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Chair

Mr. James Bezan

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● (1140)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. We are continuing our study under Standing Order 108(2) on the NATO strategic concept and Canada's role in international defence cooperation.

Joining us today we have Paul Chapin, who is the vice-president of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, and Colonel George Petrolekas, a member of the board of directors.

Lieutenant-Colonel Petrolekas has a unique background, combining years as an army officer and as a senior executive in the telecommunications industry. He has served in Bosnia, Cyprus, and Afghanistan. In the latter conflict he was recognized as a pre-eminent authority on NATO and coalition warfare in that country, serving as a confidant and trusted agent between the Canadian CDS and senior NATO and U.S. officials on the Afghan file. He is a marketing executive now and has extensive experience in large, medium, and start-up enterprises in high-tech industries, providing network equipment and solutions in over 87 countries.

Paul Chapin is an adjunct professor and research associate in the defence management studies program at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University in Kingston. He has been the vice-president of programs at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, and has joined the board of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. He left government service after 25 years in DFAIT. During his diplomatic career he served in Washington as the minister-counsellor in charge of the protocol section of the Canadian embassy, as Canada's representative on the NATO political advisers committee in Brussels, and as a political affairs officer at the Canadian embassies in Moscow and Tel Aviv.

So both have had extensive careers. We welcome you both to committee again and look forward to your comments. I turn the floor over to you to bring your first 10 minutes of presentation.

Mr. Paul Chapin (Vice-President, Conference of Defence Associations Institute): Thank you, Chair, and honourable members.

We have circulated our opening statement, so we will not repeat that in the interests of time. George Petrolekas and I will have a very few brief opening remarks just to kind of set the scene, and then we're in your hands.

Your subject, and we don't want to sound patronizing, is an important one, because in fact it's our assessment that Canada has reached the stage at which it's probably important to go back to some first principles on the security and defence policy and look at our interests a bit more carefully than has been traditionally required of this country.

Beginning with NATO, there's a major NATO summit this weekend in Chicago, as you know. They're becoming almost annual events. This is the 25th such summit since they began 55 years ago. The last NATO summit, which was in Lisbon about 18 months ago, issued a strategic concept of 2010. Strategic concept papers tend to be broad political guidance for the indefinite future, reflecting recent international developments and trends, that require NATO to look at itself and look at its direction and look at its priorities. NATO has issued seven such strategic concepts since it was founded in 1949.

The strategic concept of 2010 is important because it was the first one, although it came a little late, to try to take account of such transformative events as 9/11, our engagement in Afghanistan, the major dissension within NATO over Iraq, and all of the concerns that have arisen since that time about what the western democracies are trying to do in places where they're heavily engaged to rebuild war-torn societies.

SC 2010 stipulated that NATO has three functions. Typically NATO doesn't declare itself quite so specifically and so definitively. This one was a little different, and therefore interesting. It identified the requirement to, firstly, defend members against all threats; secondly, address the full spectrum of international crises; and thirdly, develop partnerships with others, other countries outside of NATO, other organizations beyond NATO.

This is a stretch for the alliance, which for the most part, particularly for its European members, has seen itself in the business of defence—item number one in the three tasks—and defence specifically of the territory of Europe. For NATO to formally now espouse a much larger mission, to be cognizant of and to do something about international crises writ large, for, during, and after, implies obviously a role in nation-building. And that, as you would imagine, is a hugely controversial issue today. It has been for quite some time. The controversy has been heating up for quite some time.

The notion that the alliance to cement that approach ought to be developing more formal ties with countries outside of NATO and with organizations outside of NATO implies that NATO is getting ready to go abroad and to stay involved in these issues. There's a good deal of angst within the alliance about what these aspirations as identified in the paper actually imply for policy.

The background obviously is that the financial crisis has afflicted the economies of every NATO member one way or the other, and has imposed on them defence budget cuts—at the low end about 9% or 10%, and at the high end about 28% or 30%. You don't cut your defence budgets by those amounts without cutting your military capabilities.

So at the very time that NATO is espousing a rather more forward-looking and enterprising approach to itself and the world around it, the NATO members themselves are probably less equipped to do that, and they're less inclined.

● (1145)

Why are they less inclined? It's because they are war weary. They've been at war one way or the other for 10 years. NATO has 28 members. A lot of governments within NATO, or opposition parties to those governments, are very skeptical about whether the alliance should be doing very much more of this.

I will stop and let my colleague, Mr. Petrolekas, take the story from there.

Mr. George Petrolekas (Member, Board of Directors, Conference of Defence Associations Institute): Thanks, Paul.

I'm going to talk a little about the Chicago summit, the main points that are going to come up, and some implications for Canada as a result of that.

It's really important that we keep in mind the last three things Paul talked about. One is the landscape in which the strategic concept of 2010 is hitting, namely the fiscal constraints that are being felt across the alliance and decisions being made by countries based on fiscal demands.

The second thing is a public reticence to get involved in long campaigns and what that provokes in terms of thinking about strategy. That has also provoked in most nations a rethink of what constitutes national interest. The four major points of that are: security and sovereignty of the country; its economic well-being; the stability of the world order; and the promotion of values, democracy, rule of law, and so forth.

I suggest that the landscape of war weariness and fiscal constraint have really sharpened the discussion or interpretation of national interest. So while the fourth is important, it is no longer primordial. Certainly the stable world order is important, but only as it relates to national economic interest.

So in the Chicago summit we think the first major point will certainly be Afghanistan. It has to be recognized that the Afghan state, the Afghan national security forces, cannot stand alone at this point. There is a notional deadline of 2014 to transition the mission fully to Afghan control, but it has to be recognized that the Afghan national security forces will still need military assistance or training assistance after that date, and most certainly will need financial assistance. So those needs are going to come into conflict with the landscape we just described of fiscal constraint and public weariness.

The military capability side will also be discussed at the summit. You'll have heard the term “smart defence” often used. NATO does not dictate to sovereign states what to do. Sovereign states will decide what they need to do. NATO itself as an institution becomes the enabler to permit certain thinking to become more efficient in how the defence dollars are spent in a fiscally constrained environment, but also to take some lessons that were learned from the recent Libya campaign. My colleague, David Perry, who will be testifying in front of you on Thursday, will be able to go into a little more detail.

To summarize very quickly, one of the things NATO has learned is it absolutely cannot conduct major military operations without the United States. So even though fighters and troops are contributed, things that make operations possible—the logistics behind them, like refueling capabilities, electronic warfare capabilities, and so forth—reside almost uniquely in the United States. Smart defence seeks to address that through common funding initiatives.

Finally, and Paul alluded to it, is the question of partnerships. You're all aware of the United States strategic pivot announced in January of this year, with increasing focus on Asia. It doesn't mean an abandonment of NATO; it just means something else has now risen as an area of interest that's far more important for a number of reasons that we can get into during our discussion.

Within that shift, within other operations we are involved in, there are like-minded states that are similar to us or to most of the western liberal democracies with which we share certain values, notions, and world views. They would certainly be Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and some others. However, there is no construct at this point within NATO to bring in partner nations to be able to function together.

On what all that means, before we even get into a detailed analysis of the strategic concept, I believe we as a country need to decide on areas where our interests are involved. How do we move NATO to better adopt or address things of concern to Canadians, or should we look at other types of security arrangements that better suit Canada's interests?

● (1150)

There are four areas that I believe are important for Canada in the near future.

Obviously, North America is one.

Certainly the Arctic is another, as receding pack ice makes it more of an international waterway, and a navigable waterway, with potential competition for resources, but having an ability to look at our own territory.

Third is the Americas. When you think that 15,000 people die in Mexico a year through drug-related violence, that is four times greater than Afghanistan. So there are critical issues that are just beyond our borders. Gang violence—I'm certain all of you watch the same news I do—that happens in Mexico or in Guatemala or through the chain of narcotic cartel-controlled or transshipment countries has an impact on what happens on streets in Toronto and in Vancouver. So we ignore the Americas at our own peril.

Finally, there is the Pacific, driven partially by the American pivot, but also by our own interests. Our four leading trade partners in the Asia-Pacific area eclipse our trade with every other region of the world, save the United States. With the opening of the northern gateway, with increased maritime traffic, with maritime disputes in the South China Sea, where gunboat diplomacy is alive and well in this period of time, we do have an interest in what goes on in those areas.

So how we look at Asia-Pacific and the Americas has a huge impact on how we structure our forces and where we pay attention from a foreign affairs and Government of Canada standpoint as a whole.

That concludes my remarks.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen.

We're going to start off with seven-minute rounds.

Mr. Harris, you have the floor.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Thank you, Chair, and I want to thank you both for coming to join us today.

Of course, because you didn't read your paper, we had to read it while you were making your presentation, and I want to thank you for it because it does outline some of the things you said. Of course, I've also had a look at some of the other papers that your organization has worked on, and you, Mr. Chapin, in collaboration with a number of other people in the last couple of years.

To what you're presenting to us today I have to say a big “wow”, because in listening to everything you had to say, it seems that Canada has a role in the world that I never thought we would have in terms of military interests, particularly from a defence point of view. I want to say there's a difference between being interested and having an interest. Obviously, we care about what happens in all parts of the world and support working toward international peace and security and our partnerships with NATO and with the United Nations. Forgive me if I focus a little bit on NATO, because that's really the purpose of our study here today. What you're saying and what some people say is that you're not arguing against involvement in NATO, but there are other areas that Canada should take an interest in. Certainly, that's the case.

To get back to NATO for a moment, I do want to clarify some of the things your organization has said, and some things that you, Mr. Chapin, have said concerning NATO and the UN. Of course, the Washington Treaty is very much engaged itself as a party to the Charter of the United Nations, and NATO is integral to that, as reinforced by the strategic concept itself and reinforced by the UN-NATO declaration of 2008, which I'm looking at here. It's very much a vehicle for international action.

I wonder if you could clarify what you mean in your most recent strategic paper, “The Strategic Outlook for Canada”, in which one of your recommendations, recommendation 7, suggests that Canada should begin discussions with the U.S. and other democratic allies on a new international architecture better suited to the security environment of the 21st century.

Then you go on to say that the doctrine, laws, and institutions on which we have relied for our collective security over the decades are all well past their prime. Well, they may be traditional, as you point out in your paper today, but certainly the whole basis of NATO is article 5, and the whole purpose of it—there are other purposes, obviously, but the notion of collective security and how that adds to the stability, at least of the NATO areas, and the notion of including others, including relations with Russia and the other European nations, seems to me to be still a very important goal.

Why would you say—I think it was interpreted by the Library of Parliament analysts—that they were irrelevant, and were no longer valid? Could you clarify that for me?

● (1155)

Mr. Paul Chapin: Sure. It's never been our intention to argue that NATO needs to disband or that we need to get out of NATO. The architecture we had in mind began as a concept at the end of the Second World War, that is, to create a United Nations organization. It was supposed to be an all-encompassing solution that would deal with international peace and security, economic prosperity, and social issues. That organization remains in existence, and it does some very good work in most fields. It does a little bit of good work in the security field, but it is not fulfilling the security function it was designed to fulfill, in part because of the way in which the UN is organized. Its decision-making is captive to unanimity among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and that has been rare in any period of time since the UN was created.

NATO came along as a pragmatic fix for the problem that western countries had with the UN's inability to do security. In the NATO charter, the Washington Treaty, right up front it says we believe in the United Nations, but we also believe in the United Nations principle that we're entitled to our self-defence. In the event that the United Nations cannot guarantee our self-defence, there's nothing to inhibit us from developing alternative arrangements under the UN system. That's what NATO did.

For years NATO's function was strictly to deal with the most immediate problem, which was the defence of Europe. When that function was no longer required at the end of the Cold War, NATO surprised many people by performing admirably a vital function that has been given very little attention—to ensure the stability of the process by which the Soviet captive states were reintegrated into Europe. It would have boggled the minds of people in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s to think that the Cold War would come to an end, not with a bang but a whimper, and that an angry shot would never be fired, and that all of those countries the Soviet Union had taken over would find themselves not just in NATO but in the European Union, acting under European Union rules.

NATO has served two vital functions. A third one—and I'll let George discuss this in greater detail—has been its ability to train people, train countries, its own members and others—

● (1200)

Mr. Jack Harris: Can I interrupt? We're very short on time. All of the things you talked about are important. We probably need more than two hours.

So you still support NATO? You don't stand by this comment that the collective security notion is irrelevant?

Mr. Paul Chapin: We just don't think that NATO should be the full answer anymore.

Mr. George Petrolekas: NATO's boundaries end at the western shores of Canada and the United States. You never see any discussion about the Pacific dimension of NATO. It always seems to end on the western shores of France. That's one of the things we need to raise.

With respect to article 5, and from a policy standpoint, the United States recognizes five domains of warfare: air, land, sea, space, cyber. What triggers a conventional response? What triggers article 5 in emerging domains? That's what we're talking about: modernizing NATO and moving it into the 20th century.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Thanks very much. It's a pleasure to be with you, gentlemen. Thank you for the serious attention you've given to these issues that relate to Canada's security and to the strategic concept, which is the subject of our report at the moment.

You wrote a paper on behalf of CDAI that was very well received. It came out in advance of the release of the strategic concept, which brought together many independent, government, and former government views on what NATO has become and what it should be under this new strategic concept. You brought that forward before the concept itself was finalized.

Could you compare your priorities, what you thought the alliance should be setting out to do in 2010, and what actually came through in Lisbon?

Mr. Paul Chapin: Well, Mr. Alexander, you catch me a little off guard, because there was a point about a year and a half ago when I was asked to actually put together, in chart form, exactly the answers to precisely those questions.

I think in general we took a little darker view of the strategic outlook than the NATO strategic concept displays. However, we were more akin to the experts group that NATO had struck to do this kind of work, so I think we were in good company.

Secondly, we laid on the line some of the early thinking about the cautions about nation building, about fixing war-torn societies, in that if NATO is going to be in this business, it had better have the decision-making systems in place and it had better not make decisions without ensuring they are adequately resourced. Also, once they're resourced, if there's a fighting component to it, the NATO generals and NATO forces had better be given the means and be allowed to conduct their operations in a way that would enhance their effectiveness in theatre.

We also said in that paper that it was time—and maybe this is the origin of some of our thinking today—that NATO thought a little bit more about Canada and Canada thought a little more about NATO. NATO was one option when we selected it in 1948-49. There were two other options at the time.

One was simply that the United States and Canada join the Brussels Treaty, which had the three Benelux countries, Britain, and France. A second option was a much larger international organization that would have comprised basically many of the original members of NATO, all of the Scandinavian countries, and key members of the British Commonwealth. It would have included Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and there were probably one or two others there.

People thought the first option was too little and the second was too much, so we settled on a NATO of 12 original members focused on Europe. That was then.

The question today is that we've now grafted on to NATO.... Well, NATO now has 28 countries. It has transformed itself. Is that still suited to Canadian needs? We flagged that in our paper. I think we were a little disappointed that there wasn't a bit more reflection of some of that kind of thinking about the future.

● (1205)

Mr. Chris Alexander: Let me put to you another question, a related question. On the whole issue of partnerships, you described in your opening—perhaps Mr. Petrolekas can answer this—how a very large number of the partnerships that NATO has arose essentially as a result of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council attempt to have partnerships for peace and other relationships with a very large number of countries that had once belonged to the Warsaw Pact or the Soviet Union, and then others even beyond that group, but geographically proximate.

In both of your recent papers, though, you talk now about the imperative Canada has to solidify security partnerships in Asia, and to do more in the Americas, where there are hard security challenges, as you were saying. You also mentioned Africa as a place where the state-building challenge and potentially the challenge of conflict on a large scale are perhaps the most acute anywhere in the world.

What are you saying about how Canada's partnerships in those regions should be structured? Do you see NATO as a vehicle in one or all of those regions? Do you think we should be going back to the UN to try again? Or is there some other kind of third option that you see, regionally specific...?

I think this is relevant to a discussion of the strategic concept, because the strategic concept—apart from the UN charter—is the only articulation of our shared security interest with allies that we have so far for 2012.

Mr. George Petrolekas: We agree, and it's not a sequential or a linear series of steps, and one isn't to the exclusion of the other, so let me just clarify that really quickly.

Yes, there are partnerships that NATO has established. There are partnerships for peace. There were certainly partnerships that were much trumpeted for the Libyan mission: the inclusion of the UAE, non-combat support by Morocco, and so on and so forth. Those are all good and valuable things, but they are punctual and tactical, if you will. They're not strategic in terms of the partnerships that are formed.

When you put a strategic concept in a document that is supposed to provide guidance for an organization for the next decade, it's incumbent on that document to look at the trends that are unfolding in the world and try to anticipate its partnerships as a consequence. So, yes, there should be smaller, punctual partnerships, which obviously are valuable, but we did talk about the long-term strategic shift in Asia and incorporating some of those.

Now with respect to Asia and the Americas and certainly Africa—and we're seeing South Sudan materialize as a hot spot right now, which we identified as well in the strategic outlook paper—there is a role for NATO in these places. NATO's strategic concept in itself talks about mobile, deployable, joint forces, including the NATO response force at a strategic distance. It talks about protection of transit areas and lines of communication and energy infrastructure. But aside from making those statements inside the concept, we're not seeing advancement of that discussion, and it's in our interest to advance that.

What we would like, first of all, is for NATO to more seriously address the role it has to play in places like Africa and Asia, because as we said, the border is on the west. We just don't see that happening right now.

● (1210)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move on to the last of the seven-minute rounds. Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you both for coming this morning.

Your conclusions kind of caught me by surprise, and that has to do with the larger question of how you define interest. I think one of you made the note that you're rethinking what constitutes national interest. That seems to be kind of a draw-down on the concept of values, a projection of values, and almost flipping it to say, historically speaking, that if we have an economic interest, we're interested. When you apply that lens, you then seem to arrive at the conclusion that our interests are at home, in the Arctic, in the Americas, and in the Pacific. I'm not sure I disagree with that, but on the other hand, what's notable is the leaving out, if you will, of the Middle East, which within the foreseeable future is going to be the source of a lot of conflicts, and Africa, which is in some respects a litmus test, because we actually don't have much in the way of interest there, other than mining interests and things of that nature.

Are you in effect repositioning our relationship to NATO and in effect saying to NATO that the other parts of NATO are going to have to take over these conflicts? I don't know where you're going with these conclusions.

Mr. Paul Chapin: I think where we're going with these conclusions is to an appeal to people who value the interests of Canadians to consider the future a little bit more than the past. If you consider that there's a taxonomy of interest, the first and most immediate being the safety and security of citizens, the second one being their economic livelihood and prosperity, and so on, those two things ought to drive a lot more of our foreign defence policy than I think they have traditionally been doing. So they are more vulnerable in some respects to globalization trends than maybe they have been and maybe they were in the past.

There are two other broader contextual interests, one of which is the value that we place in a stable world order. If it's disruptive and chaotic out there, it's going to wash over into Canada. We have a hard-edged interest in dealing with international conflicts.

The fourth one is that we can try to head off much of the stuff out there if we can get people to understand the value of democracy, human dignity, respect for government, the consent of the government—those kinds of things. The more other people believe in those values out there, the less likely there's going to be trouble out there.

How that translates into policy is the sense that there's probably a new division of labour required. For a very long time, Europe couldn't manage on its own. It needed help. It needed the deterrence factor of North American help. Europe has 500 million people. They are wealthy as hell, notwithstanding their economic problems.

Hon. John McKay: Yes, I was thinking about the Greeks.

Mr. Paul Chapin: They can certainly look after themselves and their security. They could do a credible job if they ever got their act together—and some of them have—to look after the security interests of their neighbourhood.

● (1215)

Hon. John McKay: But you already said the U.S. is a *sine qua non* of NATO.

Mr. Paul Chapin: The UN is the context for NATO. To the extent that the UN doesn't function, NATO is our second-best solution.

Hon. John McKay: It doesn't function without the UN.

To apply that to your analysis to, say, Afghanistan, are you, in effect, saying that governments have been blowing us smoke, we the public, when they say “Well, we're there to bring democratic values to the Afghan people, to protect women and children”, all that sort of stuff, when in fact they really have no interest in Afghanistan?

Mr. Paul Chapin: I would argue with you, sir, that we—

Hon. John McKay: I'm just teasing it out here.

Mr. Paul Chapin: George, do you want to take that?

Mr. George Petrolekas: There are a couple of parts to that. I think there's absolutely a belief that we can better things. I recall one time walking outside of Bagram and watching a farmer trying to rebuild his farm. I thought, this is something really worth backing. The guy is sweating, working in the heat of the sun, building his mud bricks, and slowly, brick by brick, rebuilding his farmhouse. I thought that type of work, that type of ethic, that type of desire to improve should get our backing.

We're not defending the trends that are happening; we're just observing that because of fiscal constraint, because of other interests rising in other areas...we're not precluding doing things in Africa and we're not precluding doing things in the Middle East. We're looking at the long term and trying to describe to you the context in which all of this is landing. It is landing in a—

Hon. John McKay: Here's my point in pushing you a little bit on this. I'm not disagreeing with you with respect to the farmer or the beggar. There are those who say, "Well, that's just soft stuff", and I hear the background chatter saying, "Well, we're not going to do values any longer. We're not going to project western values. All we're going to do is look after ourselves and let the rest take care of itself." Between those two polarities, there seems to be a shift going on. Are you observing that shift, I guess is the question. I'd be interested in your observations.

Mr. George Petrolekas: Sorry, the shift—

Hon. John McKay: The shift to economic hard-core interests versus—

Mr. George Petrolekas: I think that's exactly one of the things that we've described as things that we are seeing as a symptom of global financial crises. It is very hard, for example, if you're the Greek MOD at this moment to justify your 130-person Role 3 hospital in Kabul when people in your own streets are going through garbage cans.

Again, I'm not here to defend that or to justify it. I'm just suggesting to you that this is exactly what is going on around us and you need to anticipate that.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Mr. Paul Chapin: Can I just add a quick thought?

The Chair: Yes, quickly.

Mr. Paul Chapin: We're not proposing that Canada abandon good works. What we're saying is, let's divide up the labour—because we're diffusing a lot of effort, and there are other people who can spend more time, maybe more effectively, doing certain kinds of things—but also let's know what the business is. It's not necessarily doing good; it's achieving good effects. That's where we think a great deal more intellectual attention is required. How do you actually fix problems rather than work heroically at them?

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Gallant, you have the floor.

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

Through you, to our witnesses, there are some, like my colleagues across the way, who question the utility of maintaining our partnership in an organization such as NATO, given that there are no conventional military threats to Canadian sovereignty or security. However, that line of thinking is somewhat naive, given the fact that those who would seek to do Canada harm are using new methods of attack, like cyber-attacks, terrorism, or other non-conventional threats.

In your opinion, what threats currently face members of NATO, and does the strategic concept paper address these threats to some extent?

● (1220)

Mr. George Petrolekas: You articulated some of the threats. You mentioned cyber, and that is one domain that has not been developed, either from a policy standpoint or an understanding of what that actually means. When you think that the New York Stock Exchange can fluctuate in value close to 7% in one day, based on strictly automated trading algorithms, with no human intervention, what does an attack on that do? When the national electrical grid and its switching is totally controlled by computer systems, what happens to those when they're attacked? Those cross-border...they're not limited to one particular country.

From an economic standpoint, one can foresee disruption to the oil supply, for whatever reason. Then question the ripple effect of what occurs. Jeff Rubin has talked about it from one aspect of the long-term effect of triple-digit oil, but what happens if oil automatically spikes because of something that destabilizes the global commons? Is there a collective responsibility to ensure the freedom of the global commons, wherever it may lie?

So $150, $160, $170 oil is going to push countries like Greece and Spain and Italy, or even companies in our country, over the brink. I recall Air Canada's recent quarterly reports. It announced a loss for the first time in several years, driven by fluctuations in the fuel price. How many companies in Canada now become affected because an action or event crosses the global commons and affects shipment and trade and so forth?

Absolutely, there are a host of threats much better addressed collectively than by individual nations.

I hope that answers your question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

The doctrine for the Canadian Forces, as found in the Canada First defence strategy, places an emphasis on our Arctic. Are there currently any plans or initiatives for future joint training for NATO in the Arctic and the north? What role is there for NATO in the Arctic?

Mr. George Petrolekas: I think for the most part successive Canadian governments have treated the Arctic as Canadian inland waters and have not necessarily welcomed NATO involvement specifically in the Arctic, as we ourselves try to wade through a number of issues.

I'll give you an example from a question of smart defence. As you all know, Canada did pull out of the alliance ground surveillance system this year. These were the drones that NATO was going to purchase, and they became difficult to justify. We thought it was difficult for Canadians to justify contributions to smart defence when that entire capability that could be useful in terms of surveillance—surveillance over shores, surveillance of the Arctic from NATO—might have a mission set that would be applied here.

In the 60-odd years of NATO, I think the sum total of NATO common funded investment in Canada is a navy pier at Halifax, and only once have NATO assets made it over to North America: post-9/11 when the AWACS were brought over, and a very minor contribution after Hurricane Katrina. So there is a sense that we're not necessarily getting the return on investment, and part of that is driven by the fact that, yes, we do have needs like other alliance members and we should be beneficiaries of some of those programs that we fund on our own shores. We just don't see that occurring.

Again, it's trying to push NATO into recognizing that its boundaries don't end at the Bay of Biscay; they end in Juan de Fuca.

● (1225)

The Chair: Thank you.

I forgot to mention that we are into the five-minute rounds, so time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Moore, you have the floor.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like some clarification regarding the Afghan mission and the role of NATO.

I see a difference between having troops on the ground in Afghanistan and continuing to grant funding and advisory services from outside the country.

In your opinion, could it be possible that no troops from any NATO country will remain in Afghanistan after 2014? If we contribute advisory and financial support, will the Afghans be in a position to take over?

Mr. Paul Chapin: We work at two levels in Afghanistan.

First, we train Afghan forces so that they will be able to ensure their own security. At the other level, we try to promote more generally the country's development. NATO's strategy is to ensure—

[*English*]

focus on training the Afghan forces over the next two and half years, so that by the end of 2014 they can look after their own security. Assuming a fair measure of success, at that point there is a question: are they capable of handling their own security? How much continued military support is going to be required beyond 2014? It's a big question mark, and I don't think any NATO country has officially declared that it is willing even to think about that issue just yet.

On the other hand, a NATO strategy was approved at the Lisbon summit, which will be revisited at the Chicago summit next weekend, about continued support for Afghanistan over the long term in finance, economics, social development, education, and so on. There, there seems to be a good deal more willingness to stay involved in Afghanistan, but the question will be how much can people afford, and how much do they want to do in Afghanistan, given their own economic weaknesses?

[*Translation*]

Mr. George Petrolekas: There was a symptoms analysis.

I'll add that a member of your committee knows more about Afghanistan than anyone else in Canada. It's the former ambassador, Mr. Alexander.

Allow me to add a few comments. It's obvious that the Afghan state needs financial help, but beyond that, it still needs support in various areas of training, for example in the military and economic domains.

Even before the Chicago summit, I think the UK announced, a couple of weeks ago, that it was considering granting some $100 million to the Afghan state after 2014, to further NATO's efforts in Afghanistan. However, if the last numbers I saw are right, to be adequately supported the Afghan military would need almost $6 billion. Right now, therefore, there is a lack of willingness and support.

Ms. Christine Moore: Thank you.

I quite appreciated your answer, but my time is running out and I would like a short and clear answer.

After 2014, will a military presence still be necessary in Afghanistan? Will the situation have sufficiently evolved to allow for another type of support?

Mr. George Petrolekas: According to our Canadian, British, and U.S. partners, as well as other NATO countries, the short answer is yes. Yes, judging from what we have seen, the Afghan army will still need military support.

● (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Chapin: Is it to fight insurgents or stay back and train Afghans to fight insurgents? I think there's almost no appetite for forces to fight insurgents after 2014.

The Chair: *Merci beaucoup*.

Mr. Chisu, you have the floor.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for your participation and for appearing as witnesses in front of our committee.

Professor Chapin, you expressed some skepticism about NATO from some NATO countries, certainly not former Warsaw Pact countries, because they are very much interested in NATO, and still they see NATO as an umbrella organization that is defending against Russia.

At the start of NATO, Canada had a permanent role and participated. It was one of the founding members of NATO. Somehow this role faded over the years. How is our voice heard today in NATO, and what will our future contribution be to NATO's transformation?

If I have time I will put a question about the information sharing between NATO members, and finally about NATO-Russia relations, in the way we have the enclave of Kaliningrad, which you need to....

Mr. Paul Chapin: I think a simple way of thinking about NATO is that three functions are performed under the title of NATO.

The first function basically is as a permanent diplomatic conference in Washington and around the North Atlantic Council table. All the governments are represented there by their ambassadors. They are essentially in permanent session. They have their staff to make sure they're connected with their capitals, their headquarters, and their foreign and defence ministries.

Canada has a voice around that table, and it is a highly respected voice. It's probably not as loud and heard as much, because NATO started out with 12 members and it now has 28 members.

The second element of NATO is the permanent international staff of military and civilian people who serve this permanent conference. There are dozens and dozens of Canadians, and I think hundreds of Canadian military officers, serving in both the civilian and military support systems for NATO. This is in Europe or in the various regional commands.

The third level is when NATO goes to war someplace, whether it's anti-piracy, Afghanistan, or Libya. Canada may or may not be involved a lot or little in those operations.

So Canada's influence and Canada's voice is at the diplomatic level permanently, in the staff work where Canadian expertise.... We knock our bureaucrats a lot in this town, but Canadian bureaucratic skills are very highly regarded in places like NATO.

Third is our role in operations.

Did you want me to say something about...?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Yes, I would like if you could say something about the information sharing between the NATO member countries. I was in Afghanistan, and I was in Bosnia-Herzegovina, so I know a little bit about....

Mr. Paul Chapin: There are two kinds of information sharing. The first is the constant discussions and sharing of analysis and assessments that go on among governments and around the NATO committee tables. The North Atlantic Council has several supporting committee operations. That is fairly frank and fairly comprehensive. Clearly, some information is held back by some people from other people. If you're the Americans or certain other members of the alliance, you have intelligence collection systems and material that has a very special character that you don't share with everybody. It has been a remarkable development in NATO over the past 10 or 15 years how much more intelligence is now being shared within the alliance than used to be the case.

When I served in NATO along with Colonel Pellerin, who is our executive director, back in the early 80s, it was a very difficult thing to get the hard intelligence into the general discussion.

● (1235)

The Chair: Time has expired, sir. We're going to have to keep moving on.

Mr. Kellway, you have the floor.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you, thank you to our guests for coming today and providing a very interesting discussion.

I want to go back a bit. I was kind of surprised to hear your definition of Canada's interests in four areas: North America, the Arctic, the Americas, particularly Mexico, and the Pacific. Picking up on what John said earlier, I was a bit surprised by what you left out of that discussion or list of interests. For clarity's sake, is it these interests plus others, or are you just refocusing? Is your effort in identifying that list to refocus the discussion onto other issues that aren't getting, in your view, sufficient attention these days?

Mr. George Petrolekas: There are two different things we're talking about. I hope we're not confusing them. The very first thing we said was that there is a hierarchy of national interests. That has become more defined in the environment that we're living in—that environment being influenced by public opinion, the wariness of our public, and also the constraints of the fiscal purse. Bearing those two things in mind, nations have to make decisions on where focal points will be. That is strictly a description of what we're seeing happening around the world. I can give specific examples and demonstrations that illustrate that trend of a sharpening of the definition of national interest.

With respect to areas of interest, if national interest is being sharpened to those first three areas of the hierarchy that I described, then you're also seeing effects of that in areas where nations choose to put their focus. It doesn't necessarily mean they have abandoned particular areas. There is just more focus on those particular areas.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: You're saying those three...the sharpening of the national interests should be focusing us more on North America?

Mr. George Petrolekas: They are, in fact, focusing us in those particular areas.

One other thing, just to clarify, is that we did talk in the strategic outlook paper in general terms about Canada and Canada's interests, but there are also limitations when we're talking about the NATO strategic concept. You asked us to comment on where is NATO's thinking in all of this. I think we're in lockstep by saying that NATO has traditionally had a very limited view of what its roles are in other places. We're actually encouraging NATO to broaden its horizons to beyond the limitations of the European geographic land mass.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: To include our land mass, I take it.

Does it include this North American land mass?

Mr. George Petrolekas: It includes parts of the land mass where there are areas of interest. Here is an example. The NATO Response Force was designed in 2001 to provide NATO an expeditionary capability and to intervene in a series of places.

Haiti, after the earthquake, had absolutely no NATO involvement. There was a specific mission set that was designed within the NATO Response Force to help out and assist in regions of the world where disaster had struck, and yet NATO has never used the NATO Response Force in that regard.

In Afghanistan, NATO required the NATO Response Force as an election support force but could not find the means or a way to break through the North Atlantic Council to deploy that.

● (1240)

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Are you calling for more? If NATO is going to stick with that very traditional kind of geographic perspective, are you calling for a more limited role of Canada within NATO?

Mr. George Petrolekas: No. The very first step is to identify that it is an issue.

The second step is to flag that to our diplomatic intervention to try to move NATO to recognize that it does have interests collectively beyond its borders, which it actually mentions in the strategic concept. It articulates that quite clearly, but it doesn't act on that.

Third is where we would look to satisfy our own interest if the second can't occur.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: How optimistic are you about the second?

Mr. George Petrolekas: I try to retain some optimism. It did take 10 years, but there is now a heavy airlift capability in NATO stationed in Hungary, where they bought C-17s, something that was identified—that the alliance as a whole requires heavy airlift. The AGS program seems to be moving along, after fits and starts, but the unfortunate thing is it does take time.

We do think that a nation like Canada, which is generally seen as not having particular geopolitical agendas, as an honest broker can help move our partners in the alliance into the kind of thinking I've described.

The Chair: Thank you. The time has expired.

Mr. Menegakis, you have the floor.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I too would like to thank our witnesses for appearing before us today. I also want to congratulate you for the important work you've done in your careers—certainly very impressive—and the work you continue to do.

My first question is this. In light of NATO's strategic concept, with its three roles or three principal tasks, as I think you refer to them in your presentation, could you describe the strengths and weaknesses of Canada as an ally in delivering on these fronts? Perhaps I will ask you to put a little more emphasis on our weaknesses.

Mr. Paul Chapin: I'm not quite sure I got the gist of your question. Canada's ability to delivery in what particular—

Mr. Costas Menegakis: On its three principal tasks.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Collective defence, partnership....

Mr. Paul Chapin: Well, if you begin with the first task, which is the defence of the NATO area, the Euro-Atlantic area, our role was absolutely critical early on. We had brigades stationed in Europe, we had an air force stationed in Europe, and we had heavy naval commitments to the defence of Europe. Clearly, over 60 years, that has progressively disappeared. We're not there any more in that respect. So as far as the defence of Europe specifically is concerned, I'd say we're absent, with good reason.

On the second function, crisis management, I'd like to make a distinction between NATO and its members. NATO as an organization has organizational and structural problems of all kinds. It's only as robust and as effective as its members allow it to be. Individual members can be a great deal more active and effective on their own or in small groups. What you've seen in some respects has been individual NATO members either leading the whole organization or leading some of the organization, or creating "coalitions of the willing", as they are called, of countries that are both within NATO and outside NATO, to get things done.

I think on that front, Canada has been a very important contributor to the collective missions that we have believed in. As a group, we didn't believe in Iraq, but we certainly believed in the Afghanistan mission. We believed in the Balkans missions. We believed in the Libyan mission.

Once we overcame some of the deficiencies of the dark years in which Canadian defence was underfunded and undermanned, we turned out—as most of us kind of suspected we would—to be first-class soldiers and first-class contributors in a highly professional way to solving problems.

So I think we do quite a good job there. I wish our diplomacy was as robust and as entrepreneurial as our military activities have been.

The third one has to do with partnerships. I think we're playing a very large role—we can probably claim as strong a role as any NATO member—in trying to drag NATO into understanding that there are requirements for partnerships. In Afghanistan, for instance, all 28 members of NATO, one way or the other, have been involved. But there are another 20 countries involved in Afghanistan, and not in small ways, either. We're saying that if this is the world of democracies working in action, why is it that we consider these other 20 countries as kind of second-class citizens? We maybe invite them to some of our meetings at NATO, and so on.

What we've been saying is that we have to firm up something with these countries. If NATO as an organization will not do that, we have to figure out some other way to get that done.

● (1245)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: How am I doing for time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: There may be time for a small comment, if you wish.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: A small comment? Okay.

My comment is this. Certainly we have a long history and a very proud history of being peacekeepers around the world. I can tell you of one effort that comes to mind, and that is the peacekeeping effort of the Canadian armed forces in Cypress. The longest-serving peacekeeping mission of the Canadian armed forces was there. It spanned 29 years. We lost 28 brave young men and women in that effort, and I think we have a lot to be proud of.

Again, thank you very much for appearing before us today.

The Chair: Thank you. Time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brahmi, you have five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to follow up on the question that was asked by Mr. Harris at the beginning. It concerns recommendation 7, which includes the rather strong statement that “The doctrines, laws and institutions used for collective security are no longer relevant.”

Mr. Petrolekas, I feel that you didn't have time to answer that part of the question, so maybe I will give you an opportunity to do that now.

Mr. George Petrolekas: I don't think we said they're not relevant. We said they're past their prime, to be more specific.

I did mention a particular area. I talked about five domains of warfare that are certainly recognized in the United States. Certainly, President Obama has been quite clear in a policy statement he made about four months ago.... At least in the cyber domain, the U.S. President was quite clear that from a U.S. perspective, that was an area that would trigger a defence response.

To just use that as a vehicle to discuss recommendation 7, we have not kept up, from a policy standpoint, in recognizing that field. Certainly, from Canada's standpoint, the thinking about that is not very well developed. I would say it's in its infancy. And certainly from a NATO standpoint, the implications of that U.S. presidential statement have not been thought through. So what do all those things mean? That is one area in which we're saying there are changes that are occurring in the landscape before us that the institutions themselves haven't kept up with.

The second area has to do with.... Geographically, if I might draw people's attention to the South China Sea, and I made sort of a glib remark earlier that this is an area where gunboat diplomacy is alive and well—certainly the standoff that has being going on for close to four weeks between Chinese vessels and Philippine vessels.

Four of our largest trading partners are in that particular region. Some 60% to 70% of the world's maritime traffic transits through the South China Sea. Taiwan is one of our largest trading partners. There have been three major crises over the Taiwan Strait in the last 40 years. The building of the Chinese aircraft carrier, this ex-Soviet *Varyag*, can be traced back to the third Taiwan Strait crisis, where the Chinese naval expansion began immediately after the Taiwan Strait crisis.

Some 70% of the world's liquid natural gas traffic flows through the South China Sea.

As our own northern gateway pipeline opens and shipping traffic increases from our own shores to the east, our immigration from the east has now eclipsed other areas.

Institutionally, NATO has not looked at that particular area. There is no security structure, except for bilateral agreements right now, that covers collective security responsibilities in that whole area of the world. Yet through the number of examples I've just given to you of why it is of interest to us and why it should be of interest to NATO, the institutions have not incorporated the changes that have taken place.

We're not saying they're not relevant. They were built for a time and place that no longer really exists. I don't think any one of us would be bold enough to make a statement that the Soviet army is going to cross into Germany and march toward Paris today. Yet that is what part of that collective defence structure was built to address. Therefore, it needs to be rejuvenated, and it needs to be brought into a more modern time.

● (1250)

The Chair: Thank you. Time has expired. It's been exactly five minutes. *Merci beaucoup.*

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: I thought I had five seconds.

The Chair: It came in just over the five-minute mark.

Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Through you to the witnesses, thank you for appearing.

I'd like to carry on with the Soviet theme, although it's now a Russian theme. Historically, of course, there's been a tension. The reason for NATO's existence is...not in part, but it's a major role in the relationship between, shall we call it, the Siberian state now called Russia, and of course our increased desire to maintain a dialogue and to improve that dialogue.

There are exacerbating circumstances, in particular surrounding nuclear disarmament and the missile defence systems that are being contemplated by NATO and NATO nations, and the statement by...I believe it was the military chief's recent comments surrounding the ballistic missile defence system.

I wonder if you would comment on this pursuit of a stronger relationship vis-à-vis those relationships, or those recent issues, and how you see them progressing.

Mr. Paul Chapin: It's an underappreciated, looming problem, Russia.

I served in the Soviet Union back in the seventies. My colleague, Chris Alexander, was there much more recently than I was. There was a sense that cooperation was going to be possible only at the margin. Maybe we could do a little bit of crisis management together, but their system and ours were just fundamentally incompatible.

That fundamental incompatibility isn't there anymore. The Soviet Union is history. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is history. And Russians have demonstrated in very graphic ways over the years that they want to be a democratic society. But it's going to take them more than a generation, as we know, to achieve anything approximating that. They are moving rather too rapidly back to a one-party state. It's not a Communist Party state, but it has a lot of the old Communist Party attitudes about how you run things. And that's a serious problem that is going to limit our ability—NATO's ability and individual countries' ability—to cooperate with the Russians.

There is a NATO-Russia council that tries to put some structure into conversations with the Russians. It has been helpful. It's not a particularly useful vehicle, but it does mean that on a regular basis the Russian ambassador sits around the table with all the other ambassadors of NATO to discuss things. They do the same thing with the Ukrainians.

The Russians have been coming to G-8 meetings, and sometimes have been invited to NATO meetings and so on. But I think there's a limit, and the limit has been established by the Russians, not by us. They have one of the fastest growing defence budgets and military development programs in the world. They're not getting along particularly well with their neighbours.

I think their threats about ballistic missile defence are just as bogus as could be. It seems to be universally ignored that the Russians have a ballistic missile defence system of their own. So what are they complaining about us developing one of our own? Clearly, the notion that our ballistic missile system is a threat to them, when the missiles couldn't go a tenth of the distance to get there, is a kind of nonsense.

At some point, we have to recognize that the Russians have a long way to go internally to establish democratic credentials, and only at that point can they really expect something more than polite conversation with us. They have been helping in Afghanistan in ways that served their interests and ours, so there's some cooperation going on. They've been helping on counterterrorism. They've been helping on counter-piracy. Where it's in their interest, from a practical perspective, things work well. But the regime in Moscow has ambitions that I think make it a long-term problem for us.

● (1255)

Mr. Rick Norlock: I'd just like you to comment. As we know, dictatorships, when they have trouble within their own borders, usually like to pick a fight with somebody internationally. If the current regime in Russia were to come under some kind of constraint, would you change that view that the missile defence issue is bogus? I can see it becoming serious if Mr. Putin begins to have a threat to his democracy.

The Chair: Mr. Norlock's time has expired, so give a very brief response.

Mr. Paul Chapin: I can give you a very short answer on ballistic missile defence. They use it I think as a political football. Back in Lisbon, barely 18 months ago, there was a nice comfortable agreement worked up with the Russians to cooperate on ballistic missile defence. What's happened in the meantime? Well, it wasn't on our part that the story changed.

The Chair: Mr. Strahl, you have the floor.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, for your contribution here today.

I haven't seen any polling on it, but I think Canadians in general are supportive of our participation in NATO and are certainly proud of our men and women in uniform who've been deployed recently in NATO-led missions.

There is also I think a public perception that just a few NATO countries carry most of the load. Do you think NATO is at all threatened, long term, by that fact or that perception that not each of the 28 nations is an equal partner and that some seem unwilling or unable to participate as fully as some of the others?

Mr. George Petrolekas: There are two parts to that. The alliance recognizes that there are differences in economic capability between nations. So they are taxed, if you will, for common funding programs based on the size of their economy, and so on.

I led the NATO certification team to Slovenia in 2004, and I recall speaking to their chief of defence staff. They were making very modest contributions, I think it was about 300 to 400 people in total to various missions—not just Afghanistan, but that represented a contribution from an armed force of 4,000 in total. It was still a sizeable contribution from a percentage standpoint. So you have to be careful when you look at the levels of those contributions.

What really worries us—and we do address the fear of a two-tier NATO—is the willingness to commit and to look beyond the European geographical construct, and also the difficulties that happen in a particular mission. In Libya, for example—and again, our colleague, Dave Perry, will be talking about this on Thursday—there was an entire rebalancing of AWAC crews once Germany decided to support the mission politically but not militarily. So AWAC crews that were assigned to the Libyan mission had German aircrews taken away and moved to Afghanistan, which were then backfilled by others. Those are some of the things that are different.

The third part that concerns us is a willingness to look beyond. We've identified a number of countries that seem to have a more global view than some other nations within the alliance. That has become a bit of a conflict within, because there are nations like ours that look beyond their own borders and other partner nations that do, but then there are others that don't, either from their own interpretation of interest or their ability to economically support it.

Are there two tiers emerging? Absolutely.

● (1300)

Mr. Mark Strahl: I think you've identified some of the threats. Are other countries like ours, as our defence budgets globally become more stretched...? You've just indicated that it is a concern. How does that manifest itself? What is the threat there in the way that NATO operates?

Mr. George Petrolekas: I'll give you an example of how it manifests itself.

When the United States announced its strategic pivot, part of that announcement also said there would be base closures in Europe, there would be reductions of brigades, and there would be reductions of troop commitments to Europe. That's influenced by fiscal constraints on the United States, by whether it can afford to maintain previous levels, but also by those levels being affected by changes in strategy, indicating that it is not the primary interest anymore.

So, yes, absolutely, nations will sharpen and decide what they do based on fiscal constraints, and those are some of the things that you are seeing, such as the Dutch eliminating all of their tanks as part of their smart defence initiative, because they can no longer sustain that capability. But there are ways to address it.

Mr. Paul Chapin: Let me make one final point about NATO, and that is that of the 28 members, 26 of them are European. Of those European members, some are large and some are quite small. As long as they continue, as they have for a very long time now, to understand that what they have in common and what they have to protect in common is more important than anything that might divide them, NATO will survive. It's at the point where people's loyalties get pulled in other directions and they see other interests superseding their common interest that the alliance I think is beginning to fold.

There's a whole history of prophecies that NATO is about to die. It's still around and it's still striving. I fully expect it to be around for at least a generation.

The Chair: Thank you.

Time has expired for the scheduled meeting, but because we got started late due to the votes in the House, I'll entertain one supplemental question per party.

Mr. Harris, go ahead for the NDP.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thanks.

I wish we could have had more time. It's been very interesting.

My question is a bit broad. Let me preface it by saying that people are members of NATO for different reasons. The eastern Europeans, perhaps Lithuania, Slovenia, or others are there because they still feel the need for that collective security. NATO requires consensus for action. You said there were 20-plus NATO countries involved in Afghanistan, for example.

NATO still has a value in terms of building that consensus for action, and even for the strategic concept, which is broader than those narrow interests of some of them. Does it not have a value in continuing to broaden that consensus and developing that consensus even if members can't participate in actions? And wouldn't you see the fact that other nations, such as the 20 involved in Afghanistan, want to contribute to some international peace and security efforts as an argument for taking that larger group back to the United Nations as a focus for diplomatic initiatives—as you said, we're weak on that score—and trying to enhance the role of the United Nations, and get rid of some of what you called the nonsense or histrionics and whatnot and the scepticism about the UN that I see in a lot of defence people in Canada? Can that not be improved using that consensus, politics, and diplomatic efforts?

● (1305)

Mr. Paul Chapin: Mr. Harris, I think you've just described the only avenue for salvation for the UN Security Council's functions. That is that the NATO countries and the countries that are democratic and think like NATO begin to work more as a block within the UN and take the UN back, in some respects, from some of the influences that have really distorted its basic purpose and direction over the last couple of generations.

I think NATO, if it plays its cards right and remains the anchor of the international security system that it has become, can spawn good work in a lot of other areas. NATO is helping the African Union develop its peacekeeping capabilities. It can do useful things in a lot of areas. To the extent that it's prepared to work together in those fields, I think its broader function on international peace and security through the UN and through making the UN more effective is vital.

The UN's effect on international security right now is almost entirely a function of NATO. The UN can do all the easy things in peacekeeping and peace operations, but the hard things all have to be done now by NATO. So let's see if we can't figure out a way to merge those two operations and make them mutually reinforcing.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: I want to pick up on Ms. Moore's question about a continuing role in Afghanistan. You said you think the public appetite for fighting insurgents will be at an end in 2014, but you didn't think it was necessarily at an end for the purposes of continuing to train Afghans to fight insurgents. I guess others might interpret differently, but my interpretation of the parliamentary resolution is that in 2014 we're gone, and we're out of there regardless of whether the Afghans are ready to carry on their own security. What's your view on that?

Mr. Paul Chapin: I'll give George a chance to answer that as well, but I think the name of the game has always been, or should have been, maybe much sooner than we've now realized, that in due course Afghanistan has to stand on its own feet and look after its own security and deal with its own internal problems. We can help in a lot of different ways up until 2014, but at a certain point you have to say that this is as far as is reasonable for you to expect us to go in certain functions. We'll stay in other ways and do some other things.

It seems to me that the biggest problem, one of the major problems, Afghanistan has is Pakistan. I'd like to see a great deal more of our collective effort focused on helping Pakistan. It's a Commonwealth country. We used to have military training cooperation. There are Canadian soldiers who trained in Quetta. We've lost all of that, and somehow or other, for its own reasons, Pakistan has collapsed internally and it's a major sower of problems in Afghanistan.

I think we're Afghanistan-bound way beyond 2014, but what we do and how we do it will be very different from what we've done in the last 10 years.

Mr. George Petrolekas: I'd also add that we aren't here to interpret the parliamentary motion or what that means. What we were describing to you is what is going to be on the agenda at the Chicago summit. It is inconceivable for anyone to say to any of you that NATO and other allies will not ask Canada for some sort of contribution, whether it be military or financial. We were trying to flag for you that it is going to be a subject at the Chicago summit.

● (1310)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Alexander, you have the final question.

Mr. Chris Alexander: We have the strategic concept. You've given us some additional insights into it. I think a lot of food for thought stems from your describing it as aspirational in some way. It's a declaratory document. Some real work needs to be done to make sure the alliance is acting in the ways it needs to fulfill those aspirations.

Could you, in closing, give us a sense of where you think Canada falls short in being able to deliver on these aspirations? Clearly we've done some things well historically and recently. You've covered that. We've heard about that here.

Where do you think the gaps are in our capabilities, in our commitment under this strategic concept as an ally? In your strategic outlook paper you talk about certain scenarios. We hope they don't come to pass with regard to Syria, Iran, and North Korea. You mentioned that your analysis of the strategic concept had been made in a darker frame of mind.

Could you share with us some of those dark thoughts, but with regard to Canada's capabilities and the gaps we might find in seeking to fulfill our obligations under the strategic concept?

Mr. Paul Chapin: Let us both take a crack at answering that. Looking back at Canadian foreign and defence policy, because they're intimately linked, I think one of the real disappointments for me is the decline in our capacity for intellectual leadership. Over the years we've talked about Canada being a middle power, of Canada being a peacekeeper, and so on. What that really always implied was that Canada had its ear to the ground, was thinking creatively, and came up with solutions to problems that sometimes nobody else was able to do, either because they didn't have the freedom to think that way or they didn't have the temerity to articulate these kinds of things.

When Mr. Brahmi talked about our recommendation 7 and some of the things that are past their prime, the institutions, laws, and so on were all created between 1899 and 1945-1949. There's not much intellectual novelty in our thinking about international issues since that time, with the possible exception of R2P, responsibility to protect. There we're schizophrenic. Look at Libya. That was a classic example of where the responsibility to protect should have kicked in. And Syria in spades. But what did we do in Libya? We said you can intervene but no boots on the ground; you can protect civilians but only from the air and from the sea. Since when is that the way you structure soldiers to go and do good to protect civilians? Imagine police being required to operate under those kinds of parameters.

We have to do something about that sort of thing, the doctrine of pre-emption. We're still focused on how much do you have to know and when do you have to know it before you can take some action. The international law of a war, armed conflict, detainees, all that kind of stuff—instead of arguing about those things, we should put our minds to coming up with new international conventions, and if necessary institutions that reflect those conventions to give people some guidelines about how to manage security in the 21st century. For me that's the biggest downside.

Mr. George Petrolekas: I guess we're running short on time, but specifically on weaknesses from a Canadian standpoint, I think we're losing our regional expertise. I don't think that either in Foreign Affairs or the military we are tapped into the undercurrents going on in areas that should interest us, so as to understand them. We have a tremendous multi-ethnic population resource in this country with linguistic capability, which resides in parts of the Canadian Forces as well and which could give us insights into parts of the world better than what we have now. I don't think we've exploited that to a level we could.

The second area of weakness is that we're designing forces possibly based on the last war and the last decade. I think there has to be some thinking now about what these shifts mean. At the end of the day, these are the shifts that start influencing what kind of equipment you buy, what kinds of forces you have, how you man them, what the balance of those forces is between east coast and west coast and the balances between army, navy, and air force. I don't think we have yet broken out of the various silos that drive procurement, missions, thinking, and application in various regions. I think we could do a better job of that. That's a weakness I see.

● (1315)

The Chair: Thank you.

Before I adjourn this meeting, I want to ask that the members of the steering committee stick around for a very fast informal conversation with me about future scheduling issues.

Colonel Petrolekas and Mr. Chaplin, thank you for coming in and for sharing your expertise with us today. It will help us form our opinion. We're looking forward to your colleague speaking to us on Thursday.

With that, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

An hon. member: I so move.

The Chair: We're adjourned.

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