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—
Chair

The Honourable Maxime Bernier

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• (1100)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

I'd like to welcome you to the Standing Committee on National Defence, meeting 15. We are continuing our review and study of the role of Canadian soldiers in international peace operations after 2011.

With us today, from the Francophone Research Network on Peace Operations, is Jocelyn Coulon, the director; and as an individual, we have Douglas Bland, chair of the defence studies program at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University.

Mr. Bland, I understand, is going to start. You have about five to seven minutes each, gentlemen, and then we'll go into the first round, starting with the official opposition. Depending on how many questions there are, we will probably go a couple of rounds.

Mr. Bland, it's yours.

Dr. Douglas Bland (Chair, Defence Studies Program, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, As an Individual): Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I have a few written notes that I will use, and then I will be very keen to join your discussion and answer your questions.

If I turn to my notes, my first point for the committee is that a study of the future of peace operations that begins from the premise that peace operations or peacekeeping are military operations distinct from war-fighting sets up a false dichotomy that may diminish the study's influence in the formulation of Canada's future defence policies.

Peace operations and peacekeeping operations are forms of warfare in which, as in all the other forms of warfare, means and tactics are adapted to meet the needs of particular circumstances. To set these operations outside the realities of warfare confuses policy and defence planning, and raises unrealistic expectations in our community. As we have seen in the Afghanistan campaign, these confusions can hinder the operations of the Canada Forces in the field and harm Canada's national security.

Scholars have long described warfare as occurring along a spectrum of conflict. At the lowest end, one might place unstable peace or ceasefires during conflicts. At the high end, we find total war with few limitations on the scale or ferocity of operations.

Examples of operations conducted at the low end of the spectrum include the large deployment of the United Nations into the Middle East in 1956, an operation that is still ongoing; and into Cyprus in

1964, an operation that is also still continuing. In both cases, lightly armed forces were deployed in situations where the likelihood of the UN becoming involved in armed conflict was very low.

At the high end of spectrum, we find the world wars, and along the length of the spectrum we find so-called limited wars, for instance in Korea in 1950; and in the Middle East in 1956, 1967, and 1973, and in Lebanon, for instance, more recently.

All wars, as defined by their particular characteristics, can be placed here or there along the spectrum of conflict.

Wars that share particular characteristics often assume particular modes of conduct and tactics. For instance, urban warfare, guerrilla warfare, revolutionary warfare, and civil warfare have their own defining characteristics and, thus, often their own defining modes of operations and combat. However, they are all wars by general definition. They have their own grammar, but not their own logic. In other words, they are identified by their particular means and modes, not as operations set aside from the general circumstances and demands of warfare.

Thus, peacekeeping and peace operations, too, are not distinct from warfare. Rather, they are another type of military operation. They have their own grammar and they have their own logic.

When we assume today that peace operations are not warfare because they occur in particular circumstances under the direction of international authorities and use particular tactics and modes of operations, we make a serious error. Moreover, when we assume that all future peace operations must be stuffed into the configurations of the operations of the 1950s and 1960s, then we make a dangerous error as well.

Let me support these remarks with two illustrations from Canadian military operations during the period 1990 to 2010. The Canadian Forces were deployed in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 under a UN blue flag, and were equipped for that mission on the assumption that it was a peacekeeping operation. Our combat units arrived in theatre with a mere six rounds of rifle ammunition per member, and in white painted vehicles. They almost immediately came under fire from well-equipped local forces. For 10 years these units attempted to conduct peacekeeping operations in the midst of a conventional war. The Liberal government of the day refused to acknowledge this fact and sacrificed the lives of 25 soldiers, and created scores of seriously wounded casualties as a result.

Today the Canadian Forces are involved in a war in Afghanistan. At the unit level, this is as deadly a war as any we have fought around the world, and it is conducted with every conventional weapon the Canadian Forces own. Yet in the midst of this war, Canadian soldiers and public servants serving the Government of Canada are conducting complex peace operations—development and humanitarian missions, for example. Our Afghan mission cannot be labelled as either a war or a peace operation; rather, it is a conflict mission we are waging with the means and methods appropriate to the circumstances.

• (1105)

The questions that this committee is addressing and the recommendations that it will make are important, but a study aimed at influencing future defence policies that reaches conclusions based on the notion that peace operations are separate and distinct from warfare may seem incredible, and thus be set aside by defence planners.

The international environment in which the Canadian Forces can expect to operate in the future will not allow for the deployment of peacekeeping forces not prepared at the outset for the rigours of combat among people in disintegrating states and communities.

I would hope that the committee would break from past attempts to separate peacekeeping missions from warfare and be the first to boldly alert Canadians to the operational realities and limitations of what I call third-generation UN missions—warfare by another name—and to the dangers these conflicts present to the men and women of the Canadian Forces.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you, Mr. Bland, for your remarks. We do have copies of your submission.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Coulon, you have seven minutes in which to make your presentation.

[*English*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon (Director, Francophone Research Network on Peace Operations): Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, this committee is of course reviewing the role of Canadian servicemen and women in peacekeeping operations post-2011. I have a couple of ideas that I would like to propose, as well as a few suggestions to make not only about how peacekeeping operations have evolved, but also about what Canada could in fact take on, whether it be in Africa or in other theatres of operations.

However, to begin with I think that it is important to make a number of distinctions—Douglas Bland stressed this point in his brief. Peacekeeping operations are only a component of today's broader peace operations which include conflict prevention, peace enforcement, peace-making and peacebuilding. Along this spectrum, there is also traditional peacekeeping, which is what Canadians have been used to for the past 50 or so years.

These peace operations, Mr. Chair, have got considerably bigger, to the extent that they are unlike anything we have seen over the past 65 years. Twenty years ago there were 12 peacekeeping operations globally; 11 of which were led by the United Nations, and one other by a multi-national force based out of Sinai in between Egypt and Israel. Now, as I described in my written brief, nowadays peace operations run the whole gamut including 40 peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding missions spread out over 5 continents, including 200,000 peacekeepers, 6 international and regional organizations, and 2 coalitions, which currently play a role in these missions, billions of dollars for the reconstruction of fragile states and to provide a fresh start for the people of 23 countries located primarily in Africa, with a success rate commended by most researchers and research centres, including RAND Corporation and the Human Security Report.

The reason why today's peace operations have become so popular among decision-makers as conflict management and resolution tools is that they have been fine-tuned over the years and produce results. There are a number of activities included under the mandates of today's peace operations including confidence building, arresting war criminals, creating or strengthening state structures, disarmament and mine clearance, reintegrating child soldiers, protecting civilians including women and children, reforming the security sector, etc.

In fact, the success of peace operations is increasingly on the radar screen, taken into account even by a number of western countries that had more or less dismissed them in the 1990s. A number of concrete examples attest to this growing confidence. In 2006, seven European nations, including big countries like France, Germany, Italy and Spain, came to support the mission in Lebanon, and on their conditions, I should point out Mr. Chair, which is important for Canada on a go-forward basis. In September 2009, during an unprecedented meeting in the history of the United Nations, the U.S. President spoke directly to those countries that provide the UN with contingents and promised them that the United States would remain committed. And then, in February 2010, the new British Defence Green Book stressed that "the exceptional role that the UN plays in terms of international architecture, peacebuilding, and security and governance, is more important than ever".

So for the past five years, there have been many western countries that have begun to consider a return to the peace operations model, or have actually taken the leap and are taking part in UN, NATO, European Union, and OSCE-led operations. They are supporting peace operations conducted by the African Union and other regional organizations.

•(1110)

I will speed up. As you know—and Douglas pointed this out in his testimony—the 1990s were tough in terms of peacekeeping operations. There were mistakes and disasters, and we often forget the success stories. I was a journalist for 20 years. And as you are aware, honourable members, journalists write bad news stories because people don't want to read about good news stories. There is good news to report as far as peacekeeping operations are concerned. Of the 120 peacekeeping missions led by various international organizations over a 20-year period, the overwhelming majority were a success. We therefore need to remind our political decision-makers, the public, and researchers, of this.

What does that mean for Canada? I think that if you were to look at the way the Europeans negotiated their return to the UNIFIL in Lebanon in 2006, you would realize that a number of criteria were set enabling the French, Italians, Germans, and others, to deploy their forces safely. Of course, a peace operation will never be a war operation. I understand the distinction that my colleague is making and I also understand the definition of war. However, peace operations follow the rules set out by members of international organizations, in agreement with the various parties. Let me come back to my core idea, and that is that most of these peace operations actually work.

And so, given the reforms carried out at the United Nations in the past 10 to 15 years, and more specifically, in light of what we call robust peacekeeping, which permits France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, to deploy tanks, aircraft, helicopters, and ships to Lebanon to carry out the UNIFIL mandate, I do believe that this is a new era for peace operations. They are not like Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, and the old peacekeeping missions.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair—and I will respond to questions that you may have—I believe that Canada has acquired an exceptional reputation and experience in Afghanistan. Now, it is true that we have lost 140 soldiers. And yet, we should be very proud of what Canadians have accomplished in Afghanistan, for our security, for the security of NATO, and for the world. On the strength of the nearly 10 years of combat experience, relationships with the people, and of the interoperability with our allies on the ground, I do believe that now Canadian soldiers are well equipped to participate in peace operations, whether it be in the Congo or elsewhere in the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

•(1115)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): *Merci, Monsieur Coulon, pour votre présentation.*

We will go to the first round. I would remind members to put their questions through the chair.

Mr. Dosanjh, for seven minutes.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Bland and Mr. Coulon. You both raise very interesting issues. What I get from both of you, if I could combine the two presentations, is that it is a field where there is much less agreement than we would like to have on what a peace mission or a

peace operation might look like in the next 10, 15, or 20 years, and what Canada should do.

You can't have a definition that's etched in stone. I realize that. Every mission is different. As Mr. Bland eloquently said, every mission has its own "grammar". But can you tell us how our construction of a mission, or any missions, in the next five or ten years might be impacted by our experience in Afghanistan? We've lost 143 lives, and there is a certain feeling in the country, as you argue, that no peace mission is without danger. In any peace mission, you can always lose lives, and I recognize that.

So can you take a leap five or ten years hence and see what might happen?

•(1120)

Dr. Douglas Bland: Let me respond to the first remarks, Mr. Chair.

In my academic business—my military business was another period—we like to begin, as I'm sure Jocelyn will agree, with a definition of the terms we're using. What we've never been able to do, in my view, is find anybody who could settle down and tell us what peacekeeping was and keep to that definition for very long. We call them peacekeeping missions, or peace operations, or muscular peacekeeping. We keep running around trying to find a definition. That suggests to me that we are trying to define something that perhaps is too difficult to define, because it always changes in the circumstances.

That's why, in my own view and that of lots of people, especially members of the Canadian Forces, peacekeeping is assumed to be warfare, and has the conditions of warfare, and the circumstances, and they will change right in front of your face, as they did in Cypress in 1974, when the little peacekeeping force came under attack by the Turks. They killed a friend of mine, a Canadian Forces officer, in that operation. The morning was quiet, and he was dead by the afternoon.

So when we look at the experience in Afghanistan and other places, since the end of the Cold War, especially in Bosnia, the people who led the Canadian Forces...and are leading the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan are young officers trained and experienced in the former Yugoslavia. Rick Hillier, Andy Leslie, Mike Jeffery—all these people grew up in those circumstances, when Canadians didn't understand it but they did. And when they went to the next operation, they said, "We're not doing that again."

So I would think that the policy and the plans that military officers in Canada will put forward will be to say that peacekeeping is warfare, and that's the first assumption; that we'll adjust the needs of the deployment to the circumstances of the mission, either a lot of stuff or not so much stuff, but we're going to go there with the assumption that we're in a dangerous environment; that we need logistics support and can't depend on allies to provide for our logistics support and so on; that we need our own rules of engagement, our own weapons and so on; and that if, when we arrive there, it's kind of benign, well, the commanders will stand down a bit.

It's very hard, as we learned in Bosnia, to go on a mission and then call back home and say, "We need more than six rounds of ammunition here. People are trying to kill us."

I think the general remark to your question, then, is that people are going to assume that the operations they go on are military combat operations, and that operational effectiveness—i.e., "Will it work in conflict?"—is the first question they will ask you.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: Mr. Coulon, do you want to add to that? I'm interested, because you show that these operations have in fact expanded, contrary to popular belief, and you referenced Afghanistan at the end, and also Lebanon.

Can you tell us what you think missions might look like and how they might be constructed?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: Mr. Chair, I agree in part with my colleague Doug's definition, but I do not want any generalizations to be made regarding peace operations. There are dangerous peace operations, and we know which ones they are. When the United Nations Security Council or other organizations adopt a military posture on the ground, they go to great lengths of course to provide soldiers and servicemen and women with as much protection as is possible in a peace operation.

Now, I would like to stress the fact that not all peace operations are characterized by the violence we have seen in Rwanda, Bosnia, and other theatres of operations. As I said earlier, there have been studies of 120 peace operations over a 20-year period. And based on our calculations, roughly 10% to 20% of these operations were somewhat violent in nature. The overwhelming majority of these operations therefore were conducted with the consent of the parties involved and with lightly-armed military forces akin to those we have been used to seeing for many years.

Now, of course, the UN, having learned that things can change rather quickly, such as in Cyprus in 1974 or in Bosnia in the 1990s, endowed its soldiers with a certain robustness—if you'll pardon the expression—not only in their conduct, but also by providing them with certain military materiel and equipment.

I do believe that as the committee considers the notion of peace operations, it must keep in mind the full spectrum of peace operations.

• (1125)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Mr. Bachand, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our two guests who are leaders in this area, Mr. Bland and Mr. Coulon, whose report I read after it was presented to us about a month ago. I must tell you that you are making quite a substantial contribution to this committee's work. I think that we are getting off on the right foot by listening to you and your suggestions. My questions are for both of you.

In a previous debate, we decided to do something about peacekeeping missions. Members began the conversation by asking whether we were dealing with peacekeeping, or peacebuilding. I find your way of making those distinctions original.

Yes, there still are peacekeeping missions. And yes, there will surely be a lot of peace enforcement missions too. And, there will be peacebuilding missions. I wonder if, as we look at the problem as a whole, it might be useful to develop a whole series of toolboxes, if you will, so that when considering a particular conflict, we can say, well, here is what we have available to us under this particular mandate. The international community could indicate that the NATO mandate should be used to carry out a particular type of mission, or the European Union mandate for another type of mission. So, that would be your first toolbox.

Naturally, I would like to hear what you have to say about the UN reform. It is not normal that the Security Council should have to sometimes take years to respond to a conflict where hundreds of thousands of people are being killed. And so, in my opinion, there will be no progress on this until the UN is reformed.

Now, the doctrines would constitute another toolkit. We could look at the array of existing doctrines, and also those new ones that are coming to the fore. And I would also like to hear your thoughts about the duty to protect. We could add that to the array of actual services we provide, by saying that we can no longer wait for the UN or NATO. Canada would intervene by itself under its duty to protect. This is a doctrine which has not been fully fleshed out, and that the UN has not really fully delved into.

As far as the rules of engagement are concerned, they could be adapted. You're not talking about the same types of rules of engagement for peacekeeping missions as you are for a peace enforcement mission. How should we address the matter of rules of engagement when the various national parliaments that are taking part in the operation are free to set the rules of engagement?

And finally, when it comes to component parts, I think that the UN is currently making an effort to tack on the civilian component. I believe that it was you, Mr. Coulon, who recommended a unified command. When I say "civilian", that means that the other components are the military or police. I think that it would be difficult to convince the military that a civilian could direct the operation. I would like to hear your opinion on that. It is true that currently there is a civilian coordinator, often from the UN, but generally speaking the command on the ground is in the hands of the army and the military forces rather than the police.

I may have jumped around a bit, but let me sum up. Who do we get the mandates from? When it comes to doctrines, I would like to hear what you have to say about the duty to protect. How do we address the matter of the rules of engagement? Given the various components at play, is a unified command the best way or is there another way of coordinating between the various groups, the military, police and civilians?

• (1130)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Gentlemen, I'll ask for some succinct answers, as you have about three minutes.

A voice: Three minutes each.

Dr. Douglas Bland: I think it's a seminar, actually.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Well, I was going to thank the guest speaker, but....

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Three minutes.

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: I'll start, and I think Doug could answer on the doctrinal aspect and perhaps on the rules of engagement. I'm not military, and I think he has a better understanding of that than I have.

[*Translation*]

So I will make my comments in French.

First, I would like to remind all MPs that, during a peacekeeping operation, most of the time—95%, I believe—a civilian is the one heading the overall peacekeeping operation. That person is called the secretary general's special representative for the Western Sahara, Congo, or Ivory Coast. In short, that individual who heads the overall operation and who is responsible for the various civilian, civilian and military police components is traditionally a diplomat.

Then, you have the second in command, the force commander. This individual will direct all of the peacekeepers or European Union military or other international organizations staff. For over 10 years, that is how the United Nations has operated, to the satisfaction of member states, who have a very clear chain of command.

I want to come back to the Security Council reform. I believe that your question implied that the Security Council takes too long to make a decision regarding a peacekeeping operation and, as a result, it needs to be reformed. The question does not concern the reform; it concerns the political will of members of the Security Council. Be they 15, 20 or 25 members, if they lack the political will to do something, nothing will happen. It is not just the UN, it is not the UN secretary general who makes the call to deploy armed forces.

This has an impact on another of your questions which was the following: If the UN can do nothing, can Canada do anything? Can Canada, on its own, deploy forces? I would note that, in 1996, Canada launched an operation in Zaire to try to save millions of individuals. This operation was a failure for all kinds of reasons that would take too long to explain. Canada does not have the means to do this.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): I'll ask Mr. Bland for a very short intervention. I'm sure we'll be able to come back to these in the next round.

Dr. Douglas Bland: I'll work them in someplace, Mr. Chair.

• (1135)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

Dr. Douglas Bland: The first principle—with which I'm sure all the members here, along with the members of the government and the House of Commons and the Senate, and most Canadians, will agree—in consideration of any of these kinds of things, in any deployment, is the safety of the members of the Canadian armed forces.

That's not to say that they're going to go in someplace and hide out and stay inside the wire, so to speak. They just won't do that.

But we don't want, ever again, to deploy forces as we did into the former Yugoslavia, where they'll be subject to harm, danger; notify their superiors about that; and be left there on their own. So that's the first consideration.

As to rules for going on missions, if you read through all the white papers since 1947, and period statements on defence, and so on, you'll see in all of those papers a set of conditions that must be met before the Canadian Forces can be deployed on peacekeeping operations. We never used them. We have never followed those; or maybe a little bit here, a little bit there. All of these decisions are taken in the circumstances.

Finally, as for civil-military command and so on.... These are loaded words; “command” for sure is. Certainly senior military officers have to cooperate with civilian authority. So the civilian authority that directs Canadian operations overseas is the Prime Minister, and the cabinet, and the government, and, more largely, the Parliament of Canada.

But before we go down that road too far, you have to understand—and I'm not assuming that people don't understand, Mr. Chair—that command arrangements in Canada are directed by the law. There's the National Defence Act, and orders and statements to the Canadian Forces must be passed through the CDS and so on. So you would have to adjust the law and you'd have to do these other things.

What I teach at school when we talk about public administration and defence administration and so is that there's a thing called “administrator's delusion.” The administrator's delusion is the assumption that if you get the process right, the outcomes will be right. So we spend all our time talking about the process, hoping to find the magic way to make decisions and to run operations so that these things come out well.

Well, it is a delusion. You have to have people, including politicians and public servants and military officers, who can adjust sensibly to the conditions they find themselves in when we deploy people overseas.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much. Around here, we call it “political” delusion.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Mr. Allen, welcome to the committee. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank both of you gentlemen for being here.

Mr. Bland, I agree about the lessons learned. We hope we learn lessons in all the things we do, whether in the forces or elsewhere.

Looking at where we are now in Afghanistan, one senses that we're looking for security and development. Those are the primary things we're trying to accomplish. You eloquently described the nature of the conflict in talking about the low end to the high end of what it looks like in theatre and how it's not necessarily what you think it might look like when you get there. The realities can quite often be at opposite ends of the scale.

In that particular situation, knowing what our forces are doing in the south in a major combat role and looking at that spectrum of violence, do you think that what we are trying to accomplish—the development and security aspects—are attainable, based on where we are in the theatre, as opposed to what we wanted to accomplish when we left to go and what we're still talking about trying to accomplish? Do you sense that somehow we might not be able to do that because of the role we are playing on the ground and what we are facing?

Dr. Douglas Bland: In my view, the essence of the mission in Afghanistan, stated or otherwise, is to provide and to develop and to maintain and secure the conditions that allow for good governance—maybe not peace, order, and good governance, but at least good governance—so that the individuals and the rural communities and the various parts of Afghanistan can go about their business with some degree of safety. The ultimate mission here, the objective, is to produce a society in which there is adequate governance and accountability for the people.

You can't do that, and we see that, without security. The Taliban, or whoever is directing these operations in Afghanistan, are students of revolutionary warfare and guerrilla warfare and so on. The first lesson enemy commanders understand in these circumstances is you attack the security forces, the police, the politicians, the guy who delivers the mail, the guys who pick up the garbage. You create such administrative chaos that the people feel frustrated, insecure, and frightened, and they leave the arena to the insurgents. That's the kind of mission we're in now. We're not looking for, or at least I wouldn't look for, peace in Afghanistan.

Saint Augustine, whom you may all know about, 1,500 years ago wrote in a nice book that you can have peace any time you want; you just have to do what the bad guy tells you to do. He didn't put it in such gross language, but it's the same principle. You can have peace any time you want.

The people of Afghanistan—or the few of them I spoke with when I was in theatre, mostly civilians, teachers, administrators, and others—don't want peace; they want liberty and stability so that they can run their country in a day-to-day mission. We can deliver some aspects of security for them, I hope, while we're there; what we do when we're not there is, of course, another question. We'll leave it to somebody else to do that.

If that's not too academic, Chair, I think that's the way I would approach that question.

• (1140)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Mr. Coulon, do you have a response as well?

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: I don't have anything to add.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Mr. Allen, you have just under three minutes.

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Thank you.

We were talking about this sense of how we.... If we send folks to do jobs, they need what I call adequate tools to go with them. We learned that lesson from the Balkans, as you pointed out. If we're preparing for worst-case scenarios, as we now believe we should, we don't want to send folks with tools that are inadequate. In a prior life I was an electrician at one point in time, and there was no sense in my showing up without a meter if I was about to find out that a line had 40,000 volts in it. It's not a good idea to wet your finger and hold it up, although some folks probably have done that.

We're sending folks with tools, but we need a balance between what we're prepared to go and do, based on our knowledge as we enter, and the realities on the ground. We need a balance between our expectations and the expectations of the folks who are actually going to go and help, for lack of a better term. We're being asked to do something, whether that's to keep peace or try to help create peace and bring, as you said earlier, some stability and security. In the case of Afghanistan we were hoping for development, but I didn't hear that in the last question.

If it's not an escalating spectrum of violence, what do we do if we prepare for the violence that isn't there with the tools that are appropriate? What do we do after that? Once we arrive and we're on the ground, and we don't actually need to have this level of equipment and tools, if you will, what would you see us doing then?

Dr. Douglas Bland: If I were a commander, I would park those tools and look at the situation and so on. The thing that I think is important....

Again, I assume, Mr. Chair, that members of Parliament, certainly at this committee, understand that Canadian Forces spend an awful lot of money and time training military staff officers to answer the question you just asked: what shall we do? Bongo, bongo, we're all going to the Congo. Okay, where is the Congo? They sit down and they have....

I just came from the Canadian Forces College in Toronto, where I was giving lectures two days ago. These officers are trained throughout their entire experience, from rank to rank, to do an appreciation of the situation. What are we facing? What tools do we need? What are the circumstances? Is it hot or is it cold? Is it Norway or is it the Congo? They draw up a sensible plan of operation and then adjust it when they get into the thing. It's the whole business of military staff planning for operations.

I'll take a minute to illustrate this point. I worked as an adviser to the inquiry into the deployment in Somalia. One of the things I thought was very interesting in the testimony and in the report is also something I would suggest the committee might take a look at in relation to your question. It's the section in the report that deals with operational preparedness. One of the first findings of the inquiry in relation to launching that mission into Somalia was that there was no problem in the way the military go about assessing how much they need, how many people they need, what they need to go into a mission. The process is fine.

The second finding was they didn't do any of it, or the parts that they did do were arbitrarily dismissed by bureaucrats and general officers and other people. They just grabbed something out of the air and said, "Let's go to Somalia."

The answer, and what I would encourage Canadians to insist on, is a very highly skilled and trained military staff that can answer these questions before you go on an operation.

My last point, Chair, is that the only thing I regretted about the Somalia inquiry was that it was held after the troops came back. It should have been held before they went over. The House should have called commanders, politicians, and others to the table and said, "Do you know what the mission is? Have you got enough stuff? Do you know your rules of engagement?" When somebody is looking over your shoulder, that makes people—at least in my case, anyway—pay attention.

So we shouldn't be examining, with respect to everybody, the detainee issue now—years later. We should have looked at that before we went overseas, just to be current.

• (1145)

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you.

We'll now go to the government side.

Mr. Hawn, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, folks, for coming.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I'll probably deal mostly with Mr. Bland.

You talk about the administrative delusion and you talk about the experience that commanders on the ground got in the former Yugoslavia and how that may or may not have been passed on. With that planning experience, will military planning experience and capability always lead the government's ability to develop policy, because it's those folks, the young Hilliers and the young Natynczyks, who bring that experience that government members don't have? And what's the responsibility of government to listen to that experience?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I wouldn't presume to say what the government's responsibility is. I think citizens would expect the government to talk to its professional advisers, to other advisers from other parts of foreign policy, to advisers from the international community, and maybe even to good old academics once in a while, and then form an opinion about the kind of mission we are capable of doing, how we can do it, and so on. They would be looking into

the future force. We talk a lot about the present force; we've got to think about the future force.

I would hope that, just as this committee is doing, governments will assemble a history and an experience of what has happened in Afghanistan—how it changed and moved, and how we responded to that—so that we can conduct the next operation more smoothly.

I am encouraged, and maybe Jocelyn is too, at meeting so many young bureaucrats from the Government of Canada, CIDA, and others, in Kandahar and in other places and in the field in other parts of the world. These are foreign policy guys, young people who are getting right into the war business and international operations. They're going to be the civil service cadre of the future who will say to an officer, "I remember when we were together in Afghanistan; we did this and we learned about that, so let's do that again."

That's what was missing when we went into the post-Cold War era, because hardly anybody outside the military had been involved in any of these kinds of operations.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Thank you.

You said that war is about peace, and I suggest that everything done by the Canadian Forces, every single day and by every member, is about peace in one way or another.

You also talked about definitions of peacekeeping and peace-making, and we've heard various terms thrown out. There seems to be... "desperation" is probably too strong a word, but there seems to be a strong desire to be able to define whatever it is. It seems to me that the idea that we've got to do that becomes part of the administrative delusion.

You talked about appreciating the situation and what the military does in that. Does that administrative delusion, perhaps falling out of trying to define something too closely, lead to a tendency to situate the appreciation? Do we say, "Okay, we've made up our minds, this is what it is", and wind up going to a former Yugoslavia or an Afghanistan without a clear understanding, and then put an awful lot of pressure on the folks on the ground to pick up the pieces of that administrative delusion?

Dr. Douglas Bland: Yes, and that's what I mean, Chair. If we get these discussions and definitions and dichotomies wrong, it's dangerous for people.

If you define something as peacekeeping and it conjures up in the minds of citizens, politicians, and others—and maybe soldiers too—a certain end result, but it's something else when you get there, well, you're really stuck. If we begin as high-low combat operations and take it from there, and then apply the techniques, as Jocelyn has talked about, in the circumstances that we've learned from peace operations in different places, that's fine; however, if you go and say, "Well, this is a Korean-type war", or "This is going to be a revolutionary war", and start with those kinds of definitions, it takes you nowhere, actually, and puts you in a very dangerous situation.

That's what happened in Somalia. When the Airborne Regiment went to Somalia on the understanding that they were going on a combat mission—and they didn't have a mission when they went, we must remember—and other people thought they were going on a peacekeeping mission, after that everything went off the rails from that confusion.

• (1150)

Mr. Laurie Hawn: If that happens, then do we wind up with challenges—for instance, what we're facing in Afghanistan right now—of interpretation of international law, where people have difficulty putting things into the context of the extremely difficult circumstances we're operating in? That includes in Afghanistan, and I suggest in Africa, where it would be just about impossible to do that. Do we wind up with challenges to the folks on the ground again because there's a tendency for the mission to become a target of some NGOs or others who may have an ideological or other axe to grind?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have about a minute and a half.

Dr. Douglas Bland: I'll give you perhaps two sentences. I'm out of my depth somewhat, other than from operational experience with the law, but when I was doing that, it was an entirely different kind of world.

I would hope that the international community, perhaps led by Canada—that'd be fine—would convene the next Geneva Convention to adjust international law to meet the circumstances and the experiences that we have now, on the assumption that the wars we will be engaged in, for the most part, will be wars among the people, wars in which combatants will be difficult to notice, wars that will in no way fit the model that the earlier conventions at Geneva were assumed to be addressing.

That's a big lesson that I think we need to take out of this experience in Bosnia, perhaps, as well as in Afghanistan, and in the Congo; what are we going to do about that? That's a horrible situation there too.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have about 40 seconds.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: When we were chatting earlier, you mentioned that it relates to responsibility to protect and Canada jumping in somewhere outside of Canada to exert responsibility to protect, which I suggest might be somewhat difficult for a country with the relatively limited capacity of Canada.

You mentioned a responsibility to protect situation that happened right here in 1970 that you were involved in. Do you want to just touch on that briefly?

Dr. Douglas Bland: Yes, that was the FLQ crisis. I was stationed in Petawawa with an operational unit. It was Thanksgiving. That morning, a lot of us had been out duck-hunting. It was nice, peaceful garrison life.

By late that afternoon, we were fully armed to the teeth, weapons loaded, on board helicopters—our brand new set of Huey helicopters that hadn't been used in operations very much—and flying down the Ottawa River.

We landed where the Rideau Centre is now. It used to be a parking lot. We brought in one helicopter after another, a dust-off into the centre of the city. I always like to tell people that it was Canada's first experience in combat aerial operations, but unfortunately it was in downtown Ottawa and not in somebody else's country.

We then went across to the Cartier Square armouries, where we met senior mounted police officers as we were still loading magazines. We were told to guard various houses here and there.

One of the NCOs said to a mounted policeman, "So what do we do if somebody comes up on the lawn?" The mounted policeman said, "Shoot him. But then tell us first." My commanding officer quite sensibly said, "Hold it: nobody's shooting anybody."

The point of the little war story is that it's nice and sunny going duck-hunting. You come home, the turkey's in the oven for Thanksgiving...and that evening we're downtown, walking streets, and people are frightened.

In Kandahar, in Bosnia, in Germany under NATO, which was our greatest peacekeeping operation, the siren goes off and your life changes. Everything changes.

Again, we shouldn't hope to be able to dictate from Parliament or from NDHQ to the commanders in the field how they will react to the situation when they arrive on the ground. You train these people. You commission them. The Queen commissions them, and you give them the responsibility to command operations for Canada in the field. You assume, as I do, that they're sensible people in difficult circumstances, and then you hold them to account before they go and when they come back.

I hope that's not too much preaching, Mr. Chair.

• (1155)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you.

Before we go to the second round, Mr. Bland, I would like a short clarification.

You mentioned that when we went to the former Yugoslavia, we were basically conducting peace operations inside a conventional war. Was that a failure of intelligence or was that a failure to execute the intelligence that we got?

Dr. Douglas Bland: Oh, it was a circumstance that arose.... I'll try not to be too long about this. We'd just had the war against Saddam, the first Iraqi war, and all the nations of the UN came together. People were talking, just after that, about the golden age of the United Nations and peacekeeping, that if you fly into someplace and put up the blue flag, people stop fighting. And it was a mistake.

The Government of Canada sent the troops into Yugoslavia from our posts in Germany on the assumption that this would be a UN peacekeeping operation, with white vehicles brightly painted and a big UN flag, and that this would be enough to stop the operation.

Then when we discovered, almost immediately, when they mortared some of our first convoys going down the road, that, "Uh-oh, this ain't peacekeeping", there was no adjustment; very little adjustment.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you.

We're going to begin the second round with the official opposition.

I believe Mr. Dosanjh is going to share his time with Ms. Neville.

Welcome back to the committee, Ms. Neville.

Go ahead, Mr. Dosanjh.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: Thank you.

I want to go back to the issue that you raised, Mr. Bland, in terms of our experience with non-state actors in Afghanistan and in Bosnia. In the coming decades many of the peace operations, or whatever you might call them, might not involve two states and a situation in which you have the consent of both parties and the UN goes in and just basically monitors the situation. Increasingly you will be dealing with non-state actors.

I have two questions for both of you. First, in the long run, if that's true, then our thinking about peace operations or peacekeeping or peacemaking changes altogether and takes into account the recent experience in Afghanistan.

Second, you raised the issue of the Geneva Conventions. You obviously raised it, but have you thought about how the conventions ought to be amended?

Do either of you have a suggestion?

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): This is a five-minute round, so we are going to have to be even more succinct. There's about 3:40 left in this round.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: I have no other questions. The witnesses can take all the time that's left.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Unless Ms. Neville wants to....

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: No; she said, no, that's fine.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: Mr. Chair, I will try to respond on the issue of non-state players.

First, historically, non-state players were not present in Bosnia or Somalia. During the war in the Congo from 1960 to 1964 there was a legal government, but there were also rebels in various provinces throughout Congo that had declared independence or that tried to attack the Belgian government. They also attacked peacekeepers who had remained in the Congo for four years. This is not necessarily then a new phenomenon, but it is something that is occurring increasingly often in conflicts.

Will this phenomenon continue to occur in the future? I believe that we need to be cautious here. A number of long-term conflicts are resurfacing. Be it between Ethiopia and Erythrea, between India and

Pakistan or between Morocco and Algeria about the Western Sahara, these are past conflicts where peacekeeping operations were undertaken. We are well informed about them, these territories where there are non-state players and where peacekeeping operations have occurred.

Is there a possibility, as I was saying earlier, that this phenomenon will occur more and more often? I believe it is still too soon to say. In the 1990s and the early years of 2000, there were a significant number of such non-state players. However, research on this subject is still recent. The phenomenon of terrorist groups is a destabilizing element that did not exist five or eight years ago. al-Qaeda and Somalian groups were not present like they are today.

I believe that this is the answer I can give you concerning non-state players.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Dr. Douglas Bland: Chair, as far as the conventions go, it would be a great study. It's somewhat out of my league and time, but it's something that could be convened. It's very interesting, I think. You might talk to the JAG about that kind of stuff, but it's a lesson learned out of the thing.

With regard to non-state actors—that's one way to describe what's going on in these situations—perhaps the twin idea to that is that we are increasingly facing circumstances in many nations where there are ungoverned spaces, where the sovereign authority has no rule, or where, if there are governed spaces, they are governed by transnational gangs, drug dealers, cartels, and so on.

We don't have to go very far to see that. We have ungoverned spaces all through Mexico. Jamaica is going to be a criminal state, by some estimations, very soon. In Haiti, and all across the Caribbean, these problems are very big.

Not to be too much of an alarmist, but I wrote a book about this just recently: we have ungoverned spaces in Canada—Cornwall Island, aboriginal reserves, large parts of the Prairies, and other places. These are very difficult problems for Canada. As the RCMP police officers told me in my research for the book, there are 700 gangs in this country, and the aboriginal gangs—not to blame the aboriginals—are moving across the country. We have all kinds of difficulties like that heading our way too. Maybe they are not as serious, but we've learned something and we need to perhaps pay attention there.

So the theoretical point is that, yes, we should expect in future operations that there will be non-state actors; ungoverned spaces, and contests for these spaces; outside intervention by belligerents from other states; and that these will be, to say the least, messy operations.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Mr. Coulon, with regard to the Congo, were you talking about the Katanga secessionist movement of Moise Tshombe?

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: There was not only the Katanga secession. There was also Kasai, and there was, I think, another province, Equateur or something like that, that also seceded.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Against President Kasavubu at the time, 1960 or 1961.

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: Yes.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you.

Mr. Bachand, you have five minutes.

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

I have always said that a mission implies two theatres of operation. Some things happen on the ground, but there is also public opinion, which is probably just as important if not more. Everyone knows this, and the Americans have known since the Vietnam war. Many people say that the war wasn't lost in Vietnam, but rather in the American theatre of operations, when the public said that they were tired of the war.

I would like to know whether you believe that the Canadian public is sufficiently informed. When soldiers are deployed, people in Canada and especially in Quebec believe that it is to ensure that peacekeepers can restore peace in an exotic locale, that these are extraordinary people who separate the camps. I feel that the public is not sufficiently prepared for such missions, such as the one in Afghanistan.

Do you feel that it is important to make a greater effort to make the facts public, to keep the public in the loop? First, perhaps Canadians need to be straightened out and told that we are not going there simply to insert ourselves between the two camps who have agreed together to put an end to hostilities, and to separate them.

As MPs our we properly informing the public and ensuring success in both theatres of operations, as I mentioned at the start of my question?

• (1205)

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: If I may, Mr. Chair, I would like to answer that question, since it is to some extent the subject of the study I tabled in January and February.

Part of the study dealt in fact with the way that governments, journalists and even experts inform the public. I noted an inability or reticence from politicians, both Liberals and Conservatives, to use the words that need to be used during a conflict. For example, some public relations firms or pollsters suggested that government members should use soft words to describe Afghanistan, and to refer to it as a peacekeeping mission, that we were going to help women and children and rebuild the country. All the arguments used were extremely positive and soft. However, I believe that Doug made it clear in his presentation that, in reality, a war should be called a war. When we are in Afghanistan, we are helping women and children, we are protecting them and we are allowing them to go to school, but we are bombing and killing Taliban and al-Qaeda members. Afghanistan is not the Western Sahara. It is not a small peacekeeping operation off the beaten track.

The words we use are important, and when they are not appropriate, Mr. Chair, this leads to confusion in the public opinion and a rejection of the mission. The mission in Afghanistan is very unpopular in Quebec for all kinds of reasons. Furthermore, it is also not popular elsewhere in Canada because Canadians are confused

about what we are doing. When the Canadian Forces, National Defence, conducted a poll of approximately 1,500 Canadians two years ago, they were asked what we were doing in Afghanistan. The majority of Canadians said that we were conducting a peacekeeping operation with peacekeepers. However, that is not true. Why do Canadians have that perception? It's because politicians, journalists and experts are not doing their jobs of informing the public, and this is not a uniquely Canadian phenomenon. I have demonstrated this phenomenon in France, the United States and in Germany, where everyone always speaks in vague terms without ever using the appropriate words for what is happening.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have 10 seconds.

Dr. Douglas Bland: And in my 10 seconds, I'll say, Chair, that I have nothing to add.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Monsieur Bachand.

We will now go to Mr. Braid for five minutes.

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your very judicious timekeeping.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I'd like to begin with a question for Professor Coulon.

You indicated that in recorded history there have been approximately 120 peace operations, and that many have been successful. Could you define "success" for us?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: I believe, with regard to military intervention, that the greatest success perhaps was when Rome destroyed Carthage. That was a success, since the objective was reached, Carthage was destroyed and the war was won. Another example of a success was when the United States obtained the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan, and the surrender was signed on a battleship or in a conference room. This is one success that we can measure in concrete terms.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, it is more complex to determine success. It depends on a series of parameters. So, when we take a United Nations mandate, we see a certain number of objectives. The first objective is to establish a political process leading up to an election and the establishment of a democratic government. Sometimes, the election does not occur as here, in Canada, we would like it to occur. Nevertheless, since it might be the first time in 50 years that people have gone to the polls, if the voter turnout was significant enough, if there was not too much fraud, the outcome is not so bad. Perhaps we might consider this a failure, but for that society it is a first step towards something of value.

Next, a government is established. There are other elements in a United Nations mandate as well, such as disarming the militia, reintegrating child soldiers, reforming security sectors, rebuilding infrastructure. We know that it might be impossible to ensure 100% success in each of these very specific areas of a UN mandate. However, if the UN force withdraws, it can say that, despite everything, although it did not reach 100% of its objectives, it gave that society the tools it needs to move a little further towards reintegrating the international community. Success cannot be measured in terms of all or nothing, in some areas it might be 50%, 60% or 80%, but the UN force can leave with its head held high because it has done something.

That is the response I can give you. If you compare it to the example that I provided, it is clear that it is not the ideal.

• (1210)

[English]

Mr. Peter Braid: *Merci beaucoup.*

Professor Bland, I have a different question for you. Moving forward, what factors should the Government of Canada consider when determining whether or not to participate in an international peace operation?

Dr. Douglas Bland: Not to dodge the question, but I can direct you to several numbers of white papers that list all that. We pay little attention to them, in the fact.

On the other hand, a first response that I think we need to look at is whether participating in a particular mission in a particular part of the world is important to Canada's national interest, and the first national interest is to maintain Canada as a secure, united, liberal democracy.

The next thing we need to understand is whether we have the capabilities for such a mission. Measuring the capabilities is not just whether we have a stock of goods and tanks and ships and planes and so on, but whether we have the capabilities in the circumstances we are going to face there. That's where we start to join the military planning option with the advice from professionals, in order to describe to the policy-makers the circumstances we are getting into, the capabilities we have, and whether we have adequate or inadequate capabilities.

As has already been discussed here, we need to understand how the civilian population understands the mission. Jocelyn is right on: we need to speak strongly to people on these matters. We need to tell them that this mission isn't going to be going to Cyprus and standing around—although that mission was important at the time—but a mission that's going to be more like Afghanistan.

Again I come back to my point. After our experiences, we—and I hope we start with Canadian politicians—need to start explaining to Canadians that they're operational military missions, meaning that you can't put them into little category boxes and then expect to have the statement that “This is a peacekeeping mission” define what the mission is actually about.

It's a bit iffy, but again, I am not too keen on having a list of what we should do or where we should go, because such a list is just not practical in the real world.

Mr. Peter Braid: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Go ahead, Mr. Boughen.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To our guests, welcome, and thanks for spending part of your day with us.

When I look around and see what's happening with the UN and what's happening with NATO and what's happening across the planet in terms of warfare, it becomes a question of who's leading the parade and where the parade is going.

When Canada was at war a number of years ago, we fought against one country. That was Germany in World War I. We knew what they looked like, and they knew what we looked like. World War II was kind of a replay of World War I with higher-tech stuff. Again, we knew what was happening.

As Mr. Bland has said, we can go out shooting, looking for wild turkeys or ducks or geese or whatever we want to cook, and not be there in the afternoon because we're off to war.

I would like to hear from both of you gentlemen on what you think is happening in terms of where the parade is going and who's leading it.

• (1215)

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: I could start with part of the answer.

I think the international system has developed a lot of instruments to make sure that we can intervene when we need to intervene with the right tools.

If you recall, at the beginning of the nineties, Iraq invaded Kuwait. We went to the Security Council. The Security Council wanted to do something, but the UN didn't have the means to deploy a large armed force immediately to the Gulf. Therefore, for one of the first times, the Security Council asked for a coalition, led by the U.S., which 45 other countries joined, and we decided to kick out Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

A few years later, during the Kosovo crisis, we were not ready to replay what happened in Bosnia with the UN there. Therefore, we asked the UN to do something. But we understood that several countries in the Security Council would block an intervention in Kosovo. NATO emerged as an organization that had the legitimacy from its membership and from a lot of other countries, and NATO launched an attack against Serbia to liberate Kosovo.

In the war of 2003, you saw what happened. There was division in the Security Council. I think the majority of the international community was against the war in Iraq, but the U.S. decided to go ahead and enter Iraq.

You have several kinds of tools, if I may say, that can be used to keep peace and security. Is there someone who leads? Well, some people around this table would say that the United States leads, because it is the superpower, and people gather around the U.S. and ask the U.S. to do something. But at the same time, the U.S. is not as predominant as we think. The Iraq war has sent a strong message to the U.S. and to the international community that it cannot do everything.

Perhaps Doug has other considerations on that.

Dr. Douglas Bland: I think it's a deep, and in some respects worrying, question, or at least the answer is.

It's not just "our side", if we can say it that way, that's learning lessons from these operations; so is the other side, or the many other sides. One of the lessons they may be learning is that we're not up to this kind of stuff; we will back off unless it's very close to home. It's very close to home in Mexico right now for the Americans.

The other idea that is worrying to some people is that the Cold War post-Second World War structure that we built for maintaining the security of liberal democracies is fracturing. I've just been thinking these days, given what's going on in Greece this morning and this week and what's going to go on for the next few weeks, that the European Union was a grand idea, and I use it in the past tense. Part of the grand idea was to have one economy—the euro—and that we would all be in it together. Well, now they're not so sure about that.

What is the experience with the Europeans in Afghanistan? Are we all in it for NATO? I'm not so sure about that.

Why are the Americans sending lots of forces into Afghanistan? It's because the other guys aren't going to send the forces in.

We may be approaching a situation where those who oppose liberal democracies see us as weak and divided, reinforced by the actions of ourselves and our allies and others that we are weak and divided.

If I just go back to Canadian....

• (1220)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): May I ask you to sum up very quickly?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I will.

In Canadian foreign policy history, Wilfrid Laurier, in 1910, talked about Canadian defence policy. What he said, in essence, was that there was no threat, and if there were one, the Americans would save us, so we didn't need any armed forces.

That was changed by Paul Martin, Sr., at the end of the Second World War. He said that Canada had an appetite to play a strong role in the world and that we had the teeth to go with it. And we did.

That has all withered away, so that we're now in the position of, "There is no threat, and *maybe* the Americans will save us"; and the same for Europe.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

Hans Morgenthau, in his book *Politics Among Nations*, argues that the international system is structured still under the guise of the nation-state, yet we have all these non-state actors who are emerging and are much more difficult for nation-states to respond to.

In terms of these non-state actors, are you able to comment on whether we as a nation have, in terms of both our military and our intelligence background, the capabilities and the understanding to respond effectively to those non-state actors?

Dr. Douglas Bland: Can we say no?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): That's the shortest answer you've given. I wanted a little more than that.

Dr. Douglas Bland: That was my question, Chair; sorry.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Okay.

Yes, Monsieur Coulon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: Mr. Chair, I believe that we have, nonetheless, tools to respond to these non-state players.

First, unlike what some may believe, the fight against terrorism is working. It is not because there was a scare in New York or a passenger gets on a plane—one out of three billion passengers per year—that we are failing in our fight against terrorism. I believe that we are successful. I believe that the messages being sent to terrorists and to the states that support them show that we have gone on the offensive and that we will no longer be intimidated.

At the same time, we live in an open society. As a result, openness is necessarily one of our weaknesses. However that is what makes our liberal societies so great: our openness and our democracy. So that is the point with regard to terrorism.

With regard to other areas, for example, during these debates we have talked about the problems facing some African countries in controlling their territory. I am thinking in particular of the Sahel, from Mauritania to Somalia. The Americans have a strong presence there, but there are other countries too, such as France and Great Britain, conducting exercises, etc.

We are not obligated to occupy the territory in order to neutralize or destabilize such groups, because they will always be there. Sometimes I would like us to stop trying to make everyone believe that our enemies are eight feet tall and that we are only five feet tall: that they are giants and we are dwarfs. Western countries are well equipped to deal with such threats. That said, there will never be 100% security, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): I appreciate your response to my question. Thank you.

We have a few questioners left. I'm going to shake it up a little bit.

We have Mr. Allen, followed by Mr. Payne.

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you to Mr. Coulon, we'd spoken earlier, and Mr. Bland had answered the question around how we equip folks and make sure they go with, as I term it, the "right tools".

Notwithstanding the fact that they do that...and let's presuppose that we got it right and we did send the tools as we thought.... We went through the things that Professor Bland talked about, the checklist of why we're there and all that sort of stuff. But when we get there, we see that the place isn't quite as we thought; in fact, it's less so. As Mr. Bland said, you stop planning; you can sort of park the stuff.

How do we balance that with the folks on the ground who are there to help, who are looking at that material that comes in to actually engage in an operation that we're not going to engage in? How do we balance the needs of that population, which is looking and thinking that we want to escalate up, when the reality is that we're looking to escalate down? How do we make sure that we don't get into a situation of having a conflict unnecessarily escalate simply because we came over-prepared because of whatever intelligence we got?

You know, there's no fault, and I'm certainly not finger-pointing that somehow we went with too much. We thought that's what we should do.

So how do we balance that need of those folks on the ground versus what we've done as we enter that theatre?

•(1225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: I think, sir, that you are pinpointing one of the most fundamental questions when it comes to peacekeeping operations.

Actions in peacekeeping operations seek most of all to maintain peace, to bring peace rather than wage war. So the military's position and the objective of the operation have to be peaceful. This does not mean that we do not bring some weapons in order to be heard or even to defend ourselves when incidents happen—such as in Cyprus in 1974.

Consider that peace operations are different from war operations such as in Iraq, for example, where you have to bring all your materiel to face the enemy and the situation on the ground. This is why it will always be difficult for international organizations to adequately assess the options that they have in terms of military deployment on the ground.

Now, do not believe that we engage in peace operations with our eyes closed. There are preparatory missions in which we inspect the territory and measure the dangerousness of the actions of the parties on the ground. Then, they advise the United Nations or other organizations about the modalities of the military deployment on the ground. Usually, and I'm talking about the 120 peace operations launched over the past 20 years, peace operation missions arrive with the right materiel for the mission that they have.

Only exceptionally are there unforeseen shifts. Indeed, no one foresaw that the Turks would invade Cyprus in 1974 because there had been a coup in Athens that just toppled an administration that had itself toppled the government in Cyprus. You can see that this was an exceptional situation, and Turkish paratroopers arrived within a few days. Action was needed. Peace operations do not constantly unfold in situations like that.

In some places, there can be surprises but throughout the majority of peacekeeping operations, things in general happen the way they were supposed to be when the mission was planned.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

You have 40 seconds.

Mr. Malcolm Allen: This question speaks to the experience. Professor Bland talked about what General Hillier and General Natynczyk finally learned coming out of the Balkans as we headed forward. If we're not engaged in peace missions—or whatever terminology we like to use—how will our folks gain the experiences so that when we actually do go back to those, as we'll no doubt be requested to do...and how will we make that balance fit?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have 15 seconds.

Dr. Douglas Bland: Partly to answer your first question, you need to have, and we always do have in fact, continuous planning for military missions. Every morning the commanding officers get up and have a meeting, an orders group, on what went on last night, how it's going, and how to adjust. That's all warfare stuff. They're always adjusting to the mission. If they say nothing happened last night, well, we'll stand down a few patrols.

It's important, and I think modern commanders understand that they have to play a part in the game of not escalating or unnecessarily de-escalating the impression of a threat.

What do you do when you're not in operations? The armed forces train. You simulate, you do exercises, you learn as much as you can.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have a very highly educated armed forces these days, and a very sophisticated training system.

The other thing you do, and what I would encourage, and I think most officers and others would agree, is you send as many people as you possibly can to all kinds of operations all over the place so that they can watch, see what's going on, learn something, and talk to their colleagues. That's the normal way of doing things.

•(1230)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

We have three questioners left. We have Mr. Payne, then Monsieur Bachand, then Madame Gallant.

Then I've informed Mr. Hawn—he has no difficulty—that we have some very short committee business to do with a press conference on Tuesday dealing with the Arctic study.

Go ahead, Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions and comments, through you, are to the gentlemen here today.

I want to welcome you. Thank you for your attendance here.

I was actually quite interested in your comments, Mr. Coulon, on what we need to do in terms of telling the public about the missions. I found that quite enlightening. I guess in some ways there have been some failures in that in the past, and I'm sure there will be in the future.

One of the concerns I have, of course, is with respect to some of the things that we are doing in Afghanistan, in particular around helping to rebuild the country. I don't think that message is getting out. I think we're trying to tell that message, but I'm almost positive that the media isn't carrying that kind of message.

I just wonder if you had a short comment on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: It is true that in any military intervention, there is the development aspect, the population assistance aspects, that are all part of everyday reporting. Very often you don't see this: why is that? That's because what you and I retain is what is going wrong. If a soldier gets killed, that will be in the news. But the fact that we just built the 168th school in the district of Kandahar will not be in the news.

It's very difficult to attract the attention of the public. Take yourself for example. When you read about medicine, road construction, all of those events that take place in today's society, do you want to know about the good news, for example, the fact that the trains are arriving on time at the Ottawa station? No. You wouldn't want to know why the trains are on time, you would rather want to know why they're late. Reporting work, public relations work, often raises problems in operations.

That being said, I still think that the role of politicians is extremely important. They play a leadership role. That's why politicians must be at the vanguard: always ready to explain to the public what is going on on a daily basis, in Afghanistan or elsewhere, with the right words, even if those words hurt. I know that it's difficult to do this because public opinion is a fickle thing: just look at polls, by-election results, etc.

I think that you have to be very honest in those situations, because after all, human lives are at stake.

[*English*]

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have two minutes.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bland, you talked a little bit about ungoverned spaces. I'm wondering, in your opinion, what would be required before we would send troops into ungoverned situations and ungoverned spaces. You talked about a number of them around the world. Could I just get a better understanding of what your thought process is on how we might be able to manage those kinds of situations?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I would piggyback on what Jocelyn has just said.

The first thing is that the nation's political leaders would decide that going there would be something that was in Canada's national interest. Then they would provide the resources commensurate with the mission, as decided by them and their advisers. Then they would get out on the street and convince Canadians that this was in Canada's national interest. It might be hard; it might be not hard. We're not doing it because we're all boy scouts, as one Prime Minister called the boys in Bosnia: boy scouts with guns. We're there because it's in Canada's national interest. It might be hard, it might be soft, but we're going to go.

Then, as the mission unfolded in its various phases and conditions and situations, the politicians, not the military, would stand up and say that we're in control, we're doing this, we're supporting it, and we're not backing down now.

I think it goes back to the House of Commons, and the Senate to some extent, setting the mission for Canada and paying a lot of attention to it before launching anybody off on any kind of mission.

• (1235)

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you for that.

My impression from both you gentlemen is that in fact what we need to do for our Canadian Forces is to, for lack of a better term, "train them for war"—we've heard that before—and that will allow them to do peacekeeping missions.

Dr. Douglas Bland: Or fight floods in my hometown of Winnipeg, or find lost kids, or fight forest fires; they could serve the national interest in all sorts of ways. You can hire civil servants to do all of those things—to fill sandbags—but when push comes to shove, you need an armed force whose duty is, whose only purpose is, to apply force, deadly force if necessary, to enforce the policies of the government of the day—lawfully, of course.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

Dr. Douglas Bland: If you don't do that, just hire diplomats, maybe.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): We'll now go to Monsieur Bachand,

[*Translation*]

for five minutes.

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

I would like to go through a little exercise for the benefit of the committee, naturally. I would like to know if, with regard to international law, to legality and legitimacy, the United Nations would be at the top of the pyramid. Is that so?

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: Well, it depends, because—

Mr. Claude Bachand: Just a minute, Mr. Coulon. I would like to make a little list and then you can answer.

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: There are things that are legal yet are immoral.

Mr. Claude Bachand: And there are also things that are illegal that can be immoral.

[*English*]

Dr. Douglas Bland: Can I perhaps respond?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): No, the time—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: No.

[*English*]

Boy, the time is flying, isn't it.

[Translation]

With regards to legality, legitimacy, and international law, I'd like you to give us your opinion on the following: NATO in the Kosovo operation; the European Union, which has taken over from NATO in Bosnia; the African Union, which, in certain conflicts, is currently supported by NATO; the responsibility to protect, which is a new legal approach. Finally, a coalition of volunteer countries, especially in Iraq.

What is the legality and legitimacy of all this? I will probably have to ask you to respond in writing. You will not have enough time to answer this question right now.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Monsieur Coulon,

[Translation]

you have three minutes.

Mr. Jocelyn Coulon: The international system set up an international organization in 1945, the UN, to manage issues of peace and security pursuant to certain criteria as defined in the Charter of the United Nations. As a general rule, the charter encourages the peaceful settlement of conflicts, but article 51, for example, does provide for a state to defend itself. The Security Council can use coercive means against a country, as was the case in Iraq in 1990-1991. The legal infrastructure of our international system is the United Nations.

However, as you know, the UN—especially the Security Council—is a political entity. Decisions that are taken by the Security Council are not always based on law or legality. Therefore, some operations happen to be legal, simply because they were voted on by the Security Council, but are considered illegal by some because they do not respect international law. I think that a lawyer could explain this better than I.

As for NATO's presence in Kosovo, the International Commission of Jurists set up by Sweden has declared that the war was illegal, but that it was also legitimate due to the fact that it had garnered the approval of public opinion worldwide. Legitimacy is a much more political concept; it is not based on law.

As for the European Union and the African Union's intervention in certain conflicts, these organizations usually get the green light from the United Nations Security Council. They are covered. Furthermore, the responsibility to protect is a very complicated issue to discuss. Indeed, there are some very strict criteria to be met before this intervention mechanism can be resorted to, otherwise, it would be applied all the time.

As for the volunteer coalition, you are talking of the coalition in Iraq in 2003. From the United Nations' point of view, it was illegal, but in October 2003, a resolution to support a multinational intervention in Iraq gave this intervention legal standing.

• (1240)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You have 25 seconds.

Dr. Douglas Bland: Okay.

My response is that, first, there is no such thing as the international community. There are lots of nations. When they go to the United Nations, it's a bizarre marketplace where nations trade information or whatever back and forth to suit their national interests. The United Nations isn't sovereign, and any idea that Canada should tie itself, its sovereignty, to decisions taken by the United Nations is a very poor thing.

If I were to suggest to Canadians or members here or anybody else that we should perhaps surrender a lot of our sovereignty in matters of international affairs to the British Empire, or to the Commonwealth, or to the United States, people would say, "Well, boo on you." But if you say, well, we'll just do whatever the Security Council decides, or not do, people think that's reasonable. I don't understand that, actually.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you.

Madam Gallant will now conclude the last round of questioning.

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

Mr. Bland, if, as some suggest, the Canadian Forces should be relegated to blue helmet missions only, what, if any, risks does Canada face?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I missed part of that; this is if we're relegated only to peacekeeping, to blue helmets?

• (1245)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Right.

Dr. Douglas Bland: What it does is it probably restricts governments into the future to join missions of which we have no advance notice or whatever. It ties the hands of government.

If you say we should only prepare for peacekeeping missions—if you can get somebody to define what that means—and if peacekeeping means small arms weapons, no fighter planes, and so on, then what you're doing is the opposite of what Paul Martin, Sr., said of Canada at the end of the Second World War, that we wanted to play a role in the world and we had the teeth to do it.

A lot of people since then have said that Canada ought to play a role in the world, and we're going to gum them to death, I guess; we don't have any teeth.

The more serious thing is that when people say we should do peacekeeping, does that set the policy for the next government and the next government? It does, in a way, if the first government—perhaps Pierre Trudeau's government—disarms the armed forces. Then the next government can't do anything, because they don't have the resources.

Canadians should decide what portion of their wealth will be devoted toward international affairs, building capabilities for that, building capabilities to defend Canada first, to defend Canada, with the United States, in North America, and then maintain that level. That's what I would advise, but then, I'm not in your position.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Upon what basis should the choice of missions be determined—that is, if we have the luxury of time and choice?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I would return to what I said earlier, that we need to understand what our national interest is and then relate the deployment to our national interest, not to something that a so-called international community decides, unless what they decide is in our national interest, which it often is. Then we should make sure we have the capabilities to do it reasonably and with reasonable prudence. Most often, military operations that I've been involved in planning have, at the end of the day, come down to just those things. But it sometimes surprises prime ministers, and maybe even defence ministers, to find out that when they say, "Let's go to Zaire", we don't have anything to go to Zaire.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What are your thoughts on NATO's review of its strategic concepts with a view toward the future of the Canadian Forces?

Dr. Douglas Bland: I think, again, a strategic review should look at two aspects. First, we need an assessment of what kind of world we will live in, what Canada's going to be like, and what Canada's place in the world will be. My political science colleagues do that when they say the world is round and has all kinds of problems.

At the same time, we need to write very strong statements in the white papers and defence statements on the economics of national defence. What we often do, or somebody does, is write very grand statements of Canada's intention in the world that we call defence white papers or foreign policy white papers. Nobody adds up the bill before they issue these papers, so they become meaningless, in effect.

How much is enough in Canada for national defence spending? It's 2% of GDP. It's always that. If GDP is going up, we get a little more in the way of capabilities, maybe, if prices aren't going up. And that's without inflation.

The history of Canada's defence policy—never mind commitments to NATO and NORAD and the UN and everything—is 2% of GDP. So it's like the kid at the store who says, "I have 10¢. What can I get for that?"

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Thank you very much.

I want to thank both of you gentlemen for a very thoughtful and engaging discussion. It will certainly help us in our further deliberations with regard to this issue. On behalf of the committee, thank you again for coming.

Committee members, normally to do committee business we go in camera, but this is a very quick item. With your indulgence I will read it out, and then someone can move it, if they wish. If someone objects, obviously it won't go ahead.

It reads as follows:

That the Chair organize a press conference to announce the presentation of the Committee's report on Arctic sovereignty to the House of Commons on Tuesday, May 11, 2010.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You're going to move it?

Yes, Mr. Braid.

Mr. Peter Braid: I don't have an objection; I just wanted to raise a potential red flag. I'm wondering about the timing and whether we open ourselves up to the awkwardness of a trip in four weeks after the tabling of a report.

Just in terms of credibility or optics, I'm wondering if perhaps we should wait.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): The issue was raised by Monsieur Bachand.

I'll let you speak to it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: e week, either thursday & Friday or Friday and Monday and mThank you, Mr. Braid. I hadn't seen things in that light. I believe that this does indeed jeopardize the presentation of this report. If we table it in the House and then travel a few weeks later, that's not ideal either. As for me, I'm open. I believe that the committee's work on Arctic sovereignty has been well done. We have a very good report. However, I do agree with you in saying that if we table the report on Tuesday and then have a press conference before even visiting the place, that will be a little bit odd. I think that perhaps we could delay the tabling of the report and then have a press conference as soon as it is tabled. I think that would be important.

• (1250)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Go ahead, Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That was the same point I was going to bring up: we need to go on our trip first. It would certainly look funny that we would be going on a trip after we'd already tabled the document.

I'd certainly agree with a press release after that point in time.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): We have two options: either we don't adopt the motion or we take the date out so that we can do it at a future time.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Yes, take the date out.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): You're still moving it, minus the date. You can amend your motion, so that's fine.

Is there any comment?

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Bryon Wilfert): Well, it's been a pleasure chairing you today. Have a nice day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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