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Chair

Mr. John Cannis

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•(1105)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC)): I'll call the meeting to order.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a schedule in front of us.

I'll make the cellphone announcement: if you have a cellphone, please shut it off, or do whatever you do with it to make sure it doesn't ring—sit on it or throw it out the door.

The schedule indicates that we'll deal with the witnesses first and then deal with my notice of motion second. If it's all right with everybody, I'd like to quickly deal with that notice of motion and get it out of the way, so that we can spend the rest of the time with the witnesses' appearances and the questions to follow.

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Chair, I move that the committee, within the terms of its mandated defence policy review, concentrate its focus in the next series of meetings on the Canadian Forces' procurement process.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): You've heard the motion. Is there discussion?

Keith, did you have something to add?

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): We could probably get this out of the way fairly quickly if we could just amend this motion slightly. The notion of looking at procurement as part of the study, we think, is absolutely essential and has to be done. But the way it reads now is that it could completely dominate the scope of the study we're doing, and the scope of the study we're doing involves many things.

Having said that, procurement is critical to the study, and I completely agree with the mover of the motion. I would suggest as an amendment that we omit “concentrate its focus in the next series”, and replace it with “include in a series of meetings on the Canadian Forces' procurement process”. In that way, the department is given time to prepare for this.

We've committed to do a series of meetings on this, and I'm sure the chair will communicate that directly to the department so that it's done forthwith. But the way it reads right now, it obligates us to focus “the next series of meetings” just on this and may not give the department sufficient time to get prepared. Maybe they'll need just a week or two to do this, and then we can have the meetings that are required and will accomplish I think the intent of the motion, which is laudable.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Can you go over what you're suggesting?

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Chairman, I move that we omit “concentrate its focus in the next series” and replace it with “include in a series of meetings on the Canadian Forces' procurement process”.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): So it would read “that the committee, within the terms of its mandated defence policy review, include”?

Hon. Keith Martin: Yes, “in a series of meetings the Canadian Forces' procurement process”. We need to remove “on” too.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I don't think I would agree with this. It would seem to me it dilutes the whole purpose here. The purpose here is not solely to deal with procurement, but to certainly concentrate on procurement. If we have an issue about the committee asking people to come in who aren't prepared, all we're saying is that we should concentrate our focus on the procurement. I don't think that precludes our giving the department some time to get those people in place, but I think when we dilute it, all we're saying basically is that it would be one of the things we look at. Really, what we're trying to do here is narrow the focus in the immediate future to the procurement side of things.

•(1110)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Go ahead.

Hon. Keith Martin: If we were to do that, Dave, it would change the complexion of the study quite significantly. There are many things to study: recruitment, procurement, hardware, funding—a whole series of things that ought to be looked at. If we just did procurement, we would I think be short-changing ourselves in dealing with a number of other challenges that this committee could bore down to and provide very constructive ideas on to the general public. If we were to just focus on the procurement, then essentially what we're doing around the country would in many ways not be useful, particularly since we're going to do NATO briefings right now. That'll be dealing with a whole array of issues that we're going to include in the study that are not germane to the issue.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): We could have a series of questioners now.

Monsieur Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chairman, I really like the wording of the original motion. We've been hearing horror stories about the procurement process for a long time now. Sometimes reference is made to delays of 10 or 12 years. For some time now, particularly since yesterday, we've been witnessing the reverse. We know what happened in Afghanistan yesterday, and this morning, in the *Globe and Mail*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Sun*, we see that the military are pressing for a vehicle with better armour, as a result of the incident yesterday. That means that, if the committee doesn't make this an urgent issue, the defence policy as worded will lead us to acquire equipment in reaction to incidents such as those that occurred yesterday, then, as a result, we'll subsequently no longer have a say in the matter.

The Conservatives' motion makes this an urgent matter. I like the fact that the motion requires us to focus immediately on the issue of the procurement process. I believe we can show a little flexibility. If, at the same time, there are important meetings and people want to come and talk to us, we can make room for them. I like the fact that the committee is deciding to take the bull by the horns because we have an emergency. We have to act before all the equipment is bought. The committee must step in, and, for once, I'd like it to come out a winner. I wouldn't want the Senate committee and the unelected minister, Senator Kenny, to beat us to the gun once again. I'm in favour of the motion as it stands.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The reason I want to question Mr. Martin is that we're not asking for there to be a different complexion; it's just the chronological order in which we wish to discuss procurement. It's not necessarily going to be the entire focus. It's not that we're going to hijack the agenda—we would never do that. We just want to discuss it first because of the urgent matters mentioned by Mr. Bachand.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): In order to bring this to a head, I suppose the way to do this is that you're proposing that as an official amendment to the motion. Hopefully the clerk can correct me, but we vote on the amendment first, and if it's passed, we vote on the amended motion, and if the amendment fails, then we vote on the motion as it stands.

Mr. Bagnell.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): I tend to agree with what Cheryl just said.

I wonder, Dave, if there's any way you can suggest that little bit of wording that would make sure that, as Mr. Martin said, it didn't change the agenda. This is one of the priority items, so we do it, fine, but it doesn't dominate the whole study. Is there any way you could just put what Cheryl was saying into—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): I wonder if we could come up with a compromise here. Would you entertain that, Keith, just for a second?

It states right now, "concentrate its focus in the next series of meetings". Could we say, "concentrate its focus in a series of meetings", just take out "the next" series of meetings?

Keith.

• (1115)

Hon. Keith Martin: That gives the department an opportunity to get prepared.

Let's be clear; we completely support this issue for the reasons that were mentioned. We're all seized with how to make the procurement process better. We have a great opportunity to find out how to do that. So let's just give the department an opportunity to get the information in a short period of time, and I think we'll be able to find the answers we're looking for.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Okay, so the amendment—

Hon. Keith Martin: I'll drop my amendment to the changes you're proposing.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Okay, we're proposing a friendly amendment by the mover that it state, "mandated defence policy review, concentrate its focus in a series of meetings on the Canadian Forces' procurement process".

Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I just want to clarify that the shorter length of time will be shorter than the length of time it took to get those documents we requested for our submarine study.

Hon. Keith Martin: It depends what you ask, Ms. Gallant.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Duly noted.

(Motion agreed to)

Thank you very much.

We welcome our witnesses here. I apologize for taking that minute to do other business, but as you know, we are in the middle of a study on the review of the defence policy, and today we have some people who I think will be able to contribute quite a great deal to that.

We welcome you, Dr. Calder, Rear Admiral Robertson, and Vincent Rigby, director general of policy planning. Gentlemen, if you have presentations to make, one or all of you, please do so, and then we'll turn it over to questions from the members.

Dr. Kenneth Calder (Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to be here with you this morning to discuss the recent defence policy statement.

I should tell you that Rear Admiral Robertson is the director general of international security policy, which means he deals with our relations with NATO, with NORAD, with the United Nations, all of our bilateral relations with friends and allies, as well as the policy aspects of peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Rigby, who is the director general of policy planning, is in the cell that actually generates options for defence policy. He led the team that drafted the defence policy statement. He probably drafted a good part of it himself, so I'm sure most of the words are engraved in his soul. He will be able to answer any of the detailed questions.

What I'd like to do is make a few opening comments and talk about the interdepartmental process that led to the defence policy statement, a little bit about the substance of what's in the statement, and then a little bit on where we go from here. I'll try to keep it as short as possible.

As you are aware, the defence policy statement was part of an overall review of Canada's international policies, which include diplomacy, defence, development, and trade. That review was integrated to an unprecedented degree. At the beginning of the 1990s, in contrast, producing an integrated national response to the complex challenges of the post-Cold War world would have been a real challenge for us in government. Frankly, there was not sufficient consensus then on what was needed in a new world.

But 15 years of experience—in Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and elsewhere—taught many of us in the bureaucracy, both military and civil, the need for a three-D approach to our engagement overseas. As a result, across government we came to take a more comprehensive view of international policy.

For our part, the role of the Canadian Forces became more deeply understood and appreciated. For CIDA, it became clear that humanitarian and development objectives could not be met in the absence of a secure environment that could only be provided in some cases by military force. For the Department of Foreign Affairs, it became clear that the challenges of foreign policy in the 21st century could not be met without an effective Canadian Forces. Those of us in defence realized that we could not solve the problems in failed and failing states on our own without parallel diplomatic and development efforts.

One sees this consensus reflected in the IPS documents themselves, which consistently reinforce one another. One also sees it in specific areas, such as the focus on failed and failing states, where what is required is the coordination of military and non-military resources. One sees it in the government's operational decisions, such as the deployment of the provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan, which draws on the skills of our military, diplomatic, and development personnel.

The defence policy statement was the product of close cooperation between the civilian and military staffs in the defence organization. What emerged was not contested by other parts of government. Indeed, the process was marked by a remarkable lack of controversy inside the government. In contrast, the 1987 white paper was attacked for its Cold War rhetoric and generated enormous controversy on the nuclear-powered submarine. In 1994, the major policy issue that was quite hotly contested was whether the Canadian Forces needed to remain combat capable.

This time around there was a remarkable degree of consensus on the requirements of the Canadian Forces. Everybody agreed that the Canadian Forces should remain combat capable, be able to respond to a wide range of scenarios, expand in size, focus more on domestic

security, work more closely with the United States, maintain an active role overseas, and be properly funded. This was built on a solid consensus on the international security environment and a growing record of experience over the last decade with post-Cold War operations. There was also widespread agreement that the abiding roles of the Canadian Forces—the protection of Canada, the defence of the continent with the United States, and an active role overseas—remain valid, but that these needed to be updated to reflect the current security environment.

With respect to Canada in North America, we took a careful look at 9/11 and its implications for Canadian security. Prior to the release of the defence policy statement, the government had increased funding for aspects of the Canadian Forces that bear on domestic security; had monitored closely the establishment in the United States of the U.S. Northern Command; had established with the United States the binational planning group to enhance bilateral security cooperation; and had detailed some of the roles the Canadian Forces would play in implementing the national security policy.

• (1120)

The defence policy statement went a step further, particularly with the creation of Canada Command, a reflection of a new perspective that sees North America as a theatre of operations in its own right. We have also been pursuing, through the binational planning group, through NORAD, and in other fora, ways to strengthen how Canadian and American militaries work together on land and at sea in the defence of North America.

The heightened focus on domestic and continental security will not come at the expense of the role of the Canadian Forces abroad. What is new here is the focus on failed and failing states. This reflected our experience in Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, and elsewhere around the world through the 1990s, as well as what we have done since 9/11 in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The expansion of the forces by 5,000 regulars and 3,000 reserve personnel, combined with organizational changes in the command structure, will enable us to deploy effective task-tailored units to the greatest effect overseas.

The demanding nature of these roles, the reach required to protect Canadians at home, the increasingly sophisticated nature of operations abroad, and the number of people required to make a difference produced a consensus within government on the question of resources. There was widespread agreement early on that the Canadian Forces, as an important national institution and key instrument of foreign policy, needed more support than the government had been able to provide over much of the previous decade.

While we were not exempt from the expenditure review that took place last fall, we believed, in the end, that defence would be receiving substantially more funding in the next few years. These expectations were confirmed in the 2005 federal budget, and we were thus able to develop our new policy with a healthy degree of confidence. Nevertheless, I expect that you will ask me whether the DPS is affordable. Both the minister and the CDS have seen the \$12.8 billion increase that we received in budget 2005 as a welcome start, but they have also said that the full implementation of the DPS will require more resources.

The maintenance and development of relevant responsive and effective operational capabilities will be the key benchmark for DPS implementation. In some areas the government has already set out how it intends to do this. It has said that it intends to acquire the mobile gun system, the joint support ship, new search and rescue aircraft, new medium-lift helicopters, new utility aircraft for the north, new trucks and so forth, and there are other details in the defence policy statement. But many of the program details for these acquisitions have yet to be worked out. What precise platform, what weapons will be acquired, how many, when, at what cost, all have to be worked out in a coherent defence program.

The government has made a commitment to release more detailed plans for the future of the Canadian Forces in the near future, and in conjunction with the staff of the vice-chief, we are currently developing this program document with an eye to releasing it in the coming months.

In conclusion, I would simply say that I personally have been involved in four white papers and I have never seen as much consensus, both inside and outside of government, on the way ahead for the Canadian Forces.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Very good. Does anybody else have a presentation or can we start to respond to questions?

Thank you very much, Dr. Calder.

We'll start with Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, Dr. Calder. It was an interesting overview.

Given the motion we have just passed with respect to procurement, I guess your last comments are of importance to us. The fact that a large sum of money appears to be put forward in the budget...you equally mentioned there's a lack of information on platforms and what the military's needs may be. How do you see the

military or DND being able to utilize even the money that is put forward at this point?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I don't think that's a problem because the increases in the budget in 2005 ramp up over time. So I think we have in this year the money we need, because we're at the beginning of the process. Obviously, as the program details are worked out and as we begin some of these acquisitions, the demand on the capital budget will rise, but that's actually accounted for in the budget.

As you know, it is difficult for the department quickly to absorb large amounts of new money, to spend it responsibly. But the first step, which is what we're actually working on and which I hope the committee will be able to see in the not too distant future, is that we need to have the defence program that works out the details of all of these programs and makes sure they fit together and reinforce one another. You then have the sequencing of the timing so that it can be done within affordable parameters.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: What I'm thinking is, have we perhaps in some respects put some of the cart before the horse? We've gone for this long period of time where we've been cutting back with the military, cutting back on resources, on people, and on equipment. Now we put out a large sum of money—some would say a large sum, others question that—for procurement, but we haven't got our house in order as to what our true needs are and, using your words, what platform it should be on. Are we moving a little bit backwards here in the process?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I think if we had the \$12.8 billion today your comment would be justified, but of course we don't have that; it's coming. First of all, the department has laid out in broad terms what the military thinks they require into the future in those programs. That is one step in the right direction, laying those out. What we have to do is work out the details of the program so we can go forward to cabinet with a convincing case that justifies the expenditure of the money. I'm confident that by the time the money starts arriving, we will be in the position to expend it properly and wisely and with due regard to the taxpayers' interest.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Another big part of the program was the enhancement of the personnel numbers within the forces. What do you see happening with respect to that if we are not able to make that enhancement happen with respect to deployment overseas or even in our own country?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: As you know, there are two aspects to this question. There is the aspect of getting people to come into our recruiting offices and sign up, and then there's the aspect of training. Both of them are challenges. This is not an easy process and it is not without difficulties. My understanding is that there are difficulties, and it is certainly challenging to get the numbers.

I also can tell you that the Chief of the Defence Staff and the people responsible for recruiting are acutely aware of this and are determined to make it succeed. I think the recruiters are confident that they can reach the numbers over the period of time, but this is something one has to pay a lot of attention to as it unfolds to see if we're actually achieving those objectives.

•(1130)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: If we don't meet those objectives: that's my concern. I understand the Americans are just announcing now that they're finding it very difficult, and with our deployment to Afghanistan it may or may not help our recruiters. If we don't meet that, what happens to the rest of the plan?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I think what it does is reduce the number of trained, deployable people we have ready to go, let's say, x number of years down the way, so we would have fewer forces to deploy in some cases because the numbers wouldn't be there. But I don't think it would actually unhinge the plan, if I can put it that way, or delay achieving the full objectives.

Of course, in every white paper I've ever been involved in you set out objectives and aims and the path you're going on, and you don't always make the timelines because other things sometimes intervene and cause you to slow down. I don't think we would be in a critical situation if we were somewhat slower at getting those numbers.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: This is not a white paper, though. The defence policy is a policy as opposed to a white paper, correct?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Well, it's a matter of terminology. I would say it's a small w , small p , white paper. If you can conceive of a generic white paper, you'll find it has all those characteristics.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): We had this discussion the other day about what this actually represented. Some mentioned white paper, some policy. Just exactly what is it?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Sometimes the terminology is complex. In 1987 we had a white paper and we called it a white paper, and it made a great demand on the finance department. So in 1992 we also published a white paper, but we didn't call it one because it had become synonymous with something that's expensive. Fashions change sometimes.

It is a policy.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Mr. Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: I'd like to welcome Mr. Calder and his group. I thought I heard the minister say—I believe you referred to this—when he took out his statement or his defence policy, that a document would follow shortly describing the equipment we need so that the policy is applicable.

Did you mention that earlier? Did you say that we should expect to see that type of document in the immediate future?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: That's correct; that's the document I referred to at the end of my speech.

Mr. Claude Bachand: You want to talk about your presentation.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: That document provides all the details on the program. It doesn't just concern procurement, but also other changes made to the program.

Mr. Claude Bachand: That's good. Do you think we committee members will have a chance to lay our hands on the document so that we can discuss it before the military planners and you yourself have bought all the equipment?

Going back to what I said a little earlier about the motion that has been introduced, there was an incident in Afghanistan yesterday in which three of our soldiers were injured. Suddenly people are saying it's important to add more armour to the G wagon. But that will cost \$100 million over a two-year period.

Am I to conclude that was bad planning? Does that mean we sent off 250 soldiers who didn't have the necessary equipment to protect themselves? There were three wounded and now it's a rush. That moreover is the word used in the title of the article:

[English]

“Military puts in rush order for safer patrol vehicles”.

[Translation]

Are we going to be rushed like this as incidents occur? As soon as something happens, we'll have to buy this or that. Should we conclude that, when the document I just referred to finally comes out, all the equipment will already have been acquired?

•(1135)

[English]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: If I may, I'll respond to that in English.

I think it's safe to say you will see the document before most of the acquisitions in the document actually take place, given the amount of time it takes us to acquire new pieces of equipment. I would hope that you would see the document in the not too distant future. I don't expect that you would see the document before it has been agreed to by the government. The government will look at it, make its decisions, and agree to the document; then my understanding is that it will be published. It will be available to parliamentarians and to the general public, but that will be certainly, as I say, well in advance of most of the acquisitions that would be covered.

I would say, with respect to the items you cite in the paper, one should take note that the incident that happened yesterday, regrettable as it was and thank God nobody was killed, showed we had done the right thing in acquiring the G wagon and in reinforcing the G wagon. In fact, the injuries were, as I understand, minor, although I haven't seen the detailed reports. I think in a sense it shows we acted correctly in acquiring that.

There is also a report there on other acquisitions that are in train. Those are not acquisitions that have been worked out at the last moment. We began the planning for the current and future deployments in Afghanistan well more than a year ago. In the planning for those operations, of course, the military put forward sound military options, and some of those options involved acquiring additional equipment that would help the forces do a better job there. Those are the ones that are referred to in the newspaper article. There's nothing hasty about it. It is based essentially on our assessment and experience in Afghanistan and what the troops need to do the job.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Thank you. In another line of thinking, Mr. Calder, it seems to me we're missing a director here today, the Director General, Policy Coordination. I'm told his name is Mayhew, but it's pronounced “Maillox”. Could you explain why that director isn't here?

I'm looking at his responsibilities as stated in the organization chart. As you know, the committee wonders whether it can influence the defence policy and how it can do so. Many people wonder whether we're not doing a pointless job.

I'm looking at the responsibilities of the director who is absent. He does a lot of interesting things. He liaises with Cabinet, he handles parliamentary affairs. I'd be pleased to ask him a few questions. I also saw that he prepared the minister for question period. I don't know whether we could secure that gentleman's services here to assist us in drafting our questions. I doubt it.

I'm also wondering about the official policy. Isn't this director responsible for reading the government's policy statement and saying how to interpret it, for preparing the briefing for the minister and Privy Council as well as briefings for the various non-governmental organizations? Doesn't he prepare the interpretation that is to be provided in response to the academics who know the field?

That makes me wonder. Does our committee really have a role to play? Mr. Chairman, is it possible to ask Mr. Mayhew to come and appear before us, as Messrs. Rigby and Robertson are doing? It seems to me he's a missing link for our discussion this morning.

[*English*]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: In the case of Mr. Mayhew, I'm sure he'd be quite happy to be here, but he's on extended sick leave because of some rather difficult surgery.

I could have brought more of my staff here. I thought that bringing two would probably be enough, but of course I could always bring people from other areas, if you were interested. I think between the three of us we can probably cover off most of the issues Mr. Mayhew would be able to speak about.

With respect to modifying the policy statement, the policy statement is a statement of the government and is part of a package. It is not just a defence document, but part of a package, as you know, of a foreign policy statement, including trade policy, aid policy, and so forth. So it is not something that is a draft or subject to change. The point, of course, is that policy, and defence policy in particular, is not in fact a one-time event but an ongoing process. It is a dialogue, or should be a dialogue, anyway. It is something that is evolving over time, and who knows, we may have another policy a year from now.

So in that sense the deliberations of this and other committees on policy, and your recommendations and suggestions and so forth—which I would particularly welcome, for example, on procurement policy—would be very well received and would probably become part of the next white paper process, because in producing this paper, we certainly paid strict attention to the reports and suggestions of this committee and others on defence policy.

• (1140)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Are you suggesting then that whatever we come up with as a recommendation from this process will be part of another white paper before anything else develops? I think that's what I heard you say, but I'll let you clarify that.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I'm not in a position, Mr. Chairman, to predict the future, but it seems to me this is not the last defence

policy. Put it that way. In the future, there will obviously be reiterations of policy, and normally speaking, in National Defence, we pay very strict attention to the recommendations of committees and the results of their deliberations, so they become, in a sense, part of the process for the next round.

This white paper may last for 10 years, like the last one did. On the other hand, the 1987 white paper lasted I think 18 months. So the lifespan of white papers is a highly irregular thing.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Rick Casson): Mr. Bagnell.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I thank you. I might not use all my time, so I can share with Mr. Khan.

Thank you for coming. I'm not sure quite how the system works, so I will make my same points to all the witnesses, just so that it gets into the system.

As you know, my riding is in the north, so I was delighted to hear your emphasis on the north. I think it's been building in recent years, and that's very good. I'm very happy with that. Of our 60,000-odd people, the two areas of Canada where we had sovereignty challenges were Nunavut and Yukon. In Nunavut we had zero troops until I complained, and now I think we've got one. In Yukon we had four.

I was glad to hear you talk about the new utility planes and search and rescue. As I've said a number of times, I think it would be totally unacceptable, with the broad array of new search and rescue planes we're going to get, if there wasn't at least one north of 60—even if it was used for other things as well, as part of the compromise.

I'm appreciative of the attention the north is getting, and I want to just reinforce how important it is for me that this continue, especially with the melting of the polar ice caps.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: We have actually paid a lot of attention over the last few years to the question of what happens with the melting of the polar ice cap. There's the question of international air traffic over the north as well, which can also be a factor.

I won't repeat what the defence policy statement says in terms of the details of what we're going to be doing in the north, because I know that you know them and so forth, but I would simply make the comment that this policy statement has put a greater emphasis on the north than any policy statement has since 1987. In the 1992 white paper, I'm not sure we mentioned the north, and I don't recall that we said very much in the 1994 paper. But there is no doubt, and I have seen this in consultations with the Canadian public and with some of our academic colleagues—particularly our friends out in Alberta, who pay a lot of attention to the north—that inside and outside government over the last few years there has been increasing attention on the north and the questions that could arise in the future. I think that's why you see reflected in the DPS more emphasis on the north than we've seen for a long time.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Dr. Calder, thank you for being here.

I have two quick questions. I'll ask them and then listen.

The first question pertains to our troops deployed to Afghanistan. I know they're deployed there, they're in harm's way, and they're doing a great job. Does the Department of National Defence have the ability to provide them with their immediate needs, and could you identify some of those needs and how long it would take to meet them?

I also read with interest in the newspapers some comments about the procurement of C-130s and some helicopters. I'm also concerned that a lot of these comments come about through a lack of knowledge of single platforms, single bidders. The C-130 is a tried and tested aircraft, as are the Chinook and the Apache. However, we won't get into that.

So perhaps you could comment on the needs and the timeframe.

My other question is a general one. I'm curious to know whether you see a greater U.S. influence on our formation and command structures as a result of the defence review.

• (1145)

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I'm not sure exactly what your reference is to needs. Certainly the troops, the PRT, we currently have in Kandahar, as far as I'm aware, have what they need to do the job there. There are no shortfalls or problems in that respect.

Of course when we get into the new year, we are going to a much higher level of operation, when we put in our battle group and our headquarters and so forth. There are a number of things that have to be put in place before they actually arrive, and that will be in February, so I think it will happen. The process is unfolding as it should.

You made a reference to the Hercules and others. I should tell you that the department is looking at the capital acquisition programs that are outlined in the white paper. Obviously we want to move forward as quickly as possible for the procurement of the various things that are outlined there. But as the minister has said publicly, he has not gone forward to the cabinet on those types of issues, for example, the tactical airlift and so forth. He has not gone forward with proposals, and that is all still under discussion.

With respect to American influence, I don't think there is any particular American influence on the changes the Chief of the Defence Staff is bringing about in the command structure, for example, the establishment of Canada Command and CEFCOM.

There is a similarity between Canada Command and NORTHCOM, but that's not a question of American influence. I think that's a question of both countries responding to the same sets of external security concerns, and that is the increased threat to North America as a result of terrorism and the asymmetric threats, and also the increased need for the armed forces in the United States to respond in the case of civil emergencies, as we've seen here in Canada on many occasions. The Americans are getting used to it as well. There has to be more focus on operations in North America. In establishing Canada Command, we're responding to the same types of considerations the Americans have had, but I wouldn't say it's American influence.

Mr. Vincent Rigby (Director General, Policy Planning, Department of National Defence): If I could add to that, I think Dr. Calder is 100% right. Beyond the command and control structure, in terms of some of the operational structures that we created as part of the DPS—special operations group, standing contingency task force, mission-specific task forces—what these are about are greater integration and greater jointness, having more bang for the buck. This is not unique to the United States or even to Canada. This is happening across the world with militaries. Allies are looking at ways of responding to the international security environment more quickly, more effectively. That's why I think we're looking at those kinds of structures. We know that the U.S. has put a considerable amount of emphasis on jointness, but this I think is very much Canada just accepting the reality that this is the best way to respond to contingencies.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): We'll start the five-minute round.

Ms. Gallant, the floor is yours.

[English]

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

First of all, OCIPEP, the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness, has been renamed since the Auditor General found all those millions missing. What is it called now?

• (1150)

Dr. Kenneth Calder: It has been absorbed into the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Planning Canada. The entire organization effectively was incorporated into this new department, which also incorporated the Solicitor General and other organizations, so that you have a ministry under the Deputy Prime Minister looking after public security and emergency planning.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

I see that you're in charge of managing the bilateral and multilateral defence and international security relations. I'd like to ask a question specifically about NORAD. Why is it that there is nobody at NORAD from what used to be the OCIPEP department. Foreign Affairs, as I understand it, has a representation there, but we have nobody from the Office of Critical Infrastructure or its new entity.

If there is a situation where there's a missile headed for Canada, there's no one in that situation room to advise on what infrastructure might be affected.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: It's a good point.

I think on the military side, the Canadian military who are there are in a position to in fact deal with a number of those questions. Of course, the information they pass back would be passed to the ministry of security and emergency planning.

We are, of course, involved in negotiations with the Americans to renew the NORAD agreement. In the process of those negotiations, we are looking at enhancing NORAD.

NORAD at the moment essentially deals with aerospace. We are looking, with the Americans, at the possibility of closer cooperation with respect to maritime security, and also closer cooperation between the two militaries in support of the civil authorities in the case of an emergency and so forth. Depending on the outcome of those negotiations and exactly the scope of NORAD, it's quite possible we might have somebody from that ministry involved.

When we established the binational planning group, which is not part of NORAD but is kind of co-located with NORAD and is run by the deputy commander of NORAD, who is the Canadian senior officer, we did have a representative of that department involved in the binational planning group. I've lost track of exactly what happened to that position, but I think it has not since been filled. But it is certainly there and certainly available. If Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada wished to put somebody down there, that would certainly be quite welcome.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

You're involved with other bilateral issues. Would it be correct to assume you are familiar with their ballistic missile defence program? Can you tell us what exactly the United States was asking of Canada when it was asking for the support of our country for that program?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I can say that they were not looking for money and they were not looking for use of Canadian territory. They were looking for our cooperation with and support for the program as it evolved. It was in a sense a preliminary negotiation.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: So they weren't asking for anything other than our moral support?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: More than moral support, our political support, but we might have also been able to make some sort of contribution in the area of research and development, or Canadian industry might have had an opportunity to become involved. But they were certainly not looking, as I say, for any of the major types of items you would usually think of in a program like this, because of course they are at the very early stage of their program as well, and it has a long way to go. They were essentially asking us if we wanted to get on board.

Mr. Vincent Rigby: Let me just add very quickly to that, from having been fairly intimately engaged in DND negotiations.

When the President pushed forward the idea of the ballistic missile defence system, he wanted the United States to engage all allies. It was very much a part of the evolution of the BMD system to engage allies. He saw it as a global system. It was not just Canada that was engaged, but other countries as well—the U.K., Australia, and so on.

I think in the context of North America, the United States sees the defence of the United States more and more in a continental context. They see defence as being indivisible between Canada and the United States. It was very natural for them.... It wasn't so much about what they were asking for specifically, but for them it was a no-brainer that if you're talking about missile defence, as with other aspects of continental security—whether it was the border or maritime security—you would discuss that aspect with the Canadian officials. So it's very much I think part of a broader context.

•(1155)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Mr. Martin, over to you.

[*English*]

Hon. Keith Martin: Thank you very much, Dr. Calder, Admiral Robertson, and Mr. Rigby for being here today.

Dr. Calder, we're a large country with a small population with defined military capabilities. We'd like to get the best bang for the buck. In your experience, do you see Canada providing certain niche strategic capabilities internationally?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: The word "niche" always makes me quite nervous because niche suggests to me some kind of specialty that we would do that others might not do. I think that is an unwise course to pursue. If you make a mistake and find the wrong niche, you may actually end up doing nothing.

I think the best course of action for the Canadian Forces, which is in fact being done, although not always stated, is to have the types of forces that have the maximum utility and the maximum flexibility for the Canadian government, because it's not possible to predict what we need in the future. For example, if you talk about the navy, I think frigates are the most important thing for the navy to have. Frigates can do a whole range of things. In the army, for example, the most important thing is obviously a combat-capable infantry that is well-equipped.

I think the guiding principle in force planning should be to acquire the things that you are most likely to use and that you've used in the recent past. In fact, when you are getting rid of stuff, you should get rid of stuff you don't use. For example, that's why we are replacing the main battle tank, which has never really been deployed since Korea nor actually since we had them in Europe. We're replacing that with a mobile gun system. It is something that is more useful, and you could imagine it easily being deployed in a place like Kandahar.

Hon. Keith Martin: Perhaps I should rephrase the way I presented that.

There is excellence, and I'll give you an example. The MTech program, in my experience, where I've seen our forces members working abroad, has done an outstanding job. The cadre of NCOs that we have right now is a pool of excellence, if you will, that can provide an enormous bang for the buck at a relatively low price.

That's what I was really referring to. It's not to do something to the exclusion of other things, but to really develop a few areas of excellence, such as the MTech program, which is what we have, and our JTF-2. But we can leave the latter aside.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I would argue quite unashamedly that all aspects of the Canadian Forces are excellent and that we have excellence in all the areas. I think we should continue. There may be some areas that I haven't thought of that we shouldn't develop further, but I think we should be striving for excellence across the board. Quite frankly, I think we've actually achieved it in terms of quality.

I think Mr. Rigby may have something to add.

Mr. Vincent Rigby: I would only add that, like Dr. Calder, I'm a little bit nervous when I hear the word "niche". I certainly wouldn't call this concept of the three-block war a niche per se, which we articulate in the defence policy statement, but I would say that the Canadian Forces are very good at that.

The Chief of the Defence Staff has talked about this before. Some forces are very good at the high end and some are good at the low end. We can do all three blocks. We can do high-end combat, we can do stabilization, and we can do assistance for humanitarian aid. That's what we're very good at, and that's where I think the DPS really focuses.

If you want to call it a niche...I don't like the term, as I said, but I think the forces will become even better at that. Their expertise is not only in terms of their actual capabilities and equipment. They have the ability to deal with local populations, as we've seen in Afghanistan.

Hon. Keith Martin: Not for one moment was I implying that any element of our forces was anything but excellent. Perhaps I didn't word it well.

Do I have a minute?

• (1200)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Yes, you still have a minute.

Hon. Keith Martin: Lastly, on the procurement side, can you provide any suggestions on what can be done on the political side to shorten the procurement process? I thought I'd leave you with an easy question.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I have been involved in the aspects of procurement for 20 years now—the policy aspects of it, the cabinet aspects, and so forth. As long as I have been involved in it, the time it takes and the complexity of the procurement process have been an issue. In fact, when I first became involved in the process about 20 years ago, we were doing a memorandum to cabinet on the procurement process, and you could fill this room with the documents and studies on the procurement process.

Quite frankly, I don't have any easy answers. It's not an area of expertise I have. If I had any ideas, I would certainly have launched them already.

I will say that we're buying major pieces of equipment that are enormously expensive. When you're dealing with the amounts of money that we are dealing with, when the decisions that are made on those pieces of equipment will determine whether people live or die out in the field, and when you look at the sheer complexity of the pieces of equipment you're buying, it is not surprising that the process is long and difficult. There may be ways of streamlining it,

but no matter how much you streamline it, it's still going to take a long time because of the gravity of the matter.

That said, I could certainly tell you that the minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff are quite determined to work on the procurement process and to bring about improvements. But I'm afraid I don't have any easy solution to the problem.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Thank you.

Mr. Perron, over to you.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I'm going to state a fact. I would have liked to receive a copy of your opening statement. I feel that work instrument helps us committee members better prepare to ask questions. Mr. Chairman, I believe we should receive a copy, as we do most of the time.

I went onto the National Defence Web site to see what you were doing, what your responsibilities were. One of those responsibilities—which seems to be important, since it's the fourth one—is to provide advice on management of national unity issues and on provincial government relations.

What does that have to do with your work?

[English]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Actually, it is in my job description, but since defence is a federal responsibility and we don't have the types of federal-provincial relations that other governments do, I would say in fact that it is something I have not spent any amount of time on in the last few years.

By the way, if the committee likes, we will have my opening remarks translated and forwarded to the committee.

If a question came up for the department where we had to deal with the provinces, I would be involved because of that statement in my job description, but in fact it would not be one of the more active aspects of my portfolio.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Does that mean you haven't been involved in that aspect over the past two years? Is that related to the fact that the Liberal Party is in power in Quebec? That's just an unpleasant remark.

How is it that no reference is made, anywhere in the statement, to the quality of life of our soldiers and their families or to relations between soldiers and senior command? That's not talked about at all. It talks about aircraft, ships and money. However, as regards the human side of the armed forces—soldiers—it seems that's not at all the concern of senior officials, those who think and decide. I believe you are one of the intelligent people who took part in developing this policy. Why is that the case? What are the plans?

•(1205)

[English]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: The defence policy document does not pretend to be complete or to deal with all of the concerns in the department. For example, I think if you check into the defence policy document, you won't find anything on procurement policy either, or if you find it, it would be very slight. In the same sense, we haven't talked a great deal about many aspects of things that are being done inside the department. The idea is not to be a compendium of everything that's done, but to set out the priorities of the government in the way ahead. Therefore the absence of something should not be read as a lack of importance; it probably should be read as something that is being dealt with in its own track.

I would say that the Department of National Defence, certainly over the last decade, has put an enormous amount of work and effort into the quality of life of the Canadian Forces, ever since, I believe, Doug Young was the minister, and we made significant contributions there. The quality of life of people in the services has always been a very high priority in all aspects of the department, and particularly to the military leadership. I don't think anything should be read into the fact that we didn't mention it in the defence policy document.

Mr. Vincent Rigby: Perhaps I can just add one comment to that. I would simply say, sir, that it's true. We don't go into a lot of detail in the defence policy statement about quality of life issues, but we do refer to it in passing in the context of the heavy operational demands on the Canadian Forces over the last 10, 15 years—the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder and other issues of that nature. I think we do say at one point in the DPS that the government says that the highest priority for the government and the Canadian Forces are its people.

I think one of the reasons behind the expansion of the Canadian Forces by 5,000 personnel is to try to reduce the operational tempo of our people by as much as the government possibly can, and by reducing that operational tempo, you of course reduce the stress on the people themselves.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I don't have any more time, but I'd like to take some of... I agree with you; you've made a lot of progress. I'd like you to admit or see that a great deal remains to be done.

Have you considered unionizing your soldiers?

[English]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: No.

An hon. member: That's a political answer.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Thank you.

Mr. Powers, over to you.

[English]

Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.): Thank you very much for coming, gentlemen.

I have a comment on the beige paper on defence policy review. Like my colleagues earlier, the fact that you've dealt with the sovereignty element of it...certainly not the sovereignty focus, but

the fact that you've looked at the reality that it has a coast to coast to coast element with it. So the forward planning that can go with that is I think the fact that you've recognized it and you've identified some things that need to be dealt with.

Mr. Calder, you referred to the infusion of money, the multiple billions of dollars. This is certainly probably the first go-round, and you're looking for more. I'd like you to perhaps expand upon where you would like to go from there. I'm aware of the heavy-lift capabilities and the transport capabilities we require in order for us to carry out, how shall we say it, the peacekeeping abilities we're going to involve ourselves in, but can you perhaps give me some of your thoughts, or perhaps your colleagues' thoughts, on where we need to go beyond this particular document in question?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I don't think we can go much beyond it at the moment. As I explained, we are in the process of working out a program document that will in fact give substance and put meat on the bones of what you find in the defence policy statement. I think that will kind of set out where we need to go. At this point in time, that document is not at the stage of development where I could in fact say anything publicly about it, or the committee, prior to it being considered by the senior management and by the minister, but as I said, I'm hoping that in due course we will in fact have that document out.

•(1210)

Mr. Russ Powers: Enlightened by process as you go through that evaluation, you'll determine where there are areas that probably would show up in subsequent asks or process.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Yes, I think so, and we will be learning also from the experience we're going to have next year in Afghanistan, operations in Afghanistan.

As the command structure inside the Department of National Defence changes with the establishment of Canada Command and CEFCOM, and so forth, that will also tell us a great deal about what other capabilities we may need, but I think it's too early to say that now.

Mr. Russ Powers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): It's the Liberals' turn.

[English]

Are there any Liberals who would like to comment? There are still two minutes left on your side.

Keith, go ahead.

Hon. Keith Martin: Dr. Calder, on the issue of our relationship with the U.S. and the interoperability challenges that all the allies of the U.S. will have, can you provide us with some insights as to what we need to do in order to ensure that we have interoperability with the U.S. in our military endeavours?

With their spending so much larger than ours, we can't catch up, and with the complexity and technology moving so quickly forward, could you give us some insight on how we can ensure that interoperability continues?

I just want to put that finally in the context of my comments about procurement. I know it takes a long time, but with technology moving so quickly forward, by the time, of course, we make a decision, even if it's eight or nine years down the line, we're still behind the curve in terms of what is technologically up to date.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: On interoperability, I'm going to ask my friend here to talk about this, because of the operational experience he's actually had with the American forces. But in a lot of areas we have already a high level of interoperability with the United States. We have our frigates that sail with American carrier battle groups and fit seamlessly into those operations, to the extent that, I'm told, they have become almost invisible to the Americans as a foreign ship being present. We have a lot of interoperability developed with the Americans, and a lot of it comes through because of our relationship in NORAD and because of our operations together, the two air forces. We also have it in the army because of our experience working, for example, in Afghanistan with the Americans and with others.

I think there's always a challenge with the Americans because they are putting so much more into defence than we are, and it's a question of size. But I'm not sure this is insurmountable, because many aspects of interoperability are more related to communications, to modes of operation, to being able to communicate to one another, for example. So all of the work that is being done on what we call C4ISR in the department should also in fact help with interoperability.

Drew, do you want to add something?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Mr. Robertson, do you want to add something?

Rear Admiral Drew W. Robertson (Director General, International Security Policy, Department of National Defence): Yes, thank you.

The Americans have this problem with all of their allies, but it's not all about money. It's about manners of operating, as you said, and it's about habits of cooperation as much anything else. When it comes to money, even the Americans don't have enough money. They have a challenge of interoperability just in the fact that their next class of destroyers is costing multi-billions of dollars and they have choices to make about where they're going to put their moneys.

The greatest requirement is that whatever a country fields, it be capable, proficient, and ready to work with the U.S. If you do that, you've got something to contribute. The challenge we have with the Americans perhaps is related most to their command and control system. You'll hear the term "SIPRINET" used. It's just a secure Internet-based system for communications command and control. In the case of that system, which the Americans use more and more for coalition operations, it is a system that's very difficult for any foreign country to gain access to, in part because of the way information is stored on it and secured on it.

The counter to that, in part, is multinational command and control systems like the system used in NATO. Having commanded a NATO flagship myself, several years back, if NATO has one common system that's used by all of the forces deployed on an operation, then you don't have that interoperability problem with the U.S.; what you have is interoperability with 26 other nations on a deployment.

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Thank you.

Mr. MacKenzie, over to you.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you.

I was interested in your comments about the procurement and the rooms full of paper. If I could make one suggestion...if we shredded all that paper and started over fresh, would we then be better off? And maybe if we take the political part out of the procurement and make the political part the oversight as opposed to the decision-making in the first place, it might shorten the process.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I'm not sure I'd want to comment on the political process, but I wouldn't want to have to read all that paper again.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: If we go back to Mrs. Gallant's comments with respect to NORAD and missile defence, I think many of your comments were what we heard this summer on a tour we made down there. If there was a political will to revisit that, would it put us in a position of looking backwards and joining in, putting our people on a different level in dealing with the Americans? I'm concerned about NORAD, that instead of two countries working together at the same level, the American people are going to be looking at us as less than equals in that whole arena.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I don't think that's going to happen. We have begun conversations with the Americans on NORAD renewal because we need to renew it by I think May of next year. As I said earlier, we are looking to enhance the relationship. We're not looking for the status quo; we're looking to enhance the relationship. Certainly the sense we've got back so far from our interlocutors is that they have the same interest.

I think the Americans would have preferred that we had taken a different decision on ballistic missile defence, but I think they respect our decision. They always said at the time it was for us to decide, and we could decide whatever we wanted. I don't think it has actually done damage to our bilateral relationship, or particularly to our NORAD relationship, in large measure because that relationship is based on what is in the interests of the United States and what is in the interests of Canada. So it's not a personal thing. You don't pay back for things that irritate you with the other. What happens is both the Americans and the Canadians recognize that we are better off with NORAD, doing what NORAD is doing, than trying to do it by ourselves, and we both recognize that the defence of North America cannot be parsed. In many areas, the defence of the continent is the entire continent. They could not tolerate seeing a threat to any part of the continent, nor could we.

So I think the NORAD foundation is a foundation of self-interest on both sides, which is I think the surest foundation of a success. I'm quite optimistic that with the negotiations we'll be able to come back in front of this committee and others in the not-too-distant future and report on that.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I'm not suggesting that there's any payback in this, but when we're not part of what they consider to be a major part of their future plans, we also have to leave the room, if you will, in certain circumstances in NORAD. By not being part of it, does it not shut our industry—research and development and some other things—out of that particular loop, whereas Australia has stepped up and joined in? We lose more than appears on the surface. That's my concern.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I think many of us believed we would better off in the tent than outside the tent at the time. I would say, though, that I've never believed that applied in the case of industry. I think in the area of ballistic missile defence, if Canadian industry is producing something that is useful and that the Americans want, they'll come and buy it. That's not driven by what people like me do or others. If Canadian industry produces a product that contributes to missile defence, the Americans will buy it. I suspect they already have, in some cases, although I don't have the details.

• (1220)

Mr. Vincent Rigby: Could I jump in and add something very quickly?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Sure, go ahead, Mr. Rigby.

Mr. Vincent Rigby: I think the Americans look at the Canada-U.S. relationship very much in a holistic way; they don't look exclusively at the ballistic missile defence decision or at the Iraq decision, for that matter. I've had the opportunity—and I'm sure Admiral Robertson can give you anecdotal evidence as well—to visit the U.S. and Washington on a number of occasions recently. When we talk about the defence policy statement, when we talk about the \$12.8 billion over five years, and when we talk about what we're doing in Afghanistan, the Americans are very impressed. I've had a couple of people tell me they're glad to see that the Canadians are back. So I think that puts it in a little bit of context as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Madam Gallant.

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

I'm trying to correlate the defence policy with actual decisions taken by government. Would you explain the way missile defence policy evolved within the department during the span of time between early 2004, when indications were that Canada was supportive of the BMD, and the point at which the Prime Minister announced that Canada was not going to be participating? Is there a guiding policy with respect to BMD, or once the announcements happen, do they become policy?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I'm not sure I understand, but I think in a lot of these cases we had discussions with our American colleagues at the active working level. In fact, we've had discussions on the subject of BMD on and off with the Americans for about as long as I can remember, actually. Obviously, at some point it came time for the government to make a decision, and the government decided, in its wisdom, that pursuing ballistic missile defence was not what it considered to be a priority, that it wanted to focus its efforts elsewhere. It does happen that sometimes you go forward to government with recommendations or conclusions, or whatever, and they decide, in their wisdom, that they want to take another course of action.

Mr. Vincent Rigby: I would say that government officials received a mandate from the government in the spring of 2003 to go away and work with the Americans on an agreement for ballistic missile defence. As government officials, that's what we did. We worked as hard as we could to get it to the point where we could present the government with options. But as Dr. Calder said, at that point the government's priorities lay elsewhere—with maritime security, or border security, or what have you. I don't think there was any internal change at DND. As I said, we'd been instructed to work with the Americans and discuss ballistic missile defence, and that's what we did.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Within current defence policy, what aspect would be the basis for advising the minister or the Prime Minister on making a decision about which conflict Canada would become involved with? We're invited to participate in many different operations, but there are a finite number in which we can participate.

For example, on what policy basis would Canada go to Darfur as opposed to the Congo, or to hunt al-Qaeda in Afghanistan versus providing stability to Iraq, as Mr. Rigby alluded to? Where is the basis in defence policy?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: First of all, the basis is found originally in foreign policy, not in defence policy. It may also be found in some aspects of aid policy. Where we go abroad, where we deploy, and what operations we become involved in are not questions for the Department of National Defence. We get play in that discussion, but first and foremost it is a question of whether any particular intervention is consistent with Canadian foreign policy and in Canadian interests.

For example, we may well want to intervene in a conflict that poses a serious threat to international peace and security in any particular area. To some extent, that would be the basis for what we did in the Balkans.

In the case of Afghanistan, it is clearly the campaign against terrorism and the policy of pursuing the terrorists where they are, as far away from our territory as possible.

In other cases, we may want to intervene in a crisis in our own neighbourhood—for example, in a place like Haiti. In a place like Sudan, our interest and involvement reflect the strong humanitarian element in Canadian foreign policy.

There is a whole series of reasons that can generate a mission. We play a part in that discussion, but obviously Foreign Affairs, CIDA, the Prime Minister, and the Privy Council Office all have a say. We certainly look for operations that are either UN operations or under a UN umbrella. In some cases, there may be a NATO element. For example, our mission in Afghanistan not only contributes to the United Nations mandated mission and to the Afghani people and government, but it also contributes to NATO because it's a NATO operation. A number of considerations will play into any sort of discussion.

From the Department of National Defence's point of view, of course, the question is, are we capable of doing a certain mission? And what is the contribution we can make? Invariably, what happens is if we identify a crisis or a country where we need to deploy, the minister will ask the military, if you have to deploy in this area, what could you do? The military side would make a contribution. It's the military that defines the detailed options, it's the military that assesses the risk to Canadians, and it's the military that determines what needs to be done. Those options are presented and the government will decide.

We each have separate roles in the process of making a coherent decision.

• (1225)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back to NORAD for a second. If I may say, it's sort of an indirect participation in the ballistic missile defence.

I'd like you to comment. If Canada were to place radar at Goose Bay or wherever in the country as an eye in the sky, would that give us an enhanced role in NORAD, and would that be beneficial to Canada?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Excuse me, I'm not sure.... If we put radar in...?

Mr. Wajid Khan: On Canadian soil to track incoming missiles—would it give us more participation in NORAD, an enhanced role in NORAD, more room around the table, thus going back into the missile defence program through the back door and not committing a whole lot of money?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: I don't think it's possible to put radar in Goose Bay without committing a lot of money. I've never seen anybody giving—

Mr. Wajid Khan: Relative to going into missile defence?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: We have the radar, as I understand it. I'm not in the air force, but I think we have the radar in NORAD that we need for the NORAD mission. I don't think any type of radar is necessary in Goose Bay.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Or any part of Canada?

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Yes, or anywhere else, and certainly I've never heard of a cheap radar either. Given all the other priorities we have for the expenditure of defence dollars, I don't think it would even make the list.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): With your permission, I'd like to ask you a question related to what Mr. Khan said. Isn't there an agreement that states that, if a radar station were established

in Goose Bay, we wouldn't automatically be part of the anti-missile shield because that's related to detection? There's a distinction between detection and counter-offensive equipment, in other words interceptors. It seems to me I recently read Mr. Ferguson's document on the fact that, if we engage in detection, we're not violating the government's policy of not taking part in the anti-missile shield. My question merely follows up on that of Mr. Khan.

[English]

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Certainly we have agreed and have amended the NORAD agreement such that the information collected by NORAD and the information available to NORAD with respect to missile warning can be made available to the American commanders who are conducting ballistic missile defence. Whether, if we went further and did something else, it would constitute involvement in ballistic missile defence or not would probably be an issue that would be hotly contested. I don't think it's simple.

• (1230)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): Mr. Perron, over to you.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Mr. Chairman, out of a sense of solidarity, I'd like my time to be allocated to my colleague Claude Bachand.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): You should have told me in advance.

I believe we've had an excellent meeting. I'd prefer to skip my turn. I've essentially touched on the subjects I wanted to address. Would other committee members like to speak? Otherwise, we're simply going to adjourn the meeting since everyone has spoken. Does someone want to speak?

Mr. Calder, on behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for your presentation. I expected something very technical. You provided us with a good overview of the government's policies, as well as its new policy. I invite you to continue your good work. I believe you have an open mind and understand that committee members want to contribute to the development of defence policy. We've had this discussion on a number of occasions. We absolutely want to have an impact on the policy. We don't want to do a three- or four-month job on policy and have it serve no purpose. We're leaving for Europe next week. We wanted to ensure you that the work of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs is producing results. We'll be able to say we've provided something new. Thank you for your presentation. Continue your good work and we hope to see you again.

Dr. Kenneth Calder: Thank you very much for your patience.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Claude Bachand): The meeting is adjourned.

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