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Chair

Mr. Rick Norlock

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● (1105)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC)): This meeting will come to order. The defence committee is continuing its study of the defence of North America, but before we begin, I'd like to just recognize the presence in the public gallery of the Honourable David Price, former chair of the defence committee.

Thank you for dropping by, sir.

We have before us today two witnesses. The first of our witnesses is Mr. Colin Robertson, vice-president of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute. We also have Mr. Aurel Braun, a visiting professor from the department of government at Harvard University.

Welcome, gentlemen. As per usual, you will have a 10-minute introduction.

Before we begin, I just want to apologize to those who came here expecting a full two-hour meeting. Apparently we have some exigencies of procedural affairs in the House, and the bells may ring, so this may be, I suspect very strongly, a shortened meeting.

For that reason, we'll ask Mr. Colin Robertson to begin.

Please do your best to keep it within the 10 minutes.

Thank you.

Mr. Colin Robertson (Vice-President, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute): Thank you, Chair.

My comments today will address the strategic environment including the threat of cyber, the value of diplomacy, and the enduring value of our defence partnerships with the U.S.A. through NORAD and NATO; the strategic value of sea power and the importance to our economy; and why it is time to incorporate ballistic missile defence into the Canada First defence strategy.

I'll start with the strategic operating environment. Preserving the international order obliges constant vigilance. It means a commitment to both hard and soft power measured in money, people, and kit for our armed forces and foreign service. We live in a world of sovereign states pursuing sovereign interests. Force counts, as Mr. Putin illustrated in Georgia and now in Ukraine. Iran pursues nuclear weapons. Instability continues in the Middle East and North Africa. Maritime territorial disputes between China and its neighbours are coming to a head in the East and South China seas.

These maritime disputes in particular could do far more than merely challenge or change the ownership of rocks and shoals; they may well challenge the rules-based international order, which would in turn threaten the freedom of coastal states, including Canada.

In this environment the core priorities of the Canada First defence strategy continue to apply: first, defence of the homeland; second, continental defence through NORAD, our air and now maritime security territorial defence agreement; third, contributing to international security and stability principally through NATO and a strategic doctrine of collective defence, cooperative security, and rapid response.

The nature of warfare as a competing clash of wills has not changed. The technology has changed its character to the four elements of warfare: land, air, sea, and space. We have added a fifth domain, cyber. Cyber-defence requires much closer collaboration between the private sector and our governments. Shut down our electrical grid system, and you risk the shutdown not just of Canada but the United States.

The Canadian Council of Chief Executives' report recently noted that cross-sectoral and public-private collaboration has already thwarted or reduced the severity of numerous attacks. Information sharing is critical to ensuring the cyber-security of our economy and our country. The international environment puts a premium on diplomacy, traditionally a Canadian asset, but underutilized in recent years.

Intelligence and insight is strategic leverage in Washington, where there is an appetite for a Canadian perspective on the world. At the same time, the rest of the world is very interested in our take on the Americans because, when we are on our game, we understand them better than anyone else. For Canada, our overriding relationship will always be continental, and I would include Mexico now, but it is the United States and then the rest.

The United States is not in decline. The United States remains the most powerful nation in the world. It is a civilization of remarkable innovation and resiliency. It is also the world's biggest market, and we have preferred access to it. Like it or not, the United States bears the global burden of responsibility. Know it or not, it is expected to be the adult in the global commons. With its constant attention on crisis, it doesn't always have time for the neighbours who aren't a problem. This means that in the Canada-U.S. relationship, the onus for initiative is with us. Like a garden, the relationship needs constant tending. We should have representation in all 50 states using, for example, honorary consuls with local networks to support our trade and interests.

To underpin our diplomacy and foreign policy, we need military capability and we leverage this through our alliances, NORAD and NATO. For 65 years the NATO alliance has served Canada's collective defence commitment. NATO is the effective cop on the global beat, the go-to organization when muscle is required to manage chaos and restore order. A strategic alliance of democratic and sovereign states, these adjectives are both a strength and a shortcoming.

NATO's supreme allied commander General Philip Breedlove was in Ottawa earlier this week. I went to hear him, and he posed some hard questions.

First, are we structured correctly to provide a rapid and credible response? Second, is the alliance agile and flexible enough to react appropriately? Third, and even more tough, are our forces positioned correctly to respond?

Less than a handful of the 28 NATO members currently meet their commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence. We in Canada currently spend 1% of our GDP on defence. It's the lowest of all the major NATO allies. As we prepare for the NATO summit in September, Canada can demonstrate leadership within NATO by significantly strengthening our military capabilities.

Now I'd like to say a few words on freedom of the sea and maritime order. Our prosperity depends on maritime law and order and freedom of the seas. Negotiation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is one of the greatest triumphs of Canadian diplomacy. Canadian jurisdiction was extended to the continental shelf, effectively doubling our ocean estate.

● (1110)

With 40% of our land mass in our northern territories and 25% in the global arctic, securing international recognition for and protecting Canada'a extended continental shelf must be a national priority. With three oceans at our back and the longest coastline in the world, Prime Minister Harper has said that Canada and its economy float on salt water.

On any given day one-third of the inventory of enterprises like Canadian Tire is at sea. We also ship our major exports by sea. Take pulse, a multi-billion dollar Canadian industry. Production has increased fivefold in the last 20 years. We are the biggest exporter of pulse in the world. It's our biggest export to India and it's shipped to 150 markets.

We are the world's biggest producer of potash, providing half of the global supply. We ship it to 100 markets. We can be an energy superpower once we build east to west pipelines and LNG terminals to get our oil and gas to tidewater and thence to market. For Europe it is a strategic alternative to Russian energy.

We are opening the Arctic Ocean. Last September the *Nordic Orion* was the first container ship to pass through the Northwest Passage laden with B.C. coal for Finland.

Our ability to enforce law and guarantee safe passage depends on naval power. Navies with air support can project power over huge distances. Last week we deployed HMCS *Regina* for anti-piracy and anti-terror work in the Arabian Sea, where we've had a near permanent presence since the Gulf War, completing 30-plus deployments since 9/11. It's gone on to join NATO's mission of reassurance in the Mediterranean.

Military capability underpins our diplomacy in foreign policy. To deliver these capabilities we need a competitive industrial defence capacity. You cannot have one without the other. Holding foreign policy military capability and industrial defence capacity all together requires sustained political will and leadership and that's the role of this committee.

For Canada, industrial defence capacity is traditionally a continuation of international enterprises and homegrown niche market SMEs that fit into supply chains. The national shipbuilding procurement strategy and the Defence Analytics Institute give us a framework for building our new navy and coast guard. The key drivers of our procurement process must be getting the ships we need in a timely and cost-effective manner.

I encourage this committee to address the following questions: First, is our industrial defence strategy sufficiently long-term and systematic in approach? Second, does our industrial defence strategy include clear schedules to deliver with incentives and penalties for contractors? Third, given the long time frames for development, do we have the necessary broad political consensus to weather changes in government?

Former American Secretary of Defense Bill Perry told me that no one gets procurement right, but that he had learned two lessons: first, buy off the shelf as much as possible, and second, keep to schedules because of defence inflation. Ian Brodie, my colleague at the school of public policy at the University of Calgary suggests using defence procurement as leverage in our trade negotiations.

I'd also like to say a few words on BMD. It's time for Canada to find shelter under the umbrella of ballistic missile defence, because the threat assessment has changed.

First, North Korea has developed a rogue mobile ballistic missile capacity that's intended to target the U.S.A. But given its wonky aim, if you watch when they shoot their firecrackers on July the fourth, it could just as easily hit Canada with nuclear warheads. Second, Iran has an arsenal of ballistic missiles and is steadily working towards an intercontinental capability. Third, Pakistan with its missiles and nuclear weapons, if it were to go rogue or lose control of its arsenal, it would be a problem. We will likely see more bad actors with access to warheads, intercontinental missiles, and weapons of mass destruction. It's not just nuclear, but also chemical and biological.

BMD is a proportional and prudent response to practical tangible threats. It has been endorsed already by our 27 partners in NATO and our friends and allies in Indo-Pacific, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. We share information and early warning and risk assessment with the United States through our participation in NORAD. It seems ludicrous, but when it comes time to make the critical launch decisions, our officials literally have to leave the room.

The algorithms developed by U.S. northern command to protect the American homeland do not include Canadian cities like Edmonton or Saskatoon. Without our participation the U.S. has no political or moral obligation to defend Canada. In my view, we owe it to Canadians to remedy this situation through an early announcement of participation in BMD.

To conclude, accession to a ballistic missile defence program is the best insurance to protect Canadians. Challenges, whether new like cyber or enduring like industrial defences production, oblige close partnership between the public and private sectors.

● (1115)

We defend ourselves in the international order through institutions of collective defence and security, notably NATO and NORAD. We underpin our security and advance our values through our foreign service, with its eyes, ears and a voice in every important corner in the world, and I would argue furthermore in the United States.

We must have robust Canadian Armed Forces, regular and reserve, well equipped with kit. They represent our readiness to defend our homeland and meet our obligations to collective defence. Given trade and globalization, this requires a coast guard and a Royal Canadian Navy that is “ready, aye, ready“.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Robertson.

Professor Braun.

Prof. Aurel Braun (Visiting Professor, Department of Government, Harvard University, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the committee for inviting me.

You have a longer version of my comments that are being translated, and by the brevity of my calling—professors tend to be much more long-winded—I will try to condense them as much as possible.

My topic is North American defence, Arctic security and Russian imperial delusions. These are large interlocking topics. My purpose today is to provide context, linkages in a broad analysis, with some specifics on certain issues.

In the time permitted, the assessment cannot be comprehensive. I hope to get into more detail in the question period, but at least I want to look at some of the potential threats to Canada, and possible ways to understand, counter, or at least mitigate these.

At first blush it would seem that Canada has a very effective triple layer of protection to guarantee its interests and sovereignty. My colleague mentioned NATO. This is one layer. The second layer is NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defense Command, which creates an alliance with Washington that is meant to protect our airspace, air sovereignty, overall defence of North America. Last, we have a third layer, and that is Canada itself. We often tend to forget that Canada is a G-7 member. We have a very large economy. We have enormous potential. We can do a lot ourselves. Consequently, it would seem that there would be little reason to be alarmed about threats—and I'm not here to alarm anyone—but I think it is important to look at possibilities.

I want to start off by saying that we are not in a cold war. Despite all of the problems we are witnessing in the east, the world democracies are not facing a massive military threat from a superpower with tens of thousands of tanks and vast numbers of aircraft ready to march across Europe, or a superpower that is intent on devastating North America or North American cities in an ideologically driven war fought for the purpose of imposing some universalistic doctrine.

I'm not going to look at all of the threats; I'm only going to look at some of them. But I think we also have to understand that we cannot simply delink what is happening in the east from our concerns in North America. What is happening in Ukraine, Russian actions there, does affect Canadian security. It has implications for North American defence, for Arctic security, as well as Canadian sovereignty.

I will start on the first section by looking at Russian ambitions and how they impact us in Canada.

Since Mr. Putin returned to the presidency in 2012, but particularly in the past year, Russian claims to the Arctic have multiplied. At one level this ties in with Mr. Putin's strenuous efforts to build up Russia's military might—there are enormous increases in the defence expenditures of Russia—but it also reflects a larger Putinite view of the world as well as the Kremlin's domestic political considerations. We saw that already in 2007 the Russians made a kind of quixotic gesture. They planted a little platinum flag on the floor of the sea. It's a sort of 16th century-style claim that has no validity in international law. But there have been more concrete steps since then.

We know that Mr. Putin made a statement recently, in which he instructed his military to pay strong attention to the Arctic, and declared that “every lever for the protection of Russia's security and national interests must be ensured.” Further, the Kremlin has begun to rapidly reopen and strengthen old military bases in the Arctic, and in the fall of 2013 Mr. Putin ordered the creation of a new strategic military command in the Arctic that is to be in place by the end of 2014.

It is worth noting that the Arctic, which has a very fragile and difficult ecosystem, is generally believed to contain as much as perhaps one-quarter of the world's undiscovered energy resources. Russia has been far ahead of the members of the Arctic Council in trying to explore these resources already. A recent study by the Council on Foreign Relations in New York showed that of the nearly 60 large oil and natural gas fields discovered in the Arctic, 43 out of the 60 are in Russia, 11 are in Canada, six are in Alaska, and one is in Norway. In a sense, given the extreme dependence of Russia on energy, on energy exports, the Russian military buildup ties in with that larger policy. Mr. Putin is playing that military card in multiple ways as part of a larger policy game, but it is also part of a larger imperial delusion that Russia is undergoing.

● (1120)

Let me state unequivocally that Russia today is definitely not a superpower, with the sole exception of nuclear weapons, and it is highly unlikely that Russian will ever be a superpower. It has a GDP that, in nominal terms, is only that of Italy's and just slightly larger than Canada's. On a per capita basis, Russian GDP is that of Barbados.

Further, Russia has enormous demographic problems: a population of 143 million, ethnic issues in the Caucasus. It's plagued by a stagnant unidimensional economy. It is in desperate need of fundamental structural reform if it is to be competitive in a modern international system. It is heavily dependent on energy and weapon sales. Particularly in the case of energy, they are doing everything possible to try to extract more hydrocarbons, which are very heavily pollutant.

Mr. Putin has a choice of trying to build a modern state or trying to build a greater Russia, an imperial Russia. He seems to have opted for the latter, and that affects his world view. Within Russia itself, there is a kind of combination of what I have called in several of my scholarly writings—

The Chair: Mr. Braun, I'm going to have to ask you to end here but to continue later, with about three and one-half minutes.

We have to go to vote now. We will come back, and hopefully, we'll have sufficient time for some questioning.

Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): It's a 30-minute bell, I understand.

It might be, if there's consent, that we could—

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Do I have unanimous consent to let Mr. Braun finish so that we could start the questioning?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: There being unanimous consent, Mr. Braun, please continue, for three and a half minutes. Then we'll have to suspend and then resume questioning after the votes.

● (1125)

Prof. Aurel Braun: Thank you very much.

I just want to briefly mention the term “political magical realism” which draws on a literary term, “magical realism” where you see in Russia this bizarre combination of fantasy and reality—increasingly more fantasy—with Mr. Putin engaging in a kind of bizarre behaviour as well as very tough repression.

The internal system of Russia is one that is repressive and risible at the same time. Internationally, Mr. Putin has pushed for as much power as possible and it is a delusion because Russia can never become the Soviet Union again. It will not have that power. But this doesn't mean that Mr. Putin is delusional even though Angela Merkel said that he is out of touch with reality.

Mr. Putin's behaviour is delusional not in a pathological sense, but it is a kind of political indulgence that is fuelled both by the fact that the opposition in Russia is not particularly well-organized, but also by the feckless responses that the rest of the world has had to Russian aggression in Crimea and in Ukraine.

I think this affects our defences and our perception and our interests in three particular ways that I will go into perhaps during the question period. The three areas are international law, the UN, and nuclear proliferation. In each one of those areas, there is a reason to worry considerably.

Canada's options depend on that triple layer of defence. The first two layers seem very impressive but they are dependent not on whether the United States has a lot of capacity but whether the United States exercises power. Power needs to be mobilized. Power is not a solid. It is not abstract. It is relative and if it is not mobilized, that capacity is basically wasted.

What we have seen in the case of the current administration is an emphasis on what is soft power but in an ineffective way, not particularly combining with hard power. Power is always a combination of hard and soft power.

As *The New York Times* columnist, Frank Bruni, very perceptively stated about this administration, the United States under President Obama is “walking small”. That has implications for us because that means we have to look very strongly at the third layer. We must do more ourselves and defence deterrence doesn't come cheap. You have to make the sacrifices because we need to do concrete things. We need to get more aircraft, the way Australia did when they looked at the Chinese threat. We need to push for more submarines, more acquisition of capacity, and this would be the hardware, but also we need to use what I call software—diplomacy—things that we do normally but we need to enhance them.

Let me just conclude. There are no painless sanctions so there is no deterrence on the cheap. We need to reinforce all three layers of defence and in a way that not just Canada, but the United States has to do a lot more in terms of leadership. We have to somehow induce Mr. Putin to engage in a kind of reality check, not just in Ukraine but also in the Arctic where he has been increasingly assertive. We need to combine the hardware and the software, and demonstrate Canadian leadership.

What we have seen with Mr. Putin in the past is that he has shown himself capable of cooperation and compromise, but only when all of his other options are unequivocally removed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor.

I encourage members of the committee to come back to committee as soon as the vote is completed because it is the chair's intention the minute there is quorum to start the meeting.

Thank you.

The meeting is suspended.

● _____ (Pause) _____

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● (1215)

The Chair: We'll resume. We're at the question and answer time.

I know that Ms. Murray should be coming in the door any second now, because I just saw her coming down the hall. She'll be here in time to take the minutes.

We'll have five-minute rounds, just to offer an opportunity for as many members as possible to ask questions.

We'll start with Mr. Leung, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

We heard a lot of mention this morning about how Canada needs to have a reasonably strong military. That is part of the reason for the protection of trade links, disaster mitigation, and rapid response. All these terms are used to mean "functionally operational" in times of emergency.

There's another component that I feel is very important, which is that a lot of the innovations, tools, and products that come out of the military, out of combat, currently have civilian applications, for example, the Internet, GPS, composite materials, and safety features that are put in cars, such as ABS braking, and so on.

Perhaps you can share with us how Canada as a nation, as we move forward in the 21st century, can best adapt itself to that model of industrialization without having a bad name, as the United States does with the military industrial complex. Could I have your comments, please?

Prof. Aurel Braun: My colleague has mentioned the United States as the world's superpower. The success of the United States in terms of innovation—Silicon Valley—is not accidental. There is a connection to the military. A lot of the inventions did come out of DARPA, and they had an impact. This is not to suggest that the only way to get innovation is by having very heavy military expenditures, but there is a valuable connection.

If you have a society that emphasizes freedom of communication, a society where there's entrepreneurship, a society that is open to trade and to ideas, it is one of the best recipes for having the kind of synergy that creates advanced thinking, implementation, and ultimately, also, the capacity to produce.

I think Canada is a very advanced industrialized state. We have been really successful. Often, when I speak to people in Canada, they don't realize what a large footprint we have internationally, how respected we are, and how successful some of our companies are.

I think that in terms of collaborative efforts, in terms of allowing ideas to come in, in terms of immigration policy, we're bringing in and encouraging very bright people to come to Canada. Cooperating on defence with the United States and with our western European allies—I think it has to be that combination. We have to move simultaneously on multiple fronts.

Mr. Chungsen Leung: Mr. Robertson.

Mr. Colin Robertson: Thank you, sir.

I would just reiterate, that in the United States, as you pointed out, DARPA has made huge investments and, in a sense, is probably why we got the Internet. You yourself, I think, said you worked with the RAND. That's been a big asset in the United States establishment, which has had great civilian benefits.

In Canada, in addition to sea, land, and air, we used to have a major defence research side. George Lindsey was a great Canadian who used to be involved in this. We've probably moved away from that slightly, and we probably have more involvement now with the private sector.

We do have absolutely first-rate firms, like MDA, for example, with its Radarsat, which is really world-leading and is supported not only by the defence department but also by the Department of Industry. These are great Canadian assets that should be encouraged.

Mr. Chungsen Leung: What's the best organizational framework to foster that type of innovation? In the United States there's a very close connection between General Dynamics, Boeing, and so on with the military. In Canada what would be our best vehicle?

● (1220)

Mr. Colin Robertson: I would say supply chains or areas in which we have particular excellence, for example, communications and transportation. We have to be very good at those because of our geography and the kind of country we are. I use the MDA Radarsat example. These are part of the crown jewels of Canada. It's important to keep that side of it.

I do think the public-private partnership is very important. The American model has moved in that direction. As well we need to get involved in the supply chains, particularly with the United States—the United States and all the rest have done defence research—but also with our European and other allies.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Robertson.

Mr. Harris, for five minutes.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentations.

Mr. Robertson, I'd like to ask my first question of you. You indicated in your opening remarks that Canada had made a commitment to spend 2% of its GDP on defence. I've never heard that. I know you have a long history in the diplomatic corps and perhaps you can enlighten us as to when that happened.

If you indeed believe it's the case, are you seriously suggesting—and I think you mentioned the figure of 1.1% this morning at another event—that Canada should nearly double its defence expenditure to get up to $35 billion or $36 billion a year?

Is that your position, and when did we commit to that?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Sir, if you look at my remarks, I think what I said was that there is a NATO target for all members of NATO, and we are a member, and the NATO target is 2%. We have not come close to meeting that target for a number of years. I was looking at the NATO figures just this week and as you suggested, we're currently at 1%.

My observation would be that if we are in a situation where we are expected to do more, eventually we have to make investments ,and it's not just Canada, it's the rest of the alliance.

I also think we shouldn't be bound simply by a figure, although figures are important because they're an indication of commitment. Also important are your output and results. I would argue there, as I have with some of my European colleagues, that our contribution—for example, the CF-18s, and the *Regina* moving from the Gulf into the Mediterranean—makes good sense, but the problem is that we don't have a replacement now for the *Regina* doing work that Canada has committed to helping to do as part of our larger collective defence responsibilities.

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't mean to cut you off but I do have other questions.

I've looked in vain for the NATO statement of that target, in fact, by agreement, and I haven't found it. There are some countries, like Greece, for example, that expend more than 2% but that may be more a function of their GDP than their commitment to defence.

I want to go straight to the topic of BMD. You seem to be a public proponent of that in various places, including the Senate and again this morning. From a strategic point of view, are you seriously suggesting that Korea is not a superpower, that even Russia is not a superpower, and that it's likely the Americans would let the Koreans get to a point where there was a clear and present threat from a capable enemy that is saying they're going to do this and wait to play catch-up? Is that really serious? I find it hard to believe.

We've seen what happened when Iran was acting up with the Stuxnet move, and the suggestion of the Israelis taking out nuclear facilities when there was a clear and present threat.

Do you really think that Korea is a serious threat to North America?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Jack Harris: You do. Well, thank you.

You also said that as a country, Canada has underutilized our diplomatic resources and expertise, and I would certainly agree.

Do you believe that NATO, and Canada as a NATO partner, should take seriously the commitment to what is called, in a NATO-strategic concept, a commitment to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and that they would support the efforts stated by Obama, who is talking about getting to zero in terms of dealing with countries like Pakistan, whom the Americans support generously with military support annually without apparently extracting any methods of de-escalating? Do you think that it's time for a worldwide effort to do this get-to-zero thing on the diplomatic level using whatever economic and other levers we have?

● (1225)

Mr. Colin Robertson: Yes, sir, I strongly believe in non-proliferation, but I also think that we live not in the world as we wish it, but in the world as it is. Because we live in the world as it is, we have to prepare for the worst, and that would include things like ballistic missile defence.

Do I wish that North Korea would develop this capacity? Not at all, but they have unfortunately come fairly close and they are improving their trajectory. This is proven and that's why the Americans, under President Obama and Secretary Hagel, have now placed interceptors in Alaska and California, because the threat today is greater than it was last year, or even three years ago.

Kim Jong-il lives in his own.... We heard about magical realism and President Putin. Well, North Korea would certainly qualify under a magical realism side.

From a Canadian perspective—I'm only concerned about the security of Canadians—it would be useful for us to be part of that umbrella, as are the rest of our allies.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Robertson.

Mr. Chisu, for five minutes.

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

Thank you very much, Professor Braun and Professor Robertson, for your presentations.

In the context of the defence of the North American continent, I will go to the Arctic. Also, in a different context, Professor Braun, you mentioned about Russia not being a superpower, but in all this equation, we are eliminating China. The defence relations between China and Russia are excellent at this point, and we have seen in history a lot of axis alliances, which created a bigger problem for us in the last century.

Speaking about the Arctic, how do you see that the United States and Canada will embrace, let's say, a better cooperation in the Arctic? You can say I don't know anything about the policy of the United States regarding the Arctic, and obviously, as you mentioned, we are a little bit concerned about the buildup of Russia in that part of the world.

Prof. Aurel Braun: Thank you, Mr. Chisu.

It's an important question which is very difficult to answer. You ask about China and I don't think I have the time to go into great detail, but China does cooperate with Russia. It acts indirectly in the Arctic. It is a country that wants to ensure energy supplies. China also has a lot of funds. Russia does not have anywhere the funds that China has. I'm not entirely convinced that cooperation is that close. There's also a lot of suspicion between the two countries, but they do cooperate, definitely.

We have to understand the nature of the threat. Mr. Harris, I think you made some important points when you said, “Is there a direct blatant threat? Can we believe the United States would not act if Canada is directly threatened?”

With the greatest respect, that is not the issue. If Russia were to grab Canadian land, if it were to attack Canada blatantly, of course under the agreements that we have with the United States, the United States would have no choice but to act. But that is not what happens often in international relations.

Threats can be subtle; they can be piecemeal, and that's where we need to have, a response. This is why when I talk about the three layers of defence, we must not forget about the third layer. It's not a matter of percentages—we spend 1.1%, 1.5%, 2%. Do we spend what it takes to guarantee our sovereignty? Do we make sure that we are sufficiently secure? Can we rely on an ally that has proven to be not particularly reliable in many instances? Do we strengthen that third layer, while we continuously work diplomatically to strengthen the other layers?

Yes, we do have good cooperation with United States, but is that across the entire spectrum? We don't know in what ways we will be tested. So can we afford not to have a capacity in the Arctic to defend certain crucial interests ourselves directly, not to have the air power? Can we afford not to have the icebreakers that are necessary to ensure passage? This is what we have to ask ourselves. Do we take seriously our sovereignty? Do we take seriously the danger in the Arctic, not just over military force being used there but over exploration?

The Russians are making claims of the entire Lomonosov Ridge, and now they called a claim in to the United Nations for the Mendeleev Ridge as well. That covers much of the Arctic. The track record of Russia in exploration on land is disastrous. Can we imagine what would happen in the fragile ecology of the Arctic? That would not be a direct military threat, but we need to have that capacity in there.

This is why we need to look at Russia's attitude to international law, the misuse of international law. What happens in the case of Ukraine? The Orwellian language, the twisting, the undermining of international law.... If anyone cares about international law, we need to be concerned.

We talk about proliferation. What is the message? What is the message you get from Ukraine? Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in 1994, because they were told not just by Russia but by the United States and by Britain that they would assure the integrity of its sovereignty. Had Ukraine retained its nuclear weapons, it is highly unlikely, I would put it to you, that Russia would have risked an invasion of Crimea. What is the lesson? The lesson internationally for proliferation is if you have nuclear weapons, keep them; if you don't have them, get them.

● (1230)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Braun.

Next is Ms. Murray for five minutes.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): I'm going to ask about a different set of issues.

Mr. Robertson, you mentioned, I think, the key aspects of defence: land, sea, air, space, and cyber. In terms of defence of Canada and defence of North America, I want to ask a bit about cyber.

There has been some controversy recently that Communications Security Establishment Canada has been tracking Canadians through their IP addresses as part of creating a framework for analysis. Also, there has been some concern that there are large amounts of data that are being gathered by the government without warrant, and potentially under ministerial authorities. There's also controversy that there is not really a mechanism that's accountable to the public through Parliament for the activities of CSEC.

In our attempts to have a good balance between information privacy, so people don't feel that Big Brother is watching over their every move, and having security so the kind of intelligence gathering that we need to do for real security needs can happen, are there improvements needed in reporting and in authorization?

What are the pros and cons of allowing this system now that is so much an outlier compared with the other five eyes, in terms of no need for a warrant and broadcast authorizations and lack of clear accountability to the public?

Mr. Colin Robertson: I'll just say a word because I know that this is an area where Professor Braun has a certain expertise. I'll just say, ma'am, that the questions you raise are all questions that not just Canadians are dealing with, but also Americans and Europeans. They're being dealt with around the world, particularly in open societies.

In closed societies it's a different fashion how they deal with this. They collect....

I think these are all good questions for debate, and I think ultimately the decisions will be made by Parliament. The laws we pass to decide—because this is a new area; this is something that 10 years ago really wasn't an issue, but it has certainly come to become a major issue.

My own personal view with security and privacy is you have to find the balance. I tilt more towards privacy personally, but I think you have to ensure also that the collective security needs are met. I think that the debate we're seeing in the United States is quite reflective of that discussion that is taking place now as to how far the state should go. Certainly some of the examples you hear when you're listening to foreign leaders or you're listening to people up at summits would strike me as going too far.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Do you personally believe that we have found the right balance, or is there some work to be done to rebalance?

Mr. Colin Robertson: I think we're still in early stages. It's like after the invention of the telephone. It takes a while before you figure out what all the implications are. I do not believe we are there. I know that in the United States the Supreme Court has been looking at this issue, and courts have been looking at it, and I know that you as parliamentarians will be faced with this as well.

I don't know the answer. There has been a lot of work and research.

I'll now defer to Professor Braun who I know does look at this.

● (1235)

Prof. Aurel Braun: We know that another dimension to warfare in the 21st century is cyber-warfare, and there is increasing potency to that, with vast resources being devoted to cyber-warfare by all states, to an extent, but mainly by states like China, the United States, and Russia.

In a sense there is the problem that you have to guard against cyber-warfare. You have to be knowledgeable about cyber-warfare, but democracies also have an obligation to protect the rights of their citizens. This is what we are about. Democracies are fundamentally not about the pursuit of virtue but about the protection of rights. It's an extraordinarily important question. To the extent that we are resilient capable societies, we have a profound interest in guarding the privacy, the safety, and the rights of our citizens. But it's a constantly evolving field and it's not well understood even by experts, because it's very segmented.

I think one of the problems is that we do not have adequate conversation across disciplines. You would have experts in cyber-warfare, and you would have experts in electronics, but they don't talk to their lawyers, and they don't talk to the civil libertarians, or not enough.

This is one of the things we need to do and one of the things parliamentarians may do in terms of leadership, to bring together these various levels of expertise so instead of a segmentation, there's a kind of integration, so we find the right kind of balance for protecting domestic rights, protecting ourselves as democratic societies against potential opponents.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Braun.

We'll move to Mr. Williamson for five minutes.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): It's good to have you both here today.

My colleague opposite seemed surprised at the idea that North Korea could slip and somehow be permitted to develop nuclear weapons in a continental capability so they could strike North America, so let's turn to a real-life example elsewhere in the world.

Is it not correct that the stated policy under the current administration and previous U.S. administrations was not to permit Iran to develop a nuclear weapon?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Yes, in the United States, President Obama, like other presidents of the United States, has said the one issue that truly keeps them awake at night is nuclear proliferation. President Obama launched a couple of years ago in Philadelphia.... There's been meetings since in Seoul and Europe to try to contain the genie. This includes participation and support of those that have, including Russia.

Mr. John Williamson: How would you say that's going? There seems to be a belief now that Iran is going in that direction. They're going to be heading in that direction. The U.S. lost its mojo on this question. What are your thoughts on the direction Iran is taking?

Mr. Colin Robertson: I'm encouraged that the Geneva talks continue on, although perhaps not as fast as we'd like. I'm encouraged by some of the discussions I've held in Washington with experts on something called the Iran Project, with a lot of extremely well-informed, experienced Americans. The objective at the end of the day is to prevent Iran from acquiring the nuclear capacity to turn it into weapons. I think that's an objective of most countries, and Canada is a piece of that. You continue to work at this, but at the same time you have to prepare for the worst, which is why in response to Mr. Harris, I said that if we have access to an umbrella and there are storms coming, you want to use that umbrella.

Mr. John Williamson: That's exactly where I was going to go next. The Americans are not developing this umbrella over North America in the hopes that North Korea will develop a missile, but to prepare for the day that might just happen.

Can you provide some more comments on that please?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Yes sir, that's the case. Again, the six powers, including China...China is taking the lead. China does not want to see the North Koreans advance their capacity. I think everybody understands. Nobody wants that genie out of the bottle. I don't think the Russians do. I had discussions with Russian officials. I believe them when they say they do not want to see Iran develop a nuclear weapon capacity because the Iranian-Russian relationship hasn't always been friendly. This is a genie we all would like to put back in the bottle, but we live in the world as it is and we aim for the world we would wish.

● (1240)

Mr. John Williamson: It seems to me there are two options before us. We could revert.... We could continue with the traditional approach, the mutual assured destruction, or we could look at options, which Washington is already doing, to look at the feasibility, the possibility, and construction of missile defence. Do you agree with that? Those are really two options. Maybe there's another option.

Mr. Colin Robertson: I think there's a range of options, but I do think that given the assessment of threats, not by me but by experts who I rely upon, that in the Canadian instance today just as the other 27 members of NATO and our partners in the Pacific, Australia, Korea, Japan.... These are serious countries which have chosen to take out the insurance policy. There is now a potential threat to Canada, and I think because of that, we should avail ourselves of the invitation. The Americans aren't pushing us on this, but that invitation to accede to the insurance policy and use the umbrella should it come makes a lot of sense.

If I were living in Saskatoon or Edmonton—and I have relatives out there—I'd want that.

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you very much. I have no other questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Merci, Mr. Robertson.

Madame Michaud for *cinq minutes s'il vous plaît*.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Élaine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank the witnesses for their presentations. My first question is for Mr. Robertson.

Mr. Braun, you will have a chance to comment, if you wish.

Mr. Robertson, you spoke in your presentation about Canada's great need for military equipment and the major gaps in our current equipment. You also mentioned the need to improve the military equipment procurement process to fill those needs. In particular, you spoke at length about ships, icebreakers and frigates, for which there are currently significant delays. We are unable to meet our needs quickly.

Could these gaps in the military procurement process be considered a potential threat to Canada's security? Do you have any suggestions you can make quickly on how the current process could be improved?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Ms. Michaud, I would just like to say that the supply and procurement situation is very difficult around the world. I have spoken with a lot of experts. Everyone tells me that it is very difficult.

According to the former United States secretary of defense William Perry, the most important thing is meeting the deadline and buying things that are available to everyone.

Ms. Élaine Michaud: Are you talking about items that already exist? So it is not necessarily having the capacity to build everything here, in Canada, but rather using equipment that already exists and is already being used by many allies.

Have I understood what you just said?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Yes, madam.

Most of our purchases come from foreign manufacturers. We are part of a supply chain. It is very important for us. That is our niche. If we are buying for the future, we are going to buy from overseas.

We have an industry in Canada, in Quebec, that is very important for us because it creates jobs for Canadians. There is a balance. Fortunately, we have had an agreement with the Americans since 1941, the defence development sharing agreement between Canada and the United States of America, which has served Canadians well.

Ms. Élaine Michaud: Thank you.

[*English*]

Prof. Aurel Braun: Cooperation in procurement is a worldwide phenomenon. No country has a capacity to do everything themselves, not even the United States. They import UAVs and others. We do need to cooperate. We have companies such as Bombardier, BlackBerry, Bell that have capacity. The problem is that when we have relatively very low defence spending and very low acquisition, and we do that in Canada particularly in terms of our needs, then we have less of a say. In terms of procurement of aircraft, if you buy a very small number, it is the fact that you are lucky to get less in terms of a contract to cooperate.

● (1245)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Élaine Michaud: If I may, since you are talking about costs, I have another question about that. I would like to move on to something related in part to military spending.

You mentioned that you think it would be important for Canada to take part in the ballistic missile defence. So far, Professor Philippe Lagassé has been the only witness to appear before this committee to say that there would be no additional cost to Canada if Canada wanted to increase its participation. The other witnesses have all said that it was fairly unlikely and that, in fact, our participation would have to increase substantially.

Do you have an idea of what the cost of this participation might be for Canada?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Honestly, I have no idea.

However, I can say that I have spoken with Americans. Since they have already constructed the building, it's felt that the costs would be minimal because it's already been done. Now, we are protecting information under the NORAD agreement.

Ms. Élaine Michaud: Are the current facilities adequate? Do you expect additional investment from Canada, be it equipment, human resources or financial resources?

Mr. Colin Robertson: Frankly, we can't be absolutely certain because the threat is changing.

We have satellites and other equipment that may already be used. It depends on what happens with North Korea and other countries. If the situation changes… Three months ago, who would have known that the Russians would decide to invade Ukraine?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Robertson.

Ms. Gallant, for five minutes, please.

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

Before I go into my questions, I just do want to correct the record. The Liberals subscribe to Joseph Goebbels' mantra that if you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. It was stated that the Canadian government is following Canadians on their IP addresses. We have heard testimony from the commissioner of CSEC that warrants are required and no wrong-doing has been committed by that agency.

That being said, I have some questions for Dr. Braun. We heard repeatedly from the United States during our NATO PA meetings that with respect to BMD, there was an interest in cooperating with the Russians. Despite the fact that they have missiles directed toward their neighbours in eastern Europe, the BMD intention was to have sensors and only react from a defensive mode, unlike them, where they have their offensive mode.

Given what's happened over the course of the past several weeks in Crimea, do you think there's going to be a realignment?

Prof. Aurel Braun: Wise policy-makers always adjust to new situations. The question is whether the Obama administration is prepared to do that.

I'm sure you know that the agreement was for a much heavier and much more layered missile defence in eastern Europe. In Poland and the Czech Republic, the governments took a great deal of heat domestically to agree to that.

When President Obama came in, he changed that under this idea of a reset button...that somehow Russia could be induced to be more cooperative if the United States was more forthcoming. What the United States proposed, and what is being implemented, is far less than what was originally envisioned. I think there's good reason at the moment to try to reassure the eastern European allies that hard security guarantees, which is why they joined NATO, are meaningful, and BMD would be part of that.

Whether the American administration is prepared to do that, I just don't know. If we look at the sanctions regime they have been introducing, it is reactive, not active or proactive. It has not had the desired effect, by any means, and consequently Russia has not been deterred. I think there's a very serious issue here.

Now, the United States said that BMD or ABM was not directed against Russia, but against Iran. I'm a good deal less sanguine than my colleague here about what Iran is doing. I think these negotiations are not going to achieve what they're supposed to achieve. There's been a shift, not just a semantic shift, but a conceptual shift, and you see the big division between Israel and the United States.

Israel is saying that what was supposed to have been done in the case of Iran was that Iran was to have no capacity. But the Obama administration is now talking that they won't have a breakout capacity—well, not a short breakout capacity. It's not the same; it's a very significant difference.

The other element of Iran is that when you look at the nuclear capacity, it's not just having the actual weapon, but the delivery systems. They have been moving full speed ahead on developing very sophisticated long-range delivery systems, which can reach any part of Europe, and eventually may have a capacity to reach longer as well.

There are those multiple threats in Europe, and eventually they could come to Canada as well. We depend a great deal on American leadership. The Americans have capacity; the question is whether leading from behind is actually leadership.

● (1250)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Dr. Braun, with respect to NATO, we're told we're entering the third phase of NATO. We're told to think of energy as a tool to solve geopolitical problems, such as security of supply. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, and CETA, as well as the American version, can provide a second anchor to bind our societies.

Can you tell us, because you did refer to energy, about the different steps we might take to accomplish these?

Prof. Aurel Braun: I'm sure you and others understand that NATO was never meant to only be a military organization. It was also a political organization, and politics are to be broadly interpreted. If you look at the criteria for joining NATO, there are political criteria and expectations. Energy, especially in the case of Russia, is also politics. We've seen that demonstrated repeatedly.

Energy cooperation as a means of defence and deterrence is especially important. There have been steps taken for energy sharing for reverse energy flows. It's very difficult. For example, one step that is being taken but not sufficiently effectively is that Ukraine is to get some natural gas from Slovakia. Slovakia would have the capacity for reverse energy—

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Braun. We're well over time.

The next round of questioning will go to Mr. Harris, for five minutes.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Robertson, I blessed your remarks on Edmonton and Saskatoon. They'll find their way into a political pamphlet in the next election. I know what your comment intended. I would want to counter your comment with the remarks of the deputy minister for policy at DND, that Canada is not under any direct threat or imminent threat of any kind, so the people of Saskatoon and Edmonton should not be lying awake in their beds at night, like we did, by the way, and probably you did in 1962, when we were in fact in the middle of the Cold War and in imminent potential danger.

Professor Braun, I'm interested in your remarks on Russia and the need for icebreaker capability. We in Newfoundland and Labrador think icebreakers are a great thing, and we need them to get ferries back and forth to Labrador. They're very important to us, so I agree with you at that level. But we have been told again by a lot of Americans, Canadians, and witnesses that the Arctic is not a war zone, and it's not likely to be a war zone. It's a different layer of concern. I would agree with you that we do need to increase our capability in the Arctic of being able to operate and of being able to protect the environment, and that these are potential threats, particularly as climate change may make these things stronger.

Maybe I can go back to you, Mr. Robertson, on the issue of defence expenditures. The likelihood is that this aspiration—that's what I call it—from NATO is not going to be realized. In fact, there's not much of an appetite from any quarters in Canada to significantly increase defence spending.

Where should the priorities be for Canada in the defence of North America, being mindful of Professor Braun's concern about the sovereignty and the large perimeter we have, the need to patrol, etc.? Where should our priorities be? Could you comment on your mentioning in passing that Mexico should be part of this defence of North America, or is increasingly important to that? Could you give us some comments on that?

● (1255)

Prof. Aurel Braun: Maybe I'll just make a couple of comments, Mr. Harris.

We want to make sure that the Arctic does not become a war zone. The best way to ensure that is to remove temptation. When you have these outlandish claims made by the Russians to vast portions of the Arctic, when they are seeking to get energy without much regard for the fragile ecology, when they disregard international law in a blatant fashion, which they have, then it is really essential that we take reasonable steps that include both hardware and software, so to speak, to try to prevent that kind of emboldening of a regime in Russia, which is behaving more and more like a rogue state rather than a responsible member of the international community.

Often we don't have choices. I would much rather see money spent on education and our health care than on the military, but we also have a responsibility to our own citizens. Also, we are members of a number of alliances, so we have a responsibility to our allies, as well. We need to develop multiple capacities.

I think as an advanced industrialized state, we also occupy a leadership position in the world. We are one of the most important states internationally. We are proponents of democracy, and that is to be taken seriously and carries an obligation to do what is necessary, and sometimes it's very painful. As I mentioned earlier, there's no deterrent on the cheap.

Mr. Colin Robertson: In terms of priorities, which is the question, I think Canadians would support that, because we are people of the world. Go to Toronto where half the people were born outside the country. We've always taken great pride in what we do abroad, and part of that is through our diplomatic service, which is much, much cheaper to preserve. Military leaders themselves will tell you, far better we solve problems through diplomatic efforts, because when we turn to the military, that doesn't always solve the problem. It's also very expensive, as we know.

Regarding the question about Mexico, my belief is that Mexico has advanced significantly. It is part of the North American Free Trade Agreement; they're a partner in that. Sometimes they have had challenges in their northern border with drugs and things where we can probably be helpful. We have our frigates down there, and our submarines that are doing work in terms of drug introduction and the rest. We could probably be more helpful to Mexicans. I foresee a time when I think Mexico may well join NORAD, and that would make some sense.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Robertson.

Before we go to the next questioner, the chair has asked two previous witnesses a very similar question. It has to do with an issue that was brought up by Mr. Robertson around the angst concerning procurement.

As a nation we are about to replace a very expensive piece of equipment called the F-18. I think you are familiar with that so I won't go into it. We have a choice. We can purchase aircraft other than the current consortium that we belong to, the F-35, and we'll get some regional benefits on each of the purchased aircraft. However, we could go to the F-35 and have an opportunity to have some economic advantage by every single aircraft that is produced, I believe it's in the hundreds. One of the other advantages is the ability of interoperability because that consortium composes many of our NATO allies.

I would appreciate it if you would both get back to the committee in writing on that question because I do not want to usurp much more time from the members.

Mr. Opitz, for five minutes.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I was on this committee before and I'm glad to be sitting in again today. I knew you guys would be here and I'm sorry to have missed your presentations.

You are right, Mr. Robertson. We do have a brilliant diplomatic corps. We have very expert people who are well rounded, smart, know their files, and work hard. That whole-of-government approach is very important, but we're not sophisticated enough in this world yet that we can do without militaries at this point in time. The Canadian military, I think, has distinguished itself in its duties around the world.

I'll ask some fairly broad questions.

Our Prime Minister has been very clear with the G-7 and others about Mr. Putin. He said very clearly that Mr. Putin does not want to be our friend; he wants to be our rival. I think he has demonstrated that in many, many ways. Of course the west had hoped that integration with Russia through the economy and energy and things like that would calm the situation and that through this integration things would work out much better than they have. It appeared to be for a while, but clearly he had been signalling for a couple of years that something was about to change.

One of the key councillors in the European Union produced an article a few days ago that suggested that a couple of years ago when he called Ukraine an artificial state and suggested Crimea always belonged to Russia, that they thought he was somehow being flippant. So I hope two years on that they've realized this was no joke and that he was already testing the waters for these sorts of things.

Russia clearly has changed the equation geopolitically. It's changed the way we see threats coming out. We had hoped that was not the case, but a lot of this is Soviet playbook stuff that is not only 75 years old but I think goes back right to the Russian Revolution. They've perfected the technique of—

● (1300)

The Chair: Mr. Opitz, could you ask a question?

Mr. Ted Opitz: Right, okay, I thought you said five minutes but....

It is a rogue state and it is imperialistic.

Mr. Braun, what do you think is Canada's role? Do we have a responsibility to our allies, especially in NATO to guarantee energy stability?

The Chair: Mr. Braun, would you be so kind as to get back to the committee in writing on that question? It's well past our time for adjournment. There have been some very important questions so any of the questions that you answered that you would like to add to, please feel free to do so through the clerk. The committee would very much appreciate that.

If you would get back to us in writing on any questions that have remained unanswered, we would very much appreciate that.

This meeting is adjourned.