



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on National Defence

NDDN • NUMBER 048 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, February 14, 2011

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Chair

The Honourable Maxime Bernier

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• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC)): Good afternoon and welcome to the 48th meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

We are delighted to welcome the National Research Council of Canada and the President, John McDougall. It is a pleasure and thank you for being here. We also have Jerzy Komorowski, Director General of the Institute for Aerospace Research.

[English]

Thanks for being with us. I will give you the floor for five to seven or 10 minutes. After that, members will be able to ask you questions.

Merci beaucoup. La parole est à vous.

[Translation]

Mr. John McDougall (President, National Research Council Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to present to the committee today.

My name is John R. McDougall, and I am President of the National Research Council of Canada, or NRC. I am accompanied today by Mr. Jerzy Komorowski, Director General of the Institute for Aerospace Research at NRC.

NRC is an agency of the Government of Canada. Our mandate is set out under the NRC Act and makes us responsible, among other things, to undertake, assist or promote scientific and industrial research in different fields of importance to Canada.

NRC research spans a wide range of disciplines from aerospace and agriculture, to ocean engineering and photonics. We also offer an array of technology development and commercialization services to our partners and clients, including our industrial research assistance program that works with close to 8,000 small and medium-size Canadian businesses each year.

[English]

The NRC Institute for Aerospace Research, or NRC Aerospace, is Canada's national aerospace laboratory. We maintain national research and development facilities in Ottawa and Montreal, but we work with governments, universities, and aerospace companies across Canada and internationally to advance research and technology development in this important industry. Our work and

our expertise are focused on the design, manufacture, performance, and use and safety of air and space vehicles.

In late October 2009, NRC was asked by Industry Canada, the Department of National Defence, and Public Works and Government Services Canada to conduct an independent review of the statement of operational requirement for the new fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft that DND intends to procure. This statement of operational requirement was produced by DND in 2006. NRC's review resulted in a report that was submitted to Public Works on March 12, 2010, and the report is now available in both official languages on the DND website.

• (1535)

To complete the review, we assembled a team of highly qualified staff from NRC's flight research laboratory. This team was led by an airworthiness expert with a master's degree in aeronautical engineering, a fixed-wing pilot's licence, and more than 18 years of flying experience. He was joined by a human factors specialist with a doctorate in neuroscience and 10 years' experience in human factors analysis for Defence Research and Development Canada, and three former Canadian Forces pilots with close to 60 years of collective military experience. Two were search and rescue pilots during the course of their military careers, while the other was a senior test pilot at the Canadian Forces Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment in Cold Lake, Alberta.

We began the review in November 2009. The team thoroughly examined the statement of operational requirement references provided to them by Public Works. In January 2010, the team travelled to Trenton, Ontario, to interview DND personnel. In late January 2010, our human factors specialist travelled to Canadian Forces Base Comox in British Columbia to observe search and rescue technicians in action aboard the Buffalo aircraft.

We produced an interim report on February 5, 2010, which we delivered to Public Works. The Department of National Defence responded to this report on February 15, and we met with them on February 19 to discuss their comments. We delivered a draft final report on March 5, incorporated comments from Public Works on March 9, and submitted our final report on March 12.

In very general terms, the principal conclusion of the report was that the statement of operational requirement, as written, was over-constrained. By this we mean the application of the statement of operational requirement would likely make it difficult to achieve the overarching objective of acquiring an aircraft to provide the level of search and rescue service equal to that currently provided.

The report provided an analysis and discussion of each of the high-level mandatory capabilities identified in the statement of operational requirement, with observations and recommendations for each. The report contained 15 principal recommendations that were intended to solidify the actual requirements for the aircraft while providing bidders with flexibility on how they could propose meeting the requirement. These recommendations advised that the 2006 statement of requirement for Canada's new fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft should be amended to reflect a capability approach, rather than a platform-centric one, which would be a major rewrite.

Second, they advised that the Government of Canada should review the current policy, in which the Canadian Forces provide all primary fixed-wing search and rescue service. The government would do this by conducting an in-depth analysis of the cost and potential benefits of providing part of the fixed-wing search and rescue solution through contracted support for elements such as aircraft, aircrew, and maintenance, including civilian sources. Use of civilian helicopters is already in place to provide initial levels of support to the military rotary-wing search and rescue community.

Third, the Government of Canada should develop policy to define the required level of service for search and rescue, in terms of response time that ought to be provided by either the Canadian Forces or another provider, without reference to the existing aircraft. Where possible, such policy should be developed on the basis of available historical and forecast search and rescue incident locations.

Fourth, DND should change the statement of operational requirement to allow bidders more flexibility in meeting the requirement. For example, this could include the consideration of other options for Main Operating Bases or the consideration of a proposal with more than a single type of aircraft.

• (1540)

As mentioned earlier, the authors of NRC's report concluded that utilizing some contracted fixed-wing search and rescue response could possibly provide a cost-effective alternative to alleviate some of the costs associated with establishing or relocating a main operating base or requiring an aircraft with high cruise speed for all scenarios.

The fifth recommendation is that DND change many of the rated requirements in the statement of operational requirement to mandatory requirements. Examples of this include a ramp that can be deployed while airborne to airdrop search and rescue technicians or equipment and the capability for the aircraft to use short gravel runways and to conduct operations from austere airfields and to operate in icy weather conditions.

The sixth recommendation is that DND avoid using the term "off the shelf" in the statement of operational requirement, unless the department anticipates that aircraft can be procured in the form in which they are currently produced with no design changes.

The seventh recommendation is that DND remove specific speed and range requirements from the statement of operational requirement for the new aircraft. As mentioned, the authors recommended using a capability-based approach based on search and rescue incident data that are already available.

The eighth recommendation is that DND use alternative analytical methods to determine the minimum cargo compartment dimensions, rather than those specified in the 2006 statement of operational requirement. These methods could be based on a retrospective study of injuries to search and rescue technicians.

With that, I'd be happy to respond to any questions related to the content of the NRC report. Questions that would pertain to work being done by Public Works and Government Services Canada or the Department of National Defence after March 12 should presumably be referred to them.

Thank you very much, *monsieur le président*.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McDougall.

I will now turn the floor over to Mr. Simms for seven minutes.

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): *Merci, monsieur Bernier.*

Thank you to our guests for coming.

I have read your study. Have you ever been called in before in a situation like this between departments? You were called in by Public Works for what seemingly is a question or issue that has been bantered back and forth between defence and industry. Is that correct? What was the process by which you were called in, the initial stage?

Mr. John McDougall: The process actually began before I arrived at NRC.

Mr. Scott Simms: More importantly, why?

Mr. John McDougall: I think the real question is why. I think what happens is, in the case of a complex procurement agenda, government takes a look at the circumstances of the procurement and looks for the kind of expertise that can be brought to bear in helping through the decision. The statement—

Mr. Scott Simms: This doesn't happen very often, does it?

Mr. John McDougall: The statement of operational requirement for a purchase of this scale is very large and complex. Often, when one does look at one of these, there will be, through third parties, an opportunity to improve that statement of requirement.

Mr. Scott Simms: Would you agree with me, then, that you felt the SOR was quite narrow? You say it's complex, but really what they were looking for were things like "off the shelf". From this study, it just seems to me that they should have widened that scope a little larger than what it was. Is that correct?

Mr. John McDougall: I think what we did when we looked at the statement of requirement was to recognize that there were many, many elements in it, as was I think pointed out in my remarks. There were mandatory requirements, there were rated requirements, there were constraints—there were a variety of elements that were brought to bear in putting such a document together. As I say, it's large and substantial. It covers many, many items.

There's no doubt that our review identified areas where we felt the statement of requirement could be improved. In fact, by removing or, let's say, deconstraining some of the areas, the potential opportunity for bidders would be improved as well.

• (1545)

Mr. Scott Simms: This is a lengthy process. This started around 2005 or 2006. And you were brought in just around.... What was the date you were formally asked to do this study?

Mr. John McDougall: October of 2009.

Mr. Scott Simms: In the process of doing that, seemingly all that you've got here is.... You talk about the basing options, and so on. I reiterate, it takes the scope of this further afield. For example, one of the things you suggest is using multiple aircraft. Was that possibility not considered in your study? Did the military not want to consider that? Were they bent on using only one type of aircraft?

Mr. John McDougall: How can I describe this? I can't comment on what the military was or was not trying to do. We are not really familiar with that.

What we did was look at the statement of requirement—

Mr. Scott Simms: But certainly the scope was too narrow, in your opinion.

Mr. John McDougall: Our view is that it was overly constrained and that by moving to a performance-based or a capacity orientation rather than a platform orientation, you would improve the situation.

Mr. Scott Simms: To a platform orientation. Could you describe it a little bit more?

Mr. John McDougall: No, from a platform.

Mr. Scott Simms: From a platform, okay.

When I read your study.... One of the things we discovered when doing our study, when we went to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, particularly in Newfoundland, in Gander, was that aircraft such as the Hercules are very flexible in the sense that they can be used in certain types of forces' missions and then they can be used for search and rescue thereafter. As a matter of fact, there is a plan to use some of the different types of Hercules for doing fixed-wing search and rescue, which comes just in time, obviously, given the fact that 2015 is when the Buffalos will be done. I think 2017 will probably be when they need new fixed-wing search and rescue.

That being said, it seems the department is behind the eight ball, as it were. In other words, this decision really has to come quickly in order for it to be completed by the 2015 to 2017 window. Is that correct? Would you agree?

Mr. John McDougall: Jerzy, do you want to speak to the lifespan of current aircraft?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski (Director General, Institute for Aerospace Research, National Research Council Canada): It's true that the current aircraft have probably extended what was the original design goal. However, through appropriate maintenance actions, they have been maintained up until now, and they are still airworthy. However, there is obviously a limit to where you can carry that. And indeed the costs—

Mr. Scott Simms: But the limit is 2017, or 2015 if you're talking about the Buffalos. Is that correct?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Well, that depends on how much money you want to put into continuing these aircraft and maintaining them. You can replace structures. You can replace wings. It is all very costly.

There comes a point where it is more cost-effective to replace a fleet rather than to continue to operate it. But there are many examples currently in the world where aircraft fleets are operated for 40 or 50 years.

Mr. Scott Simms: How much time do I have? I have one minute. I don't know if I'll get a chance to ask again. Are we having two rounds?

First of all, for the sake of disclosure, I'm the MP for Gander.

On page 14 you talk about the basing option. You say Gander would have been a preferable choice, as opposed to Greenwood, for fixed-wing assets. Perhaps you'd like to comment on that. I can read the exact quote if you wish. I think you know what I'm talking about.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I'm aware of the content of the report, Mr. Chairman.

What you find in the report is an example of where the choice of the four operating bases seems a constraint, and indeed it has an impact on the response time. If you look at the number of incidents, the change from Greenwood to Gander would have allowed for a much faster response time to quite a few incidents. That's the example given in the report.

• (1550)

Mr. Scott Simms: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much. I will now go to Mr. Bachand.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to welcome the president and the director general.

My question is in fact about that. Why are the president and the director general before us when there is a technical committee of five leading experts and they are not here? Is there a particular reason why they are not here?

[English]

Do you want me to ask the question again?

[Translation]

I am going to repeat what I was saying because I don't think you were listening to me.

I was asking why the president and the director general are here when we were planning on receiving the members of a technical committee with six subject matter experts? I understand that the question is sort of political, but I'm asking it anyway.

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: The simple answer is that there are two elements to this particular discussion. One element is very technical, and we have an extremely knowledgeable DG who has been involved with the aerospace sector for many, many years, and is acknowledged around the world for his knowledge and expertise. We could line up all kinds of experts around the table, but I don't think that is particularly germane or would have as much value, in fairness.

As far as the other is concerned, I'm the head of the agency and I thought you might like to talk to me.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Yes, but I'd like to talk to specialists as well.

Mr. John McDougall: And you are, let me assure you.

Mr. Claude Bachand: In Parliament we talk to everybody, not only the chair.

Mr. John McDougall: Let me assure you that you are.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: When the committee prepares a report and sends it to the government, it expects an answer. Has the government responded to your report? Or did it receive it with a "Thank you very much, your job is done"?

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: As I think I noted in the opening remarks, the government received the report initially. There was interaction back and forth, and a final report was delivered to them. That would normally be the case in a circumstance like this. The technical evidence, if you like, or position is expressed and clarified in some instances through that process.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: In your report, you keep citing a 2005 report by Bourdon and Rempel. We tried to google it, but to no avail. It seems to be a government report. Could you submit the report to the committee? Or do we have to ask the department for it?

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: The report is public and has been publicly available for some time in both languages.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Do you have it, Jack?

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): I have it in English only, I'm afraid.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Oh no!

I have a question about the main operating bases. I think you can only give us limited information. For example, you won't be able to reveal the location of the various bases in Canada where the planes and helicopters are. I don't think that topic is in your mandate. Am I right?

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: It's not our job to tell DND how to operate. It's our job to provide advice relative to the statement of requirement

and to point out where it may constrain the decisions that would be made. So we do not comment on where things should be.

We did comment based on the historical record of incidents and the effect these might have.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: After reading all the incident reports, we can conclude that most incidents happen in three locations, the west coast, the east coast and at Trenton. We know those places are where all the operations start. But we were told, on a number of occasions, that we could improve the way we use the equipment. However, I will not ask your opinion because any discussion on this topic is not in your mandate.

I guess you cannot talk about standby posture either. When I say "standby posture", I mean that between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., the Cormorants in Gander have to be able to take off within 30 minutes, but outside those hours, there is a 2-hour period. I think that's completely unacceptable, especially since only 17% of incidents take place between 8 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and that's when the response time is the fastest, yet 80% of incidents occur outside those hours.

Are you free to talk about the standby posture?

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We have commented on the constraints in the report. We mentioned the operating bases, the posture, the 15-hour crew duty time.

We have demonstrated that all these constraints have an impact on the aircraft range and speed. Therefore, they require further analysis, including the use of Canadian Forces personnel exclusively, which was the constraint of the SOR.

We felt that these constraints had a significant impact on the available solutions, and therefore our conclusion was that they need to be given further consideration. However, because these are related to policy and not so much to technical choices, we did not comment further on them.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Okay. You are confirming that there is currently a problem with the flight engineers. There won't be enough engineers in a year.

You haven't put a lot of emphasis on the training or make-up of the plane or helicopter crew. Once again, that's because the topic is not in your mandate. Is that correct?

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Yes, that is correct.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Is the private sector option also excluded from your mandate? For example, if there are no flight engineers, couldn't civilian engineers be hired?

The topic of the origin of the workforce—whether it should be made up of the military only or whether it can include civilians—has also been excluded from your mandate. Isn't that right?

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: In our report we concluded that consideration should be given to the use of non-CF personnel, because this would open available solutions and the industry could offer a broader range of solutions for the Canadian search and rescue.

We didn't go any further than that. However, we pointed out that the helicopter wing of search and rescue allows that. There are crews under contract to Public Works, and we felt there was an inconsistency in the requirement calling for the use of only Canadian Forces personnel.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I will now go to Mr. Harris.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris: While I note this is a technical report, I want to say to you, as president of the National Research Council, Mr. McDougall, that I have to congratulate your team on an extremely thorough and valuable report to this committee. It's a real eye-opener in many respects.

You basically suggested that the government, or DND, is saying that we're going to keep the bases where they are, that we're going to keep the standby posture exactly the way it is, that we're going to deliver a level of service equal to what we have now, and that these three assumptions now put constraints on the possibilities of action.

Would it also be fair to say that they foreclose the possibility of change? We had evidence before our committee in St. John's last week from someone who had done an international study on response times, and it seems that some countries like Norway have 15 minutes wheels up, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all hours of the day and night. Australia has 30 minutes. The United States coast guard has 30 minutes. Other countries, like the U.K. and Ireland, have 15 minutes up to 8 o'clock at night and then 45 minutes thereafter. So it almost forecloses any possibility of meeting world standards.

I think your report says that because of maintaining the posture of 120 minutes from 8 to 4, when 83% of the incidents occur, we have to have faster and more expensive planes. Because we're keeping the bases in the same place, we can't consider adjusting those bases, even if a small adjustment would decrease the minimum speed required and the maximum range, which could allow money to pay for the increased costs of shortening the response times. Is that a fair statement?

• (1600)

Mr. John McDougall: Well, that was a long statement, so if I could pick and choose, maybe that would help.

I guess I would say we're fans of what you might think of in the jargon of design and standards as "performance based". So with that—

Mr. Jack Harris: You mean "here's what we'd like you to do"?

Mr. John McDougall: It would be "this is what we're trying to achieve", and we'd leave open the capacity to be innovative in terms of how it is achieved. But the ability to be innovative depends to

some degree on political decisions, not on technical decisions, so you have to ultimately bring that together.

So in broad terms, I think what I'm saying is, yes, if you impose enough constraints and they basically define what you do today, you'll get what you do today.

Mr. Jack Harris: In terms of costs of going to a 30-minute standby posture, you do make reference to that, and you agree that it's expensive. But with regard to the sensitivity of the standby posture, you say:

consideration should be given to analyzing in detail the cost...and such an investigation should be core to the mandate of the project as any changes in standby... have significant impact on project costs, personnel levels, aircraft required... infrastructure, and the SAR level of service.

That seems to me to be a very powerful statement, especially when I see some of the costs.

Maybe you can comment on this. The chief of review services, who is, I guess, the internal auditor for DND, said in a January 2008 report that the federal SAR costs were \$102 million annually. Yet one of the research studies that you refer to here, which is dated January 2008, says the costs are \$339 million annually for DND. What does that kind of discrepancy tell you as an objective observer from the National Research Council?

Mr. John McDougall: In fairness, I'm not familiar with this. I was just asking if my colleagues were.

I think the challenge it comes down to again is that, as we know, sometimes we can measure things in different ways. I think in the end, from our point of view, what we're trying to be cognizant of is the fact that the constraints you apply will ultimately influence the cost of delivery. That's the fundamental behind the report.

Mr. Jack Harris: What you seem to be saying is that if you decrease the response time, you could actually spend less on your aircraft, but you'd have an offsetting cost of we don't know how much. There would be some extra cost involved in having crews that were available for longer than 8 o'clock to 4 o'clock on a 30-minute standby.

Mr. John McDougall: There would be costs that we have not been charged with looking at. We looked at the constraints, not at the impact of the costs, and there is a difference there. That's why I say that to some degree we're talking about decisions that others have to make about the viability of various actions. But by pointing out at least where to look, we can hopefully help that process.

Mr. Jack Harris: It seems to me what you're saying is that some of these analyses ought to be made before we put this out to tender. Is that correct?

Mr. John McDougall: Again, that's a decision regarding how much people want to move in particular ways. If they want to move significantly, then they would need to do the analysis, presumably, to justify it.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Now I will give the floor to Mr. Hawn.

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

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Before we move on, I just want to correct something. I don't think he really meant to...but we aren't just genning up a plan to use Hercs in fixed-wing SAR. We've been using Hercs in fixed-wing SAR for years, so this is nothing new.

Now, Mr. McDougall, we talked about cost and so on, and you made some statements in your report, which is very good and very thorough, about basing a mixed fleet and so on. I'd just like to confirm that cost consideration was not part of anything you looked at. Yours was strictly technical, and the cost decisions and the cost implications are to be borne by decision-makers. Is that correct?

Mr. John McDougall: I confirmed that with my team.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Regarding some of the other points in your study, all of which were good and have validity, we talked about the design and the dimensions of the back end of the airplane and so on, and you made some valid points about studying what SAR techs do and where and how they move and so on. That was useful discussion; however, in terms of its usefulness to the challenge that we have for buying a relatively off-the-shelf fixed-wing SAR airplane, we're probably not going to redesign existing airplanes that will be contenders to meet those things. Obviously we'll go with what it is and make an assessment of how good it is.

• (1605)

Mr. John McDougall: I think it's fairly reasonable to assume that nobody is going to design an aircraft for the specific Canadian requirement.

What we're trying to say is that there are going to be things that need to be done to fit the aircraft to the Canadian requirement. So there will be some work done to fit it up appropriately.

Those costs should definitely be taken into account.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: But we're clearly not going to redesign the back end of the airplane to make it bigger or better or whatever.

Mr. John McDougall: Exactly. You're going to have an airframe, and that's what it's going to be.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You talked about service currently provided, and one of the big points you made was that it's not a valid statement, mainly because we're referencing that to the C-130, which obviously has some capability that a lot of other airplanes don't.

That's the genesis of saying that this comparison is invalid simply because we are currently operating a very highly capable airplane. We may not be able to afford to buy more of those for that role.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: If I may, Mr. Chairman, comment on this, we were advocating in our report to develop a capability-based requirement, which would not refer to an existing platform. It was simply what is the level of service expected, what the aircraft needs to carry, how far, and so forth.

It was our intention not to refer to any existing aircraft. In this case, you are mentioning CC-130.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I understand, but you referred to that in saying that was a shortcoming of the SOR because it did refer to this.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Exactly.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Yes, that's fine.

There's a lot of talk about mandate. I think some suggestion or maybe implication of why didn't you look at this or why didn't you look at that.... I mean, you were given a mandate that was very clear, that was in relation to the SOR, to validate or comment on the SOR. So there was no way you would branch off into other things because that's not what you were asked to do.

Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Specifically, we were to avoid providing solutions.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Right.

We've talked about if there was interaction between the government and NRC on the final report. As you said, there was some back and forth. Is it fair to say that once they've filed a report like this, it's done and presented to the government, the final report, your job is done and it's over to the government to make whatever use of the report they want to?

How did you find the cooperation of the government with DND or Public Works, once you got into your mandate or once you got into the job?

Was that a good working relationship, or how would you characterize that?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Perhaps this is a question that I should address, since the people who were doing the work are in my institute.

I would say that we were under contract to Public Works, not to DND. All the communications with any members of the Department of National Defence first had to be cleared through Public Works.

I would say that we received very good support. As the president mentioned in his opening statement, the experts traveled to Trenton and to Comox, and they interviewed about a dozen people. Also, requests for documents...any references that are listed in the report... we essentially were granted access. So I would say that the collaboration was excellent.

• (1610)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay, thank you.

You talked about a capability-based approach using available historical data. But you didn't throw in anything—and perhaps you couldn't, based on how the mandate was given to you—about the future. I'm referring specifically to the north. Obviously the north is opening up for all the reasons we know. You didn't venture into that at all. That was obviously done consciously.

Can you elaborate on that?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We do mention in the report the need to harness the data that's available. In fact, we do mention that there are attempts to analyze the existing data in more depth, and this is not yet available using knowledge-based systems. The National Search and Rescue Secretariat is pushing for that, and this may not be available. It looks like it will take another two years to do that.

But we did mention also the need to project forward. This fleet will serve Canadians for at least 30 years moving forward. So certainly we did indicate that there needs to be some consideration given to that.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: All right.

Just from running down my notes here, I have one little question about speed and cost, which we keep talking about.

Is there a linear relationship between the speed of the airplane and the cost of the airplane?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Frankly, I don't think so.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: No. I mean, it's a little bit simplistic to say that a slower airplane is going to be cheaper. That's not necessarily true.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: No. Size also matters.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Yes. I've heard that.

Voices: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you very much.

I will now go to Mr. Dryden.

[*English*]

Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

You have a very specific mandate, and I think you have very carefully answered within the specifics of your mandate. The parts that strike me, and that trouble me at the same time, began, I guess, with the word “de-constraining”. That's an awful word, sort of a created word, and usually awful created words are words that are intended to hide something in that they don't quite say as they...as what might be.

I think you said in your statement that really it was your task to look at the...or your criticisms had to do with the fact that a lot of what you were talking about didn't have to do with performance-based; you mentioned that there were a lot of political considerations that went alongside considerations of performance.

And yes, it isn't your mandate to look into what those political considerations are and how that full decision is made, but what strikes me in an instance like this is that...and I hope that, with other witnesses, we will get into what those political considerations are that affect a decision that one might assume would be substantially performance-based. Otherwise, you really....

Performance-based, I would assume, is sort of the horse ahead of the cart—where the horse should be—and then you have other considerations, once you know what that best performance might be, and you end up taking those other things into consideration.

Is that a fair characterization of where your mandate is very limited—you were talking about technical things—that in fact those things that are non-performance-based are beyond your mandate, and that the decision then also includes political considerations, which are outside of your mandate?

Is that all correct?

•(1615)

Mr. John McDougall: If I might, just let me clarify a little bit what “performance-based”, when we talk about it, really means.

The nature of engineering is about risk, and risk management, basically. In order to manage risk, one has to understand where it comes from and how it is constrained. So what we have basically identified here is that there are some things that you should know as policy-setters that you would take into account in making decisions. There are other things that are more related to the absolute capability to do a job, which are where the mandatory requirement recommendations come from.

So we have a circumstance where our job was to identify places where, as I said, in our view, the statement of operating requirements was unduly limiting the ability for options. That's really what it came down to. We pointed that out, and that's the essence of the report: if you want to create more options, you can do it, but if you're going to do that, then it means you have to make your decisions within the context of the risk tolerance that exists.

So it's about risk tolerance, at the end of the day, which is not our decision; it's a political decision.

Hon. Ken Dryden: Right. And you're saying that by offering those constraints, that in fact those constraints can get in the way of the best performance?

Mr. John McDougall: Not exactly. It's a conclusion you could potentially draw, but I don't think it's an accurate one.

We're saying it can get in the way of perhaps making a fully knowledgeable decision, a fully open decision. That's the issue. So if you open it up a little bit, then you'll allow other options to be seriously considered, and as long as they're within your risk tolerance, you'd be fine.

But if you assume you're going to go to a particular constraint before exploring the fact of whether or not it's just a risk-based constraint or whether it's an absolute constraint, then you're tying your hands unnecessarily at the beginning instead of later on.

Hon. Ken Dryden: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dryden.

It is now Mr. Braid's turn.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Mr. McDougall, just to carry on this thread of discussion with respect to a capability-based approach, you mentioned that this is one of your key recommendations, that the SOR should be more capability-based. How did the original SOR not achieve that?

Mr. John McDougall: There are a whole series of areas, and I'm going to let my technical friend here go for it.

Mr. Peter Braid: I just need a couple of examples.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Mr. Chairman, the original statement of requirement made frequent references to the existing fleets, to the Buffalo and the C-130. We were pointing out in the report that we would like the fixed-wing SAR fleet to provide a certain level of service that can be expected and that it should not be tied to the constraints that the current fleets are capable of delivering. After all, we know they are rather old.

Mr. Peter Braid: So would you agree then that it would be fair and reasonable for the government to procure an aircraft that in fact exceeds the capabilities of the current fleet?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I think we need an aircraft that will deliver the level of service that is within government policy or that's backed up by some stated policy of the government. What that is will depend on other constraints, obviously financial and others, that are outside the scope of our technical review.

Mr. Peter Braid: Why do you believe that the term "off-the-shelf" should be removed?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Because it is highly unlikely that an aircraft that will not require any modifications can be identified. Given certain mandatory requirements that we advocated, we felt that the aircraft that will be procured will require some modifications, and with those are certification requirements. So it's no longer off the shelf.

• (1620)

Mr. Peter Braid: To that point then, your report did recommend additional mandatory requirements. Specifically, what are those additional requirements?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I'm quoting off the top of my head. There is a certain suite of sensors that we advocate should be there that would help in search and rescue, that the aircraft be able to operate from unprepared gravel runways, that it be able to operate in icy conditions, and that it have a ramp. We felt the ramp was essential and extremely important. Those are just examples. I may have left something out, but there is a list right at the beginning of the report that lists all the mandatory that we identified that were not part of the original specifications.

Mr. Peter Braid: Changing gears somewhat, could you comment on whether there are other options for the acquisition of fixed-wing SAR, including the possibility of civilian options?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We have pointed out that the constraint of using only Canadian Forces could preclude the number of possible solutions. That's what we indicated in the report.

Mr. Peter Braid: How have the stakeholder federal government departments reacted to your report? How have they welcomed and reacted to it?

Mr. John McDougall: As I mentioned, the report was tabled. We had what I would call a normal kind of interaction, with various clarifications, etc., sorted out. The report has been accepted. Like you, we're now waiting to see what the specific recipient departments will do with it.

Mr. Peter Braid: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bachand, the floor is yours.

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

The procurement process for fixed wing search and rescue has not started yet. In your view and in light of the current study, is it urgent to start the tendering process? In other words, will 15, 17 or 19 additional fixed wing aircraft significantly improve the search and rescue work in Canada?

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: We addressed the urgency earlier with the comment that aircraft can have life extensions. The current fleet isn't suddenly going to terminate in its capabilities. It can be maintained in various ways for some time.

I probably shouldn't say this, but I like watching *Ice Pilots NWT*, watching the DC-3s they're flying around in the north that are dated from the Second World War and are still going strong. So you can do this.

But really, the point we can make with respect to pace and urgency is only that we were as responsive as we could possibly be and, having been commissioned in October, completed the review and delivered a report in March. So I think we've done what we can to facilitate the process.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: But in your report, you said that the delivery date of the first aircraft should be as soon as possible. We understand that there is some urgency. And the date should not exceed 36 months after contract award and final aircraft delivery should be no later than 60 months after contract award. That's why I say that there is some urgency in getting the aircraft.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: Anything with respect to scheduling, as I say again, really is the political procurement process that will play itself out. It's not something we can particularly comment on. The numbers about timelines, etc., that were put forward were pieces of information that were extracted from the discussions we had. But beyond that, we really can't make much comment.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: In your report, you are questioning the relevance of a single fleet. You seem to say that a multiple fleet with different types of aircraft could allow for greater flexibility and might be more effective. Could you tell us more about the single fleet versus the multiple fleet?

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: It's fair to say, in a perfect world, that if you had every possibility at your disposal, you would be able to best serve. Right? But we don't have the financial wherewithal to do that. We don't have a lot of things. So it does come down, ultimately, to the performance and the risk we're prepared to require and accept. All we can do is say that these are the ways you'll get the most options to the table, which I think is essentially what we've done with this report. And then within that, these other decisions have to be made.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: If I may add, we have indicated in the report that while the SOR alludes to a single fleet, we are advocating consideration of a mixed fleet because certain extremes of the envelope, so to speak, infrequent and very remote accident locations, would favour a very high-cruise aircraft, which would not be required for a majority of Canadian search and rescue incidents. So a much less capable aircraft could possibly serve most of the instances, while very infrequent, very distant incidents could be served by a small number of much faster aircraft.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: So, if I understand correctly, you prefer a multiple fleet?

[*English*]

Mr. John McDougall: I would say we don't prefer or not prefer. We emphasize again that different options are to be considered. Depending on your financial and risk tolerance, those decisions can be made. It's not really our job to advise on those choices. It's only to say, if you want choices, this is the way you can achieve them.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McDougall. Thank you, Mr. Bachand.

I will now turn the floor over to Mr. Boughen.

[*English*]

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to our experts here this afternoon. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us.

What are the challenges associated with determining an appropriate speed and range for Canada's future FWSAR aircraft, and what factors need to be considered and why?

Ten seconds or less....

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. John McDougall: It's a very big question.

I think in simple terms the performance standard that needs to be met is clearly an important consideration. As I said in response to some of the others, having set a performance standard with a risk tolerance associated with it, one is able to determine the best possible choice within the cost envelope available. I think that's the process that has to be followed.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Okay. To what extent would you think it's reasonable for the Government of Canada to seek and procure an FWSAR aircraft that beats the capabilities currently provided by Canada's existing fleet? Would you think the current version of the SOR allows for such an aircraft to be sought?

Mr. John McDougall: Again, that's the political question, really. As was mentioned earlier, the decision about service, the question about what's going to evolve in terms of future requirements and so on, does have to be judged and become an intimate part of the decision, but that's a decision made by others, not by us.

• (1630)

Mr. Ray Boughen: In your report, do you list possible choices as something to consider on the procurement side of the post?

Mr. John McDougall: As a matter of fact, we've been very careful not to because we're trying to determine and put on the table a statement of requirement, not a specification for a product, if I can put it that way.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Okay.

Mr. John McDougall: So we're talking about what the product has to be able to achieve, as opposed to what product can achieve that.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Thank you.

Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Two minutes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: On the mixed fleet thing, because we're talking about that quite a lot, and you mentioned that cost is not your part of the ship, but I know you have a lot of experience in these kinds of areas.... I'll just make a statement and ask for a comment.

When we bought the F-18, we looked at various mixed fleets, and it was our conclusion that a mixed fleet of the two cheapest airplanes in that competition would be more expensive than a single fleet of the most expensive airplane in that competition, because it related to spares and test equipment and support equipment and training, publications—all those things that would have to be considered with a mixed fleet. If you were doing a study and it included a cost on mixed fleet versus single fleet, would those be similar things that would obviously have to be looked at?

Mr. John McDougall: I certainly wouldn't disagree with your statement; that decision was made and determined that finding. But I don't think we're necessarily talking about one operator either, which has an influence on that sort of thing. So if you talk about—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You're talking about civilian-CF—

Mr. John McDougall: Yes, mixed provisions. There are different ways of achieving, and that's the whole point, right? You can go down one path that takes you to a particular space very quickly, or you can try to go down a path that opens up options and actually creates more innovation and creativity in that response, and maybe gives you a better response than you would otherwise have.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Good. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Simms, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms: I am going to pick up on that point for just a moment, very quickly, though.

Do you find the dynamics are different, though, say from Comox to Greenwood or Gander, in the sense that one aircraft is better suited for the terrain or for the area for that reason? I'm not a pilot, but nonetheless I am sure there are different dynamics when it comes to the east and west coasts. Did you discover that in your study?

Mr. John McDougall: Well, I would say that doesn't need to be discovered. That's probably a truism, but—

Mr. Scott Simms: Oh. Well, I've discovered it.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I think in our report we have indicated that there is perhaps a need to define what's called "a statement of operational intent", a generic document that could be referenced by a statement of operational requirement, which could contain a mix of missions, mission scenarios, and profiles that the aircraft would have to meet. That's one way of doing it.

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, such as, for instance, that the offshore activity off Newfoundland is not—

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I would perhaps give an example of an operation in a mountainous terrain—

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: —where there is a need for tight turns and terrain following. That's a very specific requirement on their ability—

Mr. Scott Simms: It certainly leads to your argument about the mixed fleet scenario, would it not?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Not necessarily.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

Within the study itself, you say you discussed with people, with SAR techs, flight engineers, and pilots, and that those discussions took place.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: Without giving any reference to a specific airplane, what did they want? For example, what does a SAR tech or a flight engineer want in an aircraft as to its cargo size?

I appreciate your study, by the way. I learned a lot from the factors involved for SAR techs who get involved—for instance, the helmets, the bubble windows, and that sort of thing—but what were they looking for? What would be their choice on what they would consider to be the best aircraft for what they do?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: You're asking something that's slightly outside of the report that we provided.

•(1635)

Mr. Scott Simms: No, I'm looking for—

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: The interviews we conducted were to understand the environment in which these people have to work. On that basis, we were able to sort of synthesize some of the most important ergonomic aspects of this, the ergonomics as a man-machine interface, really, that we're looking at, the human aspects.

What we have concluded, and it's very well shown in the report, is that it is very important to take into account exactly and to create the environment in which these people can work in safety and essentially without putting their health at risk.

Mr. Scott Simms: I guess I was just looking for specifics as in characteristics: speed, size, bigger compartments....

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: That did not transpire, at least to my knowledge, and it's certainly not reflected in the report.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You still have one minute.

Mr. Scott Simms: Was all the relevant information provided for this particular review, do you feel?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: Could you have done with more?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We have attempted to deliver this report in a very short time. Given the terms of reference, all requests for information and documents were essentially complied with. I'm not aware that any document that my team requested would have been denied.

Mr. Scott Simms: Do you think the terms of reference could have been broadened in this particular case? Could you have done more with a little more in the terms of reference?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I think we were properly tasked, given our expertise.

Mr. Scott Simms: That's good. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: I will now give the floor to Mr. Payne.

[English]

You have five minutes.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to welcome the witnesses here today. It's interesting to hear your expertise.

My question to the witnesses is to what extent could the Government of Canada rely on the analysis and best practices of other countries with respect to fixed-wing SAR capabilities in aircraft?

I'll ask several questions, but maybe you'll want to respond to that one first.

Mr. John McDougall: When you are looking at aircraft selections, or any equipment these days, I think you tend to look globally. Again, what you're trying to do ultimately is find the most cost-effective way to deliver the mission you want to deliver within your performance specifications. I think everyone will look everywhere in fulfilling that.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Okay.

I believe there were some questions around Newfoundland versus B.C. If you're looking at fjords in Newfoundland versus B.C. mountain passes, how would that impact your decisions?

Mr. John McDougall: Again, the elements you look at are the kinds of missions you expect—the study looked at the different missions that have to be carried out—and that ends up creating some of the performance specifications an aircraft would have to meet to complete that mission. Ultimately, when the missions are put together, you end up with your statement of requirements.

The point that was made earlier is that this may or may not be able to be fulfilled by one aircraft. It depends on the aircraft, how much money you've got, etc.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Do other countries have similar topographical and meteorological conditions to Canada, which would make their analysis and best practices comparable to our fixed-wing SAR?

• (1640)

Mr. John McDougall: I'm going to make a brief comment and then I'll pass it to my friend. I would just say that we know Canada is a vast land mass and it has a very wide range of operating environments, so that obviously plays in.

Go ahead, Jerzy.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: The short answer is that we have not. This was not part of our mandate. We essentially analyzed the statement of requirement as it was presented to us.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Am I still up?

The Chair: You still have two minutes.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Okay.

In your report you recommend that additional mandatory requirements be added to the statement of operational requirement. What are they, and why would you have added those?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Essentially we advocated adding integrated vertical optical infrared sensors and night vision goggle capabilities, and to have those integrated from the start. If you do it later, that relates to certification, and it might increase the cost.

We also advocated for short gravel runway operation capability; operations using austere airfields; flight into known icing conditions, ground de-icing, anti-icing clearance; a 30-year estimated life expectancy for fixed-wing SAR aircraft based on an average yearly flying rate; ergonomic design of the seating and workspace at the spotters' windows; as well as compliance with relevant civil operating rules, such as access to airspace requiring performance-based navigation, reduced vertical separation minima capability, installation of traffic collision and avoidance, and terrain awareness and warning systems, as well as having a ramp.

Mr. LaVar Payne: That's quite a list. When you did your study, did you find any impact in terms of cost from those additional suggestions?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: When we say mandatory, we feel that in a Canadian context it is not feasible to acquire fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft without this capability.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Very good. Thank you.

The Chair: *Merci.* Thank you, Mr. Payne.

I'll give the floor to Mr. Lobb. You have five minutes.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is my first time sitting on the defence committee.

Maybe just to do a good advertisement for the NRC, in my working career previously, in the private sector, we had a partnership with the NRC and the University of Moncton. It provided very fruitful results—at least that was our experience—and provided some pretty good technological advances with their software.

In 2009, NRC was tasked by Public Works, or contracted by Public Works, to go out and get an independent review of the SOR. With it came the report and the 15 recommendations that lie therein. I know we've talked about whether costs were looked at or weren't

looked at or whether it was about fit, form, and functionality more than anything.

Just so that taxpayers at home understand this, the essence of this was not to look at cost. Or was it to look at cost?

Mr. John McDougall: Our task was not to determine cost-effectiveness. It was to evaluate the appropriateness of the SOR in terms of achieving the end mission.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Okay. That's good.

The question I have, then, is about recommendation number 4, on the consideration of a proposal with more than a single type of aircraft. It says that it could possibly "provide a cost-effective alternative to alleviate some of the costs associated with establishing"....

In your statement you said it didn't have anything to do with cost, but recommendation number 4 alludes to cost. The reader would ask what's going on here.

What's the rationale for that?

Mr. John McDougall: Again, the rationale is about the ability to have creative responses. It was built largely around the fact that even today, the response is a multi-aircraft response.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: May I read the conclusion from the report? It says, on the single type of aircraft assumption:

Despite the preliminary costing data, the assumption of a single aircraft solution should be removed to allow industry to submit single or multi-fleet proposals. Such proposals can then be assessed on the basis of their merits including costs.

This is really what we wrote in the report.

• (1645)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Your conclusion to that point was—I'm not using my words, they're your words—to not exclude anybody right at the beginning. Let them continue throughout the procurement process and see where it takes you.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: See where it lands. That's right, exactly.

We believe that the industry has the ability to cost their offer. Let them put it on the table. Then Canadian taxpayers will have a choice.

Mr. Ben Lobb: On the flip side of it, though, you can make the argument that if you're looking at cost, once you get past the point of procurement to the point of operation and maintenance of an entity, there are cost advantages and economies of scale when operating with one machine that everybody from coast to coast understands and operates. You have the same tools, equipment, parts, cross-training, and training, from A to Z, start to finish.

That goes back to the point Mr. Hawn made in his first or second comment, that there are some exceptionally significant cost savings to operating with one single piece. Now, I didn't see that. Is that in there? That doesn't reference that.

Mr. John McDougall: That would emerge, actually, through the procurement process itself. You can go down a number of paths with that, but one for sure. If you assume one supplier, you'll have a particular dynamic. If there are multiple sources, you'll have a different dynamic, and so on. They will have to take all of those things into account.

Mr. Ben Lobb: I think the taxpayer at home should have the ability to comprehend or understand that there are two points when you're looking at your price points—the purchase and then the maintenance—and I think we've made that here.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bachand, it is your turn now.

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

How would you describe the relationship you had with the various departments? I'm guessing that, at some point, you had to make requests to various departments, such as Public Works and Government Services Canada, National Defence, and so on. Would you say it was cordial? Did they fully cooperate with you?

[English]

Mr. John McDougall: I think my colleague has stated very well that as far as this particular project was concerned, the cooperation was very good. The responses to requests were satisfied quickly and information was freely provided. Based on my personal experience, all that I've heard about this one is that it was a good project.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: I would like to follow on what Mr. Payne said about international comparison and also on what Mr. Harris mentioned earlier about different response times and equipment from various countries. Have you carried out some sort of operation or an international comparison of the types of equipment and their response times? Have you used it to make the recommendations in the report?

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: No, we have not looked at that. Again, I have to state that this was not part of our mandate. We really focused on the SOR as it was presented to us.

Also, we haven't looked at possible solutions, meaning possible aircraft. That, again, was really counter to where we wanted to focus the recommendations of the statement of requirement. We really pointed to the need for a policy to back up the level of service, in that we can use the current level of service, but really that's where it needs to start. And once there is a clear statement, then other considerations can come into play.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: I am looking at your study and I see that there are a lot of technicalities, including the cargo compartment, length, width, roller conveyors, the number of stretchers that can be included, spotter windows, and the load to be carried. One of the tricks the Department of National Defence often uses is to establish the specifications based on the aircraft they want. I hope you haven't been involved in that. You must have surely done things based on merit, meaning by speaking your mind. From the way you described the situation, do you think some companies are currently closer to meeting your recommendations than others, or have you been staying away from those issues?

• (1650)

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: I think there are quite a few of the requirements that address the cargo compartment, and almost all of them relate to the ergonomics, the needs of the SAR technicians. Some of them relate to the SAR load and to the need of interoperability—

Mr. Claude Bachand: With NATO?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Yes, and we agree with that, with a caveat that there is no need to call for ability to accommodate the NATO pallet except that the notional SAR load—there is no standard SAR load, by the way, but the idea we support—whatever that is going to be, should be compatible with the NATO pallet. The NATO pallet was developed for tactical airlift, not for search and rescue.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Yes.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: So our recommendation was to remove that requirement but to retain that the SAR load be compatible with the pallet.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Have you considered the Arctic in your recommendations? The Arctic is becoming more and more important and some missions must be carried out there.

Have you taken it into consideration in your specifications and recommendations?

[English]

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: I was talking about the Arctic. The Great North.

[English]

The Arctic, did you take it into account?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: Yes, of course, we had to take it into account, because one of the extremes of the incidents could be a need to rescue somebody from the North Pole, and that's the extreme. It is a very low probability event and yet it's one that makes a lot of demands, if you like, when we include all the constraints. That's where we mentioned that given the constraints of the SOR, it would have allowed only one hour of search, which is probably not adequate. So this is where we were driven to this suggestion that perhaps a single aircraft type is too constrained.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

I will now turn the floor over to Mr. Harris and he will be the last speaker for today.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris: On page 15 of your report, you mention two other reports: “Analysis of Fleet Requirements for FWSAR” and “30 -minute Continuous Readiness Posture Analysis”. I'm going to read from the “Review of the Statement of Operational Requirement for the Fixed Wing Search and Rescue Aircraft”:

However, the data used to determine both the hourly decrease in survivability and also the number of people who might have survived was highly filtered and conclusions were drawn based on "witness testimony and anecdotal evidence" with no raw data presented as "there was insufficient data within the text of the mission reports to properly assess each case for reaction consequence." Further, only 119 of the 1054 cases were used to draw conclusions on survivability and chances of survival. This study should not be used as a cornerstone to assess either survivability or the impact of holding 24-hour per day 30-minute standby on survivability.

I'm assuming you're saying to the government that the methodology was flawed, that the data were inadequate, and that the government should not draw conclusions based on this source. Is that fair to say?

•(1655)

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We're pointing to the limitation of the available data and the way the data were collected.

Mr. Jack Harris: You conclude that there should be another investigation of the cost of increased 30-minute standby period versus the cost of other aircraft.

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: We also said this was a valuable tool to assess the cost associated with increased readiness posture in terms of crews required or perhaps maintenance and flying rates.

Mr. Jack Harris: It has other information that may be useful?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: You can't have everything from these data, but there is some usefulness.

Mr. Jack Harris: I found it surprising that on page 1 of your executive summary you say:

The stated objective of the SOR is that new FWSAR aircraft provide a level of service to Canadians equal to that currently provided; a level that is not currently defined in Government of Canada policy.

Your recommendation following that is:

The SOR should describe the FWSAR capability sought by the Government of Canada in terms of SAR service to Canadians. It should also include a list of mandatory requirements reflecting the nature of service to be delivered and the timely delivery of this service.

That's a policy decision that government should make. You're saying that you weren't able to find any level of service that you could measure the capability of.

Are you saying that the government should spell out the expected level of service Canadians can hope to have from a search and rescue operation?

Mr. John McDougall: The recommendation essentially says that in the absence of a formal policy, it's very difficult to make these kinds of decisions. There are working procedures, but there's no formal policy.

Mr. Jack Harris: I tried to find one myself and was unable to, but I thought you fellows, with all your abilities, might have found one.

Can I ask one more question? I don't know how much time I have.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Jack Harris: You've looked at the areas of responsibility for the various search and rescue regions. On the east coast, the Halifax search and rescue region goes right out to the middle of the Atlantic. All your fixed-wing resources are essentially in one corner of that, in Greenwood, with no fixed-wing assets anywhere else. What's the

effect of that on the service provided? Can you justify that? Should there be additional resources?

Mr. Jerzy Komorowski: The justification is the cost, and there are some other considerations. We indicated in our report that Greenwood would present somewhat of a challenge to slower aircraft with reduced range, like the CC-130. On the extreme edges of the envelope of the east region, that would require landing in Gander or St. John's for refuelling, which would take about an hour. So that would have an impact. In the extreme, it would require the aircraft to continue all the way to Ireland, because it wouldn't be able to return. So there are some significant impacts.

Given the number of search and rescue incidents, our technical experts concluded that being based in Greenwood would have reduced the time required to reach a large proportion of the search and rescue incidents.

•(1700)

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Thank you, Mr. Komorowski and Mr. McDougall for being with us this afternoon.

On behalf of the members, I would like to thank you for your participation.

I think our meeting is coming to a close.

Mr. Bachand, you had a comment.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We are going to adjourn for two minutes.

•(1700)

(Pause)

•(1705)

The Chair: We are going to continue for a few minutes with meeting number 48 of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

I will give the floor to Mr. Bachand who wants to talk about Wednesday's meeting.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Yes, that's exactly it, Mr. Chair.

My colleagues should have had a letter delivered to their offices from the ombudsman of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, asking to appear. In a report called *The Canadian Forces Grievance Process: Making It Right for Those Who Serve*, he points out some anomalies in the grievance process. Since we only have one witness on Wednesday during the first hour, I thought we could invite the ombudsman during the second hour so he could make a presentation on this topic. I respectfully submit this suggestion to my colleagues.

The Chair: Just to inform the committee...

Mr. Claude Bachand: He is available. We talked to him.

The Chair: Thank you, you are very efficient.

Just to inform our colleagues, the witness who confirmed his appearance before us next Wednesday is Mr. Spratt, of the Criminal Lawyers' Association of Ontario. So it's confirmed for Wednesday.

Mr. LeBlanc, the floor is yours.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Remember that name, in case the cops stop you. The name could come in handy. Put it in your BlackBerry.

The Chair: I am a Conservative. I abide by the law.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Especially the jurisdictions and authorities...

The Chair: ...of the provinces.

Mr. Claude Bachand: We have to remember that name in Ontario, because in the Atlantic provinces, it's your name we have to remember.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Yes, but we have other ways to solve problems like that. We don't always need lawyers.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Bachand spoke to me about it and we agree if the objective is to do the study as soon as possible or rather to do the study without delaying the case. I have no objection to inviting the ombudsman for an hour if that saves us from having another meeting later. If we want to hear from witnesses who have something to say and do it properly, let's not drag the bill on. If we could add an hour on Wednesday, we would be happy to do it.

The Chair: I would just like to remind the members that the committee decided to schedule three days for hearing witnesses. So Wednesday will be an extra day for that.

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: First of all, we didn't get that information. I don't know whether you got it. You didn't either?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: No.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay. And obviously that's something we discussed, but as far as I know, the CDS is being given the financial authority; that is part of the process that's going on now.

But I have a question. When is Michel Drapeau coming?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jean-François Lafleur): On the 28th.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay.

What we're talking about is amending the Federal Accountability Act, not the National Defence Act, with respect to giving the CDS the authority to—not the Accountability Act. Wrong terminology. The Financial Accountability Act.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: There's always John Baird.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: The Financial Administration Act. Thank you.

So it's not the National Defence Act that he's going to be discussing; it's the FAA. Pick whichever FAA you want.

The principle is fine. The principle is relevant, but it's not in relation to C-41 and the NDA. It's in relation to another act.

Mr. Jack Harris: Do you recommend that the government give consideration to recommend FAA?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: We can, but it's not part of C-41. That's a separate.... I'm not saying it's not a legitimate issue; I'm just saying it's not a C-41 issue.

Mr. Jack Harris: It's not an amendment to C-41, in other words.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: No, it's not a C-41 issue. So if we're going to do something separately on that, I have no objection to that, but I just don't think it's a C-41 issue.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Bachand, the floor is yours.

Mr. Claude Bachand: I don't understand. An ombudsman sends us a letter and tells us that he wants to come and testify about Bill C-41 and the grievance process. Are you trying to tell me that it is not in his mandate or in our mandate? That's not what he says in his letter. He says that he wants to come and share his expertise based on a report he already did on Bill C-41. I don't see why we couldn't invite him to appear. I don't understand.

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Let me just read what...because I just had a chance to glance over it.

He's talking about the grievance process as it relates to the authority to provide financial compensation to fully resolve unfairness, which is a legitimate enough statement. But that's under the FAA, not the National Defence Act. C-41 deals with the National Defence Act, not the financial act.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Let me read it.

He says the following: "My understanding is that the Standing Committee on National Defence is currently studying Bill C-41, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I think that an aspect of the grievance process of the Canadian Forces should be included in the draft bill, since it would make it possible to correct a significant injustice that the members of the Canadian Forces are currently facing."

I find that he is referring to Bill C-41 and his presence as a witness is perfectly acceptable.

The Chair: The title of Bill C-41 reads as follows:

[*English*]

an act to amend the National Defence Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. Mr. Hawn is right, because that will have an effect on other acts. But it's also a global vision, so the discussion is—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: We're not violently opposed to him coming. I'm just pointing out that now you could read into "make consequential amendments to other acts" that one of those acts is the FAA, I guess. So we're not violently opposed. I just want to make sure we're clear that this is not specifically a C-41 question. It's another question.

The Chair: Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: I haven't seen this letter either. This was sent to the committee?

The Clerk: Mr. Harris, it was sent to me at 10:30 this morning by fax. I spoke to Madam Laliberté, who I believe is a spokesperson for the ombudsman, and she told me she would make sure the members received it before the meeting. My guess was probably before 12 p. m. She told me that prior to the afternoon she would send it.

Mr. Jack Harris: I'm not fussing with this. So it was distributed. That's fine.

I think if we have a meeting on Wednesday and we have time.... I know we've tried to accommodate whatever witnesses were on the list, but the sooner the better, obviously. But if we have an hour on Wednesday, I don't see why we shouldn't hear from the ombudsman. If he has something to say about the grievance process—that's one of the issues in the bill.

Whether we make a recommendation or a consequential amendment to the act is something separate entirely. If it's not within this act, then we may want to make a separate recommendation or separate report, if you want to call it that. So generally speaking, it's on the topic.

I don't see why we should waste the hour, I guess is what I'm saying.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Do we need a motion?

The Chair: Do we have a consensus?

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: There's a consensus. Okay. The clerk will do that.

See you on Wednesday afternoon, everybody.

[*Translation*]

Thank you. That brings our 48th meeting to a close.

The meeting is adjourned.

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