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Mr. John Cannis

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• (1005)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): Good morning, colleagues.

I see that we have a quorum, and I'll call this meeting to order. The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs is to review our defence policy.

Before I take the opportunity to welcome Lieutenant-General Caron, I want to touch on an issue that was brought forward last week by Monsieur Perron with respect to Brigadier-General Ward's briefing, when he requested some notes so that he could refer to them in his presentation in the House.

If you recall, colleagues, the briefing was initially set up for the critics as a briefing, and it was to be in camera. We continued in camera after that. In essence, the briefing became an unofficial meeting for the committee as a whole, but it stayed in camera.

As of this moment, we still do not have the go-ahead to allow his presentation to be made public. If more elaboration is needed, by all means, that's fine.

Are there any comments on that?

Monsieur Bachand, I know Mr. Perron is not here. Do you wish us to bring it up at a later time when he is present?

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Probably, yes.

Here he is.

The Chair: There he is. I spoke prematurely.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Let's celebrate mass again.

We have that expression in French. Does it apply in English?

The Chair: I enjoy going to mass myself. The more I get, the more blessed I am.

Lieutenant-General Caron, excuse us for a moment, sir.

As I was saying earlier, Monsieur Perron, you indicated that you were not able to utilize Brigadier-General Ward's presentation in your presentation to the House of Commons, and we looked into it for you.

I'll remind all members that the meeting initially started as a briefing for the critics, and it was in camera. It unofficially turned out to become a full meeting for everybody, but we stayed in camera for the entire presentation. I only wanted to put that on the record for you.

We've talked to General Ward in terms of making his statement public, and as of yet we haven't got clearance. That's where we're at, as of this moment, to clarify your request from last week.

Unless you have any comments, when it becomes available, it will certainly be available to you and to all. Is that okay?

[Translation]

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

[English]

The Chair: Merci beaucoup.

With that, I'd like to welcome to the first part of our session, from the Department of National Defence, Lieutenant-General Caron, Chief of the Land Staff.

Sir, welcome to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, as we do our review. We look forward to hearing from you. We'll then go into questions from the members. The first part consists of seven minutes for questions and answers from the various members.

The floor is now yours, sir.

[Translation]

Lieutenant-General J.H.P.M. Caron (Chief of the Land Staff, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet with you today. We appreciate your interest and your support for the army and I look forward to a fruitful dialogue with the committee.

As you know, the army is now experiencing the first effects of the defence policy statement issued in the spring of this year. We are also undergoing our part of the CF transformation process that flows from the DPS.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, let me state at the outset that the army welcomes, without reservation, the policies and initiatives arising from the DPS and Canadian Forces transformation. The land force is particularly well positioned to adapt to and benefit from these major policy initiatives.

Members of the committee will know that the army embarked on its own transformation process with the release of the army strategy in May 2002. That blueprint for the way ahead reflected a great deal of serious thought about the future of land operations and how we could best set our soldiers up for success in the changed strategic environment.

The army strategy continues to guide us for transformation. Now, thanks to the efforts and foresight of those who developed it, we are well positioned to absorb and adapt to the changes contained in the DPS and CF transformation. They set out the challenges of the new strategic environment and how the CF will meet them. These mirror the army's approach. The challenges posed by the non-contiguous battle space; the threat posed by non-state actors in failed, failing, and recovering states; the need for greater capacity to operate land, sea, and air elements together; the necessity to better protect Canadians here at home: these are typical of the kinds of problems the army has carefully considered.

• (1010)

[Translation]

We are therefore developing a land force—this includes our strategic-level thinking, our training and our acquisition of equipment—to meet exactly the challenges and the approach set out in the DPS and CF transformation.

The DPS will have an important impact on the army. We will have the opportunity to increase the size of our regular force units as part of the expansion of the CF by 8,000 people, including 5,000 regular force members and 3,000 reserve members. Of course, they will not all go to increasing the size of the army, but to increasing the size of the Canadian Forces. This is good news. I will come back to that a little bit later on when I discuss expansion.

The DPS will enable us to improve the communications, mobility, fire power, protection and support capabilities of our light forces. This is something we have planned for some time, Mr. Chairman, but the DPS will give us additional impetus to accomplish this sooner rather than later.

[English]

Army reserve strength will increase by 3,000 soldiers, raising the authorized end-state of our reserves to 18,500. The level that we hope for in the army will be slightly over 17,000. This is especially welcome at a time when we are embedding important capabilities in the reserves to support the army and the Canadian Forces on operations both here in Canada and abroad.

The DPS will help us complete the development and acquisition of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and integrate these into other Canadian Forces and allied systems. We will continue to transform into a modern, rapidly deployable, medium-weight force, mounted primarily on wheel-based vehicles. This knowledge-based and command-centric force, including our planned direct fire system and a new platform to deliver indirect fire, evolves from the army strategy. It dovetails perfectly, however, with the strategic direction set out in the DPS. It has been designed precisely for today's operations and to meet the threats the army will face and defeat in the future.

Overall, Mr. Chairman, the DPS contains very positive news for the land force. I should tell the committee, however, that it is not entirely without risk. In some respects we are still a hollow army. The growth has just started to deal with this hollow army. It is important to keep in mind that we are still well below our authorized strength, and the growth referred to earlier has only just begun. Other manning requirements will put additional pressure on our ability to generate forces. For example, and this is only one example, it will not be easy to find enough senior NCOs to serve as instructors for new recruits, to serve in crucial positions in two task forces abroad, and to man the new commands.

[Translation]

These problems will create short-term pain for long-term gain, however, and the long-needed additional army strength is most welcome.

I will now turn briefly to some of the effects of CF transformation on the army.

We will provide light forces to support cansofcom and capable of integrating with elements of joint task force 2. We will provide the land component of the Standing Contingency Task Force, capable of embarking and operating from a maritime platform.

We must be able to sustain overseas, for an indefinite period, two land task forces—potentially in different theatres of operation.

As part of Canada's larger international effort, we will be prepared to provide a brigade headquarters capable of commanding a multinational formation for a year.

• (1015)

[English]

We will improve the capacity and capability of light forces in complex urban terrain, mountainous terrain, and jungle warfare. We will train and generate task forces that are more interoperable with other Canadian Forces elements in tasks tailored to their mission. We will generate forces to be employed by Canada Command, responsible for protecting Canadians here at home. We will generate immediate response units, high-readiness army elements, to be employed by Canada Command in a domestic emergency.

Mr. Chair, we continue to implement our managed readiness plan, a set of planning tools that guides our training calendar, equipment acquisition, and whole-fleet management system and their synchronization with the high-readiness tasks list supported by the army. We continue the development and construction of the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre in Wainwright. It will be one of the best, if not the best, army training centre in the world. CMTC is designed to train and test our units for all of the challenges of today's complex strategic environment.

[Translation]

I hope this brief overview has given the committee a greater sense of the army's way ahead. As we resume the steady generation of task forces for challenging operations abroad, I would remind the committee that we do much of what we do in order to ensure that the dedicated young men and women who wear our uniform are trained and equipped for success. I am confident we can count on your support in accomplishing that goal.

Thank you for your attention, and I would be pleased to respond to questions.

[English]

The Chair: Merci beaucoup, Monsieur Caron.

We'll go to Mr. Casson.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General, for being here. You mentioned a couple of aspects that I'm interested in—some of the things we've been hearing about, the fact that you say it's not going to be easy to recruit enough people to serve on two task forces abroad and to man the new commands, and that one of the problems is finding enough people to actually train the recruits.

So I'd like you to comment on just exactly where we are on this recruitment line, how many new recruits you have, what stage they are in, and then also comment on how you're going to deal with getting enough trainers to train these folks.

Also, could you comment on the issue of a hollow army and give us an idea of what your procurement priorities are to fill in that hollow army—what equipment, what platforms? You mentioned the various aspects that you're going to be involved in—intelligence-gathering, firepower.

So those two things. Where are we on the recruitment line? How are we going to get the trainers to train? And what is the timeline and what are the priorities on the procurement of equipment?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Thank you, sir.

Let me set in context the challenge we have. First of all, the initial recruiting in the Canadian Forces is the responsibility of the ADM, Human Resources—Military, Admiral Jarvis. I believe he has been in front of the committee, or will be in the near future. That recruiting is ongoing, and he has the expertise to talk about the recruiting.

What I was referring to is the fact that we are maintaining a level of operations and at the same time we are transforming. Before all of that, the context of this is the hollow army. As a matter of fact, the announcement of the additional forces came before the DPS, and they were integrated into the DPS.

What do we mean by “hollow army”? It has nothing to do with equipment—I'll come back to equipment—it has to do with people. I'll give you a small example that may be useful.

In an infantry battalion we are organizing infantry companies. Right now, the established strength of those companies in Canada is about 80 people, with the leaders and the soldiers in there. However, the companies we send abroad on operations are about 130 to 140 people. That's the size required to conduct the operations we're

conducting. Of course, you cannot transform 80 into 140. What happens in Canada when we do get organized to go on an operation is we take troops from other companies to bring one up to 140.

The bulk of the increase of the regular force—of the 5,000 I mentioned, 3,000 are coming to the army—will be to bring up to operational-level strength all of the subunits, meaning the companies, the batteries, the squadrons. When we start to increase the strength of the army, those companies I was referring to a few minutes ago will move from 80 people, as is established right now, to about 130, so that we don't have to take from others. That's how we'll deal with the hollow army. Our plan is not to increase overhead or structure but to bulk out each one of those subunits. It's to those subunits that the bulk of the increase coming to the army is going.

On recruiting, as I said, Admiral Jarvis is the expert on this. We know the trend is up now. They have increased their publicity campaign, and we in the army have started to feel the increase in recruiting.

You have to understand that Admiral Jarvis, with his organization, recruits and does the initial training. When he's done the initial training, which is CF-wide, those young people, those young recruits, are then sent to the navy, the army, or the air force to continue their training.

We have our own schools, and we have started to see that increase. As a matter of fact, soldier-wise, I know we have the soldiers coming. Again referring to the hollow army, some of the things we're missing are NCOs, meaning master corporals, sergeants, and warrant officers. They are the leaders in our units, but they are also the instructors in our schools. It takes a while to build a sergeant. A sergeant will take anywhere from seven to ten years. Right now, some of the young people will become sergeants. As a matter of fact, we've reintroduced a method we had in the seventies and eighties to identify promising young privates very early on, and we're giving them the leadership training a lot earlier than they would have had it if we were at full strength. Again, we're trying to find and train those master corporals and sergeants very quickly.

On your original question, there are now new demands. We have to man new commands, including Canada Command, Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. They are all requesting trained NCOs, trained captains, trained majors. At the same time, we have to continue our level of operation, and that's where the challenge is.

The challenge will be solved by priority-setting and how quickly we can grow those new capabilities and our level of operation. That's the issue on the challenge. It's to grow and to continue operations, and at the same time create those new capabilities. It's a matter of priorities.

•(1020)

On procurement strategy and intelligence-gathering, we have a number of programs that have been put in place, like the unmanned airborne vehicle and electronic warfare programs that were initiated even before the DPS and before the CF transformation, but they fit exactly where the CF transformation is taking us.

Firepower-wise, again announced before the DPS was the mobile gun system, an American system. This element, along with the multi-mission effects vehicle announced recently by the minister, and a system that we have in service now called TOW under armour, will become the direct-fire system, replacing the tank in some circumstances. Those are firepower in direct fire.

We also have an indirect fire requirement. Again, we saw a recent announcement of the procurement of a 155-millimetre artillery piece, a light gun. It's an American system that we will deploy in Afghanistan. This is something that was planned further down in the timeline, but because we're going back to Afghanistan and there's a requirement for precision in indirect fire—this system will give us that—we've accelerated the procurement of some of that requirement.

On the protection side, we have a good selection of vehicles to provide protection for our soldiers. At the top end we have the LAV III, the light armoured vehicle. It has a big gun. It's massive. At the lower end, we have the G-wagon, which comes in different versions, armoured and non-armoured. And there was an element missing here. We're not sure of the threat level, but we don't want to go with a heavy system on a LAV III. That's where the light patrol vehicle or the armoured patrol vehicle comes in. For that requirement, it was announced that we're procuring 50 of those vehicles to provide a good selection of mobility to the people in theatre.

Those are the elements of my answer.

•(1025)

The Chair: Thank you, General.

We'll go to Monsieur Bachand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by welcoming the general, for whom I have great admiration. The general is an excellent shot with a C7. In the army, they call him Eagle Eye. I had the opportunity to train with him in Farnham, and the general still beat me even though he was injured. However, I do want to point out that I did nevertheless beat half of his staff.

General, was your last comment on the 50 vehicles referring to the South-African vehicles? Okay.

On the weekend, I trained with the Black Watch in Valcartier. I noted that I can still handle a C7 quite well. Do you agree with me that training with blanks or live ammunition do not occur often enough? They seemed to be saying that they do not conduct that type of operation very often. If we want a leading edge reserve, should we not enable it to train more often? Are they not able to train as often due to budgetary reasons?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Thank you, Mr. Bachand. In fact, I have fond memories of our competition in Farnham.

In response to your question, I would say that it is always a budgetary issue. Resources must be used where the needs are. In the case of the reserve forces, we have made great strides in enabling reserve members to take full advantage of every opportunity they have to train. Perhaps no one talked to you about that during last Saturday's event, but when we deploy a company on training, we ensure that it is a company of 100 people, and not of 30. When they deploy on training, all of our means are available to us.

As for the way the training is controlled, we do not have the means to give carte blanche to all of the regular force units to fire when they want. We therefore have a training schedule. I mentioned it in my opening remarks, it is called the managed readiness plan, which includes the regular force units as well as the reserve units.

With the arrival of the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre in Wainwright, we will ask the reserves to provide companies, in order to given them even more opportunities to train. Of course, they would participate in firing exercises every weekend, but we do not have the means. We must use the resources where they are required, based on the level they are at in their build-up, their training cycle. That is how we control ammunition.

Mr. Claude Bachand: As regards training, I understand that all issues surrounding recruitment in the recruitment centres as well as the initial selection done at the Saint-Jean base are Adm Jarvis' responsibility.

•(1030)

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Adm. Jarvis' responsibility, yes.

Mr. Claude Bachand: There is a rumour out there that there could be a bottleneck when the 5,000 regular force members and the 3,000 reserve members arrive. If I understand correctly, to avoid the problem, it was suggested that a certain number of new recruits from the other environments be sent to your schools for subsequent training.

Is this project underway? Is it a future project? Will it be abandoned?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: You are referring to contingency plans, to "what if" situations, in the event that the capacity to provide basic training in Saint-Jean no longer existed. Contingency plans have therefore been prepared so that we can use other schools, available to the navy, air force and army, to provide new army recruits with the training that they would normally receive in Saint-Jean. Contingency plans have been developed, but we have not needed to implement them, because the basic training capacity at Saint-Jean has not been exceeded.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Okay.

Earlier, you mentioned various vehicles. To my mind, the land forces are beginning to be well equipped. Of course, there is still the LAV III, which, I think is internationally renowned. However, the MGS and the MMEV are not yet operational, are they?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: No.

Mr. Claude Bachand: So that is still to come. How long will it take for these two vehicles to be operational?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The MGS will use a gun that we are all very familiar with, the one that is currently on the Leopard; I am not talking about the turret, just the gun. We will install it on the same frame as the MGS III. So it is a vehicle that we are familiar with. It is an American project that we signed onto, in order to reduce costs as much as possible. So, if everything goes well for the American project, we will start receiving systems in 2008, and they will be operational in 2009. I am talking here about the Mobile Gun System.

For the MMEV, the timeline is a bit longer. We will take a system that is currently in service, the ADATS system, and improve it. We are in the design phase; the timeframe will depend on the design phase.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Were you consulted on the various aircraft that can be used to transport equipment into theatres of operation? I know that a sealift is often used to enter a theatre of operations, and I do not think there is a problem there, but when you go into Turkey or somewhere else and you need to transport troops into a theatre of operation... As you know, we have been hearing all kinds of things recently about aircraft. Were you consulted?

In fact, if you want to transport a LAV III, a MGS or an MMEV and those vehicles will not fit into the aircraft, there is a problem. Were you consulted on the various aircraft?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: All Canadian Forces projects are done in consultation. The three chiefs of defence staff are involved in determining requirements. Gen. Lucas is fully aware of what needs to be transported. The LAV III and the MGS currently fit into our Hercules aircraft. Moreover, as for the MGS, the Americans must also ensure that it fits into their Hercules aircraft.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachand.

[English]

We'll go to Mr. Khan, sir.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for being here.

I have several operational questions, and I'll fire them off as quickly as I can. We have seven minutes, so you'll have whatever time is left of that to answer.

You mentioned the identification of junior ranks for fast-tracking to NCOs. Would that be available to those who do not have university or college qualifications?

I also understand there's a proposal to transfer infantry mortar tasks to artillery. I understand there's an improvement, and I realize the importance of a coordinated effort between artillery and mortar, but is it wise to remove the infantry units' ability to call upon the 81-millimetre mortar for elimination, etc.?

How will the forces' transformation resolve burnout? Is the army capable of utilizing the assets it has to prepare for a growth transformation and sustain interim effectiveness?

Can you explain the whole of fleet management—WFM—i.e., vehicles?

And why have you identified the need to eliminate anti-armour platoons and infantry?

• (1035)

The Chair: There are a whole bunch of questions for you there, General.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: On the first one, if I understand correctly, the question is whether NCOs, non-commissioned officers, will have a university degree.

Mr. Wajid Khan: No. You said the NCOs would be fast-tracked. Will those in the junior ranks who do not have these qualifications get the benefit of this or not?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: What we're doing is something that was in place in the seventies, as I mentioned. It's called DAPS. You may hear that. It means we accelerate people.

What is the process? Usually, a private or corporal will stay at that rank for a certain amount of time before he's eligible for leadership training for master corporal and then sergeant. What we're doing now is identifying potential very early and eliminating the requirement for potentially good private soldiers to go on that leadership training. That's what we're talking about. But everybody will be eligible for leadership training.

What we're doing is identifying promising young privates and we're saying to them, "We liked you in your recruit school and you've been with us for six months or a year, so you won't have to wait four years before we send you on a master corporal course". That's what it means. This will allow us to grow leaders a lot more quickly.

On the transfer of mortars to the artillery, there are lots of misconceptions. When we deploy whatever we deploy in Afghanistan or wherever, if there's a need to have mortars within an infantry task force, mortars will be there. It's a decision that was made to ensure that we have the resources at the right place. The infantry—and I'm an infantryman—used to have all of those weapons. It's traditional, and it dates back hundreds of years. The infantry had everything, but now it's better employment of human resources—people—and equipment. That doesn't mean we will send an infantry task force without indirect fire. They will have it. They will have time to work the teamwork together. I mentioned the CMTTC. They will be put to the test there. That's what is happening.

On burnout, that refers to the priorities I mentioned a few minutes ago. You're right. It's quite a challenge. We have to sustain the level of operations and the growth we've announced, and transform at the same time. We will have to ensure that we have the priorities at the right place. Of course, the conduct of operations will be the first priority, then the growth and integration of the new capability, and then the manning of those new structures to different commands that are coming into place. So it's a question of priorities.

Our plan is to avoid burnout. The managed readiness plan that we put in place allows us to see what we can produce with the level of strength we have. If we are going to break that level or go higher than the level, then we know what the consequences will be down range.

On whole-fleet management, again it's employing the resources at the right place. Traditionally, all of the units in Canada had all of their gear. I was an infantry battalion commander. I had 69 M113s. That's a lot of vehicles. I probably used all 70 of those armoured fighting vehicles, those M113s, probably five or six weeks a year, when I had all of the unit requiring all of the equipment to get to a higher level of readiness. Most of the time, we only used probably 20 or 30 of those pieces of equipment.

So whole-fleet management is just that: looking at the complete fleet and ensuring that the unit has the level of equipment it requires for the level of training it has been tasked to achieve. By the time it reaches the high-readiness level, it will have all of the gear, it will have all of the team, it will be tested at CMTC, and when it's ready for deployment it will go.

It will also allow us to store, before deployment, two task forces' worth of equipment, so that we don't have to rob people when we're about to deploy. That's the advantage of whole-fleet management.

The anti-tank platoon is still in the infantry. I don't see at this time anything that would force us to eliminate the anti-tank capability. The anti-tank capability is evolving, but there will be an anti-tank capability in the infantry, especially in the light infantry.

•(1040)

Mr. Wajid Khan: We're transferring from tracks to wheels. In the airlift, can you comment on the pluses or minuses? Is it about the same when lifting a tank or an eight-wheeler?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The demand is a lot lower. The weight of our Leopard tanks, compared to the weight of an MGS.... It will be a lot lower.

Mr. Wajid Khan: How realistically do we address our personnel shortfall, especially with respect to the specialist units, such as psychological operations, psy-ops, and engineering, etc.?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: We note that there are some trades, we call them trades classifications, that are at a level that needs a lot of attention. Many of those are in the support environment. The engineer is one, and this is one classification that has my full attention. It keeps me awake at night—the engineers, the field engineers. We have to take a lot of care when we deploy any engineer, because as soon as you deploy a hundred, that means you've got a hundred getting ready, and so on and so forth, to keep that level. So the engineer is one.

However, there are others. The other one you mentioned is psy-ops. There are some capabilities that we're transferring or we're creating in the reserve force. Psy-ops is one. Civil-military cooperation is another. Those are the capabilities we are going to ask the reserve to bring up their expertise on, and we will deploy them in operation.

But back to your point, there are some support trades that need a lot of attention at this time because they are at a low state of strength.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Thank you, General.

The Chair: Because time is very important, we're going into our second round, General.

We'll be dealing with Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Through you to the witness, what number of NCOs have contracts ending within the next five years?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Thank you for the question. I will have to get back to you to know the exact number of NCOs. And it's not a contract; it's terms of service.

As a rule of thumb, and really focusing on combat arms, which is probably the most demanding, it's probably the one that gives us the best example: if we have them for the first three years and they stay in the first three years, they will serve until 20 years. At 20 years, he or she has a decision. Because of our pension program, they can retire after 20 years of service or 40 years of age, and they come to that decision point. So that's one we're watching. Of course, there's always a good number of people coming up to this level. I know in the next couple of years we'll have a bit of a bump because of the recruiting that happened back in the seventies and eighties. So a 20-year one is the one to watch. If he stays in, then he will stay until he has his full annuity at 35 years of service.

We will get back to you and get the exact number. It's not a contract, but it's people whose terms of service are coming up to 20—I think that is a number that would be of use—and coming up to age 55 or 35 years of service.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

And when you do provide us with the numbers, would you please also express it as a percentage of total forces?

What measures would encourage these NCOs approaching their 20-year mark to stay when their contracts are up?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: If I had a crystal ball, it would be easier, but it's a very complex issue. There are factors such as family, the children, where they are, the second job of the spouse, the level they are at in their own career. They've been in it for 20 years. Are they a master corporal, a sergeant? Are they still promising? That's another factor that I'm sure an individual will consider. The level of activity? It goes both ways. Some want to go on an operation on a continuous basis. The young single person will want to go on an operation all the time, but a master corporal sergeant with a wife working and two children at home probably has a different outlook.

I cannot answer what will make him go or not go, but we have to look at the complete individual and look at the family, support the family, ensure that he has a challenging career but a balanced career.

So those are all of the things we're looking at to ensure that we keep the individual. We've invested a lot in him and her and we want that individual to stay until the end. But of course there's a personal decision there, and some other factors are difficult to deal with.

•(1045)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Certainly not having the Ontario health premium deducted from their paycheques when they can't be members of that health plan would help.

Now, over the past 12 years we've had budget cutbacks to the army. As you mentioned, we've hollowed it out. It's almost been a boon now for advertising agencies.

Does the Department of National Defence tender the contracts itself for recruiting or does Public Works do that?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: This is within the realm of Admiral Jarvis. I don't do recruiting. The recruiting is done on a CF level. Admiral Jarvis and the ADM Public Affairs, Mr. Tom Ring, would be in the best position to answer that. I wouldn't be able to answer. I don't know if they tender out to PWGSC and so on. We can probably get the answer for you. They are the experts on advertising. Admiral Jarvis sets the requirement. I know that ADM Public Affairs delivers on that requirement.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: If he could, through you, provide us with the amount of advertising, the cost of the advertising for recruiting, and name the firms, the ad agencies, that would be most helpful. Thank you.

I have no more questions, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: You're prompt, on time.

With that, we'll go to Mr. Rota, sir.

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is regarding the reserves. We have an increase of 3,000 coming in, rising up to about 18,500 personnel. My understanding is that the reserves are as well going through a consolidation, or a justification, of where they have their outposts. My concern is you're trying to attract people into an area that is probably not as well...I'm going to say advertised, or well-known, for lack of a better word. To me, it's very important that that be visible within the civilian society.

We're trying to get civilians to come in and work as reserves, yet we're contracting our presence where we're not going to be as visible as we used to be. Do you find that contradictory? Do you find that's going to cause some problems, where down the road we will have regional concentrations and not so much of that community involvement, which is so important to get people to know what the army or what the military is about?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Contracting our presence?

Mr. Anthony Rota: Yes. What you're doing is you're contracting, in that sense.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Thank you very much for the question.

What we're going through right now, as part of the land force reserve restructuring, is we're reviewing the establishment. It is too early to say that we're coming out of a community or not. In the army reserve, we're probably in about 110 communities. It's really our footprint across the nation, across Canada. That pays dividends in those communities. It's part of the mission the reserves have.

However, there are some units that are in those communities, but the communities have evolved; the young people are not there any more. There are some units with an overhead of a unit that should have 150 people where we have a dozen people. What this army reserve establishment review will do is review that. We have to do

due diligence. Is it worth keeping a unit if it has only been manning or able to maintain a dozen people, where it should have had 150 people? Maybe we could put that unit in a location where there are some young people, that they could be attracted, that sort of thing.

That's what the ARE is doing. It's too early to say that we'll come out of a community. We'll avoid getting out of a community, but we may have an arrangement. We have an arrangement right now in northern Ontario where a couple of units got together, where there used to be one unit and they couldn't even assure their succession. They couldn't even assure their succession, which is a sure sign that something has to be done.

They got together, on their own, with a couple of other units. They've kept some of the tradition and all of the units, but they have amalgamated. They made an administrative arrangement to be one unit. Now they can assure their succession, and there are a good number of people who serve in that unit. That's what this part of the land force reserve restructuring is doing, to ensure that we have the unit at the right place, at the right level, to ensure that they can fulfill their mission.

● (1050)

Mr. Anthony Rota: It's funny you should mention northern Ontario. That's where I'm from. That's exactly what I'm referring to. The one in particular I'm referring to is the Algonquin Regiment. Their fear is that it will move out—it's based in North Bay right now—to Sudbury and we won't have any reserves. I find that very sad, because it's the presence within the community. Are we missing the boat? Are we doing something wrong that we're not attracting enough people? I'm thinking, rather than cut it, maybe we should find out where we're going wrong, why we are not getting the numbers, and what we can do differently to attract them.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Again, it's too early to say we will be coming out of North Bay. There has always been—

Mr. Anthony Rota: I'm not asking for a guarantee.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: No, and you won't get one. We have to go through the process. We have to apply due diligence. We owe it to the people of Canada.

If we have a unit structure, it's very expensive—a lieutenant-colonel, four majors, the captains, and so on. You have 12 soldiers. You would be asking me, "What are you doing?"

Mr. Anthony Rota: No question.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: But if there is a presence and it's maintained, then we just have to readjust.

Again, it's too early to say we'll be pulling out of any of the communities. We're not there. There will be other arrangements before that. If there are 50 people, then we'll put an overhead for 50 people, or whatever, and then there will be some arrangement with other neighbouring units.

The attraction is something we're looking at as part of the advertisement. A good reserve unit can attract the people, bring them to the recruiting centres, and we're trying to ensure that those good lessons are learned across the army reserve. But sometimes the people are not there; the young people are not there.

Mr. Anthony Rota: May I just ask one quick question?

[Translation]

Thank you, Gilles. I appreciate it.

[English]

In your opinion, what is the ideal number to have as reserves in the Canadian army?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: We've gone through this. Many analyses—

Mr. Anthony Rota: I'm wondering if 18,500 is an appropriate number.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: For the mission we have right now, really you have to include in there medical and signals reserve, but 18,500 is the appropriate number.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Perron.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I will ask some very short questions, and I want some very short answers so that I can ask some more questions. First of all, I apologize for eating my breakfast here at the table: I had not eaten yet this morning.

What stage are you at in terms of CF transformation in accordance with the new policy statement?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: We are at the beginning.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: In what year will you complete your work?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The important point is the growth rate of service personnel. We have estimated that it will be carried out over five years. The equipment will then follow. Within five years, if recruitment goes as planned, we should have the people we want in our ranks.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: There is a new concept in the statement; it talks about the "3Ds": diplomacy, defence, and development. What do you have to say, both officially and personally, about this "3D" approach for the Canadian Forces?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: We are only responsible for one of the "Ds".

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: When you are on the ground, you will be with the two other "Ds".

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Absolutely. But the "3Ds" are not within the forces. We cross path during training and on the ground. We currently have an element in Kandahar, the PRT. We provide security. Our PRT includes two RCMP members, an individual from Foreign Affairs, and another from CIDA. So that illustrates the "3D" policy.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Your PRT, or provincial reconstruction team, also includes NGOs. How do you fit them in with the non-governmental organizations?

•(1055)

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: NGOs do cooperation work. Normally, NGOs are coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Our CIDA representative is involved in that coordination, and the NGOs that want to get involved with us are there. Their request for security and assistance

are coordinated, and we provide them with the best support we can, given our capabilities and our means.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: To this point, you have been talking about conventional war or missions. You have not even broached the topic of terrorism and bacteriological warfare. You have not talked about your patrol in the High Arctic.

I would like to hear your comments on that.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I was obviously not clear enough in my opening remarks, because that is precisely the kind of war we are talking about: asymmetrical war, and not war against a State, but against belligerents, terrorists. That is precisely the kind of war we are talking about.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Would you go as far as to include religious wars?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: We talk about any strategic security environment we are in. We are not talking about conventional war. If your notion of traditional war is one where the army from two or several States confront each other, it is not that.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: No, I am talking about equipment: Are you equipped to participate in a war among States.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: No. We are transforming training for people and equipment, to provide people in the field with as many options as possible, with the greatest amount of flexibility to intervene in today's environment: asymmetrical war, terrorism, and so on.

I am leaving tonight for Wainwright, where I will visit with people from the first brigade that will leave in January or February. They are preparing for operations in Afghanistan, to support Afghan authorities: the Afghan police, the Afghan army, the Afghan political authorities, so that the transformation of Afghanistan will be successful and the country will resume its position in the international community.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: My last comment will be quite short. I have two questions for you, and you can take half an hour to answer them, I will not mind.

You did not talk about disasters. I would like to hear you say a few words about the new Canada Command system here at home. We have heard that it will be a regional command system, that one of our guys might be responsible for the Eastern region, etc.

I would like you to give me your opinion of this new system, in some detail.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I did not mention disasters, except briefly in the statement, but it goes without saying. The Canadian Forces have always intervened as required when asked to provide humanitarian assistance in Canada. We did so during the ice storm, during the floods in Winnipeg, and when hurricane Juan hit Halifax. We are an organized group that can mobilize quickly, that can move around. It goes without saying that we continue to prepare to provide our support to civil authorities, both at the municipal and provincial levels, to provide assistance in the event of natural disasters and in cases where they need humanitarian assistance. That goes without saying.

The aim of Canada Command is to fine tune operational readiness, precisely for the kind of humanitarian assistance or assistance to civil authorities in the provinces. The structure will closely resemble the one we have in the field. I have four HQs: one in Halifax, one in Montreal, one in Edmonton, and one in Toronto. In the field, they will command the troops. If operations are necessary, they will command the troops and report to the commander of Canada Command as regards humanitarian assistance or assistance provided to civil or police authorities in those regions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. It's difficult to break you off.

We'll go to Mr. Martin.

• (1100)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you very much for coming, Gen. Caron.

[English]

I have a couple of observations, if I may, sir, and a couple of questions that I hope might be of value.

First, I wonder if using a retention bonus at 20 years might be of value for that population of people we wish to retain.

Second—this is my observation—when we consider giving the reserve units a little bit more flexibility on the ground to attract and retain their people, I think that might be helpful. Also, in enabling the potential recruit's family doctor to do the physical check, there could be a standard report that could go across the military so that it's standardized.

For example, the pilots' medicals that we do are very strenuous and rigorous, as you know. That might be something simple. The family doctor knows the recruit much better than a physician assistant does.

Also, if we were to adopt the RCMP security check for their recruits, that also might be something that could dramatically shorten the process by which we are able to attract people and facilitate the way we move reserve force personnel into the regular force, and it might be useful.

Those are just observations, sir.

As a small aside, some really superb work has been done in Great Britain to suggest that the use of live ball ammo dramatically reduces the incidence of PTSD, an adjustment in mood disorder. So we have the medical and scientific justification for using live ammo in training.

My question is really twofold.

One, in your opinion, do you not think we could actually capture those early retirees and use those who you and your colleagues would see as useful as part of that NCO cadre that we need to retain? So to those people who are retiring you say, "We really need you. Let's see if we can get you into the reserves and use you as trainers."

Two, what are your most urgent needs in terms of equipment and training?

Really, the latter two are my questions. The first part was just observations that I hoped might be of help.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: On the early retirees, as a matter of fact, we're getting better on two fronts. We're ensuring that we're very specific with sergeants or warrant officers with 20 to 25 years of service, asking them if they have considered going as part-timers or full-timers in the reserve. The numbers are increasing, as there are some advantages to doing that. So we're doing that.

In our big training schools in the army—Gagetown, Valcartier, Meaford, and Wainwright to a lesser extent—we are getting better at employing civilians who are former military personnel, so we don't lose their expertise. They run some simulators for us and they are involved.

So we're increasing the number of retirees in a civilian form and as reservists.

Hon. Keith Martin: *Aussi*, what are your most urgent needs in terms of equipment and training?

And, on a small note, I know your MTAP program cuts against what you need to do to keep your NCOs and such here, but they're fabulous people who are doing an outstanding job around the world.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The most urgent need is training, and we have the means internally to do that. I've put quite a challenge to the trainers. I said, you have to change all of the curricula and you have to change all of the trainers, so that our people are adjusted to the three-block war, the non-contiguous battlefield, the current security environments that we're facing in Afghanistan and that we'll face anywhere else we operate. There were still too many courses grounded in, or based on, the cold war way of doing business.

So that is quite a challenge, but the trainers are up to the challenge; they've changed all of the curricula and the trainers have been adjusted, so that the people coming out are trained to deal with the situation, the three-block war. I want the soldiers who will be operating in the streets of Kandahar to look at the environment and to have the skill set or the mindset to understand the rules of engagement that apply there. Is it a humanitarian aid situation or is it a security issue? Am I dealing with a Taliban or am I dealing with...? This is how we have to evolve the training, so that by the time a young officer gets to be a company commander, he'll be trained to deal with all of the situations, from a counter-insurgency all the way down to humanitarian aid. Those are the skills that we're developing.

On the equipment side, the way I will answer that is to say that we put forward two urgent operational requirements in the army—for the armoured patrol vehicle and the precision artillery piece. Those were the two that I felt we had a bit of a gap with in going into Afghanistan. They've been addressed.

• (1105)

Hon. Keith Martin: Merci beaucoup.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have two more with questions, General.

Mr. Casson is first and Mr. Bagnell last. It seems like we're almost right on time for 11:30.

Mr. Casson.

Mr. Rick Casson: Sir, you mentioned direct and indirect fire. What's the difference?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The best analogy for direct fire is that it's where the shooter sees the target and engages it. Direct fire is when you use your rifle when you're hunting—or a tank does, and so on.

Indirect fire is when you launch a projectile that has a ballistic trajectory, and where you usually you have somebody correcting the fire who is not necessarily where the platform is. That is indirect fire.

Mr. Rick Casson: Okay.

You mentioned the operational tempo and how it's increased over the last little while. How are you doing with preparations for Afghanistan? Where are you? Do you have all the equipment, the manpower, and the support you need?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: What we are providing in Afghanistan is a brigade group headquarters. So that's a command and control capability that will command all of the southern region in Afghanistan. So it will have Canadians, but it will also eventually have some British, Americans, and maybe some Dutch working under it.

They're going through the last phase of their preparations. As a matter of fact, this week they are in what we call a command post exercise. That's where I'm going tonight; I'm going to spend the last two days with them to see how they're doing. In fact, they have some multinational officers integrated in their headquarters, and they're doing fine. I saw them at the brigade training event in Wainwright, where they were put through their tests. So they're in the final stage and they are in good shape. As a matter of fact, the American division commander in that structure was there yesterday.

Now, we also have what we call the task force, structured with about 1,300 soldiers, which will be the manoeuvre contribution we'll put on the ground. They'll be commanded by that brigade headquarters or brigade commander. Again, they completed their training at the brigade training event in Wainwright last month, where I saw them. They were validated and certified.

We have a way of ensuring, two levels up, that people are looked at. What were the drills? Have they gone through them? What's their command and control like? What's the team, and what's the command spirit like?

They were declared ready at the end of the BTE. They're now just making last-minute preparations. They'll go on leave at Christmas and they'll start their deployment at the end of January.

The brigade headquarters will be there for nine months. We won't replace them; the Brits or the Dutch, or somebody else, will replace them in the southern region. That task force, based on 1 PPCLI, will deploy for six months, and they'll be replaced by another task force coming from the central area.

Mr. Rick Casson: Getting back to the quality of life issues, would you comment on your experience or on what you hear from your folks after they leave the forces about how they're treated by

Veterans Affairs. Are they happy with the new veterans charter, or the new direction? Are there people who are still falling through the cracks?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I'm sure there are all kinds of anecdotal reports, and you'll probably hear the worst ones. But what we did with that, with Veterans Affairs...and again, Admiral Jarvis can better address that in detail. We've pioneered some of the links with Veterans Affairs in our bases. We set up an office in our bases, and they do their business together. Some of our members are doing the release process, and side by side, there's a Veterans Affairs person. So we have put in place ways that will prevent anybody from falling through the cracks. Once we say, okay, you've completed your release process, there's somebody right beside...from Veterans Affairs at Valcartier, Petawawa, Edmonton, in the big bases, and that's the process, trying to avoid having somebody fall through the cracks.

● (1110)

Mr. Rick Casson: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Bagnell.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Thank you. I'm glad we have 20 minutes left, and I'm the last questioner, because it will probably take that long to answer my questions.

I thank Mr. Caron. He gave a great segue into what I wanted to talk about, and I'm hoping that with DPS and the transformation, of course, we can focus our responsibilities in Canada.

I'm sure you're ready for my question. Your predecessors at committees have probably told you. This will be good practice.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: The only thing I was told is that you're from the Yukon.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Vice-Admiral Forcier can get ready for the same question, and of course it's about the north, about deployment in the north and increased deployment in the north, which I've been talking about for years.

Of course, we have the warming of the Northwest Passage, so there's much more activity up there, some of it unobserved. We have 13 jurisdictions in Canada—10 provinces, three territories—and the only two jurisdictions where we have had any major sovereignty threats, or the most recent and biggest ones, were in Yukon and Nunavut. So if you take our 60,000 forces and you say, well, 13 jurisdictions, the two most threatened, how many forces do we have there? Well, we have, I think, six out of 60,000 in Yukon and I think one in Nunavut. So there's no proportionality, and when I was engaged in this type of questioning before, I can't remember who the witness was, but I had the ridiculous answer, "Well, there's no threat". I don't think that foreign troops are marching on Gagetown or Meaford or Petawawa or Cold Lake, or that foreign ships are arriving unannounced in Halifax or Esquimalt, whereas foreign ships are arriving unannounced, without our even knowing, in the north.

So there are definitely needs. And we've talked to the air force, and of course it takes all federal departments and the air force and the navy, but they alone can't do it. So we also definitely need land forces, and in fact probably even more, because in southern Canada there are people all over the place. There are thousands of policemen all over the place and other people of various orders of government who would perform some of the functions.

I just think we need more deployment in the north of those 60,000, rather than six persons in the Yukon and one in Nunavut in huge unmanned areas.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Thank you very much for the question. As a preamble, I spent six months in the Arctic. It's not much, but early in my career I trained in winter warfare and as an instructor in Churchill, and we went to Mould Bay, Resolute Bay, Frobisher Bay, as it was known then, so I do have a bit of a context and a bit of experience up north.

For clarification also on our capability.... Of course, you are aware of the rangers. We have some people in Whitehorse, we have some people in Yellowknife. They're not army, they report to the DCDS, but we are aware of what they're doing and there is a presence in Iqaluit.

We also have what I believe is more important...it's not a permanent presence; it's a capability to react to a situation. Of course, the warming, the diamond mines, the water, all of those issues will become important. And from my point of view, it's not the presence on a permanent basis that is important; it's the capability to react and to be trained to react in the environment.

We have in the army, on a regular basis, a winter warfare course and they go up north. Some of our NCOs have that training. It's three exercises a year, two in the winter and one in the summertime, and they go up north. We have 150 people, a company, go and spend a month in a community where they do their training and support that community. Again, it is to build up our expertise in working and operating in that environment. It's a very harsh environment up north, in the summer and in the winter.

But to have a permanent presence...first of all, it wouldn't be an army mandate, it would be a police mandate in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, or the Yukon. We would be called upon and we stand ready to move, because in the south we have those immediate reaction units. If there is a requirement, a call from a territorial authority that they need support...and we've done it in the past, when their satellite went down, and with some lesser-known operations with drug-running and so on. We have reacted. So from my point of view, it's not necessarily a permanent presence but a capability to react, and I believe the army has this capability to react as a result of our training. And our immediate reaction units that are in the south can be moved north if the requirement calls for it.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

We will go quickly to Mr. Perron for a very quick question, and then a very quick question from Mr. Martin.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I thought I had fifteen minutes to go.

The Chair: Sir, you have five minutes. It's all yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I would like to take you into a field—we are talking about land forces—that is somewhat sensitive and that is very important to me. I am talking about post-traumatic stress disorder.

The first thought that comes to my mind is that generally speaking, the people afflicted by this disease are young people, who for the most part, have participated in peacekeeping missions and who did not necessarily have the authorization to use their weapon. They were virtually human targets.

My second thought leads to the following question: Why are the majority of these young people in the land forces? Very few are in the navy and almost none in the air force. I would like to hear your comments. I do not know the answer, and no one has given it to me. You have undoubtedly thought about that.

My third comment deals with the same topic. Does the training system for our new recruits, which is probably sufficient for war, adequately prepare them for peacekeeping missions?

My next statement is completely gratuitous; I have no proof to back it up. Young people who participate in peacekeeping missions are almost always left to their own devices and have practically no preparation, at least with respect to what will happen to them mentally. They may have the same physical preparation, but mental preparation is not the same as it is when a person goes to war.

I would like to hear your comments on that. Take the time that is left. The chair will like that, he is interested in post-traumatic stress disorder.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I would like to make a general comment on post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Mental illness is not what concerns me most. Depression has much more of an impact; studies have proven that. Depression and alcohol abuse concern me more than PTSD. When we look at the real figures, we see that depression affects many more of our troops than PTSD does. However, we hear much more about PTSD, for one reason or another. We have set up clinics in all of our large centres, in order to help people who are suffering from PTSD.

You hit the nail on the head regarding the issue: preparation. We must prepare for the worst, but everything depends on the mandate we receive. You were probably referring to some mandates covering our action in the Balkans, in Yugoslavia, during the early years. They were United Nations mandates under chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. That is very delicate. Troops have the right to defend themselves in cases of legitimate defence.

Some problems were probably linked to the quality of our soldiers. They were sometimes reluctant to return fire in situations where they should perhaps have not hesitated. We have learned from our mistakes. That is why we want to receive clear and precise mandates when we are involved on the ground.

We prepare our soldiers for the three-block war. We endeavour to help them develop the mental agility they need to recognize what block of the war they are facing. Here is an example of what I mean by a three-block war. A soldier may be in a neighbourhood hiding a terrorist or a member of the Taliban. Shots will be exchanged. In a second neighbourhood, virtually at the same time, he may be participating in a more traditional peacekeeping mission and intervening between two belligerents. In a third neighbourhood, he might be helping an NGO to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered. During training, we want to enhance the mental agility of our troops, so that they can recognize what rules of engagement they need to apply to each situation. That is a tall order for a young person. Our training system, with its checks, expose them to that before they are deployed. The exercise that we held in Wainwright is a very good example. We threw them into a situation where civilians were in a village. They had to deal with situations that they would eventually be confronted with, in order to prepare mentally.

Can we prevent all cases of PTSD? No, we will not be able to prevent them all, but we have the tools to prepare our soldiers well, and we have the tools to identify cases of PTSD. When a soldier comes back, the clearing-process includes an interview with a general practitioner immediately upon returning from a mission. After a certain amount of time passes—I believe that it is after three months—there is another interview. If there are any signs indicating that the soldier should be seen by specialists, we can pick them up at that time.

• (1120)

[English]

The Chair: Merci, General.

We'll go to Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: It's cold comfort, General, that depression is fast becoming the second leading cause of illness in the whole world, so we're not alone in the army.

Sir, the simple question is, could you tell us what your most pressing needs are with respect to the ability of the army to respond to domestic emergencies, and in particular the ability you have to respond or integrate with first responders? Thank you.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Again, you'd get a different answer from the navy and the air force; they have federal mandates. When we do domestic operations, more often than not it's a municipal or a provincial mandate. In a sense, we have a request from a law-enforcement agency to support, and there are different levels of requests. They could range from technical support of an armoured vehicle, with or without a driver, all the way up to aid to the civil power.

I believe the army is well positioned with what it has now and what we've prepared for, expeditionary, to be able to support the law-enforcement agencies. There are some capabilities we have that would be of some use: decontamination is one, and there may be others.

It's really a question for Canada Command to ask, how are we integrating all those agencies and identifying the gaps? Where could we play a role with the capabilities we have, an expeditionary role,

that would be useful in a domestic setting? What's the most pressing need?

What we've got is what we're ready to offer, and in some circumstances it is used. In the Oka crisis we deployed all the equipment. It was not used, but it helped in providing security and restoring confidence to the people there.

All this to say that I don't have a pressing need from an army point of view. We've got what we've got and we offer it. It may find use with a municipal or a provincial authority. The integration of all those means is something that I know that Canada Command is looking at on the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Are there gaps and can we play on those gaps? Decontamination may be one; there may be others.

[Translation]

Hon. Keith Martin: Fine. Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Rota and then a quick question from Monsieur Perron.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Mr. Anthony Rota: Thank you very much, I will continue.

When you answered Mr. Perron's question, you made a comment more than anything else. He talked about PTSD, and you said that alcohol abuse was much more of a concern to you.

For me, over the past year, I have had an opportunity to talk to lots of veterans and many young CF members who have returned from a theatre of operations. One of the things that was drawn to my attention is the fact that, for both young people and veterans, alcohol is a way of forgetting what happened. It is a drug that helps forget the real problem, which is PTSD. Both problems are worrisome.

Your comment worried me. I would not want one disease to take precedence over another.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I would like to clarify my remark. In fact, I am most concerned with depression. Alcohol abuse is a problem, but my remark was linked to depression.

Mr. Anthony Rota: I know that steps are taken in the military to identify problems before they get worse. I simply wanted to comment on your comment.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Perron.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I would like to add to Mr. Rota's comments and to my own. I would like to draw a parallel. Listen carefully. Victims of PTSD, as well as victims of depression, both have problems with alcohol, drugs and isolation. In both cases, they panic, they are nervous, and the smallest noise startles them. Often, in both cases, they become violent.

That is why in light of your comment, I said that PTSD and depression are parallel diseases. They're on the same track, and the two rails under the train continue to cross over. The two issues are parallel. We must be careful when we say, in documentation, that depression is much more of a concern than PTSD. Having said that, there is an extremely fine line between the two.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: I am going by the studies we have access to. Depression has been diagnosed in many more people than PTSD has. There is no doubt: everything is in their head. That is where my comment was coming from. They are mental health problems.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: You are aware that depression can affect you physically. You can have sore legs, a sore back, soreness anywhere. The same is true for PTSD. That is why I talk about a parallel situation. There is a very fine line between the two afflictions. Neither you nor I can say where that line is. Only experts in the field can do that.

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: That is correct.

[*English*]

The Chair: Now we'll have a quick question or comment from Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Yes, sir; now I see you wear a pair of wings.

Do you think there's room for an expanded role for air assault, or air-land, in the infantry?

LGen J.H.P.M. Caron: Right now we have three light-parachute-capable companies. That's what we have. With the size we're at right now, I am worried about specialization. I need all of the twelve units we have—the nine infantry battalions and the three armoured regiments. Those are the manoeuvre units. Of course, I have the three artillery regiments and the three engineering regiments supporting that, but the manoeuvre units, I need all of them. At the size we are, if we start to specialize, it will have an impact on the capability to put out the two mission-specific task forces.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: I think we're going to close, because we've gone beyond the time and we have Vice-Admiral Forcier waiting for us.

As you can see, General, there's great interest here. We could go on and on with our questions. I do want to thank you. I certainly am not going to take any more time, but I sense around the table, as you sense as well, the great interest that members from all sides of the House have with respect to our military. I read over your closing statement. I'm not going to repeat the confidence you expressed, but I think you sensed that around the table there's great interest here to support our men and women in uniform, to make sure that we're continuously doing the right type of recruiting and the right type of training, and delivering the right type of service, which you've outlined.

With that, I want to thank you, sir, for being here, and for your time, your very thorough responses, and your excellent presentation.

We'll suspend, colleagues, for a couple of minutes as we invite our next guest in.

Thank you very much.

• (1130)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1142)

The Chair: Let's reconvene.

Colleagues, I've been advised that Admiral Forcier has to leave at around 1 p.m. He's indicated he's going to be very prompt with his presentation, and I'm going to be stricter on the time in terms of the questioning from the members, so we can get in as much as we can.

First of all, Admiral, let me take this opportunity to welcome you to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.

Sir, the floor is yours, and as I said—and I won't mention it again—we're going to be very strict this time because of your timeframe, sir.

Thank you. The floor is yours.

Vice-Admiral J.C.J.Y. Forcier (Commander, Canada Command, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.

It's a pleasure indeed for me to be here and answer your questions on my new command. If you'll allow me, I would like to say a few words to set the context.

[*Translation*]

Canada Command was created on July 1st, 2005 by ministerial order, as a result of a review of the Canadian Forces command and control structure—results which was reflected in the Defence Policy Statement of April of this year. My immediate mandate has been to employ the 60 some initial staff I have to refine our concept of operations and lay out a work plan which will close some of the capability gaps and, in some cases, devise more responsive processes.

[*English*]

The cornerstone of this change is to improve the Canadian Forces' ability to respond to domestic requirements by viewing Canada as a single operational area with a single integrated structure that will be able to bring the best available military resources from across Canada to bear in a crisis or contingency, wherever it occurs nationwide. That is to say, there is one commander with the authority to gather a clear picture of all Canadian Forces asset readiness in Canada and to direct planning and execute operations in Canada. Another way to express this is to say that Canada Command will be in charge of the defence of Canada and will be the prime coordinator for support to government, for assistance to law enforcement operations, as well as consequence management.

This mandate also extends into our relationship with the United States. Canada Command will become the primary operational point of contact with the U.S. Northern Command for combined continental operations, with one exception, NORAD, which already fulfills a binational aerospace control function. As a result, I've met twice in October with both the U.S. Northern Command and the NORAD commander and their deputies and senior staff. Together, we will be working our protocols for a more robust information exchange in the weeks to come.

Today, the environmental chiefs of staff and the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff collectively fulfill many of the aforementioned functions, but quite frankly, they are distracted by their many strategic and corporate responsibilities. Often their efforts are focused mainly on crisis response, versus deliberate and more long-term planning, which is also required. The same can be said throughout the country in the higher formation headquarters. In other words, force development, training, and the administration of our forces have been at the top of the agenda. I'm here to ensure that we now have a dedicated effort applied to domestic capacity and responsiveness.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Under the current command and control structure, if a crisis planning effort is required inside the Department of National Defence, it necessitates a call on a myriad of subject matter experts to come together; the reality is that these people are spread all over NDHQ and sometimes all over town, and they have other concurrent responsibilities. They are good people, I have worked with many of them; but they are too few, and we ask them to come to a joint planning table to work in a crisis, not to build solutions of a permanent nature.

[*English*]

In Canada Command headquarters, my own planning team will also be made up of subject matter experts, but their job will be dedicated to planning and overseeing operations in the domestic and continental environment. The members of my team reside in my building, on my floor, and get my directions daily. They have the breadth of expertise and the authority to interact more deliberately with their counterparts from the other government departments.

I can tell you that just the fact that we are standing up this dedicated effort has already increased our interaction with key national security partners, such as Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

For myself, in addition to establishing relationships around town, I have attended the federal, provincial, and territorial meeting of deputy ministers for public security and emergency management. I have spoken to the Association of Chiefs of Police, and tonight, as an example, I fly to Winnipeg to discuss how to enhance our joint contingency planning with key members of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

I will now address my final comments on command and control. Although we are still developing the details of the concept of operations, it has become clear that to be successful I need responsiveness. As a result, I will need the full authority—without

the prior approval of the commanders of the navy, the army, and the air force—to direct their forces stationed at home. I am confident I will get that authority, but the future successes of Canada Command do not rest only on a more robust national-level planning staff and on an admiral with a thirst for information, standing authority, and a forward-leaning attitude.

The key to success is the designation of six joint task force commanders who, in an emergency, have the authority over all Canadian Forces assets and personnel, including the reserve units, within their geographic areas. These six individuals will be dual-hatted generals and admirals, who will be the de facto joint force employers in Canada, in addition to their role as force generators. They will provide the single voice of the Canadian Forces to the provincial or territorial authorities seeking assistance. Above them, I will provide them with national direction, and additional assets and authority when needed.

It is a simple concept: one commander with the daily concern of the defence of Canada and of giving support to other government departments, with the commensurate staff and authority.

Mr. Chairman, with these opening comments, I stand ready to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you kindly, Admiral.

I must say, you certainly were very effective and efficient with your presentation.

We'll begin with Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Thank you, sir.

Vice-Admiral, it's a pleasure to have you here today.

In your opening remarks, I take it that this is at the front end of the planning. We need to move farther in what you're doing. I understand you're also asking—if I'm correct—that you need people and commitment from the organization regarding who will be in charge.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: That's a good question, sir.

I would say we are more than at the beginning of it. We are literally a couple of months from standing up with the full authority to do the job.

We started developing the concept as one of the five pillars of transformation way back in March. I had the pleasure of participating as a team leader with the CDS on his action team to start creating some of those concepts. I took effective command—if I wanted to put it that way—of the staff on August 2. Since then, I've had those 60 people or so. We've been working on the issues.

I've used tentative language because I need a final blessing on my concept of operations. I expect I will get it by mid-December. In fact, I have to get it by mid-December to be effective. Certainly we're on track. We've done most of the negotiation we needed to do inside the department to realign the processes, and I will move from a planning-brainstorming staff of 60 to about 120 by December. We will then have the capacity to reach out more to the other departments, but also to have that constant 24/7 awareness connectivity.

To refocus my answer, I used tentative language because I haven't got the formal blessing and a signature on my plan yet. But we've been discussing this at every step of the way with the Chief of the Defence Staff, and of course we've worked with the environmental chiefs, and we're on track. We are confident that by February 1, I'll be taking over the responsibilities for domestic and continental operations that currently reside with the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff.

• (1150)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: My other concern would be that obviously since our military trains for something other than domestic, by and large, it would seem to me that the likelihood of this is going to take a considerable amount of cross-training of our military. I recognize that in the past the military has been used with civil authorities mostly in weather disasters.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Yes.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Certainly what we're talking about now is not necessarily a weather disaster, but something more of a terrorist, rogue-state intervention.

How do you see integrating? I come from a municipal policing background. How do you see your people integrating with municipal policing in some of the larger centres, for instance? Are your people armed?

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: I should probably say that there are three mandates here.

One is very much on the classic defence of Canada, which is done in part by the environmental chiefs right now. If I use my own background and my previous assignment as commander of Maritime Forces Pacific, on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff, through the navy chain of command, I discharge surveillance in the Pacific and the approaches to the west coast of Canada. That mission will no longer be a navy mission. Navy people will do the job, but they will be doing it under my authority, my direction, and my prioritization. The classical defence role will not change.

On the element that you brought up on the police forces, we currently have a series of orders in council that lay out the responsibility and the authority that we have to work with both provincial and federal police forces. That's not going to change, but we're trying to make people more aware of the potential to be employed in those roles and how to do it better.

The cross-training part is an interesting piece. Actually now having only this core group of 60 people to focus on what I would call a gap analysis, I put this question to my staff when we first got together: what are we not doing as well as we could? It brought up a whole bunch of issues.

I'm sure you've heard this through the environmental chiefs' testimony, but when people go overseas, the level of preparedness, the level of readiness, is pretty high. In fact, it has to be, and it's validated.

I'll use a very simple example. I'm sure there's not a single person going to Afghanistan today who is not certified for first aid. However, when they come back to the garrison, there may not be the same effort to maintain that standard of qualification.

I'm not sure that everybody will necessarily look at their inventory of capability at the garrison back home as being urgently required, because it's not their turn to deploy overseas yet. I'm trying to change that focus. What happens if we have a natural disaster? What happens when we're called upon? We've got to know what our inventory of capability is. We have to make sure that we consciously decide whether or not to invest money to maintain this to a certain standard.

I know training will be an issue. I have a small staff concentrating on a collective series of issues on training.

I can give you another practical aspect. When ships prepare to deploy overseas, such as a battalion or a battle group, they will get to a certain standard, which includes everything, including basically fighting World War III. However, we've never really defined whether there's a minimum requirement to get out of the door in a hurry to go help Canadians or what the capacity is. We're going to identify that. We're basically going to create a template of additional but certainly intermeshed training requirements.

I hope this helps.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you, Dave.

We'll go to Monsieur Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome Vice-Adm. Forcier, whom I met for the first time when I visited the naval force out West. I did not stay very long. I just had enough time to visit the officers' mess. That was very important because it is a beautiful mess; it's one of the nicest in Canada.

I have three questions which you can answer. You can take them down if you wish.

My first question is on CanadaCOM's theatre of operations. There is CanadaCOM and there is also an expeditionary force. I was surprised to learn that CanadaCOM's mandate also included the United States. I think that you began to fulfil that mandate after the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina. I would like you to tell us a little more about that. I would like to know what happened, how you became involved, how you decided—this was probably done jointly by yourself and the chief of staff—to help the people of Louisiana and New Orleans.

My second question is as follows. You made an exception for NORAD because it is an organization which is binational, as you stated. However, NORAD wants to extend its mandate to cover maritime approaches. That would automatically affect you and the Canadian Coast Guard. I would like you to tell us how you see that situation. Are you involved in negotiations with NORAD? How could CanadaCOM support NORAD in the area of maritime approaches? In my opinion, this will happen in the not too distant future.

Lastly, you said that there would be six regional headquarters. That question can be settled quickly. I noted them, and I would like you to tell me if this is correct: they are Quebec, the Atlantic region, Ontario, Central Canada, British Columbia and the North.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: That's right.

Mr. Claude Bachand: At this moment, has it been decided where the headquarters will be located in each zone, such as in Quebec, for example?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: I will begin by addressing your last question. As it now stands, the internal support relationship for Quebec is done through the Quebec land force. So, we asked for its input, of course. The Parliament of Quebec is located in Quebec City, but the nexus, if you will, the hub of public security matters, is located in Montreal.

For now, this will not change. The relationship goes through Montreal. Unless we are asked to move to Quebec City, we will remain in Montreal, and keep both.

Mr. Claude Bachand: *[Editor's note: inaudible]*

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: No, I think they're on Atwater. I have not been in the Quebec sector for a while, but I will visit in 10 days.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Is it operational right now?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Yes. The general who is currently responsible for creating the armed forces in Quebec will also become my joint task force commander.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Who replaced Mr. Côté?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Gen. Christian Barabé. We are supposed to meet in Montreal on December 3rd to discuss memoranda of understanding.

As far as NORAD is concerned—I am not on the negotiating team, but I am on top of developments—discussions will be on the expanding role of NORAD, which is now focused on aerial warnings and aerospace control. It is possible that it will also include marine warnings.

As for me, the possibility of giving them several more tools to develop a North American marine profile is not an issue. They have their national sources; we have ours. We already exchange information. I experienced this throughout my entire career as a seaman. In any case, we need to tighten the memorandum of understanding, and make it more formal than the one we currently have. If it is decided that NORAD should receive that mandate, which, after all, is an important operational centre employing analysts and intelligence personnel, I have no problem with that.

However—and this is not under discussion now, but once in a while people misinterpret one's intentions—I would not want NORAD to take over control of marine operations. In other words, if something happened in Canadian waters or in our territorial waters involving the national interest, Canada will make any decision which needs to be taken. I will be in charge through one of the coastal commanders. It will not be a decision taken by the Americans.

If we believe a ship is heading towards North America—we often don't know whether it is heading towards the United States or Canada—and if we have suspicions with regard to that ship, we can exchange information. In the discussions which are happening now, we were offered to include a bit more energy and resources to obtain a synthesis of collective images. That option does not bother me. I can work under such an arrangement. I have no problem with that.

As far as the theatre of operations of Canada Command is concerned, there was a lot of confusion because of the U.S. nomenclature. The American organization is based on a structure of global interests, in which regional commanders are not responsible for defence anywhere in the world. They are responsible for bringing onboard other countries in the interest of global security.

As for the American zone of interest in North America, their eyes are turned towards Canada, because we share a common border, and we want to encourage our colleagues to prepare to reduce the risks which the United States might face. But frankly, the same holds true in reverse, that is, we want to have access to information so we can defend our country. Therefore, we want to make it easier to exchange information.

Hurricane Katrina was a very good example of our ability to anticipate events in order to be more effective. In my opening statement, I did not say that when hurricane Katrina hit, we had the Joint Task Force Atlantic ready to move in. Our starting point was to explore ideas with Adm. McNeil and his group in the Maritimes. We were not given very specific terms of reference, except that there were very explicit terms given by the chief of defence. Incidentally, I still don't have any authority in that area. It is the deputy chief who was involved in that operation. Of course, I was very interested in the discussions and in what happened. But the most important thing was to evaluate how things were handled.

● (1200)

At the time, we were told that there was no doubt that there was a marine aspect to the situation in the beginning. But there wasn't really a Canadian representative to discuss the matter with the United States. At the time, Canada did not have an equivalent position to the person responsible for the United States Northern Command. We were not talking daily, only in times of crisis. Of course, there have been talks between Ottawa and Colorado. But today, because of our structure, we are in contact every day, at every hour. So there will be no surprises.

As far as the Atlantic situation is concerned, the Americans have found a solution. They have begun regional consultations and they have developed an intervention force. Once again, under our structure, there will be more authority and a commander could receive an order that such and such a person will be in charge of support operations in the United States.

Incidentally, you can't get into the United States without having national authority. The government can give someone national authority to go into the United States, but it does not come from Canada. However, the United States are not a third world country; they are our neighbours.

We can also develop a stronger support concept. In other words, we have also looked at other possibilities. But by having the ability to chose any country, we can state that we have good intentions and send A, B or C. Conversely, I can contact the United States directly; so, if they need a specific type of resource, I can have it added to the structure of their forces.

I mentioned hurricane Katrina as being a very good example. We have learned lessons before operations began. The discussions I had with American representatives truly confirm to me that they did not originally believe that they would have to ask for resources from another country. But in our daily discussions, we realized that an event could affect the United States or Canada, or both. From that point on, we began to talk about national contingencies.

• (1205)

The Chair: Thank you.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: That was a long answer, but you did ask me three questions.

[*English*]

The Chair: It certainly is a long answer. It's a never-ending answer.

We'll go to Mr. Bagnell.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you.

I just want to continue on with my northern affairs. I was explaining to the last witness that the two threats we've had to our sovereignty in Canada were in Nunavut and the Yukon, with 13 jurisdictions. Of our 60,000 military, I think we have six in the Yukon and one in Nunavut. It's a remote area; it needs people. There's global warming; there are boats coming in that we don't know about. We're not under any threat in places like Gaagetown, Meaford, Petawawa, Cold Lake, Halifax, and Esquimalt. We do have the rangers, which are great. We want lots of support for them. That didn't seem to sell in itself, so I want to just carry on a bit more on that theme.

As far as the practicality of getting people in and out goes, of course we have the longest...I think Nunavut runway is an alternate runway for the space shuttle. So there isn't a more easily accessible runway. We have in Alaska...if you compare with what the United States is doing, I believe they have something like 50,000 or 60,000 troops. In fact, it's almost embarrassing that we have more Canadian troops stationed in Alaska in some of the air force bases than we do in Canada's entire north. We should at least be able to share the economic benefits of bases in the 13 jurisdictions in Canada in that they're not particularly generic as to where they have to go.

I'm not sure what would happen if you pulled troops out of B.C. or Alberta or Ontario or Quebec. But I know in the Maritimes—my colleagues could tell you—they'd be very upset. Cheryl doesn't want to give me her army from Petawawa.

So as opposed to six troops in the Yukon and one in Nunavut, I think we should at least have our fair share of the economic benefits, as well as just the close access to the north, where incidents are happening—just have a bigger presence in the north than we have today.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Thank you.

I could argue about whether or not there is still really a “threat to the north”, but what I will not argue about is the fact there are vulnerabilities in the north, and there's certainly a national will to do much better in the north. I think those two imperatives drove some of our work to look at the composition of Joint Task Force North.

Obviously we've just started the process, but I will tell you where we're going, and we're certainly focusing a bit more on the north. This will be in my own words here, not formal command and control verbiage.

I think what we've always done in the north is have a host command that didn't really operate in the north. It was the resident presence. It received people coming in, whether from the air force or the navy or the army, to operate on their ground, and it facilitated some of the work. That's no longer going to be the case.

On February 1, if I can get everything synchronized, the commander of Northern Area will now become commander of Joint Task Force North. He will be a commander in his own right, and the navy doesn't go stomping into the north and operating on their own. He will command the navy effort in the north when they go in the north, and it's the same thing with the air force and the army.

That is a substantial change in focus. It now means I need to provide him with a more robust headquarters; we're working on that and we will. That means more equipment, more people, more access to intelligence, and more coordinated support from here.

And certainly of all the joint task forces we're putting together—for the rest of them it's to some extent repackaging and changing the skill sets of part of the staff and giving more capacity for planning—in this case it's that and more. The commander in the north will also engage now in trying to look at what his footprint should be, with much more presence, especially in the other two territories where his headquarters are.

I have to admit it's also the beginning of our dialogue, but the first part is a given. We will give him more people, more presence, and more capacity to own the operations of the CF in the north.

• (1210)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you very much.

That's very good news. It's exciting.

The Chair: I know. I saw that smile on your face.

We'll go to Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: Thank you very much, monsieur le président, and thank you, Admiral Forcier, for being here today.

If I could, I'll bore down into one of your comments in your paper. With respect to standing up Canada Command, you were speaking about the need for responsiveness. My question, sir, is simply this. Perhaps you could go through that and articulate to us where there are gaps in terms of the integration between domestic first responders and our Canadian Forces and what your requirements are as the head of Canada Command to fill those deficits. I'm particularly interested in the communication grid and how we respond, not only between the forces and the first responders, but also within the forces.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: As to the first responder structure, certainly we're not the lead department here. The provinces have the lead in coordinating the first response; that's our federal system. The lead federal agency to support this, of course, is Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

What we intend to do with the defence forces is to get into these organizations as more equal and more present partners and to see what those gaps are. Some of them are obvious, and we're looking at some of that, but some are not—or they're not so obvious to me. Different imperatives and different provinces—geography—bring different challenges. Different sizes of populations and different economies bring different solutions.

What I'm asking my six joint task force commanders to be, because we're now engaged and eventually I'll have my authority over these individuals full-time.... I'm not waiting for February 1. We've already had meetings, and they've now gone back into their provinces where they operate to have the dialogue: what's the capacity and what's problematic?

I'm not sure at the end of the day that we necessarily need to lean forward and grow a CF capability to fill all these gaps, but I think if collectively we understand what the gaps are, we can make contingencies. If I can, I'll use a very generic example. One province may have a portion of the province where, because of geography, it's very hard to have a strong presence, but there's a population base there. Maybe it doesn't make sense to have a strong first-responder presence there, but if we collectively note some vulnerability—all the partners, municipal up to federal—then maybe we can work together to have contingencies to address it.

This is the place. If I'm going to put my eggs in one basket to go and help a community in Canada, it won't be the metropolis. The metropolises have very good, first-class first responders.

Now, anybody can get overwhelmed in a major disaster—you know, with the Katrinas of this world—but right now the first step is that I am now challenging my joint force commanders and their subordinates to understand the lay of the land, which we haven't done very well before.

Hon. Keith Martin: Admiral, would it be fair to say our Canadian Forces need better representation at PSEPC?

As you correctly said, we're not the first responders in a domestic emergency, but we saw, as you also mentioned in your comments, that whether it be Katrina or 9/11, when all things are going to hell in a handbasket, the responders are affected by that problem too. Say we had an earthquake on Vancouver Island. Could you walk us through what that response would be? How would the communication grid function and how would the mobility aspects function for us to be able to focus on the emergency needs in a particular area where a big emergency is taking place?

• (1215)

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: In the current structure, once again, the initial response, the ownership of the problem, if I can put it that way, is with the province. However, what we're trying to do is make sure we understand what capacity we can bring to the problem. The large disaster scenarios, whether there's an earthquake on the west coast or hurricanes hitting the shores of the United States, have brought to light, again, a dichotomy. One is that you can't let people not prepare for themselves for self-survival and recovery. But sometimes I think you have to be ready to acknowledge that they may be impaired themselves and can't do a lot of the work, so a national contingency plan for major disasters is what we're talking about.

We have one in National Defence to support the west coast scenario, but really, there's a phasing out of forces in the country to work under the legitimate government that's still there, whatever that is at the end of the day, in a major disaster. But the effort with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada is that we now have said.... We meet occasionally. In my previous job, when I worked for the chief of staff of the Joint Operations Group, we met occasionally. We're now saying that my director of operations should meet, if not on a weekly basis, certainly on a very frequent basis, with their director of operations and their senior planners and so on. That has started, so I've already encouraged that. I've already met with the deputy minister and the senior ADM in PSEPC, and our staffs have now started a dialogue.

We meet. We still have to determine a rhythm of meetings and a more formal structure, but that's what we're doing now. That's the beauty of having this as a sole job, rather than focusing on solving the CF issues at large. I wake up in the morning and I worry about Canada, and come the first of February, I will really worry about Canada, because it will be right on my doorstep.

I should also not leave you with the impression that we don't have and didn't have a presence in PSEPC. We have a few folks seconded there. We have somebody working in their planning section already. We have somebody running, in fact, the structure of their operations centre for the Government of Canada. Some military officers are seconded to them, and I'm aware of one individual who's helping to push ahead the interdepartmental planning for large-scale exercises. So we're there already.

But one of my self-directed mandates, if you wish, when I'm looking at the gap analysis, is looking at them, and I'm looking at all the other partners around town to see where we best should put liaison officers or secondments. So that is on my slate of things to do.

Hon. Keith Martin: Merci beaucoup.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

We'll go to Monsieur Perron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Mr. Chairman, don't start the clock right away. If possible, I would like to get five additional minutes after Vice-Adm. Forcier's testimony, because I have something to say to the committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: Within the committee?

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Yes, at the end. Six minutes.

[Translation]

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, Mr. Vice-Admiral.

I apologize for having to leave the room: this place is funny in that we sometimes get urgent requests which turn out not to be so urgent after all ,anyhow.

How much money will this new type of Canada Command cost?

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: I don't have any estimates for now, because we are still developing the concept. However, if I look at the guidelines laid out by my bosses, I realize that the point is not to increase capacity, but to reorganize our efforts.

If we take into account the quality of training and future interventions, I don't think we will need to ask for specific additional equipment. I may make additional requests, but not necessarily the department. As everyone else does, I will negotiate with my boss to know how the pie will be shared, if I can put it that way.

So I don't have any estimates. I have to admit that my current budget is very small; I have just enough to operate my headquarters. I don't have any permanent forces. Only the army, air force and marine commanders have permanent forces. For our part, we will have an impact on their training, their structure and their equipment needs, but we have not yet estimated what the costs will be.

In the beginning, there will most probably be additional costs. We will need, generally speaking, several hundreds of thousands of dollars or a couple of million dollars to build up the organization. However, this does not mean that we will adjust the defence rate and change our objectives.

• (1220)

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: You are no doubt aware that we recently travelled to Brussels and London. That was a very bad personal experience for me. When we arrived in Brussels, we heard that there had been an earthquake in Pakistan that had killed approximately 70,000 people. When we left, one week later, neither NATO nor the United Nations had decided whether they were going to assist Pakistan or not. I was shocked by the amount of time it took them to reach a decision.

I hope that you will require less time to reach a decision when faced with a disaster. If, for example, a vessel with bombs onboard came up the St. Lawrence River with the purpose of blowing up the Port of Quebec, how long would your reaction time be? Would you react quickly? I know it's difficult to answer that question, but I would still like you to try.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Within our current framework, if we try to increase our response time and if humanitarian intervention is required, in other words if a base commander somewhere in Canada knows that there is an unfolding disaster in a nearby city, then there is immediate intervention. They have the authority to act and they do so.

There was recently a flood in a small town in Newfoundland and the people in charge of the local reserve unit called Halifax to tell them that their neighbours were encountering problems, that they

were going to help them and that if they needed anything they would call. That authority exists.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: It exists.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: It currently exists.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Will it also exist under the new command?

• (1225)

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Absolutely.

The situation is more complicated when the purpose of the intervention is to assist police operations, because a request has to be made to the provincial government in order to obtain authorization to intervene. In past examples I've seen, the police officer or local police force would take the decision to request nearby assistance, rather than approach the province or the federal government through the solicitor general. In those cases, it would not make sense to delegate local authority for the purposes of intervention, because you're dealing with a different legislative framework.

To come back to your example, if the police force is aware of the presence of that vessel—

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Or if there's a suspicion.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: ...or if there's a suspicion, and the provincial government wants assistance, then there is a protocol for that purpose. The Quebec Minister for Public Safety makes a request to the Solicitor General of Canada who then replies, if he is not capable of providing that assistance, that his colleague in National Defence may be able to provide assistance.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: I'm going to put words in your mouth and please tell me if I am wrong. You're telling me that if there is a delayed response, it's mainly due to people at the bottom of the ladder not necessarily being familiar with the process required for obtaining a rapid response. It may therefore be appropriate to educate them or to hold special meetings with a view to providing them with that information.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Absolutely. I'll give you two examples. At the national chiefs of police meeting I had the opportunity to tell everyone what the process was. If they address themselves to the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, they will note that he has a protocol and must assist them. If he requires federal assistance, then he requests it and if that federal assistance extends beyond the RCMP, etc., there is also a protocol. I must point out that this is a fairly rapid process: it's a matter of minutes, or at worst, hours. If the situation involves intervention within a province, then I believe they must request federal support. Thus, these protocols do exist.

What we are currently asking our regional commanders to do when meeting with their colleagues from Public Safety is to refresh their memory regarding protocols. They have to remind them how the process works. That dialogue exists and I am pushing for even more dialogue.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: You told us—

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Perron, you've gone beyond the time.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't look at you, sir.

The Chair: That's okay. You didn't hear the little buzzer and I did.

We'll go to Mr. Khan, and then we'll go to Mr. Bachand.

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

My question is a little bit more on the operational side. Are our financial incentives and quality of training exercises, etc., substantive enough to make the reserves proactive? Is there a body that liaises with the employers? Does the CF have a dedicated unit in place that informs employers of the benefits of employing reservists and that provides support for both employers and reservists by offering info about their rights and commitments?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Yes, there is a body that works as an advisory body to the Department of National Defence. It's the Canadian Forces Liaison Council. It's been operating now for at least a decade. I'm not current on their structure and their engagement programs and all of that, but I can tell you that in all the jobs I've had, certainly for the last decade, I have come in contact with them. I've had visits of the Canadian Forces Liaison Council to the west coast every year. They did bring a series of representatives from industry, employers basically. If I remember—and this is a dated figure, and I'm sure the department could provide that—they certainly have at least 1,500 minor and major employers who have signed up to say, “We like what you do, so we will help you voluntarily. When you need the reserves, let us know, and we'll support them.”

There is a lot of talk about the reserve rules and regulations. I have worked through the years in many crises, either as a commander in the field or a commander in headquarters, and every time we asked the reserves to come out for an emergency, they did. We had no lack of support, no lack of volunteers.

The challenge to this country is that unless this is really a national emergency, like a national insurgency or something, where you mobilize the whole country, then the reserves are not mobilized; they're asked to contribute. I find, especially in domestic operations, it's their neighbourhood, it's their parish, it's their town or their province, and they're the first people to put their hands up, saying “I'm available, I can come and help”.

Mr. Wajid Khan: I just wanted to make sure that employers are allowing them to do their job. I have no doubt the reserves want to work, but to have a better relationship between their employers and them when they need to go....

• (1230)

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: The Chief of Reserves and Cadets for the Department of National Defence keeps that relationship alive. Unfortunately, I'm not working with them on those issues right now.

Mr. Wajid Khan: My next question is somewhat in line with my colleague, Mr. MacKenzie, but going a little further. Is there a danger that the reserves will become merely a civil defence force, tasked with disaster relief and aid to the civil power, etc.? How do we consolidate their roles with CANCOM and the need to maintain war-fighting capabilities? And would it make any sense to consolidate reserve units with manpower problems into reasonable reserve units while maintaining traditions?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: I'm not in a position to answer the second part of your question. I'm afraid I'm not an expert on

reserves, especially militia and the issues of consolidation of units. My predecessor this morning is in a better position to address this issue.

On the first part of your question with respect to making sure we don't dilute—to use my words—their capability to operate overseas and to be perceived and/or at least used as domestic operations consequence management folks, it's not the intent; it certainly is not.

What I'm challenging our own organization is to say, when you're home and you're not preparing to go overseas, what capability do you have? I've sort of challenged the foundation here. Do you even own a working uniform, or is this all you have in your closet when you work in Ottawa? If suddenly the national capital region were a disaster zone, what could the collectivity of Canadian Forces living in this town do to turn to and support a civil disaster? That's challenging our way of thinking. What I'm asking, though, is, what skill set do we need to keep up so that when we decide to show up to help Canadians, we're not a hindrance, we're there to provide additional capability?

Mr. Wajid Khan: That addresses the support of the civil authorities, but my concern is this. Would these people be able to maintain their fighting capability in overseas services, or even in defending Canada?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: My role is not to change the doctrine of the navy, the army, or the air force and the directions of the three commanders to their forces. They generate forces and they decide the standard of readiness for international operations. My intervention is to try to make sure that some of that skill set can be translated into domestic support.

There were folks who were concerned with the stand-up of Canada Command, that it would basically start to change the standard of how sailors and soldiers work and so on, but that's not the principle. My three good friends, the army, the navy, and the air force, have the authority and have it in their heart to maintain the professional fighting standard, and I'm not changing that. I'm just making sure we don't waste the talent pool when they're back home.

The Chair: We have to maintain consistency. You've had your extra time, and we're going to go to Monsieur Bachand.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to ask you about the decision-making process. When a reference is made to the North, does that refer, in your opinion, to land north of the 55th parallel?

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: In my view, the North simply refers to the three territories.

Mr. Claude Bachand: In that case, I'm going to describe a situation to you requiring a decision. First, regional CanadaCOMs are not completely independent; they follow your orders, in Ottawa.

Vadm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Absolutely.

Mr. Claude Bachand: If a disaster or a very serious incident took place near two regional headquarters, you would be the one with the authority to give permission to one headquarter to assist the other.

• (1235)

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Absolutely. You have to determine who is responsible and who must provide support.

Mr. Claude Bachand: I am in no way surprised by your answer. However, what is not clear to me is the expeditionary force command versus CanadaCOM. The expeditionary force commander can request resources from various areas and the government can decide to establish a theatre of operations and send vessels, planes and troops. It can also decide to open another small theatre of operations. What happens, however, if there is a disaster somewhere in Canada and you require those same forces?

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: That's a very good point.

International response forces are usually deployed as a result of a conscious decision. Weeks if not months are required for engagement. Currently, three commanders, those of the army, air force and navy are involved in force projections. It is not possible to continuously provide 100 per cent training for all planes, all pilots, all vessels and all battalions simply for the purposes of being available to leave tomorrow morning. We therefore plan in terms of resource rotation. We identify those people who are able to serve within international operations.

I know that Gen. Caron has his plan. He could tell you which battalion will be ready in six months if they are required to intervene somewhere, whether that has been planned or not. That knowledge exists at my level, but also at the regional level. We have no secrets. We don't operate in a bubble.

For example, if we develop a contingent to assist our friends who are currently in the West... The next few months will be challenging because most of their combat forces will be in Afghanistan. The commander responsible for preparing forces for Afghanistan will have to put on his joint armed forces hat and tell his boss that if ever there were a huge disaster in the West, the first request would be for assistance elsewhere. I think that is realistic.

We are not in a position to keep 60,000 regular armed forces members at home just in case there's a hurricane. In fact, I'm the one responsible for making those decisions.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Does that happen at both levels, in other words between regional headquarters and yourself but also between the expeditionary force and yourself?

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: No. Decisions regarding international deployments naturally fall under the Government of Canada. Canada's overseas deployment plans flow from a recommendation from the chief of defence and the implementation of those plans is the responsibility of the commander of the international forces, of FECCOM.

My FECCOM colleague works in the same headquarters as we do. He's on a lower floor, so we often speak. I am certain that when he is considering the possibility of an overseas deployment... Let's take the example of a discussion we had yesterday. I was telling him that it would not come as a surprise if he were considering heading to another theatre of operations that would require equal participation on the part of the army and the air force. I asked him what the impact of that would be? I work with the forces that remain in Canada.

If we had to plan deployment... For example, do we expect to have a role to play during the 2010 Olympic Games? Of course. Will there be discussions on the extent of our international operations? Without a doubt. There will be much less of an appetite for international operations in 2010 than for any other year.

Mr. Claude Bachand: However, as you said, the deployment of expeditionary forces can be planned well in advance. On the other hand, a disaster can never be planned. Take Afghanistan for example; the *PPCLI* has an important role to play. If there were a catastrophe in Canada, you would have to decide whether British Columbia headquarters or Ontario headquarters will help out. Am I right?

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Let's take a concrete example that I saw for myself two years ago, that is forest fires in British Columbia. The commander of the Western Armed Forces was about to deploy his forces in Bosnia, if my memory serves me well. He was at the very last stages of preparing his forces who were supposed to leave the following day to work for FECCOM. The commander did what he could to provide assistance but he realized that he had to decide whether he was going to send his troops overseas or not.

The solution might have been me telling him that I was going to find troops elsewhere, for example, in Ontario, and that he would be able to continue training his Western troops who were headed to FECCOM.

It's important to realize that at times decisions may be made that will prevent us from providing international assistance immediately because one mustn't forget that our first duty is to protect the lives of Canadians here first.

• (1240)

Mr. Claude Bachand: Here first. That's what I wanted to hear you say.

VAdm J.C.J.Y. Forcier: Exactly. For example, that is one of the decisions that had to be made after the Katrina hurricane hit. We asked ourselves what effect sending army and navy troops would have on the training of our forces. We evaluated what the impact would be if we sent troops for one, two or three weeks. We decided to help our neighbours, and therefore we went.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Very well.

[English]

The Chair: Admiral Forcier, thank you very much for being here today. We're nearing 1 p.m., which is your deadline as well.

I must say, today you and General Caron have, between you, certainly been very thorough and very generous with your responses, and I personally want to thank you for that. On behalf of all the committee, thank you very much. And certainly I think you sense around this table the great interest all these members have with respect to our national defence and how it's unfolding day by day. Thank you for being here.

Colleagues, before I suspend for a moment, Monsieur Perron has asked me for five minutes to discuss some committee business. I don't know what it's regarding, but depending on the subject matter, we might have to go in camera for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron: No, I don't think so. I simply want you to think about some of my own thoughts, especially after having heard the vice-admiral state to us that he has been trying, since July 1st, 2005, to make sure that his project fits with the Statement on Defence Policy. This morning, LGen Caron told us the same thing. Last week, the person responsible for intelligence also said the same thing.

Why then should we continue considering the Statement on Defence Policy if everything seems to have been signed, sealed and delivered? I think we would be much more effective if we considered the issue of procurement, for example.

Those are my personal thoughts that I submit for your consideration. If an election campaign is triggered next week, then

this isn't something we will need to concern ourselves with. I didn't want to give a big speech, I simply wanted to share my thoughts with you. I feel I'm wasting my time studying the Statement on Defence Policy and that we should focus our efforts on other issues, considering that the Statement on Defence Policy seems to have been decided.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Could I beg your indulgence? I know Admiral Forcier has to leave. Why don't we just say goodbye and then...?

I see no further comments, so I'll just adjourn the meeting.

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