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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): I'd like to call our meeting to order and welcome our guests.

We have Charles Doran and Chris Sands from Johns Hopkins, and in-house we have Andrea Charron.

Thank you for coming.

Via video conference, from the Royal Military College, we have Joel Sokolsky.

Due to the limitations on time, our friends from Johns Hopkins, I believe, have to go at 9:30, so I'd like them to go first with their opening remarks. I would ask them, please, to focus their remarks on the defence of North America and aerial readiness.

We'd like to ask questions at the end, so if you could keep your remarks as brief as you can, I know it's difficult, we would appreciate it.

Mr. Doran or Mr. Sands, either one of you has the floor.

Professor Charles Doran (Professor of International Relations (Andrew W. Mellon), Johns Hopkins University, As an Individual): First of all, I would like to thank the members of this distinguished committee for once again inviting me to participate. If we keep doing this, eventually I may get it right.

What I would like to do is not read the comments that I've submitted, but rather to make three points. These three points have to do with what I think involve the changes that are taking place in the security environment in which Canada and the United States must operate.

First of all, it is apparent to me that NORAD is once again—it was always important—increasingly important as an institution that is providing the security for North America.

Twelve years ago, there was some doubt as to whether NORAD should continue to exist. And those of us who were defending it had somewhat of a challenge. I think today there is absolutely no doubt that the role that it originally had is now once again important, and that is dealing with the air-breathing threat. For example, as recently as just a couple of months ago, a Russian Bear bomber approached within 40 miles, unannounced, of the U.S. coast before the U.S. fighters were able to meet it.

I think this is also a problem as far as Canada is concerned. These are tests, probes, whatever you want to describe them as, but in fact, they're real, and the role that NORAD plays is just as real.

I would also say that its maritime dimension established in 2006 is also increasingly invaluable for the security of North America.

Second, I'd like to emphasize what I think Canadians and Americans, as I perceive this, are very sensitive about in terms of their political attitudes and their anxieties regarding their own security, and that involves terrorism. Terrorism is something that is, of course, more prominent since the advent of ISIL or ISIS, in the Middle East. It is the case that terrorism is partly a problem because of the effort that others are making abroad to create difficulties in North America.

I would just like to put it in these terms to try to convey how significant this is in the perceptions of Canadians and Americans. Suppose that, this is an impossible situation, but just suppose that Canadians for a moment thought that the United States could be described as a country that was exporting terrorism to Canada. Think about what the response would be. The same is true unfortunately in the other direction. It's very easy to neglect the significance of this.

A recent cache of information became available here based on 4,000 recent recruits to ISIS. It's a fascinating real world discussion, and what we saw was that there weren't as many candidates from Canada or the United States as from some other countries in the west. But nonetheless, there still is a potential problem, and there's also the problem, as we know so well, with imitation. I would just like to emphasize that we should not, in my estimation, underestimate this even though in some larger context this problem for security might be regarded as less important.

Finally, I'd like to try to put this into a global strategic and security context. I think there's no doubt at this point that China would like to make clear that the South China Sea and East China Sea are Chinese waters and not international waters. Half of the world's commerce and commodities by weight pass through this area. So Canada and the United States are implicitly affected. It is also the case that although these are part of the waters of the high seas, there's an effort to constrain the movement of navies, and that would make it very difficult to help provide security for countries like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. That issue is of concern.

● (0850)

Now, closer to home, what is also clear is that Russia has decided to expand the number of its stations. It's in the process of building them or establishing some 12 around the Arctic Ocean. It's pretty clear strategically what is intended here. Whether that would ever be achieved is another matter, but what is intended is that this would close off the choke points entering and exiting from the Arctic Ocean. Even though there's no very established transit yet through this area, and even though the preferred route is probably going to be along the Russian coast rather than on our side because of the way the ice flows and other factors, nonetheless this is a concern because increasingly access to the Arctic Ocean for provisioning to some 400 planned or operational installations throughout the North American region.... This is going to become a considerable concern. Inasmuch as the proximity in particular to cities like Toronto and Chicago is very immediate in any strategic kind of context, neither Canada nor the United States can afford to take this matter casually. In fact, I think it is central to the security of Canada and the United States and of its peoples.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you for your comments.

Mr. Sands.

Dr. Christopher Sands (Director, Center for Canadian Studies, Johns Hopkins University, As an Individual): Certainly. Thank you.

I first would like to echo Professor Doran's thanks to the committee for having us back.

I want to just say a couple of things, some of which you already know, but I think it's important to add to the record. There's been a lot of stir among U.S. allies following President Obama's interview with Jeffrey Goldberg in the *Atlantic Monthly,* where the president complained about free-rider allies, who weren't pulling their weight. I think it's important to clear the air.

There's certainly no one in Washington who considers Canada a free rider. In fact, Canada is a great contributor around the world to fights that the Americans take quite seriously, whether it's Afghanistan or the fight against the Islamic State. Nonetheless, as one of our other witnesses this morning, Joel Sokolsky, has said, Canada usually can manage to be an easy rider, that is to say a country that doesn't put an undue burden on American resources but is a net contributor. Getting that right I think is the most important thing to come out of your current defence review: to make sure that you have the capabilities to contribute, in a way that doesn't mean you don't rely on the United States' support in key areas, but it means that you're not putting a burden on those resources that are most in demand in the security environment in which we now fit.

There are three ways I think we can focus our efforts together. One is to increase our domain awareness in the United States, Canada, North America generally, to know better what's going on, where we're vulnerable. This includes everything from satellite surveillance, drone surveillance, and good intelligence on the ground with law enforcement as well as our traditional intelligence agencies. There's a lot that we need to do to make sure that we know where the threat lies and we're prepared to respond.

The second thing I think we need to prioritize is making sure that the resources and assets that we do have today are working well together. NORAD is an excellent example of the way in which U.S. and Canadian assets in air defence can work together, coordinated, to provide the best coverage possible. On the Navy and Coast Guard side, we need to make sure that we're as good, if not better. And I think, increasingly, as we respond to the potential not only for natural disasters, but also for—we hope not—a terrorist incident in North America itself we need to make sure that our national guard, militia, and military operations on the ground are able to better coordinate. This is something that the governments have been working on, in terms of disaster relief, in the past, but we need to make sure there's good coordination there.

I will say that what I'm talking about on the second point is really going to war with the assets we have. We do have very good military and law enforcement capabilities, but as we look forward, my third point is we need to improve procurement. This is something that both the United States and Canada can learn from each other on. The United States suffers sometimes from having so much money to invest in defence capabilities that we're not always as prudent as we could be. Systems come in very expensive, but maybe not offering the bang for the buck that we would like them to. Similarly, Canada struggled, as you know, with procurement in the past, whether it's the Sea King maritime helicopter replacement or, as we now are debating, the future of the F-35. I think getting procurement right is going to be crucial as we move forward.

That leads me to my last point. I think it's going to be very difficult for you, as a committee—and I have great sympathy for all of you in your deliberations—in trying to plan now without knowing the outcome of the next U.S. election. This is an interesting election here, as you know, and one in which national security and foreign policy have not played a particularly prominent role on either the Democratic or the Republican side. The most predictable candidate who we have may be Hillary Clinton, on the Democratic side, but we also know that it's likely that we have 15 years or so of her emails that may be compromised to Russian and Chinese intelligence, making it a very awkward situation for her, as president. For the rest of the leaders we have a very wide, varied, and in the case of Donald Trump, unpredictable, foreign policy stance. Yet the United States is embarking on, as it usually does, an important recapitalization of its military. This is going to make it very hard for Canada to plan without knowing where the U.S. is going. I think it means in the next year contingency planning has to be part of what you're thinking, and I think you won't want to finalize plans for Canada's defence fully until you know where the United States is going. I wish I could offer you a better prediction of how that's going to work out, but I think it's a very important factor. The Canadian defence review absolutely can't be rushed because you'll need that information from the United States before you're really sure where you need to go.

Thank you very much.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments and your compliments at the beginning. They're much appreciated.

I'm sensitive to your time constraints, so we're going to move into questions for you two gentlemen right away.

The first question is going to Mr. Fisher.

You have the floor for seven minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): My line of questioning is going to be on ballistic missile defence, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here.

I appreciate all the different perspectives that we are going to hear from today. I thought we were going to be hearing from four different witnesses before.

Is this something that's possible because that's the way we usually do things?

The Chair: We will have very little time for these gentlemen. They have to leave at 9:30.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Should I pass my time on to another member or go ahead with ballistic missiles and am I able to ask the other witnesses?

The Chair: It's completely up to you. It's your seven minutes. You can repeat your questions.

Mr. Darren Fisher: All right. Are you gentlemen okay if I talk about ballistic missile defence and get some of your opinions and your perspectives on that?

Prof. Charles Doran: Absolutely.

Dr. Christopher Sands: Yes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

Again, looking for some perspective and some of your opinions, how do you feel that the U.S. regards Canada's 2005 decision to not participate in BMD?

Dr. Christopher Sands: I think it was a disappointment, although consistent with where Canada has been in the past. I think the biggest problem in 2005 was the raising of expectations with the Bush administration that Canada might be making a different answer to this question, after which the United States simply proceeded as it had done expecting that Canada would not be involved.

The U.S. is operating for now as if you're not coming back into the program.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay. There is lots of current discussion and debate now as to whether we should jump in at this particular point. What are the risks, do you think, specifically to Canada but also to North America, if we don't participate?

Prof. Charles Doran: From my perspective what is crucial is what's happening to technology. How good are the systems and what evidence do we have of this? I think the evidence is that they're getting better and better, so they're more significant as a factor in security.

As far as Canada is concerned, I think there are advantages to being in earlier rather than later, and that there are advantages throughout to having information, however it's acted upon, which is available if one is a participant and it's less available if one is not.

● (0900)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay. The current BMD is nearing maturity. The defence system is about 12 years old since we chose not to enter. In your opinion what would be the implications to Canada if we were to jump in now into a fairly mature defence system? Do you have any knowledge on what that might cost us to get in?

Dr. Christopher Sands: No specific cost information, sir.

I think at this stage some of the benefits that had been talked about during the Martin government, potential industrial benefits from getting involved and helping to build the systems, those have largely passed, although there are always new technologies coming forward, as Professor Doran has said, that may give you a second opportunity at some of those benefits.

I would say what's really past are maybe some of the economic benefits for Canada, but on the security side getting involved now still allows you to be part of the system and part of the development of the next generation of that system.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I appreciate a couple of comments that Mr. Sands made. He talked about free-rider allies and easy rider. I also appreciate your comment that our defence review can't be rushed, that we need to wait until we see what the environment's going to be like in the U.S. I don't think there's any danger of us moving that quickly.

This is somewhat similar to a question I already asked, but what repercussions to Canada-U.S. relations might there be if we choose.... Short of asking your opinion on whether we should participate, do you see whether there are any potential repercussions that we might have if we chose not to participate?

Mr. Chair, I am assuming that there will be a couple of minutes left. I'd be happy to pass on a couple of minute to another member from this side once the gentlemen answer.

Prof. Charles Doran: I would simply say that, first of all, relations are close and good, as exemplified by how things work in NORAD, but it is the case that to the extent that there is more coordination and co-operation there's going to be more participation and people will be happy about that here.

If there is not an ability to move forward, or if there's not a desire to move forward on the Canadian side to participate more closely, my judgment is that things will go on about as they have here. It's a bit ironic because, after all, the security that we're talking about is joint security and the people here don't understand why Canada wouldn't want to be fully involved in all aspects of this. Probably this is because they don't understand enough the full Canadian perspective.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Do you have an opinion on this, Mr. Sands?

Dr. Christopher Sands: Only to say that I think Professor Doran is right. The United States is going to react favourably to Canada. You're a good ally. If Canada exempts itself from one program, I think it's a strange lacuna to put into the relationship. It's frustrating, but it doesn't mean that the fundamental relationship between United States and Canada breaks down.

Think about missile defence not only in terms of the defence of the continent, particularly with a more aggressive Russia, an uncertain North Korea, and China, which has increasingly good ballistic missile capabilities, but also in terms of protecting the troops on the battlefield. Canada's in a forward position against the Islamic State. There are other battlefields in which even relatively unsophisticated allies, like the Islamic State, are able to get access to missile technology, maybe not full ballistic missile, but still the ability to attack our troops. Having battlefield protection is also increasingly important. That's technology Canada could contribute, whether it was from the navy or for protection of its troops in the field, if it were willing to participate more fully in these defences.

The Chair: Thank you very much for those comments.

Mrs. Gallant, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Gentlemen, I was particularly interested in your raising the issue of terrorism and how we had to have better integration between our military and law enforcement agencies. I know in France, where they've had direct attacks from ISIL, they have found a way to find the best practices of both the military and law enforcement and merge those best practices so they are working as one when it comes to ISIL.

Here in Canada, we seem to have these silos with the defence people saying, “We go on the expeditionary. Anything at home is civilian authority, and we don't deal with that”, and vice versa.

You mentioned that we need better integration. What sorts of recommendations or on-the-round types of actions could we take in Canada to better integrate our law enforcement and militaries as they pertain to terrorism?

● (0905)

Prof. Charles Doran: Well, first of all, you're not alone in having problems with silos. We have them within departments here and between departments. Of course, that's why we created Homeland Security, to try to overcome that. Even that is not perfect. Don't underestimate the degree of problems we have of the sort you're referring to.

Yet your argument, as far as I'm concerned, is very central. What is of most concern, it seems to me, is that there be a real, on-time—whatever the term is—communication between the two governments regarding the identity of participants and what, in fact, they're doing. This requires a degree of surveillance that many of us find awkward in terms of our own societies. Internationally, it becomes even more difficult, yet that kind of information is crucial to coping with this particular problem. I know the governments are working hard at this. I know that sometimes these things are handled best informally, in terms of the context that the government people have back and forth. We should have the formal channels open and close, to the extent that we can, so there are no slip-ups. If there is a slip-up, both governments are going to pay a big political price for this, I think, because the public is so sensitized to this issue of security.

Dr. Christopher Sands: Ma'am, I am just going to add to that. I think Professor Doran is right. The French have the ability, through a centralized government, to make top-down decisions and get better coordination than either of us as federations can. That's a structural difference.

President Eisenhower once said that in battle, plans are often useless, but planning proves to be invaluable. That is really the key here. We need our military, law enforcement, and militia to do two things. One, plan together, run joint exercises, do tabletop or actual in-the-field exercises to get to know each other's capabilities and operating culture and to build personal relationships that, in the heat of a crisis, they can fall back on. I think this has worked really well for Canada and the United States on the integrated border enforcement teams in dealing with some of the law enforcement challenges. There's a lot that can be done to foster that coordination through planning.

The second issue, which Professor Doran highlighted, is the importance of getting intelligence to work together, first, knowing what the other side might have access to so that you know, if you need it, where to ask for it; then second, building the trust relationships, the secure relationships for communication in a crisis, to make sure that people get the info they need and we aren't in a situation where something bad happens and later on, after action, the press discovers we did know, we just didn't know in the right place.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Let's go to the issue of real-time communication. In the days and months immediately following 9/11—back then it was the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness—there were several tabletop exercises between Canada and U.S., but the ministers didn't even show up to the exercise. That is an issue that I hope has been remediated and, with the change in government, we will continue to work on.

Where I want to go is on the cyber side. The United States has a cyber command, and there was probably an integration with NORAD, but Canada does not have an equivalent of a cyber command. As we know, and as we have seen in Europe, what often starts as a cyber-attack on a soft target can very quickly become a hard target where military action needs to take place.

Would you see it as useful to have someone from Canada's cybercommunity at NORAD—just as now we have Critical Infrastructure people there—so there can be more seamlessness in terms of communicating at that level?

● (0910)

Prof. Charles Doran: I certainly think that would be a proper step, because the cyber-dimension is becoming so much more important. It is also highly sensitive and highly complicated, so how it is going to be handled internationally is still probably in the development stage. For Canada to have the capacity to fully participate in this would be very positive, certainly from the U.S. perspective.

Dr. Christopher Sands: Yes, I agree. I think it is an excellent suggestion.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Would the joint agency that would co-operate at this level...? Would NORAD be a potential proper agency this could work through?

Prof. Charles Doran: I am not in a position to say what NORAD ought or wouldn't do, but I would say that in a sense this is more and less than what NORAD is.

It is less, because NORAD is concerned with other matters, such as air-breathing threats, what is happening offshore, and so on. These are very broad things that may not have much to do directly with terrorism.

NORAD is also less, in the sense that these issues of terrorism are about individuals. They are about individuals inside our societies and individuals travelling to our countries.

When this is combined with the cyber-dimension, which is essentially a high-technology aspect of this, maybe the governments are going to have to look at this more carefully to see if this should be handled someplace else. I don't know.

Dr. Christopher Sands: I do think NORAD provides a place to have this conversation. Just as we don't deal with air defence only in NORAD—we both have air forces, and they operate globally—we don't want to put things in one basket, but we want those baskets to be connected.

I might add that NATO has really invested in Estonia's cybersecurity, cyber-response centre, and there may be something we can learn from the Europeans, especially the Estonians, who have been the victim of an attack and are very much on the front lines.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Garrison, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the two witnesses for appearing today.

Since it is clear that the Government of Canada has now reopened the debate on ballistic missile defence, I want to start with my questions in that area.

We have heard from previous witnesses that ballistic missile defence would respond to threats primarily from state actors, as both ballistic missiles and long-range cruise missiles are beyond the capacity of most non-state actors. I was interested in the comments Mr. Doran made in the beginning on the changed security environment, and also Mr. Sands' comments on the importance of properly assessing threats.

My question is, does Canada face credible threats when it comes to ballistic missiles?

Prof. Charles Doran: I would say that Canada is as much a target in some of these matters as is the United States. What is really important is that this is a changing situation. This is a situation where we have governments now toying with, trying to develop or operationalize, missile capability that simply was impossible a few years ago, and there is no sign that this is going to diminish.

I am thinking of two examples: what is happening in North Korea and what is happening in Iran.

Of course, accuracy and capacity to carry payloads, all those things, are important, but the trend seems to be clear. If one is going to try to deal with those threats, one has to have defence capability.

Then of course if you talk about this in the battlefield context, we are already there, and that is a real problem for soldiers on the ground.

● (0915)

Dr. Christopher Sands: I would add that I think sometimes we imagine the missile defence system as infinite ammunition, and if a missile is coming in we can just keep firing and knocking those missiles down. Even in the United States the reality is we have a limited number of bullets in the gun, if you will. We have a limited number of shots. Going back to my comment earlier, citing Professor Sokolsky's view that Canada's is, at its best, an easy rider, we don't want a situation where the United States is investing to put in missile defences to protect Americans and Canadians, and they have to make a choice. If Canada doesn't participate in the system, and because Canada isn't adding bullets to the gun, the U.S. has to make a choice between protecting Los Angeles or Vancouver from a North Korean missile.

What we need is for Canada to contribute in this way, so that it's able to hold up its own. With limited defence resources, even with the U.S. defence budget, we're not investing foolishly, but getting the best defence we can by sharing the burden a little.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you for that.

Mr. Sands, you talked about the coordinated use of assets, and you just made reference to having sometimes to prioritize. I guess, from a Canadian perspective, that's the question I'm asking.

Given the limited resources in Canada that have been devoted to defence over the last 20 years, and the clear limits that are in our present government's budget, the questions would be, how do we prioritize threats here, and where would ballistic missile threats rank on that list of priorities?

Dr. Christopher Sands: I think ballistic missiles have two functions that will matter. The first is for an out-and-out attack. We want to prevent that. It seems unlikely short of a state of war, that Russia or China, being relatively responsible states, are going to launch a missile intending to hit a Canadian city. We don't know about the sort of more unreliable governments like North Korea's, and even to some extent Iran's, and because those governments aren't entirely trustworthy, we do have to worry about what the risk is of them taking a strike.

The second issue is the threat. I think that ballistic missiles and long-range cruise missiles, as Professor Doran highlighted, have the ability to be a threat, and to put people in a vulnerable position in negotiations, etc. It hangs over a population and creates a sense of anxiety. It may be that Canada's investment in missile defence is circumscribed. It's relatively limited. The advantage you have is the systems have already been developed. There are things you can buy off the shelf now that had you done this in 2005, or earlier, you might have had to invest in R and D and develop the systems. Now you're in a position to be able to make a relatively modest investment to deter threats. I don't think it has to displace the need to recapitalize the Canadian navy or purchase fighters, but I think a modest investment here would pay good dividends.

Prof. Charles Doran: I would like to make one quick point. I would say it is important to keep in mind what's happening to technology, and how fast technology is changing, both on the offensive and on the defensive side. When you do that, the action you're taking now is an action that is only going to have an effect maybe five to 10 years out, but if you don't take it now, then you're behind in terms of what's going to happen over that period of time.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You raised an interesting topic that was followed up by Mr. Sands. I would say NORAD was established at a time when the harmony of interest and threats between Canada and the U.S. was relatively great. We talked about the changed security environment. There's also a changed political environment. Mr. Sands made reference to certain possible outcomes of the U.S. election, but there's an area that has now become increasingly important where Canadian and U.S. interests increasingly diverge, and that's the Arctic. To me there's a potential problem here in our relationship and our partnership over NORAD that comes about from the failure of the United States to recognize Canadian claims and Canadian territorial waters in the Arctic.

How can NORAD bridge that difference of interests now?

Prof. Charles Doran: I think this issue has existed for a very long time, and I am impressed with the way in which the two governments have dealt with it. They've said they have a difference of interests here, but they are going to try to provide the security that both of their peoples demand without resolving this issue.

That's called diplomacy and it's been done effectively. I think the real truth is that the United States takes very seriously Canada's sovereignty concerns, but as I mentioned, everything that's done on these issues, publicly and overtly, is going to have an impact on global politics, especially in the South China Sea, and not only there, but now in the larger Arctic, in terms of our respective interactions with Russia.

● (0920)

Dr. Christopher Sands: Let me add, sir, that the divergence of interest has been there for a while. I think it was more difficult at a time when both countries saw the potential for energy resource development in the Arctic. That's less crucial now, not only because of new supplies of oil and gas, but because the Arctic is an expensive place to operate, so it's not a priority for our energy companies.

Where we are actually sharing concern relates to the environment. Certainly, the Obama administration and the Trudeau government have taken up a great concern over climate change and the effect it has on the Arctic, among other regions, so perhaps this can bring us together in ways that may help us resolve some of these territorial claims.

I know that this issue has been around a long time. It seems to me that Canada and the United States are reasonable countries. We ought to be able to come to some accommodation here. The longer we bicker over these territorial disputes, the more we create an opening for Vladimir Putin to put us at odds with each other, and we end up making redundant and sometimes foolish expenditures on Arctic capabilities when we could be coordinating and co-operating. I think that's exactly what our rivals in the Arctic might want.

There was the story just this morning that China is planning to do shipping through the Northwest Passage in the coming year. I think that's a dramatic change that should wake both of us up to the fact that we need to resolve these disputes. Yes, they're serious disputes, but we've resolved serious border disputes, whether it's the Georges Bank or the Alaska boundary dispute going back 100 years ago. We can do this. I think we just need to make a bigger effort to get those things resolved, exactly as you say, to prepare to defend the Arctic and co-operate in that region.

The Chair: Thank you for your remarks.

In order to respect your time constraints, we have one final question for you that's going to go to Mr. Spengemann.

You have the floor for seven minutes.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you, Professor Doran and Mr. Sands.

Mr. Sands, it's good to see you again. You and I intersected briefly over a decade ago on smart regulation here in Ottawa.

I want to take you to the second paradigm that you mentioned in your introductory remarks, Professor Doran, and that's the threat of domestic terrorism. Let's go right back to that terrible day of September 11, 2001, which my colleague Ms. Gallant referred to. We still all remember where we were on that day, and it has forever changed our perceptions on peace and conflict, and indeed, on human civilization.

I wanted to hear from the two of you—and I'm hoping to follow up with Ms. Charron and Professor Sokolsky in a second round—on where you see the threat of domestic terrorism. This committee has received evidence that it ranks prominently among the threats we're currently facing, if not as the highest. I want to ask you if you agree with that. Maybe you could outline briefly for the committee some of the factors that would go into an assessment and an understanding of the level of that threat and perhaps its future evolution.

Prof. Charles Doran: Thank you very much, sir. I have had the opportunity to comment on some of these things hereto in a way that addresses exactly the same issues.

There's a paradox that underlies all of this. The paradox is that there are more deaths by far caused by the automobile worldwide than have ever been caused by terrorism and probably ever will be, but that doesn't mean that the respective publics, Canadians and Americans, are less interested in terrorism. Terrorism for them is up front and close. The problem is, they expect perfection. In other words, they want our governments to be able to stop everything—no incidents to take place—and that is virtually an impossible action.

I am just amazed at how successful the two governments have been in dealing with this issue. The problem is, it's not going to get less.... There are still going to be problems of this sort. It is becoming more complicated, in the sense that we in the United States, for example, have had this problem of imitation. It's not just a question of finding out who's doing what abroad and impacting on us. It's a problem we have internally. I think this is a problem that is shared.

The worst part is this. If in fact an incident occurred that would somehow convey to the publics that the other side was responsible, that's just the kind of event we don't want to see, so the close coordination between Canada and the United States on anti-terrorist activity is paramount. So far, I think it's been remarkably successful. I think—

● (0925)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I'm sorry to cut you off there, but going perhaps to some of the factors that would underscore the assessment that domestic terrorism is the pre-eminent threat we're facing, or at least one of the most pre-eminent, how would you consider the work that we're currently doing abroad against ISIS as a coalition?

You know that Canadian participation is very significant; we've ramped up our mission over in the Middle East. Is that a factor in terms of the domestic threat we're facing in North America? If so, how significant a factor is it?

Dr. Christopher Sands: I think it is a significant factor, sir.

I think one of the problems that we're facing now is that young people, especially young men, are always idealistic and can be swayed by the romance of a great cause, whether it was the beginning of the 20th century when anarchism or some other cause had young people involved in terrorist activity. We see the same thing now.

You mentioned that you, and certainly we remember 9/11, but 9/11 is now 16 years ago, and the reality is that there are young men who don't remember 9/11. They've seen it maybe on television, but it wasn't something that happened to them. It's their ability to see what's going on against the Islamic State now, to be touched by cyber-conveyed propaganda on the Internet that says, “Oh, this is the world beating up on good Muslims,” to get caught up in that cause and then, foolishly, but understandably decide they're going to either go overseas to express their frustration by joining the fight, or do an attack in the United States because we are pressing the fight against the Islamic State, or in Canada because you are. They turn their frustration on us. They don't remember how 9/11 changed things.

I think we have to be very concerned, and there's great room for co-operation now.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Let me zoom into something very specific, building on what you've said, and in the context of NORAD and air defence, and that would be the threat against Canada emanating from within Canada, conducted against a Canadian target. I'd like to zoom in specifically on the west coast and take you to the deployment of our current fighter assets in terms of geographic location, not in terms of the quality of the asset. Would you agree that proximity to a potential threat, or proximity to the potentially highest threat is important in our ability to interdict airborne threats against Canadian civilian targets?

Prof. Charles Doran: Can I respond to that?

I think the answer is absolutely yes. In fact, this is exactly at the heart of strategic discussions certainly between the United States and its allies, and a rising actor in Asia, and a restless actor in Eurasia.

They are trying to deny this capacity to be close up and to follow with great reliability any potential threat that would in fact provide security for us, and so I think this issue of being able to be close to the source of difficulties and problems is what is really at stake in this debate involving China, on the one hand, in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, and Russia in the Arctic—

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Sorry to cut you off. Time is limited.

I'm talking about the Canadian domestic context, locating our own domestic assets within the NORAD umbrella, where our domestic threat is greatest.

Prof. Charles Doran: Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I wanted to specifically get to the point of where on the west coast our fighter assets should be located, or where in western Canada.

I'm out of time. I'm going to follow this point up with your colleagues, but I thank you for your presence and your testimony today.

The Chair: Gentlemen, thank you so much for your appearance. Right on time, nine-thirty, so you're off to your next event. Thank you so much for appearing today.

I'd like to move on to our next guests via video conference. From the Royal Military College we have Professor Sokolsky, and in our committee here in the studio—we don't have a green room—we have Ms. Charron.

I'd like to go to you first just in case we lose our feed on the video, Mr. Sokolsky. You have the floor for 10 minutes.

Dr. Joel Sokolsky (Professor, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada, As an Individual): I thank the committee for the invitation to appear. I'm going to direct my remarks specifically to NORAD, and to ballistic missile defence and to air defence.

First of all, the defence of North America can't be separated from Canada's overall foreign and defence policy, which is largely expeditionary. That is, Canada doesn't provide for its security by so much the direct defence of Canada or North America, but through a global engagement.

In some sense, it's that global engagement that makes both Canada and the United States potential targets. This was so during the Cold War, and I think it's the same thing now. As my colleague Chris Sands said, an attack on North America is not going to come out of the blue. It's going to arise in the context of tensions that are more than likely going to originate overseas, whether in Europe against Russia, or in the Middle East against state actors or non-state actors.

It's our global engagement that makes us kind of vulnerable, and why we need to provide for the aerospace defence of North America. I think that applies, as well, to ballistic missile defence. If we are going to be engaged overseas against actors who have this capability, then providing for a limited ballistic missile defence of North America is going to be necessary. This is I think why the United States has moved to improve its systems in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 era.

The next point is that the future of NORAD really doesn't depend on whether we participate in ballistic missile defence or not. I think the Americans have made adjustments. After 2004, when we agreed that information from NORAD could go to the American ballistic missile defence units and, even in 2005, when we declined direct participation, NORAD made the adjustments. It's not the first adjustment that NORAD has made. The United States would prefer, would welcome, Canadian participation, but it isn't a deal breaker as far as NORAD is concerned. The main issue for Canada is the question of the direct defence of Canada. I think here that participation in ballistic missile defence would enhance that.

The other point in terms of North American defence is that while NORAD deals with aerospace defence, and to a limited extent maritime warning, a lot of what goes on in North American defence and security is outside the national NORAD context—the relationship between United States Northern Command, Canadian Joint Operations Command, the myriad of relationships between the two navies, between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Canadian navy, and between all the security agencies.

North American defence and security cooperation is much broader than NORAD, and in some sense NORAD is the exception, in the sense that you have an institutional arrangement unique by national command. Most of what takes place takes place outside of the NORAD formal framework, and traditionally both governments have been comfortable with that arrangement, as well as the United States.

When the United States established U.S. Northern Command—a unified command under the American unified command plan with primary responsibility for the defence of the United States, and other responsibility for its area of operation, which included Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, and Canada—there was discussion of a much larger combined joint arrangement. Canada declined that, and this again was no major problem for the United States.

In terms of the air sovereignty, the point made by the member was something that I think the committee needs to look into. Is our air sovereignty, our fighters, too far from major urban centres? That's a Canadian problem. NORAD cannot dictate where Canada deploys its fighters, but certainly it's something we may want to look into. Again, I think, NORAD can certainly help in this regard, since its air sovereignty and protection was its first mission.

● (0930)

Overall, I think as far as Canada and the United States go—and I echo the comments of my colleagues—NORAD and broader North American security and defence relations are working. They work to the benefit of both countries, and here it's not so much the United States asking Canada to participate, but in the United States welcoming Canadian participation, accommodating it. In fact, the United States and those involved in the direct defence and security of the United States actually enjoy working with Canadians, the highly professional Canadian Armed Forces and the highly professional Canadian security services. It's this relationship that really makes it work.

It's working as well in the Arctic. Notwithstanding the long-standing disagreement over the international status of the Northwest Passage, U.S. Northern Command and Canadian Joint Operations Command have engaged in numerous planning and exercises regarding security in the Arctic. Again, it's this sort of approach that has made North American security work.

As far as what priority this should be in the defence review, apart from domestic past and aid to the civil power to which we look to the Canadian Armed Forces, North American security is the one other operation that is non-discretionary for Canada. It's something we can't avoid. We can limit our participation in various overseas operations, in various UN operations, and in various aid missions overseas, but North American security, along with domestic roles, is the other activity that the Canadian Forces cannot avoid and should have a call on our assets for.

For most of the Cold War, even during the height of the Cold War, it didn't demand excessive access because the direct defence of North America really lay in the American atomic deterrent. In the post-Cold War era, in the post-9/11 era, new threats have arisen that I think raise the level of priority for North American security in its military and non-military functions.

I think it is a non-discretionary activity for Canada. Fortunately for Canada, it's also a comfortable activity in that whatever we do to provide for the security of North America has a direct bearing on our immediate national security. The assets it draws are not excessive, and this would include ballistic missile defence. We don't necessarily have to build and develop our own systems; we can contribute to the American systems and make it truly North American, have Canadians at the sites, as we already have in terms of air defence, and thereby make a contribution and bring ballistic missile defence fully under the NORAD umbrella where it should be, because it is an aerospace threat. The other threat we'll maybe have to concern ourselves with now is changes in the cruise missile threats that are coming from Russian development.

It is something that I think should be a priority for us. In particular, if Canada is to continue to engage overseas in activities against state and non-state actors that could threaten North America, then providing for the defence of North America has to go along with that activity.

I'll end it there.

● (0935)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments.

Over to our next witness, Ms. Charron. Thank you so much for your patience. I've saved the best for last.

You have the floor for ten minutes.

Dr. Andrea Charron (Deputy Director, Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, As an Individual): Thank you, honourable members, for the invitation to speak to you today.

I have divided my presentation into two main sections corresponding to what I think is working in NORAD and what requires review, specifically in three areas: the structure of NORAD, emerging threats, and the Arctic region.

I'll begin with what's working. The binational agreement that is the North American Air Defence Command is incredibly important to both countries, but especially to Canada because of NORAD's global area of operations, it's connection with USNORTHCOM, its 60-plus partnered security agencies, and the training opportunities and information and intelligence Canada receives as a function of its participation in NORAD.

The commander of NORAD is charged with defending North America and he has the power to reach into the highest levels of government on both sides of the border to complete NORAD's three missions: aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning. This ensures that threats to North America are deterred, detected, and defeated.

As a result of 9/11, the number of air defence assets on alert has increased, and NORAD now surveys air space within North America in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration and Nav CANADA to counter strategic and asymmetric threats.

The maritime warning mission has matured, as witnessed by the increased domain awareness during events like the ebola crisis. However, more information and intelligence-sharing by all of Canada's security partners via the marine security operation centres, or MSOCs, would ensure a more complete maritime picture for NORAD. There are other issues and areas that need attention as well.

First, I'll consider the structure of NORAD. Very few people understand or appreciate the mission suites, the command structure, or delicate political balance that makes NORAD the trusted brand that has developed over 59 years. The tri-command structure means that there are three military commands involved in the defence of North America—NORAD, USNORTHCOM, and CJOC—each with different mandates and focuses.

NORAD is air-dominant in personnel and focus, as is reflected in its current name. It is most concerned with defending North America against air-breathing threats. This means its maritime warning mission can be overlooked. The very large USNORTHCOM, with its 60-plus civilian agencies as well as air force, navy, and army sub-commands, is charged with defending the U.S. homeland, ensuring theatre security co-operation, and providing defence support of civil authorities, or DSCA, which deal with weathers of mass destruction and terrorism events.

Canadian Joint Operations Command, transitioning from a mainly army to a joint command, is tasked with operations at home and abroad, except for air operations at home and in support of NORAD. These fall to the 1 Canadian Air Division, Canadian NORAD regional headquarters in Winnipeg, which is decidedly air focused.

Some academics have suggested that NORAD is a middleman and that USNORTHCOM and CJOC, the force providers and supporting commands, are adequate to defend the U.S. and Canada. Others, especially those within NORAD, feel it is time for NORAD to expand, adding new missions, domains, and partners such as the marine, submarine, land, cyber environments, and future participation by Mexico beyond its USNORTHCOM connection.

One of the immediate material concerns for NORAD, however, is the modernization of the north warning system, which is vital to NORAD's ability to detect, assess, and track airborne activity emanating from the north. Another, from Canada's perspective, is the replacement of the CF18s, which are the main tool to deter and defeat airborne threats. On the non-material side, NORAD is looking to modernize its plans, policies, and command and control structures to ensure that this system of systems can handle the highest levels of operational tempo.

Second, let's consider emerging threats. The current commander of NORAD, Admiral Gortney has testified on several occasions to the growing number and changing nature of the threats facing North America such as the proliferation of cruise missile technologies and unmanned aircraft systems. Many of the threats emanate from conflicts elsewhere, which fact highlights the importance of NORAD's global area of operation and USNORTHCOM's connection to the other U.S. combatant commands.

For the U.S. and for Canada, homeland defence remains an away game, but the threats are adapting rapidly, which means that homeland defence is now of paramount importance. Budget cuts on both sides of the border have often come from operations and maintenance accounts, which, especially in Canada, tend to affect homeland operations first.

● (0940)

This is felt acutely when Canada's military is deployed overseas. What is more, while considerations are paid to replacement of big assets like planes and ships, costs associated with satellite, land, and/or other forms of communication are rarely discussed.

They are vital to command and control, especially when multiple military and civilian actors are involved across the vast distances of Canada. Communication breakdowns, unreliable technology, and obsolescence of equipment represent an Achilles heel.

Third, let's consider the Arctic. Because of USNORTHCOM's defence support of civil authorities and its department of defence's Arctic capabilities advocacy roles, the Arctic is a region of growing importance for the U.S., especially as an avenue of approach for threats.

While the likelihood of a military conflict is very low, the U.S. is beginning to pay more attention to the region, and invariably this means there will be pressure on Canada to demonstrate the same level of interest by virtue of comparisons between capabilities of the U.S.-Canada and the rest of the world.

Canada's non-participation in ballistic missile defence which, let's be clear, is designed to defend against limited long-range ballistic missile attacks from North Korea and Iran is a USNORTHCOM responsibility, and it is the elephant in the room, especially as the U.S. is on track to deploy 14 new interceptors in Alaska.

Cruise missile defence capabilities have a separate architecture that has not been without its technical issues. A test of the U.S. joint land attack cruise defence elevated netted sensor system, or JLENS, malfunctioned in October 2015, resulting in the fire control system or the balloon detaching from its moorings. The JLENS, however, is designed to defend the Washington, D.C. national capital region. I cannot tell you the state of Canada's cruise missile defence architecture, because as far as I understand, and based on unclassified information, there is very little.

Since 9/11 threats to North America within the purview of NORAD and within the public domain have been detected and deterred. That being said, the costs of such defence are enormous. While the intentions and capabilities of adversaries continue to evolve, NORAD and the North American defence architecture must also evolve to meet these new challenges.

Our military is charged with preparing for all eventualities, but it is Canadians who must set the limits and assess the costs and benefits of this binational agreement, keeping in mind what are the most likely versus the most dangerous threats to Canada and to the U.S., and recognizing that these two states may have very different assessments of those threats.

Finally, NORAD has one outcome, and that's deterrents or defeat of a threat. But what if a legal solution is required or intelligence needs to be gathered? Different outcomes require different responses and different agencies. NORAD is vital for the defence of North America, but it cannot be, nor is it, the only tool to protect Canada.

Thank you very much.

● (0945)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments.

Coincidentally, this rolled into round two of our questions, so it'll give everybody a chance.

Before we do that, please indulge us on perhaps some repetitive questions, seeing that we had to do this with the other witnesses having to leave earlier.

Ms. Romanado, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Thank you, and I'd like to thank you both for being here today, whether virtually or in person. It's unfortunate that Professor Doran had to depart, but he brought up a good point, and I want to talk a little about the surveillance question.

He mentioned that two Russian Bear bombers came within 40 miles of northern California before they could be intercepted by two fighter jets. Interestingly enough, this happened on July 4, 2015. I'm assuming that on July 4 we had a heightened level of alert because it was in fact July 4.

Earlier in the day these same two bombers from Russia flew over Alaska and were intercepted by two F-22s. My question is this. We have ground interceptors. We have satellites and so on and so forth. How could it be that two fighters were able to come with 40 miles of the U.S. coast? The reaction was to scramble jets. We knew that they had flown over Alaska. Now they flew down the western seaboard, went down to northern California, and two other jets were scrambled.

We heard from a witness that in terms of the radar satellites that are going to be deployed in 2018, we're planning on putting in three, and we had heard from a witness that we might require actually five. I'm curious. I know we've talked about ballistic missile defence, but we had planes that came within 40 miles. What is your reaction to that, and what are your recommendations in terms of our surveillance capabilities?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: It reinforces the need for greater surveillance capabilities, but I think this was interpreted as simply a symbolic flight, and the date of July 4 was specifically chosen. The assessment is that it's Russia, Mr. Putin, showing Russia is back in the game. After all, NATO has planes flying close to Russian territory, particularly in reaction to events in [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] and Ukraine, and this is the way he demonstrates the fact he can do to North America, and particularly the United States, what the United States is doing to him.

For me, it highlights the point that because Canada's contributed to augmenting the air defence of allies in the eastern frontier of NATO, we can expect this sort of reaction we got. The need is to track these to be aware of it. Obviously both countries are showing restraint, but it highlights the need for surveillance and greater capabilities.

It's more symbolic, but it's something that can't be ignored.

What the United States and Canada seek to do is let the Russians know that we know they are there, and they can be intercepted. These sorts of probings of North America are part and parcel of what Mr. Putin is doing, and he's doing it to U.S. ships that are coming close to Russian territory as well.

● (0950)

Dr. Andrea Charron: I would add that Russian bombers are allowed to be in international air space. The question is, where do you intercept them?

Do you want to create a huge diplomatic incident when you're over international airspace, or do you want to also vary when you detect and deter these Bear bombers? If you do the exact same thing every time, that falls into a pattern, and that can be exploited. You heard from General St. Amand, there are rules of engagement, and they make decisions about when and where is best to intercept them.

The fact that it was 40 miles means people will focus on that, but that's not the point to focus on. The fact is it was deterred, it was detected, and in a statement by Admiral Gortney to the Committee on Armed Services, he said this is not new.

We saw a considerable drop-off of this activity by the Russians in the 1990s and early 2000s, but this is exactly what NORAD is charged to do, and it's doing it.

The Chair: That's your time.

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Since we began our work, we have met several people who have all confirmed that there seems to be an obvious threat coming from Russia, China and North Korea.

The relevance of NORAD is increasingly clear, and that is why I am particularly interested in the command and control aspect. We know that several agencies provide information to NORAD. In the case of a real threat, since we are not involved in anti-ballistic missile defence, we do not have access to that information, and it could take a long time before it gets to us.

In your opinion, is the fact that Canada does not have access to that information an important issue?

I would also like to know, regarding command and control, if you think we can react fast enough.

Dr. Andrea Charron: With your permission, I'm going to answer in English; it will be easier for me.

[*English*]

I'm not sure it's accurate to say Canada's blind. Remember it's not just NORAD that is looking at these kinds of threats. We have access to information from the U.S. Combatant Command, and of course CJOC. The Five Eyes provides information as well.

I'm not sure in what aspect we are blind.

I think you're asking about our response, and this relates to questions that were asked about where our assets should be deployed. In Canada our fighter jets are one of our main tools to respond to these kinds of threats. The impression I'm getting is we think they're sitting on the ground like firefighters waiting for a call to come in to deploy. They're moving all the time. They're doing surveillance, and they're going around Canadian airspace. It's not as if all of our jets are on the ground waiting to deploy. We also have them forward deployed as a result of aid to NATO and other countries.

I'm not sure if that helps.

● (0955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: That information comes from the deputy commander of NORAD, Lieutenant-General St-Amand. He stated that at the Colorado Springs base, Canadians do not have access to information on ballistic missile defence because our country does not participate in the program. Lieutenant-General St-Amand provided that information to the committee.

[*English*]

Dr. Andrea Charron: Are you talking specifically vis-à-vis the ballistic missile defence information?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Yes.

Dr. Andrea Charron: Yes, because that's USNORTHCOM. That's why in the command centre the J3 positions, the operation positions, are separated. It's simply because of that, but that doesn't mean that the U.S. is going to say that there's something incoming but they're not going to say anything and they'll just laugh at us. That's not in their interests. An attack on the U.S. is an attack on Canada as well.

Yes, technically we are not looking at the screen, but we are protected. Most of Canada is protected within the ballistic defence shield that the U.S. provides. I'm not sure that having us actually looking at that screen is going to change the response that's made, especially when things have to be decided quickly, of course. The commander of NORAD is not just the U.S. commander; he is the Canadian commander as well. His task is to protect both Canada and the U.S.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: You say that the Americans are there to support us and that they will ensure our protection. However, this committee has to analyse the status of Canada's sovereignty. Some witnesses have stated that our military air capacity is sufficient to provide us with minimum protection. We have also had discussions about the ballistic missile defence program.

The important thing to my mind is to understand NORAD's real importance; we should not decrease our commitment to it, but on the contrary, maintain and increase it.

What are your thoughts on this?

[*English*]

Dr. Andrea Charron: NORAD is working. There are some who want to give NORAD more missions, more domain awareness, etc., and that may happen, but this all comes at an incredible cost. That's where we may have to make some tough decisions. As Dr. Sokolsky said, we're obligated to defend Canada and to defend North America. Anything else is after those two missions have been achieved.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move on to you, Mr. Gerretsen. You have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to both of you for being here today.

Mr. Sokolsky, I can appreciate why you wouldn't want to leave the most beautiful part of Canada to come here, but thank you for participating by video conference. I'm going to be sharing my time with the parliamentary secretary, so I'll ask you one quick question.

I got the impression from the previous witnesses that they didn't seem to demonstrate that there was much concern with the fact that Canada was not participating in the ballistic missile defence system. I'm curious as to whether you can comment on that and provide some insight.

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: That was a correct assessment, because once Canada agreed in 2004 that information from NORAD could flow into the ballistic missile defence organization, it solved the U.S. problem, and also because, as Dr. Charron has indicated, Canada is not totally blind.

You also, I think, have to put this problem that Canada and the United States have had in the context of overall American national security policy. It's not at the top of the U.S. national security agenda. On the things that bother the United States, that threaten the United States, and that make it difficult for the United States, Canada's unease over BMD is not right up there. It's not one of them.

In the tradition of Canada-U.S. relations, accommodations are made because in many other areas of our security the United States and Canada are participating. For example, the United States Southern Command asked Canada for support with counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean, and Canada provided it.

When the United States looks out over its allies, at which allies are giving it difficulty and which allies are a problem, Canada is not one of them. This BMD issue can certainly be resolved.

● (1000)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Should we be concerned, then, that we're not participating in this? In what way do you see that contributes to our ability to defend our sovereignty or autonomy?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I think it's a piece of North America that we are not fully participant in. From the standpoint of our own sovereignty and security, it would be preferable to be integrated because I don't see a reason why not to be. It's a question of attitude and altitude. For some reason we're willing to participate in the air-breathing protection, but not in protection from a weapon which, because of its trajectory, exits the atmosphere. We're willing to support a ballistic missile defence for allies in Europe, but not participate fully in our own defence.

The other thing to remember about BMD is that the North American part is the terminal part. The United States has forward-based Aegis cruisers, particularly around the Korean Peninsula, and would hope to intercept the missile early on. Again, from the American standpoint, Canada's unease over this is not something that either puts America at risk or gets in the way of the United States handling the problem.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, thank you.

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: Apart from the fact that it prefers to make the accommodation.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I just want to pick up on something that you said at the beginning. I thought it was a very interesting way of phrasing it. You said that Canada participates in defence through engagement. I didn't really get a sense as to whether or not you thought that was sufficient or whether you were kind of saying it in a way that we should be reassessing that. Can you expand on that?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: My view is that, yes, this is how Canada participates in its own defence: through engagement and co-operation, principally with like-minded western allies overseas. The point I was just trying to make is, if you're going to do that, then you can't ignore the fact that state or non-state actors reacting to Canada's participation might strike directly at Canada. Our overseas activities can't be separated from the need to provide for the security of North America.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Bezan. You have five minutes.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): I want to thank Professor Charron and Professor Sokolsky for being with us again and talking about this important issue. Both of you have expertise in the Arctic. We're hearing about the Russian build-up of their military assets in the far north. Last year we saw them, in the matter of a couple of weeks, put together military exercises that involved over 80,000 troops and also had all three elements of the Russian armed services involved.

Do you see that as a threat and a reason we should be more engaged, from a military measure, in the Arctic?

You mentioned, Professor Charron, that there are a number of other tools than NORAD and the military. Maybe you want to build upon what some of those other tools are that we need to be looking at in the defence of North America.

Dr. Andrea Charron: I, personally, don't see any advantage to Russia attacking Canada or the U.S. for the purposes of the Arctic, even as an avenue of approach. It's almost as if we have two Russias. When it comes to all things Arctic, they have participated, along with the other Arctic states, in the Arctic Council and so far have respected the UN Convention on the Law of Sea process vis-à-vis the continental shelf.

When you look at their amount of Arctic frontage, they've put all their GDPs in the Arctic basket. They've got three rivers the size of the Mississippi that go deep into Mother Russia. They want the Arctic to be a stable place where they can do business because that's where they're hoping to dig themselves out of a big deficit right now.

Yes, what they're doing in other areas is provocative. Yes, we have to keep attention on them, but just as we're in the process of refurbishing, resupplying, and improving our procurement, so, too, are they. Because of the Cold War, everybody tended to buy things at the same time, so they're all rusting out at relatively the same time. If you're prone to be a realist, of course any time you see an ally with anything military, it's an automatic security dilemma: it must be for nefarious intent. That may be the case, but there are other ways to see that as well.

● (1005)

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I'd agree with Andrea.

Also, if you look at the U.S. comments, as Dr. Charron mentioned, NORTHCOM is the major advocate for the Arctic in the U.S. unified command organization. However, looking at statements, for example, by former U.S. chief of naval operations, it's not that much of a priority as compared to the Asia-Pacific area, and now with the Euro-Atlantic area coming up as a priority.

The United States is currently chairing the Arctic Council, and I think its objectives are in fact to encourage diplomacy in the area. The Russian buildup in and of itself doesn't call for a Canadian or U. S. buildup in the region. I think in the first instance, the United States and Canada, and its NATO allies, will look to diplomacy, but maintaining surveillance in the area is important for both countries.

Dr. Andrea Charron: If I could add, I think the threats facing the Arctic, if we call them threats, are not of your typical defence sort. They are more about safety and security.

That's a whole other conversation about what we do with the Canadian Coast Guard. With the fact that they are only a safety organization, should that be changing to a security mandate as well, and do we have enough ships and icebreakers? However, that's a different conversation from NORAD and its aerial mandate.

The Chair: You have about 40 seconds for a question and an answer.

Mr. James Bezan: I'll ask a very quick question then.

The north warning system, of course, is coming to an end: RADARSAT and the constellations, and the possibility of high-altitude UAVs. How should we be investing, and what timelines should we be looking at? My basic concern is that we don't have proper coverage over the Arctic Archipelago at this point in time.

Dr. Andrea Charron: Yes. Preferably, we need it not just for ballistic missile defence. There are also the cruise missile concerns. Pollution is a big problem.

It's so expensive to operate and to put things in the Arctic. We may need a combination of space, land, and other assets. Hopefully it doesn't do just one thing. We need it to be multi-purposed. I know the U.S. and Canada are starting to look at the engineering options.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I'm going to turn the floor over to Mr. Rioux.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let's go back to Star Wars. This week I listened to a news report where the capacity of the American anti-missile system was called into question. It was somewhat similar to what you've been saying, Ms. Charron, with regard to the incident in Washington.

First, I would like to ask you if the American anti-missile shield is effective.

In addition, we know that Canada has its own radar detection system, and uses satellites. If our country agreed to take part in the anti-missile program, would we be a real player, or simply a spectator?

[*English*]

Dr. Andrea Charron: I think this is where you really need to speak to people who have access to the secret and top-secret information, because that's not necessarily in the public domain.

There are two things. First of all, ballistic missile defence is different from what you need for cruise missiles. They are low flying versus the ballistic trajectory. The JLENS system that went rogue is to deal with cruise missiles, and we're waiting to see whether they tinker it, do things to launch it. Everybody is concerned about cruise missiles because the architecture is difficult.

I would add, too, that there was the case of a drone landing at the White House. That's again because it was low flying, low speed, and our detection is for high-flying, high-speed airborne threats, so that's something that everybody is looking at.

On the ballistic missile defence, I just want to say two things. First of all, we do contribute via our Sapphire satellite, so it's not like we're doing nothing.

There is also no guarantee that even if Canada says we want to go into ballistic missile defence that it will be a NORAD mission. Right now, it's a USNORTHCOM mission. It's working really well. To then give it back to NORAD is going to require considerable thinking about how that would function. I just share that with you.

● (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux: Ms. Charron, you said earlier that the number of interceptors was kept secret. However, you mentioned that there are 14 covering Alaska. If Canada wanted to join the defence program, do you have some idea of the number of interceptors we would need?

[*English*]

Dr. Andrea Charron: On that I have no idea; for that you need engineers. I simply don't know enough about the spacing of them. The one thing that we as political scientists could speak to is we always have to keep in mind plausibility, credibility, specificity, and imminency of threat. Without access to all the information, I cannot help you except to urge that having those interceptors may or may not make us safer if we don't understand where the threats are coming from, how they're going to change, etc.

Mr. Jean Rioux: Mr. Sokolsky, you spoke about non-military activity.

[*Translation*]

What did you mean when you referred to non-military activities? Do you think that Canada should have more reservists, and get citizens more involved in the defence of the country?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I was talking about civil organizations, police forces,

[*English*]

the relations between the RCMP and American security agencies; between agencies such as, on the American side, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the border security agencies. It would also include, as is the case in counter-terrorism now, relations among financial agencies that track money laundering and movements; relations among local police. This is all part of it. As Dr. Charron noted, at NORTHCOM headquarters there are I think 60 to 80 U.S. agencies that are involved in U.S. Homeland Security as well as Defense. In the Canada-U.S. context, the linkages on security tended to be agency to agency because we don't have an overall architecture. We don't have a command on the Canadian side that exactly mirrors NORTHCOM, so this co-operation goes on all the time at a bureaucratic level. It's what characterizes Canada-U.S. relations.

For example, in the 2006 renewal of the NORAD agreement, the maritime warning mission was added to NORAD. Prior to that, you already had co-operation on maritime domain awareness between the two navies, and because of the nature of the U.S. Maritime Homeland Security structure, between the United States Coast Guard, which is an armed forces and a law enforcement agency, and the Canadian Navy and Coast Guard. So NORAD is just a part of an overall Canada-U.S. defence and security organization, and as I suggested, it's actually atypical because it's a formally institutionalized, binational command structure when other aspects of co-operation are done on an agency-to-agency basis.

● (1015)

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I'll start with Ms. Charron. You raised the question of costs and benefits of various defence investments and the necessity of prioritizing threats. Given the major capital investment Canada really requires now to replace fighters and recapitalize the navy, and possibly also the Coast Guard, where would participation in ballistic missile defence fall in terms of prioritizing threats and investments?

Dr. Andrea Charron: I would say fairly low, but then again I'm not an engineer. One of the questions I have is, even if we, for instance, put a lot of money into interceptors, they would help with the threats now, but threats evolve, so are we just spending money for the sake of spending money? For me, Canada's main security threat is always when that border closes. Many things can close that border so that's where I would...protecting Canada and protecting our border. Because we saw on September 12 that it hurt us.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much. I know my time is very limited.

Mr. Sokolsky, you said that participating in missile defence is not essential to NORAD, and then you went on to talk about the advantages of participating in ballistic missile defence. I guess I am asking you a double-ended question. Could you say a bit more about how you feel NORAD could continue to function well without Canadian participation, and secondly, what are the threats to Canada that would justify participation in ballistic missile defence?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: Since 2005, NORAD has already adjusted to Canada's position on ballistic missile defence. The information is already going to the ballistic missile defence organization, and Canada is just not involved in that aspect of ballistic missile defence that would release the interceptors. As long as the Americans are happy to co-operate on this basis, and they simply are, I think it could go on, unless there is some sort of change in the American unified command plan that would move aerospace defence somewhere else or change the nature of USNORTHCOM, but they have just gone through a review of the Goldwater-Nichols arrangements, and I don't see that happening.

As for Canada's participation—certainly it would not build interceptors of its own and deploy them—it could mean a financial contribution to the American program, or it could mean having Canadians directly involved at some of the sites in Alaska. If new sites are put up, on the U.S. east coast in particular, you could have Canadian presence there, just as you have Canadian exchange officers at various commands in the United States. You have Canadians operating at some of the U.S. air defence bases. It would not involve Canada [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

That brings us to the end of round two. We have some time left. We have some committee business to do at the end, with regard to our trip. That leaves us enough time to do three more questions. I would like to give each party representative four minutes, to be fair.

I am going to start with the Liberal side. I know one person had a question. Does the parliamentary secretary want to weigh in? Does anybody here disagree with that?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Chair, now that we are at the third round, I would agree to the parliamentary secretary.

The Chair: Nobody disagrees.

Mr. McKay, you have the floor.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): They apparently didn't appreciate the exchange yesterday.

I wanted to pick up on one of Mr. Garrison's questions in an earlier round. It had to do with where we and the United States disagree, which is with respect to the Arctic, whether the Northwest Passage is a domestic or an international waterway.

If, in fact, by some diplomatic arrangement, the United States was to agree that this was in fact a domestic waterway, would that have any significant impact on NORAD arrangements, particularly the requirement of notification of overflies and ships entering and leaving domestic waterways, things of that nature? The simple question is, if in fact that dispute was resolved, with the result that it is regarded as a domestic waterway, would that make any impact on our NORAD arrangements?

● (1020)

Dr. Andrea Charron: Probably very little, but I can't see the U. S. capitulating—nor should they, necessarily, because of the reverberations for other important international straits in the rest of the world.

Hon. John McKay: Prof. Sokolsky, what is your thought?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I would agree, because NORAD already protects Canadian sovereign airspace, whatever the status of the Northwest Passage. I would say, though, that there was the view at the time that it would be in U.S. national security interest to regard it as internal Canadian waters, thereby providing greater rationale for Canada to know what is going on there, and as internal waters, you wouldn't have the status of transit passage in the area.

As Dr. Charron pointed out, there are reverberations to other international straits. The Canadian position is not supported by other allies, but strictly speaking, from a defence standpoint, I think it would be in the U.S. interest to recognize it as internal Canadian waters.

Hon. John McKay: That's kind of what I was driving at. Sometimes decisions get made in international relations which have, maybe, not much to do with the legal merits, but have much more to do with each nation's interests. The real question here is whether it is in the United States' interest to recognize the Northwest Passage as a domestic waterway.

Dr. Andrea Charron: The question we never ask is what the effect is if it is an international strait. Does Canada change? If we're all about trade then having an international strait makes sense. Nobody disputes that it's Canadian. That's never been at stake, and the U.S. has gone out of its way not to press that issue. As Canadians, if we want to make the Arctic a viable part of Canada rather than a buffer zone or something separate and apart, what are the implications for Canada if, in fact, it is an international strait?

Right now we don't have lots of ships coming through, and if you ask shipping captains, they're not planning on coming through because it's not charted properly. We don't have the bathymetry. Because of the Beaufort Gyre, we get all of the growlers and ice that breaks off. It gets jammed back up into the Northwest Passage. We have no ports up there. The way to make money is through just-in-time dependable shipping, and making sure you have ports along the way to load and unload. That's not the scenario right now.

That may be the question we should be asking. Rather than telling the U.S., “Think this way”, we really need to think about what we want.

Hon. John McKay: I suppose I could reverse that and say, well, if in fact it is still an international waterway, there's much less incentive on the part of the Canadian government to put in the assets that are very much needed.

Dr. Andrea Charron: I would disagree. It's like Russia. Do you want the shipping to come? Maybe you want to charge some money for it. We have the international Polar Code, which will be mandatory. There are lots of international laws out there to protect these Arctic systems. Transport Canada is already looking at a highway system. That's all possible.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bezan, you have the floor for four minutes.

Mr. James Bezan: I just want to come back quickly to ballistic missile defence. It's my understanding that the Atlantic side of North America is virtually naked other than the JLENS, and that there aren't any interceptors there and not much of an early warning system, unlike what we see in the U.S., because of Alaska, because of their assets on the Pacific coast, Hawaii, and even what they have floating around out in the Pacific.

Can you speak to that to some degree?

Dr. Andrea Charron: Only to say that the JLENS is for cruise missiles, not ballistic missiles.

In our report, which Joel was a part of as well, entitled "NORAD in Perpetuity? Challenges and Opportunities for Canada", we have many pages on ballistic missile defence by James Ferguson, who's really the expert on this. He talks about the three new sites that are being proposed on the east coast; I think Maine is one of them. There are some ideas here in the report, which is available in French and English. I would encourage everybody to have a look at it.

Mr. James Bezan: Actually, if you look at the Pacific region, Canada is very well protected because of the interceptors located in Alaska and in the area down below Vancouver.

● (1025)

Dr. Andrea Charron: That ballistic missile defence is for Iran and North Korea, and it's geographically located in certain locations.

Mr. James Bezan: We'll never stop a Russian or Chinese attack.

Iran, in my understanding, is getting more and more capable in their ballistic missile defence for intercontinental watch. They may not come to the Atlantic side if they see a weakness. They have the option of coming over Europe and through the Atlantic Ocean.

Canadian participation may mean having interceptors in Atlantic Canada as a potential trade-off for our participation.

Dr. Andrea Charron: That, I can't speak to.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay.

Dr. Sokolsky, do you have any comment on that?

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: As Dr. Joseph Jockel and I suggested, if the U. S. does go forward with some sort of east coast system, this provides the opportunity for Canada to jump in and say, "Well, we're willing to participate in this system, either by putting sensors in Canada, or by helping financially and with staffing on those systems." It's a non-technological opening, but if the U.S. were to move forward with an east coast system, as former secretary Hagel has suggested, this would then provide the opportunity for Canada to step in and contribute. It really depends on what they're going to do.

Mr. James Bezan: Right. We've heard from Liberal members here a concern—and I'm starting to think an obsession—with whether or not our CF-18s are properly located in western Canada, and the suggestion that we need to move the assets into the Vancouver region rather than their current location in Cold Lake. I'm wondering whether or not having two main operating bases for our CF-18s is sustainable as we look at potentially going to a smaller fleet. Whatever the next fighter jet happens to be—talk has been of 65 F-35s, Super Hornets, or Rafales—can we still operate out of two locations, from the standpoint of being affordable? Is Bagotville the right location in the case that Cold Lake doesn't work?

Dr. Andrea Charron: The CF-18s are not just for NORAD; they're for other missions. It's not that we park all our CF-18s at one or two bases and wait for calls. They're constantly moving and can take off and land at other bases. I really can't give you an answer right now about an exact number.

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I think it's a question that you need to ask the RCAF and NORAD.

I don't know if the committee has been to Washington, but what's the assessment there? Does the United States deliberately keep aircraft close? We do. They know we keep them to the national capital area. There, of course, it's an Air National Guard role, so there are more bases, but it is a question that needs to be asked.

As Dr. Charron says, the planes can move around. On the other hand, from the American standpoint, does air sovereignty, which is now looking internally, want to keep planes on alert closer to major urban areas?

The Chair: That's the end of your time, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. Garrison, you get the last word. You have four minutes.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you. I'm going to give that to the witnesses, of course.

I was going to ask about the Arctic, but the parliamentary secretary asked my question, although from a different perspective. I think there's some concern about a more adventurist administration in the United States, perhaps creating further hostilities or differences in the Arctic. I'm going to skip over that since it's essentially been asked, and ask a question I've asked other witnesses, which I like to ask.

Given that NORAD was created at the height of the Cold War, when it was perceived that Canada and the U.S. faced similar threats and had similar interests, if we were starting from scratch, would we create something like NORAD now? In other words, would that be something we would invest in at this point?

I'll start with Dr. Charron, and if there's time, Dr. Sokolsky.

Dr. Andrea Charron: Well, I think so, for the reason that NORAD is charged with defending North America as opposed to Canada or the U.S.

With the way threats are evolving and changing, this gives us more advance warning. It gives us an intelligence multiplier. It gives us more time to think and react.

The real beauty of NORAD is that because it has a global area of operations, it's tracking things way out in North Korea, the Philippines, or west Africa with the ebola virus. It has North America in mind, not just Florida or Vancouver.

Yes, we would need something, I think, like NORAD, with the ability of one person able to access both levels of government at the highest levels.

● (1030)

Dr. Joel Sokolsky: I would agree that, in fact, if we were to redo this, we would come up with something like NORAD.

I emphasize that—and I'm sure the committee members will remember this—NORAD was not an American idea. It came from both countries. In fact, the U.S. joint chiefs of staff were a little uneasy about creating a binational command. They preferred the prior air defence co-operation. NORAD has to be seen as something that Canadians wanted as well, which Americans eventually supported.

It has worked well. I think that for the committee, the question that also needs to be asked is where NORAD and NORTHCOM sit in American strategic priorities now. In general, I think you'll get the answer, "It's working well, and we see, basically, no need to fundamentally change it."

It's not something that Americans asked Canadians to do. It's something that both countries have agreed to do.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Charron and Professor Sokolsky.

We're going to suspend now to let our local guests depart and then return in camera to discuss our trip to NORAD in two weeks.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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