about next. The question is how to get there. Sometimes, we want to hire people or, as you said, have a mass, but today, that mass may not necessarily be human. It can be material.

You talked about the Middle East, but we could talk about Ukraine. I have the sense that the armed forces are finding ways to increase the operational effectiveness of the people directly on the front lines, through the use of technology, the extensive use of remotely operated weapons, the integration of AI and so on.

The desire to achieve that mass also presents a challenge. Technology seems to become obsolete very quickly, because of rapid technological advancement. Therefore, if the armed forces acquire huge numbers of drones or automated weapons, that equipment may become obsolete in five years because of how fast technology moves. How do they achieve that mass without the equipment becoming obsolete down the road and ultimately losing money?

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I think that's an excellent question. It's the follow-on of my initial comments.

The way you retain that flexibility, that mass, that edge capability, is by staying super close to the industries that are producing these things. The days of having a rigid process—RFIs, RFQs, RFPs, and 10 years later we deliver a weapons system—won't satisfy a future war. New industry needs to get very close to the military client. They need to develop the kind of trust that gives them swivel chair access.

The whole thing in Ukraine is about software updates. Software is the new hardware. The platform is important, but what's really important is the intelligent software that is making that platform very useful.

I work with a company that worked with the Canadian Army as it did its 4,000-mile Skidoo trek from the west coast of the north down to Churchill. We were doing software updates every night for the equipment that we gave to the rangers to use.

This is how the modern defence industry needs to be working with the military. If you have the kind of trust that allows that close collaboration, then you get persistent capability that's constantly upgraded for a fleeting advantage, as we're seeing in Ukraine. If we can get one month of advantage over the adversary because we're close to industry, we're winning, and that's how we're outperforming the bad guy.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Essentially, it's about having equipment that can be easily updated, as in the case of cars and all sorts of things. I am referring to over-the-air updates for computers, which we are seeing more and more of. The equipment must be able to adapt to the realities that will arise in the future. That can address part of the problem.

The Chair: Mr. Barsalou-Duval, your time is up.

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Anderson, it's over to you for five minutes in our second round.

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

I have a series of questions, but I was intrigued by the warfighting discussion we just had. Before, we thought that symmetrical war would be short, sharp and highly technological. It turns out to be highly technological, but it turns out that "technological" has driven us back to World War I.

When you were talking about mass, this is something else that has cropped up. We thought it would be short and sharp, but it's not short and sharp at all. It requires mass.

For future warfighting, as you pointed out, General Rouleau, we need technology. I'm wondering, in the military, do we need as many soldiers, or do we need fewer soldiers, highly trained?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I don't know the answer to your question.

I know you will always need people. You cannot hold ground with an unmanned ground vehicle. That unmanned ground vehicle can help prosecute a company assault, but to hold that ground, you need actual human beings. I think the same is true for the air force and the navy.

It took 20 years, from the 1920s to the late 1930s, to figure out how to use a tank. It took the Germans, the Americans, the Canadians and the Brits 20 years to figure out how to use it. We have just seen the advent of weaponized UAS—one-way attack drones—over the last four years in Ukraine. It is going to take time to figure out how those things ultimately land in military concepts and doctrine, and we're just not there yet. People will always be essential.

● (1620)

Scott Anderson: Thank you so much.

In terms of geostrategic considerations, I know that we have obligations overseas. I know that we need to have obligations overseas, whether we have them or not, simply because the world is much more integrated today than it ever was.

That said, our obligation is to defend the homeland, as we discussed last week, and I assume you agree. Our obligation to defend Canada outweighs our obligation to become involved in Europe, mostly because if we're in Europe, we're already fighting in the north anyway at this point, if article 5 of the NATO treaty is triggered.

Would you agree with that, General Beare?

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I don't think it; I believe it.

I believe that we defend the homeland from everywhere. We defend the homeland from Europe. We defend the homeland from space. We defend the homeland from cyber. We defend the homeland from the north. The nature of what that looks like is different in all those places.

In a world of crisis response, we could cheat on which one we would invest in or not, but in a world of a global major power competition, the best way to deter Russia is not from here. It's from on their frontier.

When we add it all up, the deterrence effect is really what we're looking for, and it needs to be exercised in an arc of geographies that will materially change the calculus of an adversary.

Scott Anderson: You mentioned that there are different weapons systems needed in both cases. My concern is our obligations with SAFE. We're already talking about 10 million euros for the benefit of it.

Those are different weapons systems. It's a different defence architecture than defending the north. It's going to take different weaponry, and frankly, we're integrated with NORAD.

With that, is there anything that Europe can supply that is better or more cost-effective than what we have through our traditional supply lines with the United States right now?

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I don't have a specific example. There are things materially that Canada can't generate. That's obvious. There are things that come uniquely from a U.S. supply chain that are world class and that you want to have on your side.

In the European context, a place we're seeing the capacity to leverage and accelerate our capacity to perform is in the Arctic. There's a significant Arctic competency in Finland, for example, that we can leverage to help us be to more effective in the homeland.

Scott Anderson: Is interoperability with NORAD included as well?

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: Absolutely. The interoperability is baked in.

One of the many upsides of NATO is this continuous pursuit of, and requirement for, interoperability. The trick is to avoid getting locked in to a technology or a platform that compromises that. I think we are actually relatively effective at avoiding that.

Scott Anderson: General Rouleau, would you—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Anderson. We do have to proceed.

Mr. Watchorn, it's over to you for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses who are here today. The discussion is really fascinating. Their experience gives us truly rich testimony.

General Rouleau, you spoke about industry's engagement with our military personnel. There are two things the government has done recently. The first is the establishment of defence innovation secure hubs, or DISHs. I had the opportunity to visit two of these DISHs: the first was at the COVE centre for maritime unmanned systems, and the second was in Mirabel, not far from me, for unmanned aerial systems.

I would like to hear your perspective on this model, where academics, companies and the military come together in a secure hub to provide the best possible technology for the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I am not overly familiar with the DISHs, but I know enough to know exactly what you're speaking of, and I think it is absolutely a step in the right direction.

I was down in Silicon Valley as a new special forces general in 2014 visiting the defence innovation unit in San Jose. That was in 2014. It has gone through two or three iterations since then. We're now at DIU 3.0, and the DIU has spawned an entire array of subordinate innovation things, such as the U.S. Army's FUZE program, Sofwerx and Afwerx.

Any initiative that brings industry, the military and academia together is a net positive. It can't just be about the DISHs. We need to have the monies in place, the frameworks that allow a technology to go from an incipient idea to tested by the client to iterated to scaled. The money, the contracting and the procurement mechanisms all have to be optimized so that this can be realizable.

We want to grow the Canadian defence industry, but most of the small and medium-sized businesses are not sufficiently capitalized to survive the time that it takes. Anything we can do to short-circuit that, to leverage Canadian technology, is time well spent.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

Tim Watchorn: Mr. Beare, you seem to be taking notes, so I will ask you the same question.

LGen (Rt'd) Stuart Beare: I am…

[*English*]

Actually, I'll save you the pain of my best attempts in French.

Mr. Chair, I find that we have an appetite for innovation and we can be creative, and these places allow for innovation and creativity, but sometimes that's where good ideas die. As General Mike suggests, they don't get into deployment and scaling because the rest of the journey hasn't been codified in policy and program, in industry and in the customer/buyer relations.

I find it shocking sometimes to see such great capabilities manifest themselves but die in the translation to deploy and scale. A lot of the friction in that, in my now 10 years plus of working with industry post-uniform life, has been this almost adversarial competitive relationship between the procurement authorities—not just civilian but military—and those who actually can solve their problems. There are too many barriers that get in the way of them being intimate and being transparent with each other without making commitments. We need to allow for the translation of DISH and other innovation-type ideas to actually scale. That needs to be fixed.

I listened to the testimony from your witnesses last week. I recall a comment being made about us needing to go upstream of the DISHs and into the academic and research environment as well and bringing practitioners, educators, researchers and industry together before you even get to the innovation hubs. All of that needs to be fixed.

[*Translation*]

Tim Watchorn: Thank you.

Along the same lines, one of the unique things Bill C-40 does with the creation of the Crown corporation for defence investment is that it gives us the ability to invest in promising technologies to take them beyond, what is known in research and development as the valley of death.

I would also like you to talk about something we have seen over the past few months. Canadian companies have received contracts to produce drones for Ukraine. The Ukrainians are currently the best at making drones because they use them on the battlefield, so I think it's an advantage to bring Ukrainians here, to Canada. Our companies will have the opportunity to fully benefit from their perspective.

What do you think of initiatives like that?

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Mr. Chair, thank you for the question.

I think that is spot on. I know that Dominion Dynamics had the Ukrainian defence attaché in two weeks ago to talk about this exact thing. I think the advantage of working with the Ukraine military, for example, is that it will increase our production and manufacturing capabilities. The defence industrial strategy is not just about standing up Canadian companies. We need to manufacture and produce key systems in this country, and that's one way we can do it at scale quickly. I fully support that, and I think a number of Canadian companies are looking at just that.

The Chair: Thank you.

General Maisonneuve, do you have your hand up, sir?

[*Translation*]

LGen (Rt'd) Michel Maisonneuve: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to add a few comments in response to the question that was asked.

First, I think this incubator idea, which will bring industry, the scientific community and the military together, is an excellent idea. However, as my colleagues have explained, it is not only important that development be rapid, but it is also important to have the necessary investments to move the new equipment from the drawing board to the prototype stage and, eventually, into production.

Furthermore, I think the reason it takes so long is that, currently, regulations often prevent these ideas from moving forward.

There is also some rigidity with respect to suppliers. Very often, the people making the purchases know a company well, so, because they have always done business with that company, they choose to keep doing business with it. However, there are many new companies in Canada that are not well known. I know a few. Actually, I work with a young company in Toronto that produces equipment for 70 countries outside Canada. It is a sovereign company, but it can't manage to sell to the Canadian Armed Forces, even though it produces the best equipment possible.

● (1630)

The Chair: Thank you, General.

[*English*]

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

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Rouleau, you touched on the issue of asymmetric warfare, which we are increasingly seeing around the world. However, there is one element that hasn't been addressed yet, at least not head-on: the issue of low-cost purchasing. I do not get the sense that it was part of military culture to sometimes use cutting-edge equipment or equipment that is the best on the market. I think the military was more focused on the availability of equipment in large quantity at a very low price. Does there need to be a shift in thinking? How do the armed forces make that happen? What do they need to do so that our industry is more capable of doing that?

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

That is a very good question. Basically, I think that, to a certain extent, it is a matter of changing the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*English*]

You have never met a general who had enough money or enough troops. You've probably never met a general who thinks having an Amazon-type service to order critical supplies while in contact with the enemy, like the Ukrainians are doing, is even in the art of the possible.

We need to think very creatively, and I think we need to enforce, from the chief of the defence staff down, that this is a different moment and it is an inflection point.

If the government is going to give 3.5% of this nation's GDP to the military, the military needs to come back and tell the government what the potential force mix could look for a 3.5% investment. That is the capabilities and the people blended together. That is the force mix, and it is not a military decision. It is an inherently political decision. It starts with answering that question and then developing the high-low mix of capabilities of the army, navy and air force but in a CAF context so that you have a balanced joint force.

The engines in the military, like the chief of force development, which is led by Major-General Dick Schmidt, a fine special forces officer.... That's what these people do. They scenario war games and different force mix options.

I'm just a civilian now. I have obviously not seen that, but it is the thing I'd be looking for to drive the rest of the conversation.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I know I do not have the floor for much longer.

To take it a step further, or to put words in your mouth, I'd like to know whether you think the military should increasingly view equipment almost like ammunition or something disposable? Should it go so far as to say that if the most expensive and most cutting-edge equipment is obsolete in six months, buying it may not be the best decision? I do not know.

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: My hypothesis is that, moving forward, 20% of your capabilities are going to be very exquisite platforms, like a ship, a submarine or an airplane, and 80% are going to be attritable mass. That 80% is going to cost you 20% of your capability budget. The 20%, which is the big things and the exquisite things, is going to cost you 80% of your budget.

That's how I see the future of military capability, which is radically different from anything we've had in the last 80 years, but it's definitely the direction we need to go in for the economics of warfare purposes and also just for relevance on the battlefield, as we see with the Ukrainians.

● (1635)

The Chair: Thank you, General.

Welcome to our committee, Mr. Jackson. It's over to you for five minutes, sir.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here.

Generals, we had the opportunity to meet just before the meeting started.

General Maisonneuve, it's nice to meet you as well.

For context, Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve, I represent Brandon—Souris, the southwestern corner of Manitoba, with Canadian Forces Base Shilo. It's my honour to represent that base, as well as the Brandon Armoury, where the 26th field is stationed.

The HIMARS are coming to western Manitoba.

The army is predicting the doubling of the size of the uniformed service personnel on base. All of you have mentioned that recruitment is an issue. Do you have specific recommendations to rapidly increase recruitment without, of course, significantly lowering the standards the divisions are going to experience moving forward?

I'll start with General Maisonneuve.

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: I made a couple of recommendations. Let's get away from the rigidity of positions we're using right now. Let's start going above the numbers. Let's use new ways of bringing people in. Let's go to the schools. Let's go and talk to young people about the honour of service. Of course, my good friend James Bezan would also be happy to weigh in on this.

We need to ensure that the honour of service is recognized by the highest levels of government and all of our elected officials, that we care about service and that we highlight it. I don't have to get on my high horse to talk about Remembrance Day coming up in a couple of weeks. We need to make sure that remembrance week is appropriately noticed.

This will all have an impact on recruiting.

Again, on the special tactical rules, we need to make sure that our recruiters are the best and that they are using their own initiative. I've talked to lots of recruiters who want to get out there, take the bit in their mouths and think of new ways of bringing people in.

There's a way to do it. It just hasn't been working so far, in my own personal opinion.

Grant Jackson: General Rouleau.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I would simply say—maybe it's counterintuitive—set higher standards. Set exceptionally high standards. It's a warfighting organization. See it for what it is. Send your best people to the schoolhouse to enforce those high standards and have a culture focused on discipline, service before self and the kinds of core precepts that attract the kinds of people who want to defend this country—men, women or whatever.

I think the last five years have been somewhat culturally confusing on a number of levels. If you want to attract people who are fit for service, have high standards and adhere to them.

Grant Jackson: I appreciate that.

General Beare.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I would acknowledge both and say amen to both witnesses' comments in this regard.

We are starting in an institutional deficit. Two decades of reductions have led to institutional reductions, so we need to be making sure that we're investing in our institutional capacity to perform as well as our military fighting capacities. We apply more effort to designing how we fight than to designing how we run a world-class institution.

The business of HR recruiting and all of that doesn't come from a military-only competency set. There are ways of doing these things that aren't uniquely or solely military and are high performing and effective in a modern digital age. Those ways need to become available to and be leveraged by military professionals who are committed the outcome, which is that those men and women who are capable and competent, desire to serve and are ready to serve become trained enough that they can serve.

We need to help rebuild our institution, which we've allowed to erode over two-plus decades of resource cuts after resource cuts.

Grant Jackson: Retention, I think, is particularly a challenge as well for the reserve units, from what I'm hearing from both the 26th field in Brandon, the Fort Garry Horse in Winnipeg and others.

I'm wondering if you have specific recommendations to solve or help address the retention issue within the reserves. Are there specific things?

Maybe we'll start with General Beare, and we'll go backwards through the order.

● (1640)

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I was a survivor of the so-called decade of darkness. Quality of life for me in that time wasn't a question of pay, although pay mattered. For me, it was a question of being allowed to be the person I was recruited to be. That was a soldier working with soldiers on good soldiering. Retention was easier when we didn't have to fight to train, but we trained to fight.

We were resourced to be able to train to fight, and we were equipped in order to be able to train to fight. You didn't have to worry about your people disappearing on you because your institution was hollow and you had to go somewhere else so you could be in an organization.

For me, retention comes from the quality of your professional life, and that professional life is allowing the resourcing of our units to be capable of doing the business they've joined to do, not making them make hard choices all the time about what they can do with the limited opex that General Rouleau referenced.

Grant Jackson: I appreciate that very much.

Thank you, General Beare.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

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

Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne—Greenfield Park, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank all three of you for being here and, of course, for your service to Canada.

Speaking of recruitment and retention, I have two sons serving in the army and a daughter-in-law in the army, so you got two for two. I can't furnish any more at the moment. I'm fully engaged.

I'll start with General Maisonneuve.

You spoke a bit about a national service program. We just heard General Beare's comments. When people join the Canadian Armed Forces, they want to soldier. They want to fight. They don't want to be sand-bagging. They don't want to be in a CHSLD taking care of COVID patients and so on. The Canadian Armed Forces will answer the call whenever it comes and they will do what is asked of them, and will do that so valiantly, but they want to soldier.

You spoke a bit about a national service program to build pride. There is a humanitarian workforce program to entice folks who want to serve in a different capacity. It's not in the defence of Canada per se, but is more of a domestic response. I wanted to flag that, because I agree that there is an opportunity for Canadians to be involved.

Right now, we're in a very important period in terms of our pride in Canadians and the Canadian Armed Forces.

One of the questions I have for you, General Maisonneuve, is this. “Inflection Point 2025” proposes reorganizing the army's divisional structure, including establishing a defence of Canada division that brings together the army reserve and the Canadian Rangers. You talked a bit about some of the challenges. One of them is bringing such a large body of reservists under one division or umbrella. That can be challenging.

What would you suggest, in terms of practical steps, to make sure that this is effective in bringing those reserves under one unit?

[*Translation*]

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

It's nice to see you again, Ms. Romanado. We met at Ste. Anne's Hospital, if you remember, many years ago, when it was a federal veterans' hospital.

What I'm trying to talk about is the span of control of the commander of the defence of Canada division. It's going to be very difficult for her to command these 10 brigades right now. How much control will she have? What will she be able to focus on in terms of standardization, etc.? Before we make any recommendations for how we might restructure or give her another way of structuring, let's give her a chance to evaluate what's going on, see how it's going and see what the brigade commanders are feeling, but then be prepared to have a go. Let's start this up and see how it runs, and if it doesn't run well, let's improve it.

Your point was about the fact that the reservists—not just reservists, but anyone who serves—want to operate and get out there. The previous question by the other member asked how we make sure that the reservists are interested and are retained. To me, it's very simple. It's training. We need to make sure that they have enough money to train and they're able to train.

I am serving on the senate of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, which is Niagara's regiment. Our commanding officer took a group to the United States to train. He had 500 or 600 because two units were grouped together. It worked out fantastically. The reservists loved it. We need to make sure that the reservists have the money to train.

The other side of the coin is they've just been asked for a 10% reduction of their budget. We hear, “Oh, there's lots of money,” but again, they're going to have to figure out where they get this money from. What do they cut? Undoubtedly, he's trying to protect the training aspect of things.

● (1645)

Sherry Romanado: Thank you.

General Rouleau, you mentioned something—I think all of you touched on this, actually—about changing the culture. You lived as a change leader in the CAF, but the CAF wasn't really following. Changing how the Canadian Army is structured and the way we do things, instead of a statement of requirements for an RFI to an RFP and then going out for tender....

To change the way we do what we do, what is it going to take? It's one thing to say we're going to do restructuring and it's one thing to spend 3.5% of GDP or allocate that—we have the political will to do that, and Canadians are behind us in that regard—but how do we make sure that it's a success? Saying we want to do it and bringing along an institution that may not have always been so nimble.... How do we make sure that this is successful?

I'll ask that of all three of you, but I'll start with General Rouleau.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Mr. Chair, that is on point. I spent 34 years in the company. I joined it twice I loved it so much.

Militaries want to change just enough not to need to change fundamentally, like in their DNA. That's insufficient, especially at a time like now. I find there is an overindexing on structure as a focal area, as opposed to people, processes and outcomes—a bit too much on structure sometimes.

Somebody needs to be willing to fail first. It takes courage. We need to align the incentive structures so that people are willing to extend themselves. The way that we pick general and flag officers, I changed the SCRITs when I was the vice-chief to favour more breadth of experience, as opposed to depth in force generation, force employment, because fundamentally, generals and admirals need to run the complex business of defence outside of warfighting. That's not a core military competence; it has to be nurtured and developed.

Those are a couple of ideas.

The Chair: General, thank you.

Ms. Romanado, I appreciate your time.

Mr. Bezan, you're up.

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

I apologize. I wasn't here at the beginning of the committee hearing because of Bill C-40, which is being debated in the House right now. It is important as well. It's on how we set up this Defence Investment Agency.

Let's talk about “Inflection Point 2025”. All three of you as generals have lots of experience, of course. This is a new concept of restructuring that we haven't seen before.

One concern that has been raised is the defence of Canada division and the new role that has been given to the reservists in Operation Lentus in particular.

Do you feel that using our reserves as the primary source for things like natural disasters, fighting forest fires and floods is a good use of our reservists? Will that create a moral hazard when we start looking at the concept of provinces not wanting to invest as much into their own emergency preparedness because they can always call in the forces to do the job? Will that hurt recruitment?

If all three generals could comment on that, I'd appreciate it.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I'll take the lead.

I'll speak to the central idea behind “Inflection Point 2025”, which is to defend on all fronts—basically the driving idea—and the capacity to create and train an army to do that and the capacity to sustain it. That's the driving idea about “Inflection Point 2025” in a world where response to national disasters will occur, but in the world, more importantly, adversaries are going to inflict pain on us. That's what “Inflection Point 2025” is trying to solve.

The defence of the homeland mission set will include in its first instance participating in deterrence, participating in the capacity to defeat threats to the homeland, in the Arctic and in the base. It'll include air defence. It will include the capacity to fight fires, if you need it. It'll include all those capacities that need to be brought to bear in the homeland, too. The 2nd Canadian Division owns that, and the fact that 2nd Canadian Division will have, under command, a body of troops to perform much of that, but not necessarily all of it, it will get it from where it needs it.

● (1650)

James Bezan: That's where the moral hazard is, though. If the provinces start relying on the forces to do that, we won't have enough manpower to go out and do the part that you're talking about, or they'll already be out there doing that—defending the homeland from adversaries—and there won't be anybody around to fight the fires.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: In my experience, we always had that problem, whichever way we structured. I'd say the main thing for Canada to contemplate is how we create more Canadian resilience that isn't singularly reliant on the military. I'm totally with the idea of through what other forms an auxiliary can be created in national services, as General Maisonneuve pointed out, that creates that capacity.

James Bezan: General Rouleau.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. It's relevant.

As a former commander of joint operations command, in dealing with forest fires or the pandemic when it kicked off, there's always the problem of a contingency mission needing forces immediately. Those tend to come more quickly from the regular force than they do from the reserve. Our model was to deploy a regular force element right away, and reinforce that as quickly as practicable with reserve forces.

There are real readiness issues with the reserve forces as a function of monies, opex, equipment. I think it took two years to get a reserve mortar platoon ready to deploy to Latvia when I was commander of CJOC. That's an example.

James Bezan: Back in Afghanistan, we were able to deploy reservists into Afghanistan and have them fight side by side with our regular force.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: It's true. We couldn't have done the war in Afghanistan without the reserves. There's no question about that. However, it takes time to mobilize the system so that there's a steady state feeding it. Something like a forest fire that flashes up in British Columbia can happen very quickly, and it could be a problem.

Now, the CDS is still going to need to sign off on requests for assistance by a provincial premier. It's not like a premier is just going to be able to tap into the reserve forces on their own.

General Maisonneuve said it earlier too: There are questions of equipment and monies for reserve forces. If we want to use the reserves in a very material way in this nation as a force of first resort militarily, then the attendant investment needs to happen.

James Bezan: General Maisonneuve, could you talk to the issue around recruitment, especially with your experience in Saint-Jean, and how that could be impacting the reserves in particular if they see themselves being used more for emergency preparedness rather than actually functioning alongside our regular forces in theatre?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: I think it would have a huge impact. I'm fully on the side of the armed forces, including the reserves, being the last resort. There is nothing that comes after that.

Frankly, right now, we should be developing, as General Beare mentioned, some sort of an organization that can go in and do this kind of response to domestic issues, domestic climate-related issues and so forth. We need to have that.

It's definitely going to have an impact because young reservists, and, as a matter of fact, young regular force folks, want to train. They want to get ready. They want to operate. They want to use their weapons. They want to deploy. I think we can do a much better job than we're doing in terms of making sure that our reserves are ready to do that.

As I say, they are the force of last resort. A national program will help that resilience. A national service program, not military service, will help that.

The Chair: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

Welcome to our committee, Mr. St-Pierre. We'll go over to you for five minutes, sir.

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Thank you.

Monsieur Rouleau, can you share your perspective on why the Canadian-led defence, security and resilience bank is a positive move for our great country?

This is the world's first global defence bank, as you know. I'm curious about why this is important for Canada as we modernize our military.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I'm not a banker. I'm not an authority in any way, shape or form on this.

However, it occurs to me that creating new veins of capital to fuel Canadian small and medium-sized businesses and start-ups in this country is everything; it's lifeblood. Even the BDC itself is getting involved in this space, as are some of the big banks, in fact. We're seeing motions on the part of Canada's big five banks to get involved. We're seeing pension funds and teachers' pension funds contributing in the venture space and to some defence start-ups in this country.

That's all positive. We can't have a defence industrial base if we're not going to capitalize it.

I see that, sir, as a strong move.

● (1655)

Eric St-Pierre: Thank you for your response.

Monsieur Maisonneuve, I enjoyed your movie reference about an hour and a half ago. Thank you for that.

You mentioned in the first part the good of placing force brigades under one headquarters with one formation. You mentioned where officers would work within divisional structures and along with allies.

Could you comment on how you would envision this change taking place? How long would you anticipate this to take place?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: Again, restructuring the entire army is a huge challenge.

As I mentioned, I worked in NATO trying to stand up this transformation command.

The whole thing about transformation, change management and restructuring is that it should never stop. Transformation is a never-ending process.

In the old days, change management would be you would get to a steady state, and that would be it. You finished changing. Nowadays, you're going to need organizations that are constantly looking to the future. One of the things that I would put in place, either at the army level or at the Canadian Armed Forces level, is a chief of transformation. That would be a permanent change management, change-forcing organization that's always looking forward.

That's very tough because, as I think General Rouleau said, nobody wants to change. Everybody says, “Oh, yeah, I'm just great. He needs change, so change him, but I'm perfect in what I'm doing.”

Really, what's going to happen, I think, with the three brigades that are going under the commander of 1st Division, we're going to need to have a little bit of time to see how it actually comes together and what kind of training opportunities there are. Is force generation facilitated by that? How effective...? Will we have exercises at the division level where they bring everybody together, as we did in the eighties? All that is to come.

I'm sure that, right now, the commander of 1st Canadian Division is working very hard to figure out the future.

Eric St-Pierre: You mentioned, Mr. Maisonneuve, the reserves and dealing with adaptation to climate change. I'm curious about wildfires. As you know, there are a lot of wildfires across Canada.

Quickly, what's the role of a modern Canadian army when dealing with wildfires across our country?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: As I mentioned to Mr. Bezan, I think the armed forces are the forces of last resort. They shouldn't be the first place we go to. Governments at every level turn to the armed forces to solve these issues.

We need to create some sort of resilience organization in every province, or perhaps federally, one that will be able to access any province. Somebody suggested regrouping all the assets in terms of firefighting aircraft into one and putting it under the command of the armed forces with that specific mission. It's not a bad idea. I haven't worked through the idea's process, but having the ability to cross provincial boundaries and go anywhere to fight fires might be a good idea.

We need to think innovatively, but, once again, the armed forces, including the reserves, are the forces of last resort. Their first mission is to defend our country.

Eric St-Pierre: I know one of my colleagues is a big fan of firefighters. I'm curious about whether you can comment, in the next 20 seconds, on the role of firefighters as we modernize our military.

She's shaking her head right now, embarrassed that I asked that question.

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: As we saw in Wainwright, firefighters are an absolutely essential part of the armed forces. Having fires on the range is not a new thing. This case was a tragic moment. We all need firefighters.

The Chair: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. St-Pierre.

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

[*Translation*]

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

What we note in reading “Inflection Point 2025”, in fact, is the vision to move from an armed forces whose primary function was to assist allies in operations abroad toward a force capable of conducting high-intensity activities on its own.

We also note that the policy direction seems to be that the armed forces will recruit more and spend more in order to fulfill NATO commitments and meet targets.

We also see a vision in which the armed forces is filling certain gaps, including the lack of equipment—aging equipment—the lack of anti-aircraft capability and the lack of artillery capability.

The question I have is this: Has enough thought been given to what the military of the future should look like? What are the needs of tomorrow? Are the soldiers we had in the 1990s and 2000s the same soldiers we need in 2026? Do they need to have the same knowledge? Do they need to have the same equipment? Personally, I get the sense that this is missing from the “Inflection Point 2025” plan. I would like to know what the witnesses think.

● (1700)

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: Is the question for me?

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: It's for anyone who wants to take it.

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: Okay. I will start, and then the others can answer.

[*English*]

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I'll jump in.

There's a fundamental difference in the raison d'être of the army as described on paper today, as opposed to 10 years ago. There was a notion that the mission of the army at the time was to provide forces for crisis response. These were missions of discretion. You could choose to go or not go. You could choose how much to go with and how long to go for. You could put a box around it. Even Afghanistan was a mission of discretion, in the context that we were able to put it in a box and sustain it.

This document is recognizing that the world has changed and that we don't get a choice now in whether we're going to defend ourselves, because a major military power—Russia, in this case, with more to come—won't give us a choice. We need an army that can confront this. That's the fundamental pivot for the army, in terms of what it used to be versus the army the commander is now imagining, quite rightly. A significant change for our soldiers is them going from an experience of rotations, from missions of discretion to sustained warfighting, and doing that at scale. That's a completely new body of knowledge regarding counter-insurgency—

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Sorry for interrupting, but I don't have much time. I do appreciate your comments.

I don't know whether anyone else would like to say anything before my time runs out.

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: Regarding the point you raised—whether they are the right soldiers, whether it is the right equipment, whether they are organized the right way and so on—I just want to say that you are entirely right. This entire issue warrants reconsideration. Regarding our units today, an infantry battalion will probably remain an infantry battalion. However, it may have new equipment, such as drones, with it.

Me, I'm a tank guy, so I can tell you that tanks have never been able to operate on their own. Operating them has always been a team effort. However, the team effort will now involve different things than we had before. Now there are going to be drones. There will certainly be cyber-defence equipment and all sorts of other new equipment.

Also, I am aware—I am convinced that the army and the Canadian Armed Forces have an internal group that is thinking about all this. Certainly, on the army side, it's the same thing: it is looking at what it will need for the future, with the new equipment, new organizations and new threats.

The Chair: Thank you, General Maisonneuve.

[*English*]

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

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

The other day Professor John Walsh from Guelph University was with us. He has a very classical view of the role of the citizen in society. He spoke also of honour, duty, bravery and so on.

We've recently opened this up to DEI. That seems to have been a failure. We heard recently that we have a 55% failure rating in BMQ. I took BMQ when I was 50 years old. It's hard to fail BMQ. What we're doing now is not working.

I'd like to hear from you, because I have heard about honour, duty and actually raising the standards. This is for General Beare first, and then we'll go around the circle. I'd like you to speak about what you would suggest, not only in recruiting in universities, but in making a cultural change across society to try to make the military experience something to aspire to: the real military experience and not pretending it's something else.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I enjoyed listening to his testimony online, after the fact. Yes, it's a whole-of-society thing. It's no longer a matter of discretion as to whether or not Canada is defended. It's our responsibility, and it's all citizens in. Even if you're not in uniform, if we see the worst-case scenario, we're all in. Let's be all in before the worst-case scenario appears. I'm totally in line with the way he was thinking about that.

As it relates to attraction, recruiting and then a successful training, there's no question that there needs to be.... I totally echo General Rouleau's remark to raise the standard. It's not to raise the standard of entry per se. Raise the standard of what you expect them to be capable of performing and make that transparent. If they suspect they can't make it, give them the means to become capable of making it before they actually step into the other recruiting centre into the training system.

● (1705)

Scott Anderson: On that—and I have experienced it myself—military courses sometimes are set up to fail the way they're set up, especially in the early part of it.

Go ahead, sir.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I think that with the younger generation—and my daughter is in that cohort—we have to recognize that they have affordability issues. For them to integrate into society like we did when we were 20 is more difficult now. They have a lack of trust in institutions that we didn't necessarily have. This is what we're dealing with.

That said, my experience in seeing young soldiers is nothing but the upside. They're the same great young Canadians who can be moulded. We don't need to train them how to fight. For this generation, we need to train them how to think about how to fight. For anything that's performative, they see right through it. Another online course for something that's of questionable use drives people to the door.

Stop being performative. Get away from being overly egalitarian and treating everyone like one-size-fits-all and let's not be incremental. Let's be aggressive and give them the kind of kit, training, experience, leadership and vision that will attract those people.

Scott Anderson: Thank you.

General Maisonneuve, go ahead.

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: I'm going to add a couple of points.

First of all, God bless you for doing BMQ at 50 years old. Well done.

I'd like to come back to this whole idea of a national service program. I think that one of the things that's missing in our country is the fact that we're not proud enough of being Canadians. It took Trump to make us have a little bit of patriotism. I think we need to do a better job of educating our young people and making sure these young people believe in our country. That means civics education. That means asking them to volunteer.

The whole national service program that we proposed a couple of months ago in an open letter to the Prime Minister is based on a volunteer program. A young person between 18 and 25 would sign up and do one year. The first month would be a kind of basic training, but then they could serve in a national service capacity, and yes, in the military if they wish, but also, there would be other areas of service—Parks Canada, etc., and so forth. The whole thing would be accompanied by a whole civics program, where they would learn about our country and be proud of it. I think that would have a great deal of impact on recruiting and making Canadians more proud.

Scott Anderson: Thank you very much.

If I have more time, I will pass it to my colleague.

James Bezan: How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

James Bezan: Can I bank it?

The Chair: Yes.

James Bezan: Okay. I'll bank it for the next round.

The Chair: All right.

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

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

My question is for generals Beare and Rouleau. It will be a pretty straightforward question, because we've drilled down on a lot of specifics here.

You both held senior leadership positions in the CAF. In your estimation, what's the single most urgent change the Canadian Army needs to make to remain operationally credible in the current security environment?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: From my perspective, we're coming out of half a decade of cultural introspection. For the record, I think the two biggest things that plague CAF culture are resistance to any and all change and a lack of real accountability built into the system, to each other. I think the culture of the Canadian Forces needs to be explicitly sharpened to focus on the world as it is and not the way we wish it was.

That's where I'd start.

Chris Malette: General Beare.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I'm going to answer by talking about something that's outside the army's control. That is, the army needs to be told that it needs to be able to perform as Canada's warfighting land force. It needs to be told it, because it's telling and suggesting—

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

I apologize for interrupting the witnesses. It is just that, for some time now, I've noticed that the camera has been pointed at me, even though I am not the one speaking. The witnesses are the ones speaking. I don't know if there was a problem, but I assume that the people who would like to see the witnesses will be disappointed to see me.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you are very attractive to the technicians.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: It's been corrected now. There you go.

I'm sorry to interrupt. Please proceed.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: It needs to be told, because right now it's the army describing the army as it needs to be. It's not a government telling the army to be what it needs to be in policy. Then it needs to be resourced to actually achieve it and not fight for the capability to fight. It needs to be given the capability to fight. The culture of performance in that regard will then come. If your raison d'être is in doubt, and you have to fight to be who you're meant to be, that has a corrosive effect on culture. Essentially, you have a learned helplessness.

I'd say that is a condition outside the army's control, but with that delivered, I have absolute confidence that in the culture of the men and women who are serving and who are coming, they have the capacity to deliver on that promise.

Chris Malette: Further to that, General Beare, what capabilities, in your estimation, should Canada prioritize over the next three to five years to ensure that the army can deploy quickly and sustain combat operations alongside NATO allies?

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I am totally in line with how the army commander described the priority of warfighting capability he needs, but what's absent in that is the capability he doesn't own. All that warfighting capability, in terms of fires, air defence and Arctic capability, needs to be delivered. It needs to equip our soldiers to perform in the first instance, but beyond his control is the command and control system—the sustainment enterprise, the health enterprise. All those other things need to be delivering as well.

With those two things coming together, now you've got a real capacity to perform.

Chris Malette: I have one last question for General Rouleau.

The army's own modernization strategy acknowledges that it is challenged in a crisis and unprepared for a high-intensity conflict. What would you say are the two most serious capability gaps that prevent the army from being ready today? What must the government do to close them?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: It's hard to distill it down to two capability gaps, but an army needs to be able to shoot, move and communicate in a high-threat environment. That's everything from managing the electromagnetic spectrum to having armoured vehicles to protect your troops. Certainly what we're seeing in Ukraine is that if you don't have an overwhelming presence of unmanned systems that are able to surveil the battlefield and then cue fires, you're not going to win a single day. I think there's a whole lot of capabilities.

I would just encourage the committee to remember, to General Beare's point, that pan-domain capabilities matter. The army will have to accept services from the space domain, from the cyber domain and from the air domain. Pan-domain capabilities matter. Within the army, all-arms combined manoeuvre matters. Your engineers matter just as much as your infantry, your artillery and your supply chain. It's about balance and best investment.

Chris Malette: Okay.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Malette, thank you very much for those questions.

We're going to proceed now to Mr. Jackson.

It's back to you.

Grant Jackson: Thank you, Chair.

Generals, thanks for your testimony today. It's been very interesting.

I was wondering about my previous questions regarding recruitment challenges within the defence of Canada reserve division. We heard from General Beare, but we didn't get to the other two generals. I wondered if you wanted to chime in on that before we move on.

Thank you, General Rouleau.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: It's a very good question, sir.

It's going to be tough sledding in the near term because HIMARS is going to come in. It's going to go to, I believe, what is 1 RCHA, the 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, today, which is going to rebrand itself as the 8th Rocket Regiment. That transition is going to be hard on the reserves because they won't have those weapon systems. There are not enough of them.

I think, with the right kind of creative leadership, they can be integrated into the 8th Rocket Regiment, and they can find a useful role for themselves, pending the army having enough systems to go around.

What plagues retention in the reserves is often either not having enough money to train, or, in the case of trades, needing bigger weapon systems beyond the infantry. There are no howitzers on the shop floor to shoot. When you're a gunner, that's a problem.

● (1715)

Grant Jackson: I was with the Fort Garry Horse at Shilo two weeks ago. They had to borrow trucks from 1 RCHA just to move their guns onto the range, because they didn't have any that were operational. That's a problem that I'm seeing.

General Maisonneuve, would you mind answering the question on retention within the reserves as well?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: That's exactly what I said, I think, to Ms. Romanado.

Reservists want to train, and reservists need to get out there.

You went with the Fort Garry Horse, which is an outstanding armoured regiment. If they don't have vehicles, tanks or even pretend tanks to get out there or reconnaissance vehicles to do their training, and if they don't have the money to do the training or the regular force support to be able to do the training....

A reservist right now gives up one night of his or her week. They give up a weekend a month, approximately, and some time in the summer. They do this. They have regular jobs.

If we had enough regular force personnel to support the reserves, then when they came to the armoury, all they would have to do is get in the vehicles and get out there and train. If they have to go there and fill out paperwork, if they have to go there and do maintenance on their vehicles, it just takes away from what they want to do. They want to get out there and train.

To me, that would help a lot for retention in the reserves, on top of what generals Rouleau and Beare said.

Grant Jackson: Because of the proximity to Shilo, when the HIMARS arrives there, what are your thoughts on reserve units training with that weapon at Shilo, General Rouleau?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I was at the regimental leaders course in the artillery last week giving a talk. What I told them is, “Look, it's up to you to create your future. The generals aren't going to phone you from Ottawa and say, 'This is precisely what you need to do.'” A lot of that goodness has to come from the bottom up; 70% or 80% of that thinking needs to be from the bottom up, with 20% or 30% framing from the top down.

I don't know exactly what it's going to look like, but I do know from my experience wearing the uniform, the Canadian military at the tactical level is super innovative and super creative.

I think Mike Wright, as the army commander, is establishing exactly the right kind of culture to let those ideas percolate.

Grant Jackson: General Beare, do you have anything to add?

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: I'd offer that getting the experience on the HIMARS is different from being at high readiness to employ them in war. Definitely, create the experiences, but create the tactical competencies to get there as your raison d'être. Based on one night a week, a weekend a month and the summer, there's only so much you can get to in terms of ultimate competency.

My experience has been with the gunners, being a gunner myself. They are absolutely integrated. There is a culture of reg and reserve working together that is alive today and will live tomorrow.

Grant Jackson: Thank you.

I was chatting with some of the folks from the Fort Garry Horse about drone training. General Rouleau, I'm curious if you have thoughts on that in regard to the defence of Canada division.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Do more. Go faster. Go ugly. Flood the zone.

Voices: Oh, oh!

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I'm serious. I heard Mike Wright talking about visiting a unit in 5 Brigade at Valcartier. He said that one of the Van Doos' battalions had two drones. It's 2026. We need to flood the zone. We need to get troops with hands on all this stuff and start adapting TTPs and taking some risks. Stop being incremental. Good lord, it's 2026.

Grant Jackson: Thank you very much.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Cheers.

The Chair: The clerk has decided this report will be called “Go Ugly” going forward.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey, welcome to our committee. It's over to you for five minutes, sir.

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair. This is a most interesting discussion.

My first question is for General Rouleau.

You referenced refashioning the military in an earlier comment, and you said that the divisions are not necessarily equal. Could you elaborate on how you would define “refashioning”?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: As a young major, I was part of General Hillier's 20-person Canadian Armed Forces transformation effort. We were put in the basement of defence headquarters for six months—the defence policy statement, Prime Minister Martin—and we created CANSOFCOM and other organizations. That was instructive to me. We started with a blank sheet of paper and tried to reimagine what the military could look like, and out of that came joint operations command, which we both ended up commanding, and OSCOM, or operational support command.

I feel that in the military we get very wedded to our structure. As I used to tell my commanding officers in the special forces, "None of this is yours. None of it is mine. We have 3,000 people in CANSOFCOM. It's Canada's, and if Canada decides we need to be truck drivers next month—the best truck drivers in the world—guess what? That's what we'll start to do."

We need to get away from this idea of preserving structure and my legacy being that I didn't lose any troops. We need to reimagine, and to General Maisonneuve's earlier point, an infantry battalion moving forward might not be 650 people. It could be 300 people, but with a whole lot more technology.

● (1720)

Robert Morrissey: That's my question; it's about reshaping, because part of the discussion and questioning was on the failure in recruiting and how we're not meeting the numbers. To your point about reshaping or refashioning the military, has it taken into account the dramatic change in the demographics of this country?

The traditional demographic age that we would recruit from is shrinking. They have more options available to them. We're an aging population. There are those of us who want to shrink immigration. Nobody has raised that in the discussion I've been listening to so far.

How do you see that impacting recruitment? You can have all the equipment, but unless you get the soldiers, who's going to operate it? I would like to hear somebody opine on that, possibly General Maisonneuve, but let's start with you, General Rouleau.

Again, the demographics of this country have changed in the last 20 years, and recruiting is not as effective as it was. Those are two realities.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I don't want to try to answer your question without the relevant strategic HR data from a recruiting perspective nationally, so I'm at a bit of a loss, but I—

Robert Morrissey: Would you not agree that the pool that you would be recruiting from has changed?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Of course.

Robert Morrissey: If the military doesn't recognize that, then something is amiss.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Of course, you have to play the hand you're dealt. In the special forces, such as JTF 2, where I grew up, we never had a fixed quota of assaulters we needed to produce every year. It was entirely dependent on the gene pool that we received and how many met the standard. By that same logic, I would never put someone in uniform in harm's way who wasn't prepared to endure that.

I'm a fan of very high standards, and if the strategic HR data doesn't support, say, a standing army of 75,000 in the future, then it's pointless to try to drive towards that, and you need to offset it with technology.

Robert Morrissey: Can you achieve 75,000 with a different methodology? That's my point.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Perhaps you could, but again, I'm not a recruiting expert and I don't feel like I have more to offer.

Robert Morrissey: Thank you.

I don't have much time left.

General Maisonneuve, you said that recruiting is still in trouble and there are too many bottlenecks.

Would you elaborate on the bottlenecks that are leading to a reduced number coming in?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: Yes, certainly. The bottlenecks I'm talking about are bottlenecks created by over-rigidity in the approach that we're taking.

To go back to your first question regarding the pool, frankly, here is a country of 40 million people. The pool may be shrinking, but it can't have that much of an impact on a small armed force of 70,000.

Your point is fine, but to me, it's not a very important issue. I think the pool is large enough that we should be able to recruit way more than we need. On the problem of bottlenecks, there's a training bottleneck where we don't have enough people to train these new recruits who are coming in.

The other thing, don't forget, is that we are trying to bring in people to replace mid-level folks who have left the armed forces. To create a sergeant, it takes 15 to 20 years. Creating a captain or a major takes 15 more years.

Robert Morrissey: General, that's the demographic I was referring to.

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: I know that, but the point is that you have these people with 20 years of experience leaving. You're replacing them with people who are 20 years old themselves. It's going to take a while to move up there. It's not just a problem of numbers. It's a problem of bottlenecks and time.

● (1725)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrissey.

Generals, thank you.

We are going to go until about 5:41 because we started a bit late, so we have a bit more time to ask questions.

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

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Maisonneuve, I get the impression that there is a blind spot in “Inflection Point 2025” that has not necessarily been covered. According to the new vision, the 1st Canadian Division, headquartered in Edmonton, will essentially handle the regular forces. The 2nd Canadian Division, headquartered in Montreal, will primarily handle the reserve force. This changes how the army operates, which was based on a regional structure. I am convinced that this arrangement also ensured that, for example, at Longue-Pointe, in Quebec, most decisions were made in French, given that it managed Quebec.

However, if Longue-Pointe is going to manage the reserve across Canada, instead of managing Quebec, and if Valcartier is going to report to Edmonton, rather than Longue-Pointe, I am concerned about the consequences it could have. In particular, I worry about the ability to work in French and the number of interactions that will take place in French in the army. Isn't there a risk that French will be pushed aside?

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: I don't think so.

First, there are three brigade groups in Quebec. Actually, there may be more than that; I cannot remember the number. In any case, the brigades currently in Quebec will continue to operate in French. In Quebec, there are also English-speaking regiments, such as Black Watch. Many of them conduct their operations in English. However, I do think that the brigades in Quebec will continue to operate in French. Currently, for example, the Canadian Army headquarters are in Ottawa. The army commander is able to speak both languages, and he does so with the French-speaking and English-speaking units. In my opinion, then, it's not a problem.

I would also say that having the reserve force headquarters in Montreal will certainly be a good way to ensure that Quebec and the French language are protected.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: The regular force's decisions and directives will come from Edmonton. Do you think that will be beneficial for Valcartier?

LGen (Rt’d) Michel Maisonneuve: I have always worked at Valcartier. My regiment, 12e Régiment blindé du Canada, is in Valcartier. This has never been a problem. Valcartier reported directly to army headquarters, which is in Ottawa. I do not think it will change anything on that front.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, General.

Mr. Bezan, I'll give you that extra 20 seconds, sir.

James Bezan: I appreciate that. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We talk about the warfighter, and we talk about “Inflection Point 2025”. We're going to need a new doctrine for the army, and that's going to change the way we train. That's going to change the way we operate. We look at the wars that are taking place right now. Ukraine is a case in point, but so is what's happening in Iran and Israel with the use of drones, robotics and AI.

Do you see where that fits into the current manoeuvre division, support division and training formation that we have right now in the document that General Wright has presented? Are we going to be flexible enough? Are we going to be fast enough? It's happening in real time in Ukraine. They have one division that is strictly drones and robotics. That's all they do, and that's been the game-changer in keeping them in the fight rather than letting the Russian war machine and Putin's barbarians walk all over them.

Go ahead, Michel, and Stuart can go next.

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: I'd be happy to weigh in.

I hesitate to say it, but I would imagine there's a massive lessons-learned group, both at the Canadian Armed Forces level and in the army, that is looking at that. This lessons-learned group is looking at all these activities across the globe, in Ukraine and Iran and in some of the lower-level activities that are going on. Gaza is not a lower-level thing.

I'm sure that they're looking at all this and coming up with lessons that they're passing on to the doctrine folks. We have a huge doctrine group, both at the Canadian Forces level and in the army, that I'm sure is looking at the new structure, new equipment and new doctrine in terms of employment. I would say that, unless I'm mistaken, there's a lot of that happening right now.

● (1730)

James Bezan: General Beare.

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: A lot of that is happening.

James Bezan: How do you see it in the document? I'm looking at the training formation, and—

LGen (Ret'd) Stuart Beare: This was written in 2025. A year of time has passed. A lot of learning is going on. This is an army commander's intent, not orders. Following the intent, now the machine is rolling and unified with that intent in mind. The doctrine, the organization, the training, the personnel modernization, the capabilities and the equipment are all in that mix, resulting in real capability. The staff and the line organizations have been seized by this. It'll go faster when it's resourced.

Back to my point, the—

James Bezan: It's about more than just resources.

You alluded to our having to “go ugly”. That's why I'm asking these last questions. It comes down to this: We have to be more risk-taking. We have to be early adapters. We have to be able to engage directly with those innovators, not just the ones coming out of Ukraine, especially. It's about what we're building right here, right now.

How do we do that? How do we get over the hurdles? What type of empowerment do we have that we can give the Canadian army so they can resource themselves and make those changes on a dime, rather than going through...? Even with the DIA, it's still going to be a process.

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: Yes.

To General Stu's comment earlier about how the army needs to be resourced, I might be mistaken, but if you look at the capital investment plan 25 years out, about 70% or 75% is earmarked for naval platforms. This leaves about 25% for the air force and the army, from a SIP perspective. That's an issue. That's an army struggling to find space for itself in the investment plan. If you want a balanced force, you need to provide the resources.

More to the point, you need to empower people to take risks. This is how special forces grow. The frozen middle of any organization is the one that tends to block change from permeating. These are organizational questions that need to be tackled by the leadership.

James Bezan: You mentioned special forces. You were a commander there for quite a while. The decision was made that we would go with Black Hawk helicopters. All of a sudden, that's been paused. It was reported about a week ago.

How do you think this impacts on operational readiness?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: It does, for sure.

Look, I wrote “How We Fight” in December 2018 in longhand. It took about seven years for that thing to become Canadian Armed Forces doctrine. Nobody's assessing the seven and a half years that it took—the opportunity cost—but we should.

There are all kinds of things that are going too slowly. We need to empower people, we need to be more creative and we need to get past our little idiosyncrasy of not trusting industry. We need to do all these things quickly. We need to have a tolerance for honest failure, because there are going to be some hiccups along the way. If Ottawa does its pearl-clutching thing too much, it will incentivize people to go back to the way we used to do it: slowly.

James Bezan: How much time do I have?

The Chair: I'll give you 20 seconds.

James Bezan: Okay.

That's not enough time for asking a question, so I'd like to say thank you to all three of you for coming in and sharing your expertise and for your incredible service to our country over the years. I've had many opportunities to have interactions with all three of you, and I appreciate the sage advice you've given me over the years.

The Chair: That's well said.

Viviane Lapointe, let's go to you and see how much time we have left.

Viviane Lapointe: Thank you, Chair. I'll be sharing my time with my colleague Parliamentary Secretary Romanado.

Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve, in your opening comments, you touched on how we have a more deliberate investment plan. Yes, we need to go faster and we need to get ugly, as said here today, but the intent is there. Could you tell us how that more deliberate investment plan changes Canada's standing with NATO and the Five Eyes, and how it can offer Canadian interest in coalition operations?

LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve: Having served with NATO, I can tell you that our lack of spending, if you wish, on our military was always an issue that I was faced with. I served as the chief of staff of NATO transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, for four years and stood up the command. I think we were resting—and I think we are still resting—on our past laurels. We were very effective. We were extremely effective in Afghanistan with our small military. We put forces out there that were in fact as good as any in the field.

As General Rouleau said, and I'm sure Stu would also agree, man for man, person for person, our military and our folks are outstanding.

That increase in funding is great. It helps us regain a measure of credibility. The problem now is creating bureaucracies to get this money spent. I'm willing to just wait and see where that goes, but I still think it's too slow. I'm with my colleagues here in thinking that we need to really get going quickly.

The problem is the authorities. Where are the authorities? The commander of the army doesn't have that much authority to be able to spend. He's given a pot of money and has to decide where it's going to go.

As Mike Rouleau explained, with the SIP right now, there's a big push on the navy, as there should be.

The credibility is going to take a while to come back. We need to get some operational capability out the door. That's what we're not doing yet.

● (1735)

Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

Ms. Romanado, I'll turn to you.

Sherry Romanado: Gentlemen, as mentioned, I'm the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Defence. Previous to this role, I was the PS for emergency preparedness.

I'm going to reiterate my point from the beginning of my last round. Canada did stand up a humanitarian workforce. It is an organization that allows for the response to domestic emergencies and so on. It's funded through Public Safety. I think it's something that we should definitely be promoting. If folks are not interested in serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, but want to serve their country in another way, it's a great opportunity.

General Rouleau, you mentioned something that I'm never going to forget now: more, fast and go ugly. You also mentioned the importance of working with industry but also working in terms of support for industry.

We have legislation before the House, Bill C-40, to establish the Defence Investment Agency as a Crown corporation. It also allows for Crown corporation to invest, which is something that we've never done before, in terms of looking at interesting, innovative ways in terms of start-ups and loans, advances, guarantees and equity investment.

What are your thoughts on what we can be doing with respect to that—this committee will eventually be receiving that legislation—in terms of supporting the speed at which Canada needs to move in terms of procurement for military, but also in terms of innovation? Could you elaborate a bit on that?

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: I think that's absolutely a step in the right direction. It's a page right out of what C.D. Howe, the "minister of everything", did in the early 1940s. When there was a gap and he could not find industry to fill it, he would create a Crown corporation.

The question is that we have to move from research and development. There are all kinds of amazing technologies being researched and developed in this country. We have to get that into ideation with the military so that in their operational problems the conversation starts connecting to the technology that's out there. Then we have to resource the technology—to your point, Ma'am—with the money the DIA has access to in order to develop, launch and then test and adjust in this ever-continuing cycle between the military and industry.

I think it's absolutely a step in the right direction. I guess my one concern would be that DIA's charter is $100 million and above: the major capital projects. Most of what I'm talking about is stuff that happens at the smalls. If a service commander still only has $25 million of minor capital authority, I think that's where we potentially need to up that by a factor of three, four, five or 10*x* to get the money moving and the ideation coming up from the bottom, not just from the top in the big projects of $100 million and above.

Sherry Romanado: I have one little last question.

You mentioned in terms of recruitment the 20-year-old thinking about joining the Canadian Armed Forces. You mentioned that for the next generation, the sixth generation of warfighting is not necessarily on the battlefield. It's quantum, AI and cyber. It's all of these other things. It's not necessarily physical arms.

There is a role, I think, for that next generation to maybe consider themselves a member of the Canadian Armed Forces through different methods, because we are using more of the technology in terms of warfighting. Would you agree that it could be something that could entice young people?

● (1740)

LGen (Ret'd) Mike Rouleau: At some level, I agree that young people could be first-person-view drone operators sitting 15 kilometres back, but make no mistake. That young man or woman operating the drone in Ukraine is tabbing in 15 kilometres to their fighting position and being targeted by the Russians. They are every bit in the mix.

I would never want anyone to think Mike Rouleau believes warfare is somehow still not going to be metal on metal or bone on bone, like it was in Mosul when my forces were kicking ISIS out. The nature of warfare is always going to be a brutal contest among human beings, but one that is supplemented more and more by technology.

The Chair: Generals, thank you for your service, expertise and experience, and for your continued service as you participate today in this study. Your input is very valuable to us. We can't thank you enough for participating and engaging with us.

I have a bit of housekeeping before I stop this meeting.

To the committee, if Bill C-40 is passed at second reading, it will be sent to this committee. I invite members to think of witnesses they want to hear from on this topic and submit them to the clerk. I hope by noon on Monday, November 2 is agreeable.

Is that okay?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Second, would the committee agree to invite the PBO on her report entitled "Canada's Defence Spending Commitments: A Primer"?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Last, for the study on francophone and indigenous members of the CAF, the minister hasn't yet appeared, but the draft report is almost ready.

Would you prefer waiting to hear from the minister before considering the report, or should we add his testimony at a later stage? We have it ready to go. The minister said he wants to appear. I want to have some agreement from the committee.

Monsieur Barsalou-Duval.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: My suggestion last time was that the analysts keep the report as is but add a section on the minister's appearance. That way, their work would not be lost, and the information would simply be added in a later section.

Regarding consideration of the report, it seems to me that we need to hear the minister's comments before finalizing the report. In my opinion, that is obvious.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bezan.

James Bezan: I'll add to that.

It's been awhile already. I don't think it hurts to wait longer. The minister said that he wishes to appear as a witness on issues around language and indigenous participation.

Let's make sure we hear from the minister before we file the report. That's my suggestion.

The Chair: I'm going to try to manage that by having the minister come, even if it means adding half an hour or so to our committee, because I think we all want to see this report completed. We'll find a way. I'll talk to the minister's office to ensure this.

Generals, thank you again.

The meeting is adjourned.

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