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Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the defence committee.

I'd like to welcome our guests, Rear-Admiral John Newton, commander of MARLANT and Joint Task Force Atlantic, and Rear-Admiral Art McDonald, commander of MARPAC.

Thanks to both of you for joining us today on our study of Royal Canadian Navy naval readiness and the defence of North America.

You both have time for some comments this morning. I understand that Rear-Admiral John Newton will be leading off.

Sir, you have the floor.

Rear-Admiral John Newton (Commander, Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, Royal Canadian Navy, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. President and honourable members of Parliament.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the readiness of the Royal Canadian Navy.

I am honoured to serve the 3,000 sailors of the Canadian Atlantic fleet and several thousand defence workers who ensure that our warships are combat ready. My primary task is to help them generate the readiness of the Atlantic fleet and plan and execute the fleet schedule. I'm privileged to be able to work with inspired Canadians every day who are focused on excelling. They are living a chapter in the history of our storied navy, which has played an indispensable role in the defence of Canada. They know from reading their ship schedules that Canada's national interests will soon lead them to exciting global destinations.

Thus, it is very pleasing for me to see in photographs recently the sailors of HMCS *Charlottetown* at the pyramids. Importantly, I know that behind the scenes this visit enabled Global Affairs Canada's mission in Egypt. Similarly, I recently saw pictures of sailors from HMCS *Vancouver* in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and I know again that, behind the scenes, visiting Vietnam highlighted that Canada seeks mutually beneficial relations in a strategic maritime region.

When *Windsor*, our submarine, recently returned from patrol, a fixture on the bow of the submarine was painted blue. In the traditions of our service, blue denotes that the submarine had been sailing north of the Arctic Circle, providing reassuring support along NATO's northern flank.

Next week, sailors of the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian ambassadors, will be visiting cities like Cartagena and Veracruz, because today they're in Cuba and they will continue that regional engagement.

This is indeed exciting service for young Canadians seeking to make a difference. It all speaks to a navy that has created and is sustaining a high level of readiness.

I'm always amazed at how naval readiness is facilitated by motivated sailors who actively join in making their ship the best in the fleet. One of my most enjoyable duties is to preside over honours and awards ceremonies. Hearing the citations, I am reassured that Canadian sailors have a strong sense of ownership in achieving excellence at sea. Aboard ships and in schoolhouses, I witness how they work to transfer to the next generation their experiences from operations.

The older generation has served in tough campaigns: the vanguard of the government response to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, wars in the former Yugoslavia and in Libya, and in the uncertainty following 9/11. They've also gone to the Arctic, and they're delivering humanitarian aid around the world.

A navy at sea, forward with allies, is a powerful option for government, and in turn builds readiness. Just this week, HMCS *Vancouver* went from patrol in the western Pacific to disaster relief duties in the hours following the earthquakes in New Zealand. I had every confidence that *Vancouver* was prepared for this kind of work. I was confident in *Windsor*, our submarine, when it was called to patrol off Norway's northern coast by the NATO maritime commander, following the submarine's work in Dynamic Mongoose, a major exercise of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Canadians should be proud that there are few navies that can claim to be so globally deployable and versatile as the Royal Canadian Navy. Yes, we have challenges, and it was sad to bid farewell to our fleet replenishment ship very recently. *Preserver* and her sister ship *Protecteur* literally led our navy to global operational success for 46 years. The Queenston class cannot come soon enough.

I'm also very proud of the crew of HMCS *Athabaskan*. They played a key role in sustaining operational output of the fleet during the Halifax class modernization.

Regrettably, the retirement of the Iroquois class destroyer has left the task group without a powerful air defence umbrella. Thus, I take to heart that the Canadian surface combatant request for proposals is in the hands of industry.

As part of the strategy thrust called “evolving the business of the business”, MARLANT has other roles to contribute to readiness. To encourage effectiveness and efficiency and facilitate optimal staff output from our personnel, each senior commander of our navy has been given functional authority in one of the three principal pillars of naval readiness. By way of background, the pillars are the material readiness of our ships, the readiness of individual sailors, and the operational readiness of our forces.

● (1105)

Specifically, my command has been assigned responsibilities in the operational readiness pillar. Thus, I exert pan-navy leadership over the policies that lay out exactly how each ship and capability will be developed to its ordered state of readiness.

We devise the activity cycle of a typical warship, including the periods given to heavy maintenance, upgrades, crew building, training, trials, and finally, operations. This is a complex blending of *matériel* and personnel resources, fiscal capacity, time, commitments to missions, assignment to national task groups, reserves for arisings, and inevitable rest and recovery following operations.

This functional task also includes the periodic review of each warfare competency in order to guard against skill fade. We have already reviewed mine warfare, anti-submarine warfare, and above-water warfare. Exercise CUTLASS FURY was conceived to enhance anti-submarine warfare expertise, not just in our navy but with our allies. Strong international participation highlighted the degree to which your navy has the confidence of our closest allies to address this very perishable skill set across our alliance and partnerships.

X-Ship is an expression of innovation in your navy. X-Ship, or HMCS *Montréal*, is exploring new manning concepts and procedures as well as new technologies, which are all key aspects of naval readiness.

The second task assigned to my pan-navy leadership is what's called “collective training”. While individual training develops a competent sailor, collective training builds sailors into effective fighting forces. Collective training has both a training and a validation function. Validation assures the commander of the navy that the standards are established for safe and effective operations. It is our key risk management tool.

HMCS *St John's*, operating with international ships, submarines, and aircraft, today is being validated to this very high standard. This is the last step in the preparations of *St John's* to relieve HMCS *Charlottetown* on the NATO reassurance mission, and doing this step is very important to the readiness equation.

MARLANT has also been assigned the task of being the national maritime component commander. In this role, I provide naval advice to Canada's senior operational commander for all Canadian warships on operations. The maritime component commander communicates with ships and alliance commanders to help formulate the employment of the asset, including operational tasks, port visits, rules of engagement, repairs, and sustainment.

Presently the maritime component commander has five ships on his radar. *Charlottetown* is operating in the Mediterranean at high readiness, assigned to the NATO standing maritime group 2. *Vancouver* has just finished the relief operations in the earthquake scenario in New Zealand and has started the long Pacific voyage home, supporting Global Affairs Canada along the route. Last week I was pleased to see *Brandon*, one of our patrol ships in the Mediterranean, getting credit for a very difficult drug bust off Guatemala.

The maritime component commander thus monitors and sustains readiness during the course of a deployment, readiness being a dynamic condition that fluctuates with changes in the crew and the status of machinery and systems.

The maritime component commander has another important task. Surveillance of the undersea domain is a complex, sustained, highly classified, multinational effort. Ships, helicopters, patrol aviation, and submarines all contribute to undersea surveillance. Our ability to respond to a threat depends on relationships, shared intelligence, a common picture, interoperability, and common tactics. Readiness flows accordingly.

This concludes my short introduction to naval readiness. I look forward to answering your questions.

● (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Admiral Newton.

Admiral McDonald, you have the floor.

Rear-Admiral Art McDonald (Commander, Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific, Royal Canadian Navy, Department of National Defence):

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to discuss fleet readiness. It's an honour to be appearing before you this morning, just as it is my incredible honour to lead and serve the men and women—regular force, reservist, and civilian members—of Canada's Pacific maritime force: my shipmates.

If I may be so bold, your inquiry into what the commander RCN calls the core currency of the RCN could not be better timed given what recent Vimy Award winner Dr. James Boutilier so brilliantly articulated:

> ...we are in the midst of a new oceanic era. Not since the great age of exploration in the 16th century have oceans played such an important role in global affairs. Unprecedented levels of commerce move across the world’s oceans, great power politics are being played out at sea, and oceans are central to the health of the global organism in an age of dramatic climate change. Moreover, we are in the process, for the first time in human history, of acquiring a new Ocean—the Arctic.

Indeed, as the 52nd admiral to command Pacific naval forces from Victoria, I remain as seized with this measure of our mettle as any of my predecessors.

While today's RCN is a navy characterized as much by progress as it once was by tradition, despite significant and enduring transformation, we remain steadfastly committed to affording maximum optionality to government: what we call naval readiness. How? By being a rapidly deployable, combat-capable "force of first resort" capable of producing technology-enabled, people-delivered naval outcomes from the sea, in home waters with other government departments, and on far-distant shores in the world with friends and allies.

[*Translation*]

In consideration of our current readiness, this week's front pages and the Twitterverse are replete with demonstrations of the strength of our naval currency.

[*English*]

As you will be aware, HMCS *Vancouver* has just completed a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission with allies on New Zealand's south island. What's not appreciated, however, is that *Vancouver* re-rolled within hours of the New Zealand request for assistance by transitioning rapidly from a force generation mission—that is to say, a preparing mission while deployed overseas, what we call a "generate forward" deployment—to a force employment, a "doing" mission. This is representative of the readiness of our ships at sea.

In *Vancouver's* case, this readiness was developed and sustained through an in-year sailing tempo of around 270 days away from home port, operating first in the eastern Pacific off the south and central American coasts, and then, following Exercise Rim of the Pacific exercises in the central Pacific, now in Southeast Asian and Oceania neighbourhoods, where she has visited and exercised with Vietnam, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand. She has crossed the equator eight times in a year.

[*Translation*]

Having visited HMCS *Vancouver* only days before her disaster relief mission, I can assure you that she is a capable ship with an engaged, enthusiastic ship's company, adeptly led by a solid, experienced command team. Her success in New Zealand is presupposed.

[*English*]

Meanwhile, Her Majesty's Canadian ships *Edmonton*, *Kingston*, and *Brandon* are one month into a two-month regional security capability, capacity-building, and counter-narcotics deployment off the central American coast while participating in Operation CARIBBE. Here the ships have proven RCN readiness once again, with *Brandon*, operating in concert with the U.S. coast guard, seizing 1.3 tonnes of cocaine with a street value of $500 million in international waters off the Pacific coast of Central America. This has contributed to the haul of more than 5,000 kilograms of illegal drugs seized by the RCN already this year alone.

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

Beyond this past week's headlines, this has been a typically busy year for the Pacific fleet.

[*English*]

It includes the conclusion of HMCS *Winnipeg's* 250-day Operation Reassurance deployment, Canada's support to NATO assurance measures in eastern Europe; and four-ship participation and key leadership positions in Exercise Rim of the Pacific, or RIMPAC, the world's largest international maritime exercise.

Moreover, work is now ongoing in Esquimalt to prepare ships and crews for the coming year's program, which will include the dispatch of a two-frigate "generate forward" six-month Indo-Asia Pacific presence mission, as well as seeing HMCS *Chicoutimi* relieving the 200-days-at-sea HMCS *Windsor* as the workhorse of the Canadian submarine force. Here I can only say that I anticipate *Chicoutimi* will have a *Windsor*-like sea-day count and program next year.

Closer to home, meanwhile, the navy, in concert with our colleagues from other government departments, systematically surveils our coast and tracks about 2,000 ships daily via a system of systems coordinated through our maritime security operations centre, a navy-hosted, multi-department enterprise that ensures our waters are being used lawfully or initiates federal fleet response when they aren't.

Having considered the current outputs of naval readiness, I would suggest that additional functional elements of naval readiness also warrant consideration. To do so, one need consider that whereas Rear-Admiral Newton has specific pan-navy responsibilities for readiness and force employment, I have, as assistant chief of naval staff personnel and training, specific responsibilities for individual training, personnel policy, and the naval reserve. Given these functional responsibilities, it's not only the tangible or current readiness outputs I've described that have the attention of my team but also the sustainability and efficacy of our future readiness.

Considering our force is approximately 14,000 regular and reserve force, and has approximately 10% undergoing individual training packages on any given day, clearly the efficacy and effectiveness of our individual training system is key to our readiness capacity. This is the responsibility of my naval training system.

[*Translation*]

The naval training system was recently reviewed and is currently undergoing its largest revitalization in more than 25 years. That revitalization will lead to significant changes in scope and structure to meet both future navy requirements and the expectations of a new generation of sailors.

[*English*]

The future naval training system strategy recognizes that the expectations of learning today are vastly different from what they were 20 years ago and that the tools available to conduct learning are increasingly a mixture of residential and virtual. Using the best practices of civilian training education institutions and industry partners, the future training strategy provides a plan to modernize, retrofit, and sustain the naval training system. It advocates the increased use of technology-enabled learning to reduce the time it takes to achieve competency. It calls for the alignment of regular and reserve force training and it implements a refreshed training delivery strategy that leverages the Defence Learning Network and self-paced learning to deliver training at the point of need.

These activities will allow technical and operational training to be completed in less time via a more interactive and immersive approach, negate the need for extended time away from home to learn, and reduce the long apprenticeships at sea that otherwise bleed resources away from the overall mission. The results are training times already seeing reductions by as much as 30%, enabling us to get sailors readied and employed faster, with a commensurate boost in enthusiasm and morale.

Additionally, I need note that the navy's commitment to ensuring sailors serve as ambassadors is being reinforced with the development and delivery of a “leadership, respect, and honour” program, an initiative that responds to the concerns expressed in the Deschamps report, that carries out the orders of the chief of the defence staff for Operation Honour, that ensures all sailors understand and model the behaviours expected of them by the new RCN code of conduct, and that reinforces the values and advantages of the naval divisional system. Addressing these aspects of deportment and behaviour addresses what are known to be significant impediments to readiness while boosting unit morale and lending credibility to the Canadian and Canadian Armed Forces brands. Effective training is a key enabler of operational readiness. It's indeed a force multiplier.

Moving finally to the consideration of our naval reserves, I need note that naval readiness, like that of our sister services, is well bolstered and made more sustainable through effective integration of strategic reserve augmentation. Conversely, as the past two decades of RCN employment of a permanent full-time reserve in a dedicated class with a dedicated mission has revealed, such an arrangement is simply unsustainable. For these reasons, the RCN has now embraced the “one navy” concept, by which no standing missions are uniquely allocated to the naval reserve, and nor are naval reserves employed uniquely in a single class. Instead, embracing the concept of augmentation, citizen sailors are being employed across the fleet, in all classes, with a target of 5% of the crew, which is approximately 10 sailors in a frigate, exactly the number of naval reservists in *Vancouver* conducting operations in New Zealand last week.

● (1120)

Moreover, our naval reserves are now energized with a new, non-standing force protection and maritime capacity-building capability that is well suited to the strategic reserve construct.

Ladies and gentlemen, having considered the functional elements of my mandate as they relate to the generation of readiness, I'm reminded that our people are, as they've always been, our centre of gravity. For this reason the admiralty has seized upon a common philosophy of “people first, mission always”, which challenges us to do more than ever to champion, celebrate, and enable our sailors as a means of attracting, empowering, and retaining them.

In this context, I'm particularly proud that the west coast has always been at the forefront of the social and institutional issues that matter to Canadians—from listening to and working with our first nations, to celebrating the first same-sex kiss on a deployer's return to port, to tackling conduct issues head-on, and to dealing with substance dependencies with both the firm hand and compassion appropriate to what I consider to be one of the nation's best employers.

In conclusion, readiness, as both an outcome and a process, remains as important and complex as ever. It has the complete attention of the admiralty as well as our potential adversaries and our friends and allies. In a new oceanic age, our readiness may never have been more important. Certainly it will be critical to our success in the large Indo-Asia Pacific estate where presence is the price of relevance.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to make remarks. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you both for your opening remarks.

We'll move to formal questioning.

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

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Admiral Newton and Admiral McDonald, thank you very much for being here, for your service to our nation, and for your testimony. Through you, also, my thanks to the 14,000 women and men who serve proudly in the uniform of the Royal Canadian Navy each and every day.

I want to pick up on the concept you described of the new oceanic era, and ask a question about which this committee so far, in its study, has not heard a whole lot, if anything. That's the work on economic sanctions, enforcing economic sanctions against a UN member state, most likely in a coalition context, whether it's economic sanctions, military embargoes, or quarantines. What's that work all about? What do the women and men who serve do on a mission that is engaged in enforcing economic sanctions? What kind of equipment and what kinds of vessels do they use? Also, how do you see the environment changing or having changed, let's say, over the last decade with respect to this kind of work perhaps being more prominent now, and in the future maybe becoming even more prominent?

I'd like to hear from both of you, if that's possible.

RAdm John Newton: Thank you, sir, for a great question.

In my career I've certainly had the reward but the great challenge of participating in an economic embargo of a state that was at war. The war in the former Yugoslavia implicated NATO in a maritime interdiction operation, in an embargo of munitions and fuels that were literally fuelling a war. NATO's role in Operation Sharp Guard was led by Admiral Greg Maddison, who went on to be commander of the Royal Canadian Navy. That operation became one of the hallmarks of our navy's versatility and utility on the international scene. That embargo, that sanctioning of a state, was very effective in reducing the nature of the conflict. It was a key contributor that eventually led to the peaceful resolution.

Maritime interdiction operations are all about sanctioning a country in one way or another. It demands a picture of the oceanic area. It demands a knowledge of the pattern of life in that region: where vessels are trading; what kinds of legitimate industries, like fisheries or small ship trade, are going on; what the military presence is of the belligerent nations. It demands a very strong sense of resolve by the participating nations, because they are now impacting, very seriously, the ability of the belligerents to wage the war that they're involved in. You go into such an operation with your gun shields up and your readiness to defend your ship. You are tested every day because of the nature of bringing a peaceful resolution or attempting to bring to bear a kind of peaceful resolution to a conflict scenario.

It is dangerous. In my career, having deployed to the Gulf and to Haiti, I mark the maritime interdiction embargoing-type operation as one of the most dangerous I've ever participated in.

I'll stop with that and let my colleague give you a piece of the answer.

● (1125)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's great. Thank you, Admiral.

Can one or both of you comment a bit on the classes of vessels that are involved in this kind of work and whether we are ready to take on a potentially greater role in this effort?

RAdm Art McDonald: Admiral Newton, if you're happy, I'll just pick up on the second part of the question as I go on.

Thank you for the opportunity to add on to the framework that Admiral Newton has already established. Casting economic sanctions in terms of what we would call, at sea, maritime interdiction—economic sanctions are just one of the potential political outcomes that could come out of maritime interdiction—Admiral Newton has reviewed that Canada, particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, has been significantly engaged in maritime interdiction operations, some of them economic sanctions, some of them humanitarian.

I myself was involved in humanitarian operations, as part of a UN mandate, against Iraq in the days of Saddam Hussein's power. Thereafter, less than a decade on, I was engaged in maritime interdiction operations again, leadership interdiction operations against the Taliban as we were conducting our operations in Afghanistan.

Maritime interdiction is a routine mission profile for the Canadian navy and for our allies. We are well equipped for this kind of mission, because we have warships with broad, multi-purpose combat capability, allowing us to engage in a full spectrum of operations. Sanctions operations are full-spectrum operations. You need to be able to go and interact at a very low level with mariners, conduct boarding operations, in which Canada is one of the leading capable nations in the world, and ensure that you have full awareness of what is being passed on the sea and how. As Admiral Newton highlighted, that will not always be well received by nations that are under sanctions, so you need to be well prepared to defend yourself in what could be a rapidly escalating circumstance. Therefore, the Canadian navy, like our allies, has always insisted that we place very capable but multi-purpose ships when in harm's way conducting these kinds of important operations.

I should add as well, if I can, that working with allies is very important in this regard, not only to maintain and build the pattern of life in potential areas of operations. Sanctions are rarely something that a single country does alone, so developing a multinational capability is critical, and something that Canada obviously is always invested in.

Thank you.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much, Admiral.

In the remaining minute, let me broach a subject that I think many of us are interested in and hopefully some of my colleagues will pick up on. That's the issue of our submarine program. This committee received testimony to the effect that if we want to defend effectively against submarines, we need submarines. We look to Australia as a nation that's smaller than ours, has a smaller coastline, and is now aggressively pursuing an expanded submarine program.

Very briefly, can you just give us some opening thoughts on this issue?

RAdm John Newton: Perhaps I can start.

Submarines are an incredible force-multiplying capability in any navy, for any country. One submarine equals 30 submarines as far as the adversary is concerned. The inability to detect the presence of a submarine in your oceanic areas of interest, and the amount of resources that must be diverted to tend to that submarine...because the weapons system is so lethal when it comes from a submarine.

In this regard, Canada has one of the most modern submarines in the world, at the top tier of submarining in the global naval powers. Some of the most inspired and experienced crew is with a bow sonar system upgrade of the Virginia class submarine and the Mark 48 weapons system, which is the most lethal submarine weapons system on the planet. The uncertainty of where the vessel is, what the nature of its mission is, its ability to remain stealthily deployed—these all demand many resources from an adversary to detect, localize, and track, and all the while the submarine is going about its very specific mission.

Thank you.

● (1130)

The Chair: We'll have to leave the submarine discussion there. I'm sure it will come up again.

Mr. Aboultaif.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Thank you very much.

Rear-Admirals Newton and McDonald, first and foremost, thank you very much for appearing in front of the committee and for your service to our country and to the world.

Our RCN has been everywhere, from Egypt to Vietnam to Singapore. We are all over the world. Our mission has such a diversity of challenges and complications that run from place to place to place.

Rear-Admiral Newton, you have served under NATO and under the UN. The missions are different based on the lead-in of the mission. Were there any differences between the two missions, and if so, can you please explain and elaborate on this topic?

RAdm John Newton: Thank you very much, sir, for the question.

Yes, we serve both on NATO and within United Nation frameworks. Coalitions themselves will seek international frameworks to operate. Even nationally we will seek an international framework, and we'll operate within international norms, and to international law, and the law of armed conflict in the Geneva Conventions. All these are expressions of a professional military force of a western, democratic, rules-based country seeking legitimacy in its mission. The NATO alliance represents both a political and a military command and control structure, but it too seeks legitimacy under the law of armed conflict and under the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The UN is very much a foundational platform upon which to build legitimacy. From that, the alliances, or the coalitions, build their command and control, always linking legitimacy, mission, and task to the UN Security Council resolutions, which highlight whatever the security or the humanitarian need is in a particular conflict scenario.

The United Nations does have military peace support and peacekeeping-type operations around the world. Personally, I have not participated in any direct UN-style missions like the peacekeeping in Rwanda and General Dallaire's experience, but there are specific peace support and peacekeeping operations. In my own experience in modern times, I think that because of the grave security situation in most conflict scenarios today, because of how threat scenarios have escalated to very high levels of risk to our personnel and to our capabilities, we have sought traditionally the more coherent command and control structures of NATO so that we can assure our safety as we go for the mission outcome.

I'll leave it at that, sir.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Thank you.

Rear-Admiral McDonald, you said something in your speech about the seizing of 1.3 tonnes of cocaine. This is one of the diverse missions that we are doing around the world. Your comment prompts me to ask a question about marijuana. The Liberal government made an election promise to legalize recreational marijuana. At some point, I guess, that will either interfere with or somehow come up in your mission in fighting or preventing those smugglers from coming our way, or even in our war against drugs in general.

If marijuana were to be legalized in Canada, would it have any effect on your operations in general?

RAdm Art McDonald: Thank you, sir, for the question.

As I indicated in my remarks, the Operation CARIBBE mission is a regional capacity-building mission meant to reinforce structures and capability for an international group in our western hemisphere. A significant portion of the work is counter-narcotics. If there were a change to the law in Canada, I would not anticipate any significant change to the employment of our work down there because of the regional capacity-building and the need to control whatever are determined to be illegal drugs in Canada. However, I imagine that there would be moderate changes with respect to the behind end-policy support around what would happen from a Canadian perspective following up the takedowns of narcotics at sea.

● (1135)

RAdm John Newton: Could I just elaborate, sir?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Yes, please go ahead.

RAdm John Newton: The counter-drug mission of the joint inter-agency task force south is, as he said, a partnership endeavour of 14 regional states in the Caribbean. So not only are we taking drugs off the streets of Canada—that's an easy way to express the outcome of taking tonnes of cocaine out of the narco-trafficking system—but we are actually disarming, to some degree, transnational organized crime. It is not in the government's platform to be aiding and abetting transnational organized crime. Our effort is to take money out of the destabilization of foreign states. This is the money of volumes that corrupt police forces and governments in the 14 regional states of the Caribbean basin, states that are fragile because of the scale of this narco war.

Finally, I would say that it's not just about drugs. The routes that drugs are moving on are the same routes that illicit trade can occur on, whether it's in arms, money, or the smuggling of human cargos. These routes can even be terrorist vectors for entering countries on the North American continent, including Canada. So it's a broader mandate that I don't think links easily back to the marijuana debate in Canada.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: The main question, beyond policies, which Rear-Admiral McDonald mentioned, is whether you seek extra financial resources if there's a change in the operation. What would you be looking for to be able to perform well in serving within the new atmosphere and the new environment that would be created?

RAdm John Newton: I have a mandate to generate the readiness of naval forces, and at the same time I have a mandate to employ those naval forces in operations on behalf of the commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command. I am given resources to execute this operational mission on every case that a ship is deployed south. While on the one hand I get operational effect by being involved in drug seizures and interrupting the trafficking, as I've just expressed, I get paid the money required for the sea days, the fuel costs, and the port visit costs for that deployment. We get money on a case-by-case basis, just like every mission that the Canadian government signs a ministerial order for.

At the same time, your navy has given you regional engagement with the 14 partner states. That's why HMCS *Fredericton*, in the Caribbean basin, is working with Colombia bilaterally on things beyond just the drug mandate. We're working in Jamaica to professionalize all the Caribbean island states in seamanship, navigation, maritime interdiction operations, and how to make jetties safe and dive underneath ships to look for illicit cargo. We are down there on the backside of the drug mission enabling these foreign states. The navy pays for that component of this sort of engagement, because that's what your navy does on a day-by-day basis.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Garrison, you have the floor.

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

Thank you to both of our witnesses for being here today.

I want to talk about an issue that I've been focusing on in this study, and that's the undercapitalization of the Canadian military in general and the navy in particular. What we've seen from the last two governments has brought us to a position where we have capability gaps emerging. We have the retirement of ships before their replacements are available. My concern extends to the expressed support from all parties for a shipbuilding strategy, where the number of ships and the capabilities to go in those hulls seem to be slipping and where the timetables for delivering those ships are becoming a great concern, I think, for keeping our capabilities.

I want to start by talking about supply ships, because they're not, I guess, the drama queens of our navy, but we're not able to operate on all of these international missions without them. We ended up retiring the ships early due to a fire on one of the ships. However, we had an announcement in 2006 that the government intended to buy three supply ships, and then in the shipbuilding strategy we have two supply ships. I'm concerned, as I've said before, that the shipbuilding strategy has become a ceiling when originally it was a floor. People tend to say that we have two main coasts so we just need two ships, but obviously ships need to have time to be refit. They're out of service a certain amount of time. You can't really do this without three ships.

I guess I'll start on the west coast, because that's where I'm from.

Admiral McDonald, can you talk about what capability gaps this lack of supply ships is producing and how we're going to deal with that?

● (1140)

RAdm Art McDonald: It's good to see you by video teleconference. I look forward to seeing you on the coast again soon.

It's an excellent question. Of course, it is a recognized capability gap for us not to have the sustainment capability of a replenishment ship. That is not catastrophic in itself; it just makes the employment of our forces significantly less efficient. It requires additional planning factors, for example, just to travel across the Pacific and add in a port visit to gain fuel for our ships. One or two times adds between four and eight days, which takes us away from time on station to do whatever our mission is, be it economic sanctions, interdiction, working with allies, etc.

Indeed, the requirement that has been expressed was for three replenishment ships. We are pursuing two, with an option for a third, to provide us with that kind of flexibility. However, I note that we had been operating two for essentially my entire time in the service, and two had provided us with a significantly enhanced capability over what we have now, which is none.

I think I'll leave my comments there and turn it over to Admiral Newton.

RAdm John Newton: Thanks, Admiral.

We started 20 years ago talking about the replacement of the Protecteur class, so it's a long-term endeavour to situate these recapitalization efforts. We're at the moment where we retired two of our AORs...and I will take exception to the term “prematurely”. After 46 years, it's not premature. It was done: the ship owes us nothing. It served Canada well.

I should add that replenishment ships aren't just resupply ships. They deliver real military capacity. I bristled when you said they had sort of a lower-level role. I spent a good part of my career on them. It's an exciting role delivering anti-submarine warfare helicopters to the anti-submarine surveillance requirement in distant operations. They provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief in mission after mission. They have command and control capacity. They are the nucleus of the Canadian task group, which is the real capability that the Canadian navy is striving to put back together after the modernization of the Halifax class and the gap introduced by the AOR.

It's an amazing capability that gives us the mobility, the flexibility, and the sustainment on station. Whether it's two or three, that's a government decision, but when we're given one, two, three, or four of anything, it is our job, both Art McDonald's and mine, to make the most of those platforms. We'll do a whole number of things to make sure we are very effective, with relationships in foreign countries, basing and hubs in foreign countries, and other capacities that can be brought to bear in our navy to help fill in some of these capability gaps that the auxiliary oil replenishment ship gave us.

It's our job to build readiness using other forces, relationships, and other navies, just like we did with the Spanish tanker SPS *Patiño*, which has renewed a relationship with the Spanish navy that was damaged during the turbot crisis. It's a beautiful relationship now with an enduring NATO ally, because they lent us a ship, and we paid for the fuel to fill our AOR gap. On the west coast, Art McDonald's team used the Chilean warship *Almirante Montt*, which has created an even deeper relationship with a Pacific power that is very closely aligned to Canada.

In trying to fix the capability gap, we've found virtue and success and enrichment of our relationships with our best partners and allies. That's our job, to fill in the gaps and patiently wait while the government delivers the program that is set out under the national shipbuilding strategy.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I hope you didn't misunderstand me. The reason I'm asking about those supply ships is precisely because I'm trying to elevate their importance in all of this.

RAdm John Newton: Yes, sir, but some of these elicit great passion. I'm just one of those types of people.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I appreciate that. I'm glad to hear it.

You partly answered the next question I was going to ask, about whether some of these interim arrangements we're making will reduce the independence of the Canadian navy. We've become dependent on allies for capabilities we don't have, and I'm wondering if that might in any way constrain our future military operations.

I'll start this time on the east coast.

● (1145)

RAdm John Newton: Yes, sir: theoretically, you're right that if you hook all the niche or specialist capability requirements in any domain to any one ally, or any one type of thematic relationship, you lose your sovereignty as a navy. And you can never know what tomorrow's mission will be. No mission tomorrow ever is a reflection of what it was in the past. We've learned to be flexible in how to approach the future. The Gulf War didn't follow the pattern of the Cold War. The war in Yugoslavia and the meltdown in central Europe didn't follow any style of conflict we had seen before. The war on terrorism, name it what you want, has not been something we were taught out of the lessons of World War II or Korea. We always look now to the future with this great uncertainty, so we don't want to create dependencies.

That said, there's a certain degree of dependence required. No nation can go it alone. You need friendships, you need partnerships, and you need really strong relationships. NATO gives us that. Rim of the Pacific...and the Western Pacific Naval Symposium is building those in the deep Pacific. You need bilateral arrangements with your closest allies, who you are wedded to by fate or the gift of geography. We have a continental ally, by the gift of geography, in the United States.

Warfare is so complex. The threats go all the way from nuclear war to cyberwar to the conventional areas of mine warfare and anti-submarine warfare. We do have reliances, and so does every country in this world. Everybody learns to contribute what they are expert in.

The Chair: We'll have to leave it there, unfortunately.

Mr. Gerretsen, you have the floor.

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

I just want to pick up, Admiral Newton, on the discussion that Mr. Garrison started. You talk about our sovereignty, and the fact that because of the interconnectedness, whether it's through NATO or the various roles that different players are playing in the world, sometimes we become dependent. I at least heard Mr. Garrison's question to be a little bit more direct. I'd like to pick up on where you see our sovereignty with respect to the dependence that we might have on other nations.

Is it something that you think we can improve upon by making changes, or is it something that you're very confident about, that the sovereignty completely exists?

RAdm John Newton: Wow. That's like a research project. That's a very tough question, sir.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Tell him it's a great question. He likes that.

Voices: Oh, oh!

RAdm John Newton: It's a great question.

Voices: Oh, oh!

RAdm John Newton: I'd rather Art McDonald start, and then I'll write notes and think about it as he goes.

We are a very proud nation. The reflection of that is that we're a really proud navy. We don't abrogate sovereignty to anybody in any way, shape, or form. At a government level, government has put its cards in NATO, and they've made bold statements, even since the election, about their resolve and standing behind NATO. We stand behind NORAD. We've made statements about the shipbuilding strategy, which feeds capability into that relationship. We're feeding capability into both NORAD and North American aerospace defence that is relevant to those alliances. I don't think anybody sees NORAD or NATO as being an abrogation of either the nation's sovereignty or the sovereignty of our navy.

I'm trying to do my best to answer your question. I think we strive to have the most important and fundamental capabilities in the navy, with our brothers and sisters in the Royal Canadian Air Force, who provide long-range patrol aviation, which is relevant to the maritime battle, to the Cyclone helicopters, which are really fundamental to anti-submarine warfare and to the surveillance and the targeting of our missiles, to our SOFCOM colleagues who deliver high-end strike forces in everything from counterterrorism to the interdiction and embargo scenarios—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm sorry to have to interrupt you, but I'm limited on time. You said that you strive to have the most advanced technologies to be able to do this, if I'm paraphrasing you correctly there. I'm not trying to get political with this question; I'm just trying to understand the facts. Do you have the resources you need to get there?

● (1150)

RAdm John Newton: Today, the country made a very deliberate decision to modernize the Halifax class, and that has delivered. The modernized Halifax class is in the top tier of military capabilities on this planet. It has only 20 years, and it won't hold at that tier forever. Today, I am confident in what I've been given with the Halifax class. Today, the Victoria class submarine, and *Windsor*, and *Chicoutimi* sailing to the far Pacific, have been modernized with key elements of maritime capability. The *Windsor* has the Virginia class sonar suite, the most advanced sonar in the world.

Yes, I'm confident. It has the most advanced and destructive weapons system, which keeps adversaries a long way away from Canadian sovereign interests or national interests around this world.

Is it perfect? We're delivering the Cyclone a little bit behind. The Cyclone is now reaching our decks. The first deployment of a helicopter air detachment and a Cyclone helicopter occurred on Spartan Warrior just two weeks ago. They're introducing amazing capabilities, so I don't have worries there. Our special ops capabilities operating with our submarines are now at a level of maturity. I'm really happy and satisfied that these high-end strategic and strike capabilities are at the forefront of global capability.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

Just changing gears briefly, at one of our last meetings we had General Vance here. One of the questions I asked him was about Russian posturing in the world and how that's changing. In fact, today there is a report saying they're now making some decisions to move nuclear weapons around in Europe.

My question for General Vance was more specifically towards the Arctic and the changes in the environment there, literally and figuratively speaking, and how that is impacting our ability to ensure that we are responding appropriately to that. Any changes or any changes that we make in the Arctic will heavily involve our navy.

What role do you see our navy playing into the future as it relates to Russia perhaps doing some work on the bases they have in the Arctic...about their continual and increased levels of coming into Canadian territory, if only for a brief period of time and moving on? There is definitely posturing going on there. What role does the navy play in that into the future, and do you have the resources you require in order to be able to do that into the future?

RAdm John Newton: I'm going to start with this one, Art, because the navy has labelled me the navy's Arctic expert, and I've been working on the Arctic file for a fair while.

That's a big question that unpacks into two components. One is the soft security, environmental pollution, constabulary nature of risk or threat devolution in the north because of climate change. The other one is the militarization or the use of northern waters by potential adversaries in future conflict scenarios.

On the soft security side of environment, shipping, and regulatory control of Canada's sovereign waters, which are the internal waters of the archipelago, there is no doubt a change in human activity in the north related to climate change, which is causing a whole series of consequences, whether it's human security, the use of the Arctic waters for shipping, or the opening of Arctic waters for potentially more oil or resource exploitation.

Into that domain, a government at a previous point made the commitment to build the Arctic and offshore patrol ship. The first ship, Harry DeWolf, is a major construction achievement in the Irving Shipbuilding yard. It is a very large ship, far bigger than probably most Canadians could imagine, which is well under way. Building has started on the second ship. That ship is not a warship, it's not a combatant. It has a gun, it's armed, but it is an enabling ship to a whole bunch of other capacities of the federal government. Whether it's support to the coast guard, support to Fisheries and Oceans, support to the territories in resource protection, whether it's support to a pollution initiative with Transport Canada and with the coast guard leading, or whether it's related to search and rescue, we can contribute as we do in southern waters fully now as we build these six Arctic offshore patrol ships.

I'm going to say one thing about these ships. On the more military domain, in terms of the point about potential aggressors in the north, it's a hard place to go—really hard. It only becomes marginally easier, even in a global warming scenario, during a few weeks, maybe three months at the most in a far right global warming scenario, because eventually—

● (1155)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Right now: 20 years from now that might be different.

RAdm John Newton: Winter will still occur 20 years from now.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I hope you're right.

RAdm John Newton: If not, then—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I know three people in the room who definitely believe you on that.

RAdm John Newton: Sir, perhaps I can answer the last piece about military elements of the capability. It is the centrepiece of a whole number of capabilities invested in by the Canadian Armed Forces, by the people of Canada. The C-17 is fully an Arctic-capable strategic-lift air platform that delivers major components of anything required by the government or military in the north to most dirt fields in the north. It is then distributed by C-130Js or Chinook helicopters. Personnel rescue can fly in the back of the Cormorant, which is fully enabled for the north.

We now have Arctic response company groups that are fully capable of deploying into the north. These are companies of trained soldiers. We have enabled rangers who support every mission of the navy, the army, and the air force in the north.

We have a command and control structure that has regional joint task forces. I command one, Art commands another, and General Nixon controls the one in the north. It's a coherent command and control structure that allows military forces to converge.

The missing piece, in this and many other aspects of military capability in Canada, is a sustainable, long-range, large, useful multi-mission capability like the Arctic offshore patrol ship to work in Canada's northern waters. This new piece is coming in 2018.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave it there and move on to Mrs. Romanado.

You have the floor.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank our colleagues for being here today and for their service. I know that the Royal Canadian Navy is called a "force generator", and with two sons serving, that's also my nickname here on the Hill. I have an affinity for the Royal Canadian Navy.

Admiral Newton, you talked about the Cyclone helicopter. We've only had eight of the 28 delivered, from what I can understand. I know we just had the exercise with Spartan Warrior. Can you give us an update on the delivery of the Cyclone helicopter and when we anticipate that the systems integration will be complete for that replacement?

RAdm John Newton: Both Admiral McDonald and I play a supporting role to the Royal Canadian Air Force in delivering this capacity to our navy, and it is a major chunk of a warship's capacity. You can't diminish how important it is.

It is the Royal Canadian Air Force, to my mind, that has to answer the generation question. Their challenges are many—delivering the competency of how to maintain the aircraft, how to fly it, and then how to operate all these advanced systems. I trust they'll do a good job, and I'll leave it to them to answer that.

We're seeing the first of the helicopter air detachments, the people and the platform, married to a warship that is out exploring the rough domain of the wintertime North Atlantic, pushing the operating envelope of that aircraft and ship to the maximum to make sure that what we take and what we are able to fly is what we had with the Sea King, which has an amazing capacity to operate in some of the world's roughest waters. It's Canadian sailors and Canadian industry and Canadian aviators that are still our leaders in landing helicopters of this size from warships in such a rough domain, whether it's the north Pacific or the north Atlantic. I trust my Royal Canadian Air Force partners will be delivering the first of these operational capabilities in 2018, because that's the date I'm working toward with my fleet, and I have a lot of integrating elements of fleet programming.

What I am seeing, if I could relate it to the Block III Aurora modernization, is nothing short of staggering. The black-box technology that is in the back of these planes and helicopters has increased the detection and ranges against submarine targets. This is a specialized radar made to generate a wide-area surveillance picture from a helicopter and network it back to the ship. I was just on board a warship. It looks like you're dealing with another warship 200 miles away, but the picture is being generated by a helicopter. The internal-processing capability to see targets where you never could see them before, whether on the surface or underwater, is amazing. I see this because I'm seeing it in the Block III Aurora. The air force is adamant that it is delivering the same or a higher level of capability than we're seeing in the Block III modernization. But I'd have to leave the delivery details to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Art, as I talked, maybe you thought of some other aspects of the question.

● (1200)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Actually, I have another question....

Sorry, go ahead.

RAdm Art McDonald: John covered it already, but I would add that as recently as what we've done with *Vancouver* in New Zealand, you see the importance of your question with respect to naval readiness. Helicopters and ships at sea are vital elements of our delivering it.

I would link that back to Mr. Spengemann's question earlier. At the beginning, he was talking about the outfitting of the navy, naval readiness, and its capacity. Here again, we have a demonstration of the need for multi-purpose capability. Canada operates large helicopters, from the Sea King to the Cyclone, and that allows us to have full combat capability with respect to anti-submarine warfare, as well as in humanitarian operations, where volume and lift are significant components in themselves.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Thank you.

Admiral McDonald, you talked a bit about our men and women and the training, recruitment, retention that goes on in our Canadian Armed Forces. You mentioned in your testimony the use of technology to reduce the time it takes to achieve competency. I know that the Canadian Armed Forces has applied DAOD 5031-1, which is prior learning assessment and recognition for the recruitment of our Canadian Armed Forces members so that they're not being trained again for competencies they already have.

Could you elaborate on some of the technologies you're using to reduce training, to get our men and women operational faster? No one wants to be retrained for something they already know. If you could talk a little about that with respect to andragogy and perhaps simulation, that would be helpful.

RAdm Art McDonald: Thank you, Ms. Romanado, and thank you for the service of your sons. We have a lot of work for them to do. I appreciate their service and I thank them.

Also, if I can just take a second, I want to applaud John's enthusiasm for the previous question. As our Arctic expert, he shows that Canada is a three-ocean navy, and we all share that passion for making sure we get the Arctic piece right.

I love your question with respect to prior learning assessments and getting training right. As I indicated in my testimony, that's absolutely vital to our delivery of capability and readiness and, more importantly, to retaining sailors, soldiers, airmen, and airwomen as we go forward. We're really looking at this revolution in the training system, which began in only the last two years, in terms of taking a cradle-to-grave look at each one of the trades, from the time someone begins all the way through, to ensure that we're not duplicating training. What we want to do then is find the most innovative systems for delivery.

Part of each of the major capital projects that are going to deliver over the next little while will have a significant training component delivered in there. We're now working to synchronize and are having the preliminary discussions with industry about what technologies we could take advantage of, but certainly, your navy—our navy—has always had a history of using simulation prior to going to sea, and simulation for everything from basic engineering tasks through to multi-threat warfare in large team simulators. That has been core to the production of the first-rate sailors, soldiers, airmen, and airwomen we've had up to now, and I see that only growing as we go into the future.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave it there. Thank you for the response.

Ms. Rempel, welcome. You have the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The phrase that was used earlier was something to the effect of delivering service while patiently waiting for government to deliver equipment. I think that's a very fair and very polite assessment of the situation.

I'm wondering if perhaps you would like to take some time to comment on what the impact is of having to operate without a supply ship right now in terms of both Canada's sovereignty and Canada's ability to defend itself.

RAdm John Newton: I'll start.

As you understand, the Halifax class modernization was an exhaustive effort that took an entire class of warships, the principal combatants of the Royal Canadian Navy, not completely out of service, but.... The readiness of the fleet dropped as you put so many ships through such a short cycle of third-line maintenance dockyard work. During that period, the readiness of the entire Royal Canadian Navy declined, and it's in that window that the *Protecteur* fire occurred while it was providing fuel to the United States Navy because of their requirement for this deep ocean support. That fire then led to an assessment that will preserve her at 46 years. Probably it should be retired too.

The loss of the capability occurred during the bottom of the readiness period. It was not caused by the tankers themselves, but by the modernization of the Halifax class, which is a risk we took to get ready for the next 20 years just as the world is heating up in many different security domains.

But here we are. We've come out of the Halifax class modernization on time and on budget, with an incredible capability that our sailors are still finding magic in, in terms of how much innovative technology has been put into this ship.

We've had to not struggle...it wasn't a struggle to find relationships, but we had to develop relationships that add their own positive values. I spoke about how the relationships with Chile and Spain had very positive values. We're coming through that period. *Patiño* just went home from supporting Spartan Warrior. Into next year, the interim AOR, a lease solution to bridge to the joint support ship, which starts constructing around 2018, will deliver. This is a lease solution.

Are we struggling? No. If you didn't expect your military to take challenge and turn it into a virtue, then I think you're probably underestimating the power of the military. All challenges and all enemy activities come at you from left field, and it's the virtue of our skill to figure out solutions. I think the interim AOR is the key piece to your answer.

● (1205)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Sure. Sometimes, though, I think all of us around the table would like us to be able to meet your virtue with our virtue in terms of supporting you from a capacity perspective.

Prior to the last election, I had the opportunity to serve in a ministry that dealt with supply chain development. The argument that was always made to me was that the opportunity cost of building out our supply chain capacity for military procurement justified the delays that we're seeing right now, frankly. I've never been a firm believer in that particular component if it materially impacts the efficacy of your work and the broader work of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I will ask you a very simple and perhaps non-partisan question. Do you think that opportunity cost calculation is correct?

RAdm John Newton: Art....

Voices: Oh, oh!

RAdm John Newton: You were in the force development world prior to being an operational commander.

RAdm Art McDonald: Thank you very much for the question.

I do think you need to place it in the context of answering the bell, as we say, for naval readiness today and naval readiness in the future. There can be no doubt, as John highlighted, that delays in delivery require us to manage something that we're capable of, for sure, but the advantage of building home-grown capacity is that we build the ability, when we're in times of crisis, to have assured response. If we're relying on others at times, then the demands of multiple nations go to a single service provider, and as a result we may not always be happy with the result that's produced.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: To be quite honest, do you think that capacity is actually being built out at home? Do you see an integrated supply chain? Do you think that end result that you're talking about there is actually something that is going to be realized?

RAdm Art McDonald: I think it's a work still in progress, but we've been developing some fantastic relationships. Admiral Newton has already highlighted several of them that work with the Halifax class modernization. A number of the strategic partners that we have there, how we integrate their work in support of our forces with our fleet maintenance facilities and so on—for sure we're improving our capacity on a daily basis, but it's still a work in progress.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: I'm sure in 15 seconds or less the chair will cut me off, but I have to ask: what are the gaps in terms of actually seeing that supply chain development capacity built out, and how do we fix them?

RAdm Art McDonald: I think, very rapidly, the biggest gap is to just ensure we do something that I think Mr. Finn, who appeared before you recently, talked about. We've been integrating both in industrial capacity and the fleet maintenance facility in-house capacity to maintain and support our ships and our maritime forces for over 40 years. We continue to need to evolve that into a modern context where industrial capacity for point delivery is phenomenal. We need to do work to ensure that we've got that synchronization just right, and that work is still ongoing.

● (1210)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Fisher, you have five minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Admiral Newton and Admiral McDonald, thank you very much for your perspective and your expertise.

On a personal note, I want to thank you, Admiral Newton, for your level of commitment to our community in Nova Scotia. There's rarely a time when I go to an event and you're not there. I want to thank you for your work. You worked side by side with me on renaming a public park after PO2 Craig Blake, and that was one of the highlights of my time on council.

I think Ms. Romanado touched on recruitment a little bit, and you both spoke about the problems of retention and recruitment.

Can you give me a little bit of your thoughts, Admiral Newton, and I'd welcome Admiral McDonald's comments as well, on why the struggle? Why are we struggling so hard on attracting sufficient numbers? I guess the crux of my question is does it add to a capability gap by not having sufficient numbers or not being able to retain our numbers?

RAdm John Newton: That gentleman up on the VDC—my colleague—in a functionally led navy has issues of recruitment and retention in his brain, but I manage, of course, retention and the forces that keep people in, just as he does, because I generate sailors and generate combat capabilities.

Our job in this equation is to make sure that the navy is a rewarding career, make sure that sailors are valued, make sure that they can work and live in an harassment-free environment, make sure that their contributions are valued, and that their mobility upward through rank and challenge is assured by fair processes. That comes down to naval readiness, because readiness is assured by motivated people who are inspired and want to own their service.

We take a beating sometimes in public perception, in the recapitalization debates. There is a negative piece that comes from that. We're not fighting, like Craig Blake, on the front lines of Afghanistan, when the credibility of the army was shown in such a positive light despite the loss of lives and the injury and all the long-term consequences of conflict of that nature. We were not at the forefront of the story of Afghanistan. However, with a modernized fleet, with our submarines operating forward, with our alliances and foreign commanders speaking of the value of our forces, I think our message and our communication is better. We are taking a number of steps to make sure that a career is manageable, that tempo isn't too high, that training occurs at the right time for a person, that people aren't posted too much, and that benefits are available to them for their deployments. We're working very hard on the retention piece.

On the recruiting side, a whole number of social and Canadian phenomena would work against us, but with reservists we have ample opportunity for speed, to make it more agile, to make the recruiting process more timely and more agile.

This subject was already started on by one of the other members of Parliament, and this is where I'll ask Art McDonald to pick up, on the recruiting piece.

RAdm Art McDonald: Thanks, John.

That's a great question, Mr. Fisher, and certainly one of our big concerns. As John said, our greatest issue at the admiralty is to make sure that we are able to attract and to make it a positive environment for recruiting by having relevant operations that resonate with Canadians. Certainly, that's what we've been able to do in the last little while.

In the last few years, as we've faced a recruiting challenge, we have been pushed off the visibility of Canadians' front pages with Afghanistan, and at the same time, we were doing our Halifax class modernization, a deliberate decision, but that reduced our ability to provide many options to government.

Systematically, we're trying to address that now. You've already seen, in the reports that John and I provided you today, our engagement through forward deployment to exciting opportunities around the globe that I think are capturing Canadians' attention. Then, systematically, underneath that, how do we address it? Admiral Lloyd, when he appeared before you, noted that the purview of recruiting belongs to the chief of military personnel, but we in the navy are leaning into that by helping to provide a number of tactical and operational solutions, provision of recruiters for the day, and experts who can go out there and discuss why naval careers are relevant to Canadians and a great way for someone to spend their life.

Then Admiral Newton just touched on it, but specifically with the naval reserves, we've really been leaning into that and have made great progress in the last little while to augment and increase the number of reservists we have, something that's very useful to our naval readiness, in that strategic augmentation capacity.

● (1215)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay, so—

The Chair: That's your time, Mr. Fisher. I'm going to have to give the floor to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Admiral Newton and Admiral McDonald, thank you for joining us, for the passion and enthusiasm you have for the Royal Canadian Navy, and of course for the great work you're doing in supporting all the sailors who serve under both of you.

When we last did this study on the defence of North America and looked at the Royal Canadian Navy, there was a lot of talk at that time, about four years ago, about a pivot to the Pacific. The U.S. was going to be more engaged in what was happening in the South China Sea, and we were going to support them in their operations, especially with the proliferation of submarines coming from North Korea, China, and others.

I want to ask you, Admiral McDonald, if you could give us a sense of where you're at with the Pacific fleet and how we are functioning alongside our U.S. partners, both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard who operate along the Alaskan coastline. What is the threat level with those countries that have more submarines and more of an aggressive stance in what they're doing with China, Taiwan, and the geopolitics within the South China Sea? How is that playing out and how is it affecting your operations?

RAdm Art McDonald: Mr. Bezan, thank you very much. That Pacific pivot got a lot of attention, and of course, as you know, our view in the Canadian navy is that we pivoted probably two decades before the U.S.

We have a balance of forces, roughly, between Admiral Newton's fleet on the east coast and ours on the Pacific coast. In some cases we have a predominance of a particular class out here whereas he has perhaps a few more frigates over there.

The bottom line, however, has also been not about where we base our forces but where we employ them. As you know, we employ our forces around the world, he routinely providing forces to operate in what one would consider our neck of the woods. I note that we provided ships from Victoria as recently as this year to the reassurance missions off Russia.

The engagement with the U.S. is as strong as it's ever been. You mentioned both elements, the U.S. Coast Guard and navy. I've met with my colleagues and counterparts and I've been in the process of meeting a variety of them, having just taken over, over the last few months, to ensure that we continue to be aligned going forward.

They, like us, have taken this case with the engagement in the Asia-Pacific and with the opportunity and the need to enforce rules-based order in the Southeast Asia and Oceania area. They've been really pushing further west in the Pacific. That lines up perfectly with what I described in my testimony as generating forward, us pushing forces earlier, faster, and further west, where we will provide maximum opportunity to government to respond to things that could be of a man-made nature or a humanitarian response, such as in New Zealand.

Mr. James Bezan: Congratulations on the work that we did down in New Zealand. We got there fast and were able to assist. That was a great operation.

Admiral Newton, do you want to follow up on that?

RAdm John Newton: Yes. What we seek in our navy is to be globally deployable from any of our two major bases. There's no restriction on a warship from Maritime Forces Pacific ending up in the Mediterranean Sea on the NATO Reassurance mission. Likewise, there's no restriction on the east coast fleet. Ships of all fleets went to the Korean conflict.

We see the world as really big. The intellectual pivot and our relationship-building pivot is Indo-Asia Pacific. Just this last week we finished preparing Commodore Haydn Edmundson, a Canadian commodore in the Royal Canadian Navy, and a predominately Canadian navy staff, augmented by Australians, who have experienced the conflict zone in the North Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean, for deployment right around Christmastime to command Combined Task Force 150, which is responsible for maritime security operations and counterterrorism operations in the north Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Horn of Africa-type regions. This again reflects on our attempt to build relationships and have influence. Our expertise and our respect is not taken for granted. It's accepted over there that we are capable commanders of that task force. This is our third round of command with Australia as a key partner.

Here we're using people as capital to have influence in this very broad ocean area and building those foundational relationships.

● (1220)

Mr. James Bezan: I wanted to go back to the comments about operating forward and the role that our Victoria class submarines play in that. Their modernization and upgrades have definitely made them even more valuable to the Royal Canadian Navy. Has there been any planning in the long term on the replacement of those submarines, especially considering the number of submarines that are being used and developed by Russia, China, and others?

RAdm Art McDonald: Like a number of our allies, we operate diesel submarines. We've been in discussion with our allies for many years over the performance of our submarines and where we want to go in the future. A number of countries are looking at their potential options going into the future. Australia has recently decided, and we're being informed by that.

In the meantime, I think our greater perspective is that we still have some very good use left in the Victoria class. We plan on demonstrating their relevance, building on the fantastic 200 days at sea that *Windsor* had this past year, including two large NATO exercises and two NATO operational tasks, with follow-up employment by the other ships of the class over the next little while, and then looking at sustaining that capability through the remaining life and possible life extension of the boat.

As many of your colleagues have talked about, there are a number of requirements for us in the navy and the Canadian Forces as we go forward and adapt to the context. Taking full advantage of the useful life remaining in the boats is important so that we can buy the right resources at the right time as we go forward.

The Chair: Thank you for those responses.

The floor goes over to Mr. Peschisolido. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Admiral Newton, Admiral McDonald, thank you for your testimony here today.

I'd like to follow up on Mr. Bezan's question on the South China Sea, Admiral McDonald, and their reaction to the recent UN decision on the South China Sea when it comes to navigation rights and islands, man-made or otherwise.

RAdm Art McDonald: I think the response from the foreign minister with respect to Canada's embrace of the rules-based order is really what we've been engaged with in the Canadian navy for the entire time of my career. We are encouraging of the use of a rules-based order by following that regime ourselves and encouraging our allies, with co-operative action and exercise in deployments and presence, to do the same.

Of course, we also see, conversely to that, where nations don't adhere to the global rules-based order or demonstrate they're willing to challenge that order, introducing some uncertainty and tension, that needs to be managed. The Canadian navy, with our allies, has been aligned in making sure that we have presence, are supportive, and embrace working in coalition together to establish, endorse, and enforce that rules-based order.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: Admiral McDonald, earlier you brought up the concept of "great power politics". The rise of the People's Republic of China is on everyone's mind, particularly with President-elect Trump's focus on China and its role in the international system.

As you know, the government has started a 10-year process with the People's Republic of China that may or may not lead to a strategic relationship with them.

What are your thoughts on the two narratives? There are those who say we need to deal with the People's Republic of China, and others who say, yes, but we also have to focus on our other allies like Japan, and on new allies such as Vietnam.

RAdm Art McDonald: It's a great question. I think this is where governments really realize the value of their navies—on the one side, for being prepared, and on the other side, for engaging to help establish intentions up front. We have, in fact, with our allies been working well with the Chinese to try to encourage them and ensure they are embracing that global rules-based order we talked about before.

China was for the first time a participant in the Rim of the Pacific exercise that happened last summer, a significant step to enhance the dialogue between mariners, between warriors, and between nations. Of course later on, I guess next month, we're going to receive a Chinese task group visit to Victoria, as their navy does what our navy does: reach out around the world to try to establish those relations upon which to build.

I think that is where the emphasis is going to remain for us, a good opportunity to engage with China and help to ensure that we as a navy and a nation understand their application.

● (1225)

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: I'll ask you one final follow-up question, Admiral McDonald, and then I'll move over to Admiral Newton. My neck of the woods is Steveston—Richmond East. As you know, in Steveston we've had a history of helping in the war effort. Our fish and our canneries fed the men and women who fought. Also, it's had a strategic location for our war effort. That's historically, but do you see a role for the south arm of the Fraser and that part of Vancouver in naval preparedness in the next five to ten years?

RAdm Art McDonald: There is always room for coastal communities to be engaged in supporting naval preparedness, and certainly your area of Vancouver has done so, as you have highlighted—thank you for it—and will continue to do so. We have major shipbuilding programs ongoing in Vancouver, of course, but beyond that, just in terms of providing defence and security in Asia-Pacific, both human and national, your area, as mariners contributing to the surveillance of our region, is very key.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: Both of you discussed the Indo-Pacific region, that it isn't just about Asia but also about the subcontinent. The rise of India is also a very strategic development geopolitically. Traditionally it has relied on Russia or the Soviet Union to arm itself. Now it's going more towards the United States and other countries. Do you see a role for Canada in this rise of India as a naval power?

RAdm Art McDonald: I'll take that one as a start, if you don't mind, John.

I'll just highlight the fact that, as John mentioned, Indo-Asia Pacific is a focus of our re-engagement under the generate forward policy. We've already had extensive staff discussions in Ottawa between the commanders of our two navies about opportunities to be exploited going forward. Building on that, we recently had a visit of *Winnipeg*, as she was returning from Operation Reassurance employment in India, and we're planning on an opportunity to visit India again in our 2017 sailing program, as well as an opportunity to work with some Indian navy assets in the Southeast Asia area, again building step by step our collaboration as a network of navies at sea.

The Chair: We'll have to leave the answer there.

Mr. Garrison, you have the floor.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Of course, being from the west coast, I've been trying to encourage this committee that a visit to MARPAC would be a good idea, despite the tendency to believe that Esquimalt's a long ways away—although I'm not sure what the point of reference is.

I want to follow up on this question we've been dancing around here, of readiness and sovereignty, and ask about two things. One of those is an increasing tendency for DND to look to contracting out for what some would call routine maintenance facilities for the Canadian navy, for purported short-term savings. The second is the tendencies of suppliers of new equipment to argue that only they can do the maintenance. I guess I want to know if you would share the concerns that many have that, when we do this, we may find at times of crisis that those private suppliers are busy, unavailable, or bankrupt, and therefore not able to provide in a timely manner the service that was originally expected.

So it's a concern about the privatization of existing maintenance services, and then about some of the new equipment coming in the new ships being arguably so complex that we can't do our own maintenance.

● (1230)

RAdm John Newton: Sir, it's a great point, and it's a great point of concern for our ship repair men and women, and I don't...I'll never reduce that. In fact, one of my roles is always to promote the fleet maintenance facility, ship repair, and other trades personnel to show the value proposition of their specialized trade competencies and all the times they have enabled our ships to remain operational. Whether it's following a fire in a ship in theatre off Kuwait or the breakdown of a frigate in the NATO Reassurance mission, these people go forward, meet our ships, and help our sailors keep the ships on station. I'm always on the job of valuing that proposition.

What we have is three levels of maintenance. The first line, the ship's company will do; the second line is when you have to come back to port and you need the specialized care of either a contractor or the ship repair unit; and the third line is the maintenance in dry docks, where you really get into the ship and do the most difficult and complex repair efforts, which can't be done over a week or over even a month with a ship in its second-line period.

We already have, at the second- and third-line maintenance levels, contractors doing an extensive amount of readiness for our ships. The whole Kingston class fleet, 12 patrol ships, has an in-service support contract with a civilian industry. We performance-measure them and we hold them to the guns, and our ships stay on station, adequately supported by a civilian agent.

We have a long-term third-line maintenance contract for the submarines in Victoria, and that's why the preponderance of that fleet is near that yard.

Using contractors has even worked its way into specialization areas over time. We don't maintain a great workforce of welding and cutting plate. That's a very agricultural-style maintenance capability, and we go to industry because there's so much of it in industry that we can compete for the price on a case-by-case, contract-by-contract basis.

There are areas in which naturally we should gravitate towards in-service support or local contracting. There are areas, though, as you say, with old legacy equipment or high-tech, high-end warfare capabilities for which there aren't a lot of users in the world, nor many industries adapted to that specialization, for which we want to maintain the long-term competency and evolve it as the capability grows older.

There's our role, with that very specialized area. What we have to do is take our approximately 900-person ship repair units of today and make sure that those general-sized workforces of civilian public servants—highly technical, highly operationally related—evolve into the right domains as we get the most complex warships, whether they're submarines, the Canadian surface combatant, or even some of the capabilities in the joint support ship.

But the Arctic offshore patrol ship and the joint support ship are not among the high-end, uniquely difficult systems to maintain. What we're trying to find is the right balance between a commercial solution that is responsive, based on our lessons with the Kingston class fleet, to the specializations needed in the high-end warfare areas.

I'll leave my answer at that, Art, and give you 10 seconds.

The Chair: Someone might want to circle back on that point.

Given the time we have remaining, I'll divide evenly and give every party five minutes. I have to leave some time for committee business in camera at the very end.

Having said that, Ms. Romanado, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to touch upon something that my colleague Mr. Bezan was talking about concerning our Victoria class submarines. We heard, when we were briefed at NORAD, about the emerging importance of protecting our Arctic and so on. We've seen that our colleagues in Russia, North Korea, and China have some interest in our Arctic.

What are your thoughts in terms of replacing our Victoria class submarines with nuclear, to have that capability to patrol the Arctic? I'm curious about whether you have an opinion on this. Of course, we're talking about the complexity of acquiring nuclear submarines. We heard from ADM Finn last week. Perhaps you would elaborate on what your thoughts are on nuclear class submarines.

● (1235)

RAdm Art McDonald: If you would like, John, I'll jump in on that one.

I think as opposed to focusing it on nuclear, the real piece, and the approach the navy normally takes with respect to developing the statement of its requirement, is on the requirement that we're trying to get there. You've touched on it. People often say nuclear because they're talking about the ability to operate under ice; air-independent propulsion, if you will. There are a number of potential methodologies for delivering that, with more advanced ones growing each day in addition to the nuclear option. Certainly I would say that this will be a consideration we need to have as we look at continuing the submarine service with follow-on classes.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Admiral Newton, do you want to add to that?

RAdm John Newton: There is a role, a place, and a time for every type of submarine, whether it's a conventional boat like the Victoria class or a Japanese boat with air-independent propulsion or a nuclear platform. There is, in the alliance and partnership world, a really valuable contribution to every type of submarine, and therefore a space for the Canadian submarine.

The north is not an easy operating environment. It is not necessarily the domain of undersea warfare, either. When you go forward and work above the Arctic Circle, you are going to the sea lanes that foreign services must use to come out of the Arctic as they attempt to use their navy to influence global affairs. Navies influencing global affairs, for good or for bad, aren't necessarily steaming toward the North Pole or into the Arctic Archipelago.

There is a role in the north; there is a role for all types of submarines; but where we tend to go is where potential adversarial forces are trying to come out of the Arctic to influence global affairs. That's today. I cannot tell you what it might be in the future, but my reality today is to send the boat I have under my employment forward toward those sea lines of egress from the north.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Based on the fact that there is a long timeline between the SOR, the RFP, the acquisition, and the readiness of the vessel, should we not be starting to think about what capabilities we're going to be needing in 10 and 20 years, because it takes a long time to acquire and get our equipment operational?

RAdm Art McDonald: We touched on that in the sense that there is dialogue ongoing with respect to all of our capabilities and how they need to evolve. Certainly all of it will be informed again once the DPR, the defence policy review, comes out and resets the context and the lens through which military planners are going to need to look into the future.

I think Admiral Newton's point and my point together is that employing our forces now as a force generator today—and tomorrow in the shorter term—is making sure that we get full value and demonstrate the relevance of the capability. That's easy to do in the current environment, as HMCS *Windsor* demonstrated last year.

John?

RAdm John Newton: I'll just finish, ma'am, by saying that our role as force generators has been to review the cycle program of the submarines, which is a very complex maintenance and operational cycle. Our role has allowed the cycle activity of the boats to be refined, and the endurance of the boats, in a lifetime, to be extended. We've learned from high-end use of the boats, high-tempo use, what the boat is capable of doing; what kind of maintenance demand it is placing on it; what kind of supply chain is required; what kind of long-term contract with a third party, in-service support contract, is required.

We're doing really well at informing the process that leads to the future capability discussion, because it allows the future capability discussion to have a time and date when the programmers in Ottawa and all our allies in government are able to align the stars to get that replacement program onto the books. We're creating the space—that's our job—and the value proposition that Mr. McDonald just spoke of.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Is that it?

The Chair: That's it.

Mr. Bezan, you have the floor.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to talk a bit about the upcoming design phase of the future surface combatants. Some concerns have been expressed that maybe we shouldn't be doing this as one block of all 12 to 15 ships under one design, and that maybe we should be doing it in smaller blocks so that we can divide that work and continue to keep up with technology. There's been some concern that we are looking at a frigate-size hull, and that maybe it should be somewhat more robust, more towards a destroyer, considering that threats are changing and technologies are changing, and we need to have some ability to have modular units that can be lifted in and lifted out to more easily upgrade that technology or change the mission as need be with the future vessel.

I'd love to hear your thoughts, Admirals. What do you want to see in future surface combatants?

● (1240)

RAdm Art McDonald: I'll start, Mr. Bezan, and John can follow.

I think that all of the considerations you highlighted, sir, are amongst those considerations that went into the extent of work that I had the pleasure of leading over the past few years as we looked at defining a capability that was going to be useful from the time it arrived and then through its entire life. Certainly, we're watching as the responses to the request for proposals roll in. In the meantime, our focus needs to be on ensuring that we have relevant employment for the vessels as they go forward. Here I'm talking about using and demonstrating capacity for a multi-purpose kind of vessel and retaining it in service.

The other element, as a force generator, that really gets my attention, to come back to Ms. Rempel's questions with respect to supply chain, is with regard to the advantages that are inherent in reducing the number of platforms that we have in terms of the varieties, variations, or derivatives of a platform that require specific training elements and specific supply chain elements in order to maintain naval readiness. There is advantage to having multi-purpose vessels, but that needs to be couched with consideration of the number of derivatives that would come out of that.

RAdm John Newton: These are all great questions. There is a very large staff in Ottawa working on making sure we do the best, given all of the constraints that are in defence procurement.

One thing I would say from my level is that we have to prove and sustain that we are a globally deployable, valued navy no matter where we show up to do the business of the nation. "Globally deployable" means the ship has to be big. What we have today is a big ship in the world of warships. It's not a huge ship but it is a fairly big ship, a very sea-keeping, stable platform capable of carrying a very large helicopter. It has the volume for the crew size we need, which is globally deploying, and it has space for the growth in equipment and capacities as technology and finances allow the country to pursue advancements as the ship evolves. We're always looking for that capacity, which is in essence a modularity in its own right that we have added to all our warships, a modular component, as time evolves. If we hold on to the premise that we're a globally deployable navy and that we require a fairly large and high-volume platform, we're tipping toward the domain that you're speaking of.

Modularity doesn't frighten us, but it's for programmers to decide whether it's the appropriate way to go. We have experience with modularity and mission modules in the Kingston class. It has its own set of challenges that are worth study and reflection on.

I would just leave it at that, with one final comment. We're getting an Arctic offshore patrol ship—6,000 tonnes, 6,000 miles, high volume, utility space for varied missions that will grow into that ship as we realize the potential of what has been purchased—and there is a case in point for many of the things you've just mentioned.

Mr. James Bezan: Do I have a minute?

The Chair: You have a bit less than that.

Mr. James Bezan: I'll ask just a short question then.

The navy has struggled somewhat with the reserve force over the years, in both recruitment and retention. How are we sitting right now in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets as to reservists, and how have they been integrated into the fleets?

RAdm Art McDonald: I have functional authority for overseeing the revitalization of the naval reserves from one that had been predominantly, as I testified, based on delivering a specific mission in the Kingston class, and the sustainment challenges that came with that. In the last while, we've reoriented that to a strategic augmentation mission, allowing our reservists to serve in all classes. We've set threshold numbers. We've also provided them with non-standing but targeted to citizen-sailor kind of mission opportunities, such as a naval security team. I've just spent this past weekend with our reserves doing a regional boat exercise, and I can tell you that they're jazzed, they're excited about the opportunity to contribute as citizen-sailors once again.

Recruitment has actually increased in the naval reserves—one, because of that relevance piece that I've just talked about, the opportunity we're presenting to them; and two, a dedicated effort that we've made to own reserve recruiting, to reinvest in each of our 24 naval reserve divisions. We're seeing positive results as a result of that. Just this past weekend, in HMCS *Malahat* here in Victoria, they talked to me about this being a banner year for the recruitment of almost 20 sailors, with the year not even yet complete.

● (1245)

The Chair: Admiral, I'll have to cut you off on that particular question.

Mr. Garrison, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Everybody's talking about being force generators today. Like Mr. Fisher, I was a former city councillor, and we always thought we had a role in force generation in enabling people to actually get to the base. We have an increasing problem at CFB Esquimalt in terms of transportation to the base, with the expansion of employment on the base and the shipyards.

I want to go back to Admiral McDonald on the question of the use of private contractors, the question of the new high-tech equipment that may be in the new platforms, and the claim that those companies have to do all the maintenance themselves in order to keep those functional. I guess I would add one more thing, that we're in the process of signing some trade agreements which would guarantee the right of non-Canadian bidders to bid on those contracts. Again, I'm asking you about the impact on our readiness and our security and our sovereignty of this use of private suppliers.

RAdm Art McDonald: I appreciate your continuing to have this line of questioning. As Admiral Newton highlighted earlier, I think there's room for both. We have the knowledge transfer between original equipment manufacturers and our fleet maintenance facilities to allow us to have an in-house strategic and operational capability to do second-line and third-line maintenance of our platforms, and to reliably trust in that.

But I think there's an advantage to trying to find the right balance between industrial provision of service support and in-house support, if for no other reason than managing, as force generators, a force that has to respond to threat to the environment, to changes in circumstances, means that we often have spurious levels that appear in sort of a sine wave, and the flexibility of having multiple service deliveries for our maintenance routine gives us the greatest efficiency going forward.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Great.

On the question of reserves, maybe I'll go back to you, Admiral Newton. You had something you wanted to add on that question.

RAdm John Newton: Yes. Our job, again, is to make the reserves exciting, to make it so they're as valued as any other sailor in the navy, and stop making this distinction of reserve versus regular force. It's one navy. It's either part-time service or full-time service. It's to speed the amount of time it takes to train and gain their certifications in their units, and we're putting a ton of effort into that.

The trouble we have is not with all the trades but specific trades. Any marine industry has troubles. It's marine engineering. It's any trade that has a high level of specialization. We're working on making sure they can move quickly to get those certifications with this modernization of our training system.

Finally, we're turning up the heat on training these people as soon as they are recruited, so we can't be blamed to be the one holding them back. We're putting a ton of effort into finding how to move these people quickly through the basic training that is required to take them from a student at university to a sailor in uniform. We're not wasting any time improving that process.

The Chair: Admiral Newton and Admiral McDonald, thank you for appearing today. Your testimony adds value to what we're trying to achieve. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

We now have some committee business to deal with in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]