HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

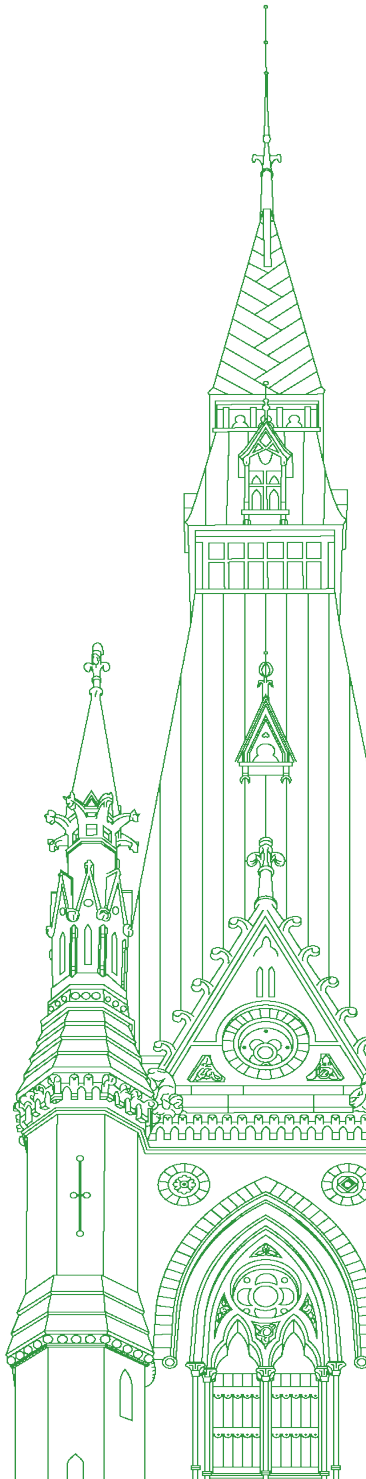
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on National Defence

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 006

Monday, February 14, 2022



Chair: The Honourable John McKay

Standing Committee on National Defence

Monday, February 14, 2022

● (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

This continues the study of the threat analysis affecting Canada, and the Canadian Armed Forces' operational readiness and ability to meet that threat.

We have two outstanding panels. The first panel is Andrew Rasiulis—I'm probably mispronouncing it and I stand to be corrected—and Elbridge Colby. Each of them has been briefed on the time available to them.

With that, I call on Mr. Rasiulis for the first presentation.

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis (Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

In addressing the threat analysis affecting Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces, I will focus today specifically on Europe and the Ukraine-Russia conflict. While we acknowledge that the committee's study encompasses a global perspective and that Canada has defence concerns in other regions of the world, Canada's largest military deployment is currently in the European theatre.

In the question and answer period, I will be very pleased to address threat concerns relevant to the Canadian Armed Forces in the other important regions, as well as questions relevant to the nature of threats faced by the Canadian Armed Forces along the spectrum of conflict, from terrorism to conventional warfare.

The immediate threat faced by Canada and consequently directly relevant to the Canadian Armed Forces is the crisis between Ukraine and Russia. The spectre of a large-scale conventional war between Russia and Ukraine, with a potential spillover effect into nearby NATO countries, is a clear and present danger. Commensurate diplomatic activity is taking place to de-escalate the confrontation. Canada is front and centre and fully engaged in both the defence and deterrence side of the equation and the dialogue and diplomacy side.

What is this conflict about, and what are the potential outcomes?

The conflict has been described by some as a battle between democracy and autocracy, or the liberal rules-based order versus *realpolitik*, the realist school of politics, among nations, based on national interests and power—chiefly economic and military. In the latter understanding of the world order, the concept of spheres of influence plays a key element and is at the heart of the current crisis.

Ukraine is the object of this current contest. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic emerged as an independent country, as did many other former Soviet republics, including Russia. The political, socio-economic and military convulsions that followed in the former Soviet space have come to a head in the current standoff based on whether Ukraine should join NATO or remain a neutral buffer state between the west and Russia.

In short summary, from 1991 Ukraine followed an official policy of non-alignment, balancing itself between Russia and the west—specifically NATO and the EU. There was a dramatic shift in policy in late 2013 and 2014, when Ukraine took a shift towards Russia. This in turn led to the Maidan revolt by western-leaning Ukrainians, ousting the pro-Russian president. In turn, this led to a revolt by Russian-leaning Ukrainians in the eastern Donbass region of Ukraine.

Concerned about the move of Ukraine towards the west, and particularly NATO, the Russians moved swiftly to seize Crimea and protect their Black Sea fleet based in Sevastopol. At the same time, they provided critical military and political support to Ukrainian rebels in the Donbass. Fighting in the Donbass was eventually stabilized in February 2015, with peace agreements known as the Minsk accords.

During the question and answer period I would be happy to elaborate on these accords and the Normandy process aimed at implementing these accords, thereby bringing the conflict in the Donbass to closure.

Russian frustration over the failure thus far to implement the Minsk accords and strong Ukrainian political efforts to join NATO have led the Russians to use large-scale military force exercises to influence the outcome of this standoff in a manner favourable to Russian security interests.

We are therefore today faced with hard choices and outcomes that could potentially affect Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces. There is a flurry of diplomatic activity at the level of U.S.-Russia, NATO-Russia, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe—the OSCE—in Vienna.

● (1540)

The diplomatic steps taken thus far suggest no agreement on the question of Ukraine's future options with regard to NATO, but there are prospects for negotiation on arms control and on confidence- and security-building measures, including a possible discussion of a new security architecture for Europe.

In the interests of time, I am prepared to outline the diplomatic options in greater detail, as well as the potential role for Canadian diplomacy, in the questions and answers.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm sorry, but I'm running a hard clock here. I appreciate your presentation.

Say hello to Elizabeth for us.

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: She's sitting right back here. She's saying hi to you.

The Chair: Colleagues, she was at one point a clerk on the Hill here—an outstanding clerk on the Hill, if I may say so.

With that, Mr. Colby, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Elbridge Colby (Principal and Co-Founder, The Marathon Initiative, As an Individual): Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice-Chairs and members of the standing committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you. Especially as an American, it's a great honour to appear before this committee.

What's probably most useful for you, given my background and expertise, is for me to lay out the American perspective in as brief a context as I can.

From our point of view, the primary facts in the international system are the arrival of China as a superpower and the primacy of Asia. China will represent roughly one-fifth to one-quarter of global GDP, while Asia as a whole will be half of global GDP, and that share will grow.

Furthermore, it seems increasingly clear that China is pursuing regional hegemony over Asia, essentially seeking to establish a predominant influence over the world's largest market area. From this position, Beijing would be able to dominate the world economy and use this power to exercise decisive influence in other countries' affairs.

From America's perspective, my view is that this means the primary U.S. foreign policy interest must be denying China regional hegemony over Asia. This will require that Washington lead a coalition of states with the will and the capacity to block Beijing's hegemonic ambitions. This ecumenical coalition is likely to centre on Asian countries like Japan, India, Australia, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam and the like. We can think of this as an anti-hegemonic coalition bound together by this shared goal.

Central to the success of any such coalition will be a sufficiently strong military component. Why? While much discussion of China focuses on Beijing's immense economic power—and this concern is surely in order—the military threat China poses in Asia is real, severe and urgent.

The reason is somewhat paradoxical: While China is very strong economically, Beijing will find it very difficult to translate its economic leverage into decisive political influence. In fact, it's finding this out right now with Australia. Because of this, China is likely to look to its immensely powerful military as a tool to pursue this goal.

China's armed forces have transformed from a relatively backward military 30 years ago to a truly top-tier one today, which the United States military finds very daunting. Moreover, the PLA is no longer just a territorial defence force; it's now a “power projection” military, one that can project and sustain dominant military power.

Beijing's most dangerous strategy in this context is a focused and sequential strategy. In this model, Beijing would try to short-circuit or collapse the anti-hegemonic coalition through more limited uses of force. This would avoid the costs and risks of a total war but, if successful, would still achieve Beijing's transformational systemic gains. This approach could work, because the coalition depends on its members' confidence that they will be protected sufficiently to justify the risks of standing up to Beijing. If they think they'll be left vulnerable and subjected to Beijing's ire, though, they will be much more likely to make the best of a bad situation and cut a deal with Beijing.

America's goal in preventing this is absolutely central. Only America is strong enough to stand up directly to China, and Asian countries can really only prudently stand up to China if they know America will be there in force to defend them. Thus, the steel in the backbone of this anti-hegemonic coalition is American strength and resolve. Now, I emphasize that I don't say this in a chest-beating way; it's just the reality of the power situation in Asia and how vulnerable Asian countries must—and I think do—think about it.

Because of this, America must ensure it can effectively defend its allies in Asia against China alongside their own efforts. If America fails to do so, the coalition risks falling apart and leaving China dominating the world's greatest market. Accordingly, the U.S. defence strategy must focus on being able to defeat such Chinese action in Asia—in fact, this is what American defence strategy is supposed to be focused on—and it must be one that the American people can reasonably support, one that would be sane and rational to implement.

This requires a military strategy of denial: basically, the ability to defeat a Chinese invasion of a U.S. ally. Because Taiwan is effectively a U.S. ally and the front line of the U.S. defence perimeter, the United States must therefore be able to defeat a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. If we're able to do so, the coalition should stand strong and we will be able to check China's hegemonic ambitions, but this will be a highly demanding military standard.

Given the size of China's economy, Taiwan's proximity to the mainland and our and Taiwan's relative neglect of the Chinese military threat, the situation is now urgent. We are behind, and it appears we may be falling farther behind. At this rate, much of the best publicly available military analysis suggests that we may be on a trajectory to lose a war over Taiwan in the coming years. Accordingly, America must sharply reorient its military emphasis towards the western Pacific, while at the same time recapitalizing its nuclear deterrent and sustaining a low-cost counterterrorism posture.

The upshot of this is that the United States will need to reduce its military engagements, not only in the Middle East but also in Europe. As a result, America will not have a military capable of handling all three major Eurasian theatres largely on its own. This will create vacuums in other parts of the world, but there is no real choice. The United States is no longer the unipole: China is now another superpower, while other threats persist.

● (1545)

Meanwhile, while Europe in particular is important, it pales in significance to Asia. Russia is far less powerful than China. As a result, my view is that America will reduce its military role in Europe and the Middle East sooner or later. The question is how graceful that transition will be.

The solution, in my view, is clear. Allies must do more. Burden-sharing is no longer just a morality play from the United States but rather a strategic necessity for allied security. The best alliance model going forward, in my view, will be an interests-based division of labour. Rather than acting as if all U.S. allies are, if you will, a three musketeers-style “all for one and one for all”—an unrealistic approach that is bound to fail—the United States should encourage its allies and partners to act more in those areas where their interests are most directly impinged upon and their capacity to act is highest.

Hence, European NATO—

The Chair: Mr. Colby, I'm sorry to interrupt. Thank you for that.

Thank you to both of you for your presentation.

Ms. Findlay, you have six minutes, please.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you very much to our highly qualified witnesses for being with us today. We really do appreciate it.

I'll start with Mr. Rasiulis, because he presented first, to talk for a moment about Europe.

We certainly seem to have all indications that Russia will invade Ukraine this week and that any diplomacy that has been followed has either been rebuffed or ignored, including recent overtures by Ukraine to Russia directly.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): On a point of order, I would like to let the clerk know that someone who is supposed to be a panellist is watching and is not yet in the room. She needs to switch rooms in order to ask questions.

● (1550)

The Chair: Apparently, Ms. O'Connell has now been promoted. She'll be pleased to know that.

Please continue. Sorry about that.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Okay.

With that, maybe I misunderstood your testimony, sir, but it almost sounded to me like you were saying that the invasion of Crimea and other overtures from Russia are justified because they want to protect their spheres of influence. Is that what you were saying?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I'm not making moral judgements. I was simply stating what has happened and why the Russians did it from their perspective.

On the question of diplomacy versus a war option, this is a big week. We've heard statements coming out of Washington and other places that say that Wednesday could be a day when the Russians start a further conflict in Ukraine. They have the capability, but at the same time, the American statements have been very clear that they do not know what Putin will do. So the decision has not been made. The capability is there. It's for him to exercise the option.

This morning I would draw your attention to an Associated Press report that the Russian foreign minister, Lavrov, briefed Putin, saying that the American proposals merit further discussion. That's the American counter-proposals to the Russian proposals, which were made a couple of weeks ago. That is a new development today, and a very important one. It signals Russian intent to continue a dialogue. It also comes at the same time that Scholz, the German chancellor, arrived in Kyiv. He spent the day talking with Zelenskyy. Tomorrow he flies to Moscow for meetings there.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you. I appreciate that. With respect, though, to what we're here to address, which is the threat analysis with Canada and Canada's role, do you agree that Canada should take a principled stand for a democratic country like Ukraine, which, although not in NATO, is a NATO ally, to try to deter a Russian invasion?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I believe Canada should stand for its national interests. Its national interests have been identified as supporting Ukrainians' territorial sovereignty. The issue of NATO accession is not just for Canada. It's a question for the alliance as a whole. That right now remains undecided. In fact, there is no consensus in the NATO alliance to accede Ukraine to NATO membership. However, Canada has been extremely active in supporting reform of the Ukrainian armed forces and thereby helping the Ukrainian forces to deter any Russian moves against them, as well as to defend their territory.

I think Canada has been playing exactly where it should be—defending our national interests by promoting a strong NATO deterrent in Europe, but opening the options for potential diplomacy, because at the end of the day, I believe Canada's national interests will be solved by a peaceful settlement of this and not through a conflict.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Colby, thank you very much for being here.

I realize that you're coming from a mostly American perspective in your statements; however, we are a close ally of the United States and very much dependent on it in terms of our military capabilities. Would you characterize the threat from China, then, as something that Canada should be very concerned about as well?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Absolutely, Madam Vice-Chair. I mean, the way I would put it is that if the United States is worried about China dominating Asia, everybody else, including Canada, should be very worried, because if we are concerned and we're 20% to 25% of global GDP, the Chinese will have immense leverage over everyone else. I have a similar message for the Europeans.

Whether Canada should.... Again, I say this as an American, so it's not my place to say, but whether that logically means that Canada should be taking an active role in the western Pacific I think is a further step. I wasn't able to finish my thought, but I think a division of labour model is going to be more effective. I certainly think Canada should be very, very acutely concerned about the potential for Chinese domination of Asia.

● (1555)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the decision or being the one advising on the decision, would you ban Huawei and other Chinese telecommunications firms in Canada's 5G networks?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I would, absolutely. Yes.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Do you think the United States sees Canada as a trusted partner or someone that the U.S. needs to worry about?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I certainly don't worry about Canada. What I would say, Madam, with all due respect—and I honour Canada's incredibly storied history in the world wars and so forth, and the Cold War—is that more Canadian effort in the defence space and more contributions to collective defence would be most welcome.

At this point, the way I think about it is that Australia is our best ally. Australia is spending well over 2% of its GDP on defence. It's standing up directly to Chinese coercion in the most concrete way possible, at great suffering to the Australian economy and people, and it's orienting its military towards collective defence, towards the defence, essentially, of Taiwan even. That's really the gold standard out there.

Of course, we're all part of Five Eyes together. The United Kingdom is spending about 2%. There's no reason we can't encourage Canada to meet the same level, and if what was just being said before is the case, this is the best way for Canada to contribute to that global order.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Colby and Ms. Findlay.

Before I call on Mr. May for six minutes, Clerk, have we arranged for Mr. Fisher to get back on?

We're looking into it. Okay. The long-lost Mr. Fisher....

With that, we have Mr. May for six minutes, please.

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Thank you to both panellists today. This is great testimony for our work here.

My questions are going to be for you, Mr. Rasiulis.

Previously, sir, you stated that Canada has put in a very measured response that puts the emphasis on diplomacy while not ignoring the deterrence side of the equation. In your opinion, how do diplomacy and deterrence work together? How should these two sides of the equation be used and how has Canada's response evolved as the situation has escalated?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: A long-standing tradition of NATO has been the Harmel two-track approach, which was developed during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. On the one hand, we had a robust deterrent posture in Europe. On the other hand, we had a measure of détente and arms control negotiations. It was a way of keeping a balance between force and diplomacy. It worked quite well in NATO's interests and in Canada's interests.

In the current situation, Canada has been punching well above its weight in terms of providing not only military training to the Ukrainians but also Canadian leadership in the forward presence in Latvia, where we head up a battle group. That is part of the NATO deterrent package to defend NATO territory and at the same time strengthen Ukraine's reform measures for its own armed forces. Ukraine is not part of NATO but is a partner of NATO.

We have been extremely robust in that area. Where Canada has not played a very strong role in this particular scenario, whereas historically we're very active diplomatically as well as militarily, is that we have not stepped up very much in terms of looking for the diplomatic solutions. The French, the Germans and the Americans have been largely leading in this area. However, Canada's decision—the Prime Minister's decision—to not accede to the Ukrainian request to ship weapons to the Ukraine, and instead to reinforce our training efforts with non-lethal aid, I believe and assume, opens up the possibility that Canada may be stepping up behind the scenes to do what Canadians have historically done with quiet diplomacy. It may be working to assist the Americans and the French and the British in their efforts to try to find a diplomatic solution out of this very devastating potential war that could occur.

There is the balance. Given Canada's latest position in not granting the weapons request, I believe it's leaving itself open for quiet diplomacy behind the scenes, but because it's quiet diplomacy, I don't know about it. I can only assume that it's happening.

Mr. Bryan May: In your opinion, sir, is that where Canada should be?

● (1600)

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: Yes. Historically, Canada has played a very balanced role. We have a great history during the Cold War of maintaining this balance, being stalwart NATO members but at the same time being very effective diplomatically, in various multinational fora, to look at problem-solving.

At the end of the day, Canada's interest, which I always refer to, because we have to look at this through Canadian national interest, is to have a peaceful world order that allows us to trade. This is our fundamental interest. We are out there promoting diplomatic solutions but maintaining a robust military presence, because the military, at the end of the day, underlies security. Without the military, you're not going to get very far, but the military is not by itself the solution. It works in conjunction with diplomacy. The two go together.

Mr. Bryan May: To that, we know that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, “Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to providing support for Ukraine and you have been that for a very long time.” He went on to say, “There are not many other countries at the equal level of efforts, doing as much as Canada.”

You've kind of touched on this already, but can you discuss a bit more—in the minute I'm going to give you here—the role that Canada has played to support Ukraine over the past several years? Can you perhaps elaborate on the support that NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg was referring to? In addition, what type of support could Canada offer?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: We've been very active on Ukrainian reform since 1993. In fact, when I was director of military training and co-operation, we were doing that well into the 1990s and into the 2000s. There is a long history there. It was always at the top of our priority list back in those days.

Since 2014 or 2015, when the conflicts broke out, Canada went in with Operation Unifier. We had 200 people on the ground as trainers. That was the highest level of any NATO contingent training Ukrainian forces. We were punching well above our weight there.

What more could we do? Well, I think we should continue to do exactly what we have been doing. Of course, currently the troops are not in Ukraine. They were pulled out on the weekend to a place in Poland because of the potential war. However, if we can get this thing settled down, the Unifier troops will go back in. The Canadian government has authorized a doubling of the amount, to go to 400 from 200, and before this problem started, 60 personnel were authorized to deploy to Ukraine immediately, so I think—

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave it there, Mr. May and Mr. Rasiulis.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I thank the two witnesses for being here. We are grateful to them.

I would like to take advantage of the fact that one of the witnesses is talking about the situation with Russia and the other about the situation with China. Up to now, we've tended to deal with these countries in isolation. Yet they both pose threats to Canada.

I would like both witnesses to talk about the possibility of a cascade of events. I imagine that China is watching closely what is happening in Ukraine at the moment and will be watching equally closely the international reaction that will follow.

What impact do you think one of these situations might have on the other?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Colby, please go ahead.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: We have seen that Russia and China are more aligned today than they have been probably since the period of Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin. It is, frankly, a catastrophe of American and western statecraft that we have reached this point, but this is where we are right now.

My view, and I've expressed it in The Wall Street Journal today, in case you're interested, is that we must prioritize Taiwan. Instead of adding more forces to Europe, the United States needs to be moving towards reductions. The main factor that Xi Jinping is going to assess in whether or not to attack Taiwan is whether he will succeed, and that will be a matter of whether the United States has enough forces, along with those of Taiwan and potentially Japan and Australia, to defeat an invasion.

There's often an argument right now that if we don't act sufficiently strongly over Ukraine, Beijing will be involved in that. I don't think that's correct, actually. They're differentiated in that way. We have to reckon with what I think of as the scarcity of our military power. We would like to resolve this issue by more allied effort. This is the point I'm trying to make to you, and I'm going to make it in the German press this week. I've made it in Britain and France and so forth, and I will make it to the Japanese tomorrow.

Together we can do so much more. The problem is that the alliance network that we're in is less than the sum of its parts right now. We don't spend a lot. We don't integrate very well, so the Chinese and the Russians are able to move much more effectively. That's the problem we face.

● (1605)

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I will pick up on that, if I may.

The Canadian effort, as I've said in my remarks, is fundamentally.... We're very Eurocentric in terms of our current deployment. This is very much part of our history. We've always defined Europe, and the current situation in Ukraine is one of the strongest importance from our national perspective.

As Mr. Colby said, the China factor is extremely important. Again, however, as he has suggested, there's a question of prioritization of resources. Canada right now does not have the sufficient force levels to maintain a presence in Europe and also address issues in the Pacific. That would largely mean a naval deployment for Canada, and currently we simply lack the resources to do both.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: In your opinion, should we prioritize the situation in Ukraine or the situation in Asia?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: Mr. Colby has outlined an American perspective on China. There is a long American history there, and I fully respect that.

From the Canadian point of view, the European connection, for the time being, certainly in the short to middle term, should remain our priority. I believe we are where we should be. Europe is a major trading partner of Canada's. We have a long association with Europe, culturally, ethnically, and business-wise. I'm very comfortable with the current position. It's a good division of labour, where the United States takes on the Pacific theatre and Canada takes on the Euro-Atlantic theatre.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: One possibility that has been raised in the wake of Russia's threats to Ukraine is that the latter may decide to abandon its application to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO.

I'd like you to talk about the likelihood of that happening. I would also like you to tell us about the possible repercussions if a rogue state succeeds in getting what it wants by acting in this way towards the West.

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: On the Russian position, they are extremely serious now. The NATO enlargement has been something they have been arguing against since almost the very beginning. In the 1990s—in 1997 and so on—they were extremely weak at doing that, and therefore they simply had to accept it or "suck it up", as they say.

In 2007, Putin went to the Munich defence conference in February—which is happening now, I think—and basically said, "We're not taking it anymore." He put the marker down. Russia was seeing NATO as encroaching on areas of its national security sphere of influence. They addressed the Georgian issue with a small war that next summer, in August 2008. When the Ukrainians did a major shift toward the European Union, with the association agreement in 2014, the Russians felt that it was getting too close to their perception of national security, and they reacted.

Would they use violence, right now, to address the situation if, in fact, NATO were to invite Ukraine to join? They are not doing that right now, actually. The question is.... They mobilized their forces of 130,000, approximately. They're showing their seriousness. I believe that if push comes to shove—though we're not there yet—they would be prepared to use military force.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave that answer there.

Ms. Mathyssen, you have six minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you. This is certainly an unsettling conversation.

In terms of both Russia and China.... Maybe both gentlemen can respond to this from their own perspectives. The Canadian Arctic seems to be, from some perspectives, open and a bit weak because of climate change, because of our own inability to send in the fighter jets that we need but don't have, and so on.

Should this be a major preoccupation, potentially, of Canada's? What are your perspectives on that?

● (1610)

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: Yes, it should be, particularly with climate change and the greater utility of the Northwest Passage. Canada was sensitized to this in the 1970s with the passage of the American ship, the *Manhattan*. At that point, Canada recognized that in order to enforce its sovereignty and the Canadian jurisdiction over the Northwest Passage—which is a dispute Canada has with the United States in terms of whether these are international or Canadian waters—it must show it has a capability in the Arctic. It has been doing so since the 1970s. Is it sufficient? Probably not.

The other powers are starting to.... Russia, particularly, is ramping up a significant military footprint in its part of the Arctic. The Arctic is becoming an open gateway now, with climate change and the mineral resources there. Yes, one can only argue that Canada, in doing its reviews—which this committee is doing—would also need to assess the importance of how many Canadian Forces resources it would wish to deploy in the Arctic. We're really talking, in particular, naval and air, with some ground forces, of course. They'd have to be able to get in and out. The icebreaker capability is the first thing that challenges Canada. My understanding is that it has some way to go.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Ms. Mathyssen, I'd like to respond briefly. I think this is a good example of where Canada has a natural specialization and interest in the Arctic. Along with the Scandinavian countries, for instance, it's a natural area. The Chinese are becoming increasingly active in the Arctic, as well as the Russians.

If I could just briefly relate it, I would suggest that the best thing for our collective interest would be if countries like Canada invested in areas where they can have a high bang for their buck, whether it's in Europe or Asia. The worst thing is to spread it around and have little to show for it. Maybe Canada doesn't need to do it totally by itself but, say, with the U.K., Norway, Denmark, the United States, etc. That's much better than if Canada puts a little over in Asia, a little in Europe, a little in the Arctic, a little in South America, and then we end up with very little.

Historically, Canada has been capable, yes, with diplomacy, but also, as I always like to point out, it had the fourth-largest navy in the world in 1945. There's an immense ability. Because it's so secure, along with us, next to us, there's a real ability to turn the military investments into effective power projection capability that can add a lot of bang for the buck in distant theatres.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: At this moment right now, we're talking about the fact that.... We all know that we have retention and recruitment issues for a variety of reasons. COVID hasn't helped the situation and that ability to retain our armed forces. We're talking about who we send them to, when we send them....

Both of you have argued for focusing on one or the other. Would Canada be wise to re-evaluate this current situation right now and say with respect to the Arctic, how are we going to redeploy and move back on the other obligations that we have? How would we do that?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: If I could say this briefly, the big dynamic that is going to happen.... Only the Americans, the Taiwanese and maybe the Japanese and the Australians will be able to meaningfully contribute to the most pressing scenario in the Pacific, which is Taiwan. I don't think there's a realistic prospect of Canada making a material contribution. That's not disrespect; it's just a practical reality.

There is going to be more of a vacuum in Europe. Canada has a long-established position there and worked with NATO during the Cold War. It seems that there is both need and capacity. Maybe that is the most efficient allocation, along with the Arctic, which is natural in the sense that it's probably better to work with the grain of past practice on the whole, especially as we swing increasingly towards the Pacific.

● (1615)

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I would agree with Mr. Colby on that one. Europe and the Arctic would be very good Canadian areas of focus. That's where we've been historically, and I believe that it remains logical. The question is going to be, as is always the case, how much money we can put up. You, the politicians, have to deal with that, in terms of competing demands for the Canadian budget and the Canadian tax dollar.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathyssen.

We'll now go to our five-minute round. We have 15 minutes and we have 25 minutes' worth of questions.

Mr. Motz, you have five minutes.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Mr. Colby, this is a two-part question. You can answer the first part in the second question.

I noticed that when Mr. Rasiulis was responding to Mr. May's question and said that Canada is punching above its weight with respect to Ukraine, it evoked a facial expression from you. Would you like to verbalize what your face said?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I'm not very subtle. I'm sorry.

Mr. Glen Motz: That's okay. It goes with the second question.

You released an article yesterday, entitled “Ukraine is a distraction from Taiwan”. You're here, though, to discuss Canadian threats and our readiness to defend against them. You're clear in your article on what the U.S. should be doing to defend itself. What role do you think the Americans are looking for Canada to play?

This is tied to my first statement about Canada's punching above its weight, and your article.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

With all due respect, I don't think Canada is punching above its weight. Its defence spending is between 1.3% and 1.4% and there is a Wales commitment to do 2%.

I go around and I hear that people in Ottawa, Düsseldorf or Lyon don't feel that threatened. People in Ohio don't feel threatened either, and there is an increasing trend in the United States towards skepticism about our international commitments. There's a real test going forward about whether this alliance architecture can be sustained.

Moreover, to the point I made earlier and relating to the second point, we don't have the military capacity to deal with all the potential threats in the world. There's obviously China, but there's Russia, North Korea, Iran, terrorism, etc. We don't live in the unipolar moment anymore and we have to focus on Asia, which, by the way, is also a Canadian interest.

All the arguments I make for America's interest are essentially one to one with Canada, because if China has a dominant economic position, you'd better bet it's going to apply it against Canada. In fact, it already has, and it's applying it against Australia.

We're much more powerful. We have a plausible route to autarky, but forget it for a smaller country, so everybody should want us to be playing that role in the Pacific. It's a collective good, but it's going to leave a vacuum in Europe, and Europe is very important. I'm not saying we should ignore Europe.

I served in the Pentagon. I was the lead official for America's defence strategy in 2018. I know the situation. We have essentially what's called a one-war military. What that means is we are not building a military to fight two simultaneous wars, because we are going to lose the primary war if we don't focus on that, and it's going to create vacuums. We're going to need the French and, above all, the Germans—the Germans are the primary problem—but Canada, the United Kingdom and others can really help.

I hear Canada talking a lot about the commitment to a peaceful world and stuff. The most concrete commitment I can see is spending more to help, to be frank.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much for that.

To both gentlemen, Canada, as of late specifically, has been a country that supports allies through training and provides a more tokenistic deployment rather than any combat support.

Are our international partners—Mr. Colby mentioned Australia, for example—looking for Canada to provide a greater level of support, in your opinion? Both of you can respond to that, please.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Absolutely. A hundred percent. The Australians have been with us in our good wars and our bad wars. I mean, they're all bad wars. I should say our ill-advised wars and our well-advised wars. Of course, Canada was in the world wars throughout.

There's no situation in which Americans would not welcome more. Forget about Americans. There are the Taiwanese. That's not even saying that Canada should be directly involved. There are the Poles, the Balts and the Scandinavians.

We're beyond the point at which countries can kind of have these caveats. Again, the Germans are the primary problem. We're all going to need to put our shoulder in as societies to.... You know, the Russians, the Chinese and others are really moving at this point.

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I will just follow up on the Canadian position and its military deployments. We've been involved with deterrence operations, as we are now in Latvia. We have a ship that's part of the NATO force cruising into the Black Sea, and we have air deployments in Romania. Of course, we met our roles in Afghanistan. The Canadian military has been very much a part of deterrence and, in fact, war-fighting, as we did in Afghanistan.

The training side is specifically what we're talking about today with Ukraine. Ukraine is not a member of NATO and therefore does not get combat support. It gets training support under the partnership for peace arrangements. This is where I said we're punching above our weight, because in the Ukrainian training mission, Canada has been doing quite a bit compared to other allies. Not to denigrate the others, but—

● (1620)

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave it there. Again, I apologize for always cutting you off.

Mr. Spengemann, you have five minutes please.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Chair, thank you very much.

I'll start with a fairly broad question to Mr. Rasiulis, and perhaps I'll have time for some more detailed follow-up ones.

I was born in Cold War Berlin. I recall very vividly having to cross multiple checkpoints to visit family. I was a very young child at the time. My father was a child in Berlin during the 1948 airlift. He recalls the American relief pilots who were dropping chocolates and raisins in little parachutes to kids who were picking them out of trees. I had a very sharply defined vision of east versus west.

If we fast forward to 1989-91, there was at least a flicker over some time of not east versus west, but east and west. I'm wondering if I can invite you to speculate, with the benefit of hindsight, what went wrong.

We're now in 2022 and I think, without putting words into Mr. Colby's mouth, he described the current scenario as a foreign policy disaster. What could we have done differently? If there are one or two big foreign policy questions that could have been settled differently between, let's say, 1970 and 2007, what would they be?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: This will get us into a huge debate, so let me trot out my territory on this one.

I believe that the Russian position.... After the Cold War, we were not all that nice to the vanquished. Yes, the west won the Cold War, but this is the classic case of how to deal with your opponent when you defeat your opponent.

We sort of ignored them. We sort of pushed them around. We did the Kosovo bombing. We ignored them. That's why Putin went to the Munich conference in 2007 and said they'd had enough.

Could we have done something so that he wouldn't have had to do that? Could we have engaged the Russians more and not sort of pushed them aside? I don't think we did this malevolently; we just sort of thought that they weren't big players anymore, so we could do it our own way. We just sort of ignored them.

That, I think, was a big mistake. That has come to roost now. By deploying the troops they have—130,000 or whatever on the Ukrainian border—the Russians are demonstrating that they count. They're saying, "Please talk to us." Now they've got everyone's attention. Everyone is talking to them.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I'm sorry to cut you off.

Mr. Colby, can I ask you to come in briefly? Then I'll have a follow-up question. Maybe you'll both have time to address that as well.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Sure. Thank you. It's a difficult question.

My own personal view is that Ukraine and Georgia are probably a bridge too far. States that were with the U.S.S.R., except for the Baltics, were probably a bridge too far. My view is that we should not admit Ukraine and Georgia into NATO under any circumstances.

There could be a possibility of an agreement with Moscow, but it's looking unlikely at this point, although it may follow what—God forbid—looks like a conflict.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I have two minutes left.

I'm wondering if you could each comment briefly on defence co-operation as a diplomatic tool, as value in itself as a military process. Then I'm also wondering about, for example, UN peace operations, not conflicts between great powers to which Canada is allied, but other work that needs to be done, like in Mali, for example, and in other areas in the world where we do good military work through the United Nations. What's our capacity as Canadians to do that work? What priorities should we set?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I'll speak from a Canadian point of view on that one. We're stretched. The Canadian military deployments that we have now in Latvia and in Ukraine are basically pushing the envelope for us in terms of how many forces we can deploy. In Afghanistan we had roughly 2,000, and that was our limit, given the number of forces we have.

We have done peacekeeping, like in Mali, where we had that one helicopter squadron that went over there and did a six-month tour. We can do things like that, but in a very, very limited way. That's a capacity issue. These are good roles, but again, the Canadian Forces has only so many people and so many resources to do this. You will reach burnout if you deploy too much. You really have to make choices.

● (1625)

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I would just say briefly, sir, that I think on the defence co-operation side, that's a very important tool. It is a diplomatic tool, confidence-building, but also we can be greater than the sum of the parts, depending on the context. The ideal European defence posture going forward looks a bit like the latter part of the Cold War, where there were different national units along the inner German border. Obviously, as you'd know very well, that's not necessarily that militarized, but Germans, Canadians, French and Brits working together. That's the ideal, I think, that we want to move towards. We should think about Europe being SACEUR in the future, to give more strength to that politically.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I think I'm very close to my time, Mr. Chair, with not enough time to get another question in. Thank you very much, both of you.

The Chair: You are indeed. Thank you for sacrificing your 14 seconds.

With that, Madame Normandin, you have two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to pick up where Mr. Rasiulis left off, namely the issue of Ukraine and NATO.

In your opinion, is it possible that Ukraine, on its own, as a result of attacks or pressure from Russia, will decide to renounce its will to join NATO?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: This is the big question, the question of Ukrainian neutrality. I won't take up too much time, but the Ukrainian ambassador in London yesterday, Vadym Prystaiko, who I know, said Ukrainians might consider neutrality to avert a war. This was immediately withdrawn by the Ukrainian foreign ministry as a misunderstanding and speaking out of context. The fact that he said that, I think, suggests that it is being considered by some.

It is on the table. The neutrality option for Ukraine is on the table. It is what the Russians really want. The question is this: How is this going to be packaged? I believe that by discussing the new European security architecture, which the Americans have given to Russia as an option, therein lies the possibility to talk about a new framework that could include a moratorium on enlargement. I certainly agree with Mr. Colby's assessment in terms of our reaching our limits, perhaps, on enlargement. Perhaps a moratorium might be a good thing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: What message does it send that a state like Russia is able to put such pressure on NATO?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: It's *realpolitik*. The question is, are you going to fight a war over something that's not going to happen anyway? Ukraine is not coming into NATO. There is no consensus to do that, so you're fighting on a point of principle that it has a right to come, but it's not going to come. Why are we doing this?

I think the message has to be put diplomatically, but I can tell you honestly that, basically, it's not worth having a war over a point of principle when the reality isn't going to be that in the first place. The message has to be handled carefully, and this is for Canadian diplomacy behind the scenes. We have a very good relationship with Ukraine. I think we can quietly, behind the scenes, tell Ukraine that a neutral option might, in fact, work to its advantage. Austria made it work for itself. Finland made it work for itself during the Cold War. This is not necessarily a sentence to be condemned.

The Chair: Again, thank you, Madame Normandin.

Madame Mathyssen, you have two and a half minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: In terms of that neutrality for Ukraine, then, if that's in fact what happens, what should Canada do to support it in other ways through that?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I didn't get a chance to talk about the Minsk agreements in my comments because of the time issue, but the Minsk agreements, if they're implemented, call for a system of federalization in terms of a special status for the Donbass to return to Ukraine proper as semi-autonomous. That's a question of federalism.

There's also the question of Russian language rights for the Russian speakers in the Donbass, which is a question of bilingualism. In both federalism and bilingualism, Canada has a great deal of experience. In that sense, should the Ukrainians wish to move forward on implementing Minsk, Canada could certainly play a great role, with our experience in federalism and bilingualism, to assist the Ukrainians.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: You were saying before that we missed the opportunity after the Cold War to allow ourselves to build, in instances, trade. Why is it that the diplomatic corps, or that diplomatic side, has been so weakened? Maybe both of you can answer. I probably don't have time.

● (1630)

The Chair: You have time to let Mr. Colby go ahead, because he's been silent.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I'm not qualified to talk about the Canadian diplomatic corps. All I would say, Madam, is that in addition to the points that Mr. Rasiulis has made, Canada and others could also support, especially, Ukraine's ability to defend itself, which is an important part of this Finland model. Finland has had the ability to defend itself, and the Soviet Union understood that very well.

To me, something like that would be an outcome preferable to a Russianized Ukraine or a devastated Ukraine. How we get there, I think, is the question. To me, similar to Mr. Rasiulis, at the end of the day, NATO is a security alliance. It's designed to defend us. When people say that Ukraine has a right to join, I respect the people of the Ukraine, but, ultimately, those are Americans and Canadians who will be dying to defend them, and that should make sense for our people and your people, I would imagine. It's for you to judge.

I don't think it's in America's interests to send people to die for a principle. In a sense, that is hollow at the end of the day. It's not practical. We should be using our military only to serve our enlightened self-interests—but our interests. That's how we've made many mistakes as America in the last generation. I hope we can narrow our focus more but remain strong where it's needed.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathyssen and colleagues. We're running past the clock, but I'm still going to get Ms. Gallant and Ms. Lambropoulos in, for five minutes each, starting now.

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

In 2014, as you know, China starting building islands in the South China Sea. In 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine, and that was just six years after invading Georgia. Here we are, almost eight years to the week in 2014. Once again, Russia may be on the brink of invading Ukraine, and China appears to be preparing an incursion into Taiwan.

Given Russia's build-up of its naval...in its Arctic, and China's presence in our Arctic, would it be better just to focus our efforts on the Canadian Arctic, in addition to upholding our NATO commitment?

That would be for Mr. Colby.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Well, madam, the more Canada can do the better, but I think if your interests are localized in the Arctic, that's an important place to play. You're right to point to the Chinese as well as the Russians, but I would suggest that Canada can play a role beyond the Arctic that, I think, would be very welcome and useful.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In addition to the study being about threat analysis, it's on troop readiness. Were the U.S. forces stood down for two years, as they were for the most part in Canada, for COVID?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I hope not. I certainly don't think so.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In terms of force generation, were the U.S. troop strengths, or new recruits, severely weakened as a consequence of COVID?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I have not seen any evidence to that effect.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you. We had recruits in basic training and they were in isolation, which really amounted to solitary confinement—committing suicide—and those who were left had missed the deadlines for their courses because they were locked down. We lost a new tranche of people coming in.

In the eyes of the United States, is Canada upholding its NORAD obligations?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I'm not aware of the specifics. The United States is always looking to the Wales commitment as probably the arbiter. That's the main thing I would focus on.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Given our assets, where do you see Canada's national interests and the United States' national interests intersecting to the greatest degree?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Well, obviously the North American continental defence, which is going to be.... I mean, homeland defence has become a much bigger issue for the United States, because in the old days it was just nuclear attacks, basically, that we had to worry about at home. That, of course, was the origin of NORAD, but today we're looking at a wide variety of other kinds of conventional strikes and cyber-attacks.

This would be very real for both of us, because, say, taking the Taiwan scenario, the Chinese would likely seek to interrupt the logistics flows and force flows from the United States and other theatres that help—the same with the Russians—and that would have a direct impact on Canada. There would be significant expectations for NORAD to be able to defend.... I mean, there are Russian submarines with a wide variety of conventional as well as nuclear cruise missile capabilities floating around the Atlantic, and pretty soon, before we know it, there are going to be Chinese capabilities as well.

● (1635)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Back in 2016, this committee was studying the defence of North America, and the hypersonic missiles—of North Korea, actually, at that time—were sort of the new thing. What sort of technology, be it from China or elsewhere, is breaking or burgeoning that we should start to pay attention to so we're not caught so behind again?

Mr. Elbridge Colby: Well, look, a couple of months ago, ma'am, it was reported that the Chinese had conducted a hypersonic weapons test. Not only had we not achieved that, but also a lot of our scientists thought it was impossible. There are enormous breakthroughs going on, and we should no longer think of China in particular as playing catch-up.

Russians, since the Second World War, have always been at the forefront of military technology, but they lack scale in this day and age. The Chinese are bringing scale and sophistication now. Now they are basically at the forefront. In fact, our former vice-chairman of the joint chiefs said that they may exceed us—at least, their goal is to exceed us—in military technology capability by the end of this decade. We have a lot to be concerned about.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gallant.

The final five minutes go to Madam Lambropoulos.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm probably not going to take my whole five minutes, because a lot of my questions have already been answered, but what I would like to ask is this. You mentioned that, going forward, our threats are increasingly in the east and that basically we're going to be needing to focus more and to rely more on our allies. With most of them being in Europe, what change in strategy would you recommend, or what more do we need to be doing outside of what we currently have as alliances?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: I would suggest that we stay the course. I think we have it right between balancing our interests in Europe with taking care of our Arctic space, and I think that given our resource limitations, that's probably it.

You can make intellectual arguments to address the China option, but there's a resource issue there. Even the United States has made.... As Mr. Colby recommended, they can't fight two wars. The Canadian option is, for all sorts of reasons, to basically stay the course with Europe and perhaps up our game in the Arctic somewhat, but basically I think we have it right.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: The only thing I would say to that is that I think this should all be in the context of an overarching alignment over China. This is an argument similar to the one I made to the Europeans. It's that I think the deal is going to be, because Canada is reliant on American defence capability, just implicitly.... In a sense, the biggest challenge we face as a nation is that it's the first time we've not been a larger economy than our rival since Great Britain in the 19th century, when we had a hostile relationship with Great Britain. This is a very new situation. It's going to be a fundamental, societal-level, long-term challenge for us, and I think it's very important that we be aligned at the basic kind of level, even if there is a division of labour.

I agree with what Mr. Rasiulis is saying and it makes sense to me, but I think that politically and in ways that make sense and in planning terms—in Five Eyes terms— it's important that we be aligned in this orientation towards China.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I have one last question. Currently, Ukraine is not part of NATO. You mentioned the option of them pulling out their request and accepting to be neutral. If they were a member of NATO and this happened years down the line and Russia wanted to invade, how would the defence of the NATO partners be different from what it currently is?

Mr. Andrew Rasiulis: Vastly. I mean, it's hard to imagine how to conceptualize how you would bring Ukraine into NATO while it has a hostile relationship with Russia. In fact, a portion of its territory is occupied by Russia or its proxies in the Donbass, and then there's the whole issue of Crimea. I guess, to be literal, that if we brought them into NATO we would immediately go into war-fighting mode to defend the Donbass and to buffer off the Crimean peninsula. We'd go into war mode if we actually brought them into NATO.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: I basically agree.

The Russians have local military superiority. We have not militarized, from a NATO perspective, most of the situation in the former Warsaw Pact areas. We have very limited forces. We talk about these battalions that deploy, but they're very modest compared to what the Russians can deploy. In Ukraine, the situation would be far worse. It would be a very dangerous and ill-advised situation. In a sense, a lot of these decisions about NATO expansion were made in a period when Russia was really down for the count and their conventional forces were really in bad shape.

● (1640)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Maybe I'm missing something here. If what they want is for Ukraine not to be considered in the future as part of NATO, and NATO doesn't seem to really want them in because it would be a lot more negative for them if they were allowed in, what's the problem? NATO isn't in a position to want them in anyway.

Mr. Elbridge Colby: The main opposition in practice is that NATO doesn't want to be coerced. The solid argument against it is we shouldn't be doing this with a gun to our head.

The bad argument, in response to your question, is that countries get to choose their own allies. It's the Americans and the Canadians who are going to be paying the bill for that, so it's not a very sound argument.

If we could find a diplomatic solution that would result in something sustainable, protect our NATO interest and leave Ukraine in an independent situation, that would be an attractive outcome at this point.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave it there.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank Mr. Rasiulis and Mr. Colby for an excellent hour. It's been a very thoughtful, insightful and significant contribution to our study.

With that, I'm going to suspend for a minute or two while our next two witnesses come in.

Again, thank you.

The meeting is suspended.

● (1640)

(Pause)

● (1640)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

It looks like there's another media request for Mr. Leuprecht. While he settles himself, I'm going to go in reverse order and ask Ambassador Robertson to talk to us for the first five minutes, and then we'll go back to Mr. Leuprecht.

Welcome, Ambassador Robertson.

Mr. Colin Robertson (Senior Advisor and Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, As an Individual): Thank you, Chair.

I have three messages and a plea. First, we need to rethink how we look at security. It's been 18 years since we last conducted a national security review, yet the threats to Canada continue to evolve.

Ours is a meaner, messier world. In looking at 2022, UN Secretary-General Guterres warns that the rules-based multilateral systems that Canada helped engineer and sustain are not fit for purpose. Polling confirms what we see and hear. Our citizens have less faith in democracies and democratic institutions. Our democratic allies, especially in Europe, have less confidence in U.S. leadership.

The threats are varied and deadly: climate change, pandemics, terrorism, poverty, and inequality. This devil's brew accentuates state and inter-state conflicts, resulting in more displaced persons than any time since the Second World War. Conflict itself is changing, with hybrid warfare, untraceable cyber-attacks, disinformation, drones and mercenaries.

The United States, polarized in its politics, is less willing and able to carry the internationalist burden. A rising, aggressive China and a revanchist Russia mean the return of great power rivalry and a revival of the ideological and systemic divide between authoritarianism and democracy.

Second, our approach to addressing defence modernization is taking far too long to produce any useful results.

Our operational readiness relies on maintaining and updating our equipment fleet. Government process requirements too often handicap industry from getting the job done. Given the age and increased operational tempo, are the budgets sufficient? Are we investing enough in the enablers, digitalization and data management, that will deliver and manage an effective force that can win future wars?

Operational readiness of our forces starts with meeting recruitment targets and then ensuring conditions are sufficiently attractive to retain our forces. We've prioritized cultural change to address sexual misconduct. We also need to look at the terms and conditions of service. Let's think creatively how we grow, train and attract the kind of talent that can master the technological challenges of our digital age and address new threats like cyberwarfare and disinformation.

We rely on the Canadian Armed Forces as first responders to deal with floods, fires and ice storms, and to rescue our retirement homes during pandemics. These calls will only increase demands on limited resources. Government should look at creating a corps of volunteers to complement civil defence and disaster relief. The Germans do this well.

The third message is that changing geopolitics and new threats require a new grand strategy that combines purpose, priorities and budget.

Changing geopolitics means that the insurance premiums for national security have gone up. We are going to have to find more money for defence, and also for the civil instruments of national security. This means more investment in diplomacy and development, and in communicating abroad our messages on democracy, multilateralism and a rules-based order. Military power wins battles, but to win wars in today's world requires both hard power and soft power. In our meaner, messier world, Canada needs more of each.

We took advantage of the end of the Cold War to reduce defence budgets, confident that we could continue to rely on the American security umbrella. The Americans are fed up with carrying the load, and successive presidents have challenged us to do more, especially now that it's time for NORAD renewal. We claim sovereignty over our Arctic but struggle to exercise it. We need a budgeted blueprint with deadlines. We can learn a lot from Nordic partners like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Is there a role, for example, for NATO, now that the Arctic is part of the geostrategic chessboard?

As a trading nation, we depend on freedom of navigation. As a maritime nation, fronting on three oceans, we need to ask ourselves, do we have the right balance between our army, air force, and navy? We don't necessarily have too much army or air force, but we do need more navy. Our potential adversaries are investing significantly in their navies, and so must we.

The new offshore patrol ships are fine for performing their important but limited roles, but a deployable, combat-capable navy requires destroyers, frigates and submarines with air and logistic support. Investing in operational readiness only when we feel pressed and then doing so on the cheap undermines our national interests. Without an overarching strategy and shared cross-party view of our national interest and how to go about advancing and protecting it, we will continue to be late, unprepared and obliged to follow rather than lead.

● (1645)

To conclude, this is my plea to you as members of Parliament. When it comes to ensuring operational readiness, we need cross-party unity that can endure changes of government. Without cross-party support, it's hard to see how we can successfully address our threats.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Professor Leuprecht, please go ahead. You have five minutes.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht (Professor, Royal Military College and Queen's University, As an Individual): Thank you. My apologies for the disruption before.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

I thank you for this opportunity to testify once again before the committee.

I will answer your questions in both official languages, but I will testify in English.

[*English*]

It's an interesting day to be testifying on readiness, given the fundamental failure of our national security architecture and posture that we have seen in this country in the last couple of weeks. It should give us all pause for thought.

On readiness, the Canadian Armed Forces is keeping its head above water, but it is probably treading water. It will be unable to continue to do so if the organization stays the course, probably insofar as we wouldn't know that we are vulnerable until it's too late. That is, we have the right forces for today but not for tomorrow, and we have no plan to right-size tomorrow's CAF and ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Most of the emphasis continues to be on the tip of the spear, because those capabilities are perceived as the goal of the organization. Confronted with very hard choices in prioritization among operations, recruitment, training and support, the CAF will always prioritize operations, international and domestic. However, the organization's greatest asset, and its greatest challenge, is not money; it is people.

Key enablers, notably personnel, are out of sight and out of mind. Recruiting, training, educating and socializing personnel takes time. By way of example, it takes about seven years and one million dollars to generate a fully trained officer, yet for years, recruitment has been relatively neglected because of too many competing higher priorities. By way of example, the CAF is currently having to go a full year without a director of professional development, because no colonel is available to fill the position. Colonels are the ranks from which the CAF draws its general and flag officers, so it is not only CAF's professional development that is suffering as a result; the case is also illustrative of the extent to which the CAF's senior officer ranks are depleted and oversubscribed.

The fragility of the CAF PD system is emblematic of the greater CAF, which is in urgent need of reconstitution, the CDS's top priority, which is regenerating the force, culture change and modernization. Professional development and culture change go hand in hand, yet how is the CAF to succeed in reconstituting itself without professional development?

The government's attitude is that the CAF doesn't need more money, because it's doing what the government is asking it to do. That attitude could not possibly be more misguided. Just look at the frequency and extent with which this government in particular has been drawing on the CAF to support international security and domestic operations. Never has the CAF been more instrumental to advancing Canada's interests, and yet never has it been asked to do so much with so little.

As I wrote in my note to introduce the first issue as editor-in-chief of the Canadian Military Journal in autumn 2021, the CAF and the many components of DND, along with the defence team, may well be the most underappreciated and misunderstood organization in the Government of Canada family and in the country:

> Never have fewer uniformed and civilian members had to take on a greater number and complexity of tasks with relatively fewer resources. During the Cold War, the CAF generally had a single principal mission: the Soviet Threat. During the 1990s, it evolved to a focus on peace-enforcement, and was followed by Canada's deployment to Afghanistan....

Armed conflict now covers the spectrum, from collective defence to wars of choice. It has changed from attrition warfare to intellectual battles; from defeating the enemy on the battlefield to setting the conditions for stability and sustainable peace; from managing violence to overseeing national security.

Today's CAF is expected to contribute across a full spectrum of missions, to prepare for large-scale conventional warfare; advise and assist in building capacity and training foreign troops against a host of terrorist non-state actors; take the lead as a framework country in NATO's enhanced forward presence to deter Russian revisionism and aggression in Latvia and across NATO's northeastern and southern flanks; contribute to UN peacekeeping and peacemaking operations; advance the government's feminist international assistance policy; dispatch special operations forces to far-flung corners of the world to shore up local capacity; prepare to deter violent extremists—

● (1655)

The Chair: If I continue to let you run on all the tasks the CAF has to do, we'll be here until tomorrow. I'm sorry to cut you off. I appreciate your thoughtful comments.

With that, I'm going to move to Madam Findlay for six minutes.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you very much to both of you for being here today and for your well-thought-out comments. It's very much appreciated.

Following up on where you were, Mr. Leuprecht, there are so many areas in which this government in particular is looking to our CAF to operate both domestically and internationally. We may be about to see an invasion by Russia in Ukraine as well as what we're speaking about here today.

Do you agree with me that there has to be more money and more investment put toward recruitment and retention, and that it is urgent?

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: We have a shortfall of 7,500 members in the organization. That's over 10% of the CAF's authorized troop strength. There are simply not enough resources to attract talent. The case in point is the CAF's cyber capability. The CAF is competing against 200,000 unfilled cyber positions in North America. The CAF can't compete against industry. It needs a whole host more options.

Yes, money is part of the challenge, but a considerable part of the challenge is getting the right people in the door and then making sure you get the right people into the right positions. Cyber is a great example of how hard it is to get the right people in the door, let alone into the right positions.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I assume that is part of what you mean by "professional development"; it needs to be broader and more robust.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: The military tends to hire people who are what's known as "left of good" and it trains them up. That's why the military has a very robust education, training and socialization mechanism. It's because of the uniqueness of what it does and because its soldiers aren't born; they're made.

In areas such as cyber, for instance, and increasingly in other trades, we're using what people call the "unicorn model". This relies on happenstance, that the right people will just show up. We can recruit them off the street and they'll do the work, because it appeals to their sense of duty.

We need to be able to develop people who are left of good, but we also need to recruit people who are right of good. That requires a completely different approach to recruitment. We can't just hope that they somehow show up or that they already exist in the ranks. That requires a lot more government attention, because many of the constraints are not CAF- or DND-made constraints. They are, in some ways, government-made constraints.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: With respect to our capabilities, we have a real problem with getting on with procurement in Canada. When I was associate minister of defence, now eight years ago, we were talking about a need for new fighter jets. Today, we still don't have a decision and we have.... Our fighter capability.... I'm advised that we need 150 fighter pilots trained and we're at less than 50. It is a dual problem of a lack of procurement with modern, fifth-generation equipment and also those trained to operate that equipment.

I'd be interested in your comments on that, Mr. Robertson.

Mr. Colin Robertson: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] effort into looking at the terms and conditions under which we can both attract people and then retain them, because as Professor Leuprecht has pointed out, yes, recruitment is a problem, but so is retention. Are people doing the right things?

That's why I recommend that we take a look at terms and conditions and how we are doing this in order to be able to meet the challenges you have correctly identified. As you have pointed out, procurement has been a problem for a long time. It transcends government, which is again why I think this committee could say that we have to get this right. If you can come up with all-party unity, that would go some distance, because it's a problem that affects all Canadians, and it's something that every member of the committee should care about and I think does care about.

● (1700)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Either one of you can comment on this, or both of you.

How do you see NORAD modernization playing out with the threats posed by new weapons, and what would the impact be on deterrence?

Mr. Colin Robertson: On NORAD, the one issue—and I listened to the last panel—that the Americans are really pressing us on is NORAD renewal. The United States is our principal partner, our binational alliance. The one that is most important to us ultimately for homeland security is NORAD.

We're now being asked to do more, particularly in the north. My view is that we should get on with it, because, with the American contributions, we get anywhere from 40 cents to 60 cents on the dollar because the Americans invest in this as well, so this is defence that serves the Canadian interests, into which we have a partner south of the border willing to put money. I think we should proceed on this, because how long will that American offer endure?

If we get a change in government, and we get a Trump-like government in 2024, do you think they're going to be willing to put any money in? I doubt it. I think we'd have to do it all ourselves, so this is something that matters deeply to Canadians and to Canadian security.

As I say, we've been asked many times to exercise our sovereignty in the Arctic, but we have trouble doing it. Now we have a real opportunity, a real need, and pressure from the United States. The Americans aren't pressing us to get involved in Indo-Pacific or Europe, but they do want us to do more up in the north.

The Chair: Unfortunately, again we're going to have to leave it there.

Ms. O'Connell, you have six minutes, please.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Is there an echo? Is there a problem with my sound?

The Chair: Yes, we're having issues with the sound.

We're going to go to Christine, and then we'll come back to you, and hopefully we'll fix it.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Okay, thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I once again thank both our witnesses.

I feel like firing a question to both of you, but first, I'll give you a little background.

Mr. Robertson, you talked about the fact that some populations have lost faith in democratic institutions and that this is a breeding ground for hybrid wars involving disinformation, which Russia seems to use a lot.

Dr. Leuprecht, you spoke about the importance of improving the professional, social and personal development of military personnel.

I can't help but draw a parallel with the current situation on Parliament Hill, where we have seen, among others, the military joining the protest movement.

I would like you to talk about the importance of monitoring and training the military more closely. In some cases, they are likely to become associated with more extremist movements, which can be used against us by other countries, particularly through disinformation.

I would very much like you to make some general comments on this.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: In my view, it is inevitable in any institution that some individuals will express unacceptable views. This inevitably poses a considerable challenge for people in uniform, who must remain neutral.

I would say that the Canadian Armed Forces have done a good job in identifying a dozen reservists. It was the forces themselves who identified the individuals who are now under investigation. So the forces are well aware of the situation, and so are the counterintelligence people in the forces.

At the moment, I think the forces are doing an adequate job, but it certainly shows that when it comes to recruiting members, more effort needs to be made at the security clearance stage, even if it takes longer.

You have to make compromises, because the more time you spend checking on a person, the more likely it is that that person will be recruited by someone else. So you certainly have to do a better job at the beginning, but you also have to keep an eye out.

Basically, I would say that there are members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are completely loyal to whatever government is in power. What is disappointing is that all officers in Canada, whether they are military or police officers, know full well the importance of their political neutrality. They have learned this in training and professional development. They cannot say that they were not aware of it. It is disappointing, especially when they make such decisions intentionally—it is disappointing.

It is very important for an institution, whether it is the police or the military, to send a very clear signal to people in uniform that certain behaviours or messages of sympathy are unacceptable.

● (1705)

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

Mr. Robertson, would you like to add any comments?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Robertson: In the current world it's even more important now for us to reinstitute civics. This is not a federal responsibility, but a provincial responsibility, back into the school system, because I think we're not looking at one particular group, our enforcement side. We're looking at all of society to remind people why democracy and our system of government are important, and how it takes every citizen to work for that. Again, I wouldn't target a particular group. What our police forces are trying to do is important, as Professor Leuprecht pointed out. These individuals have a particular responsibility, but I think we have what they often call a "democratic deficit". We're seeing the effect of it in front of Parliament Hill. I think we have to remind ourselves of the values that democracy stands for and bring these back.

I would start with the schools. As I say, it's civic education, civic groups taking responsibility for why these vital freedoms that we fought so hard for still matter a lot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I don't have much time left, but I would like to ask a more specific question about the training of the military, given the hybrid wars and the fact that the military can now often be used in the field by spies.

Should we strengthen training or psychological preparation for fieldwork?

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: The psychological screening process is important, but I think we need to look at the impact of deployment on people. We need better research and data on the resilience of people when we send them on deployment, because we see the damage done to many people by their own deployment. So we need to do a lot more research.

I commend the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research for its work.

● (1710)

[*English*]

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

Ms. Mathyssen, you have six minutes, please.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would actually like to build a little further on the questions from my colleague, Madame Normandin.

Mr. Robertson, you spoke about civics lessons and the importance of democracy. Are there other institutions that the federal government could focus on? This would be a question for both of you, actually.

I think about our post-secondary education institutions who receive funding. What sorts of supports would you look for from the federal government to build the right people with the right skills in terms of what you were speaking about with regard to understanding how important democracy is?

Mr. Colin Robertson: With the federal government providing funding, it's pretty much up to each provincial government to decide the curriculum. We've seen changes. I would leave it with the provincial governments, because I think they are just as concerned about what's taking place as the federal government is. I think we have to respect the constitutional responsibilities.

Speaking specifically of the federal government, recently President Biden held a democracy summit in Washington, and the government committed to do more in terms of democracy. We have institutions in our country like the Parliamentary Centre, which has done an awful lot to promote democracy, but I don't see the investment that I think should be going to these kinds of Canadian institutions.

There is a Canadian perspective on democracy that really is fundamentally important. I think we do pluralism better than anybody else. There's a reason the Aga Khan set up his institute of pluralism here. When President Mandela came years ago, he said the one country that really does integration and pluralism well is Canada. We have a lot to share, and we have institutions, but we need to support them.

Again, I would look at the Parliamentary Centre in particular. The federal government has supported it over the years, but it could do more. The government has also talked about its peace, order and good government institute for a couple of elections, but we have not seen that yet.

We should get on with this, because I don't think democracy can wait. This is something we should attend to. We do have capacity, but it needs investment.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: Ms. Mathyssen, we have two significant deficits here that we can identify. One is that this country does not have a systematic network of institutes that do political education.

In Germany, for instance, each of the political parties has a taxpayer-funded foundation. Those foundations operate at arm's length from the party, in the sense that all the activities they do need to be open and so forth. Their key component in Germany is political education for the population. They do a fantastic job at that. It is part of the reason—I mean, this is a multifactor problem—the European population and the German population in particular are much more politically astute and much more aware of public policy in general.

The particular challenge the CAF has is that it has no presence in most of our urban centres, because repeated governments effectively closed those bases and moved the CAF out. If you go into a school in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, most students have never met anyone who works for the CAF. They have never met anyone in uniform. They have never even met a federal civil servant. It is not even on their radar.

As a result, there are huge misconceptions about the role that institutions such as the Canadian Armed Forces play in terms of our domestic, regional and international interests. One ready thing the government could do is make sure that the CAF are more connected with students and that its federal institutions are more connected. The problem with that is that not only the CAF, but just about all federal departments, are so short on staff that they don't have additional people they can actually send out to build those relationships.

One thing I think we can do is look at how the federal government can build better relationships and socialize the Canadian population as a whole, and in particular high school students, into the role of the federal government. Then, implicitly through that, it can socialize them into democratic norms without treading on provincial jurisdiction in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: That would certainly help a lot of people in my riding in London—Fanshawe. In London, we had Wolseley Barracks, and there has been a significant shutting down of the direct.... It's exactly what you were talking about in terms of integration and what the forces look like in those urban centres. I appreciate that a great deal.

I might leave my other questions, because he's going to cut me off anyway. I will hold on to my questions for my second round.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (1715)

The Chair: Thank you for the saving of 30 seconds.

Madam Gallant, you have five minutes, please.

I'm sorry. I forgot about Jennifer.

Jennifer, you have six minutes.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you, Mr. Chair. IT have set me back up, and I thank them for that.

Mr. Leuprecht, I just want to get back to a bit of what you were talking about with recruitment and your thoughts, especially around the fact that it's safe to say that the type of threat, or even the type of combat in a lot of cases, has significantly changed with the pervasiveness of cyber-threats and foreign interference. One never has to set foot on Canadian soil to see examples of this.

I understand your point about education throughout the system, but also at the senior levels, because as you mentioned as well, even just to be promoted or to move up in the ranks, one has to have served a significant period of time.

After the length of service, does that structure not also pose issues with the changing nature of threats and the ability to navigate and manoeuvre? I hope I'm making sense, but in an organization, you don't always have to look within the ranks. You could bring in the expertise that you need at the time.

Do you see this as an issue as well in terms of some of the structures within, with the changes that might be the nature of the operation?

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: Ms. O'Connell, you hit the nail on the head here.

We need a different recruiting model. I'll give you some examples.

We need more capacity for direct entry. One of the ways Germany fills, for instance, some of its cyber-trades is by creating a direct entry program for people with the specialized Ph.D.s in computer science and electrical engineering, and so forth. They make them lieutenant colonels and they remain lieutenant colonels for life. Why lieutenant colonel? It's because that's roughly the pay equivalent they would get in industry. We don't have anything like that here.

We need to relax the uniform requirements for some trades. If you're just sitting at a computer all day, do you really need to have these very stringent...?

We need to relax the requirements for fitness for some of the trades, but that's highly controversial, because it effectively means relaxing the universality of service requirement. Universality of service means that any member of the Canadian Armed Forces can effectively be deployed. I'm adulterating that slightly here.

If we can't attract enough resources, the situation is going to get worse. It's going to get worse for two reasons. One is that the labour market, as we all know, is going to get tighter, and the other is that we continue to have declining fertility rates in this country. As a result, you're not going to be able to find the people you need. Therefore, we need to rethink how we bring people into the organization.

Some of these are legislative constraints, which I can explain or write to you about, and some of these are cultural constraints whereby the Canadian Armed Forces just can't wrap its head around the fact that it might be possible not to have universality of service and it might be possible to take someone who has 15 years of experience in industry and bring them into National Defence and make them a lieutenant colonel, for instance.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

Wouldn't the same argument be made if you wanted to recruit more women into senior positions? If you haven't had women serving, or at the very least a very positive experience for women to be serving, to have that long-standing history will be challenging.

It's the same with racialized communities, indigenous people and on and on.

In regard to the other idea of having women serving, you brought up the point about the option of deployment at any point. Again, if you want women serving, does that not pose a risk also if a woman says, “Well, if I choose to have a family one day; is this an area I want to get into?” when there is this caveat that could be thrown at any point versus expertise? That's not to say that women who have families can't have that deployment, but the point is that if we need that expertise, we need to also be cognizant of the realities of their recruitment needs.

I will just add this before you answer, because I will run out of time: We are finding this is a challenge in police forces locally, and even recruiting firefighters when I was in municipal government, because we also have a changing cultural diversity of new Canadians who we are going to need to rely on in the labour force. Joining CAF or even firefighting services is not culturally something they have grown up with.

Sorry. I threw a lot in there, but can you see that these are also barriers that CAF is going to be continuing to experience, and is it all in the modelling and recruitment side that you see areas that can potentially fix this?

● (1720)

The Chair: I don't know how such a thoughtful question gets answered in 30 seconds, so I'm going to ask our witnesses to respond over the course of the next few minutes as we go on to other colleagues.

We are at 5:25 p.m., colleagues, and we're just barely out of the first round.

Mrs. Gallant, you have five minutes, please.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, to Mr. Robertson: What do you suggest can be done with respect to increasing naval capabilities, given that contracts have already been committed to? They are already billions in cost overruns, and delivery dates keep on getting pushed down the road.

Mr. Colin Robertson: We probably have to be slightly more innovative, just as we were in the supply ships when we decided to basically refit two ships that were being constructed in the navy yard, which previously hadn't been considered.

We are interoperable with the United States. Basically, they are our principal ally. They're building a lot of ships, so maybe we should look to them. In the past we've looked to Chile, Spain and others for supply ships when we were down. I think we should be looking to other sources.

We should be getting ahead of the game on things like submarines. Perhaps we should talk with the Australians, although I'm not sure the nuclear submarine option is one we want to consider. We looked at it in the late 1980s and decided it was going to be too expensive.

Perhaps we talk to the Japanese. They are an important ally, and submarines are great value and are probably going to be in the future in the Indo-Pacific as well as in the North Atlantic.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Mr. Leuprecht, seven years and $7 million dollars to get an officer.... In the balance between discipline and the shortage of the higher ranks such as colonels, as you mentioned, how sensible is it for the government to enforce COVID shot mandates, given that the government claims 98% of the military are already fully inoculated? Are the inoculation mandates in the best interests of the national security of Canada?

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: I might just correct you, Mrs. Gallant. It's $1 million and seven years for an officer, roughly, depending on the trade. It's much more expensive if you're a fighter pilot, for instance.

What happens if you have people who are unvaccinated is shown by the aircraft carriers in both the United States and France that were taken out as a result of the virus being carried on board. You can bet, Ms. Gallant, that our adversaries were paying very close attention, because they've just learned how to take out an aircraft carrier, war frigate or anything else that floats without having to fire a shot.

The resilience of the force in force posture is imperative if we believe that the Canadian Armed Forces needs to be an instrument that is ultimately available for the government when failure is not an option and you need to succeed, because you can't have a force that's down on its luck because of either a malicious or a biosecurity attack on our country.

Uniformed members already sign up for other types of restrictions when they agree to service in uniform, so I guess this is one of the elements that will now end up having to be added to that, not in terms of choice or no choice, but I see no way around that requirement to ensure the resilience of force posture, nor am I familiar with an allied military that sees a way around this requirement.

● (1725)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Everyone on that ship was vaccinated, apparently. That is quite important.

In 2014 Canada recognized the immediate need for a cyber-command, but at the same time we had this crush of new veterans no longer deployable due to injuries sustained in Afghanistan. The veterans already had security clearances and the warrior mindset. There was a local veteran-friendly transition program here in Ottawa, at Willis College, and they even developed a curriculum specifically for military cyber-defence.

Given that we're short 10% of mandated military strength, to what extent should Canada consider keeping injured but capable personnel trained specifically for cyberwarfare, since such activity can be conducted in Canada rather than having to deploy?

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: Mrs. Gallant, it's a fantastic question that we already wrote about 20 years ago, when we went to Afghanistan.

Under the Employment Equity Act, federal institutions have a mandate to proactively hire persons with disabilities. This has always been interpreted as hiring from the outside. For the armed forces, the challenge was always how to ensure that persons on the inside with disabilities—psychological, physical or other—as a result of deployments or missions would be able to continue to make a meaningful contribution to the organization they had chosen for employment, should they so choose.

We've made considerable inroads on that, but there's still considerable work to be done to ensure that we can provide for service members who choose to stay in, but that requires conversations about universality of service that I raised earlier on.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gallant.

I'm going to take the next five minutes. I want to pick up on Ambassador Robertson's initial comments about reviewing the security architecture of Canada, which is long overdue. I share the view that the architecture is, if you will, post World War II, but doesn't really reflect modern realities.

I buy the core argument that our budget should be moved from about $25 billion to about $40 billion ASAP. I appreciate that I live in a political world, and that may not happen any time soon.

Given the limitations of politics, but also how politics reflect population, I would be interested in your thoughts of what a modern security architecture would look like.

Mr. Colin Robertson: The new challengers are such now.... We spent a lot of discussion in this particular hearing talking about cyber-attacks. That is something that is real and current. A few weeks ago, they closed down part of our department of global affairs, the Pearson building, and other institutions. They shut down part of the Newfoundland government a few months ago.

Latvia, for example, has a unit in its military, which is attached to and has direct access to the prime minister's office. It is constantly monitoring what's going on, both in cyber and another critical area, disinformation, which is something that parliamentarians care deeply about.

The new fields that are out there.... We've just had discussions, as Professor Leuprecht said, about using health as a weapon, and disease to close things down. There are all sorts of new threats. Climate is a challenge for us. It's certainly real to the armed forces, with our floods, fires and ice storms. That's when they get called upon. There's a whole new range of threats out there that we don't.... As you put it, we tend to take a look at things in a traditional sense.

We need to sit down and think about what our grand strategy is going forward. The national security part is a piece of it: Other countries look at their national security either on an annual basis or, as the Americans do, every four years with the change of administration. We seem to drag along and make incremental change.

Because our resources are slight, we'd be far better.... This is where, again, I would challenge this committee to say yes, we appreciate that we're not going to have the ability to do everything we want, but let's focus on the priorities. That's part of what this committee is trying to achieve. I applaud it and encourage it, and I wish you well, because you're on the right track.

● (1730)

The Chair: Professor Leuprecht, I'm interested in your two-minute response to the security architecture going forward.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: There's a process and a substance question.

In terms of the process, I'm quite enamoured by what the U.K. did with the integrated review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development, which we treat as silos. There's an understanding that all of these are instruments of U.K. interests and a way to assert U.K. interests.

While I have some issues with some of the results that came out of it—one of the shortfalls of that review was that it was not at all coordinated with some of the allies and partners, and I thought there could have been more allied and partner input—it's certainly an integrated approach.

There's then a capability to translate what we come up with.... "Strong, Secure, Engaged"—whatever it might be—might be defence policy, but the government didn't call it a white paper for a reason. It was effectively out of date the day we introduced it. We have no plan for tomorrow's force.

What we need for tomorrow's force, as you rightly point out, Mr. McKay, if there is no new money, is to think about how we allocate and optimize the resources we have. I've long said our first priority isn't necessarily a bigger military. In fact, National Defence gave back $1.2 billion last year. Our challenge is to spend the money we have and make sure we have a better military, in particular a military that is better organized. Do you know that we spend a billion dollars a year, give or take, on tanks? We need to ask ourselves questions about what the optimal allocation is. That is ultimately a political question, not a question for Defence.

The Chair: Thank you for that response.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about tanks.

A voice: It's a tankless job.

The Chair: It's a tankless job, yes.

With that, Madame Normandin, you have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to come back to the issue of recruitment and retention.

One of the things we've heard on the ground, from some of the people who are in the forces, is that there's one area where there's going to be a lot of demand in the future, and in which we're really falling behind: cybersecurity.

I will follow up on what you mentioned, Dr. Leuprecht. There is a need to have people who would be ready to be deployed. There is also the issue of transfers which comes up quite frequently.

So I wonder how relevant it is to continue to transfer people who work in cybersecurity, for example.

Shouldn't we make sure that there are as few transfers as possible of these people or their spouses?

This is often the problem, as one does not want to lose this necessary expertise.

I'd like you to talk to me about that, as well as the possibility of offering more teleworking opportunities in some of the military trades.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: If I may, Ms. Normandin, I will answer in English, because the answer is a bit complicated.

[*English*]

The Canadian Armed Forces now has an NCM military cyber-operations trade. We need the same thing on the civilian side. We need a classification we don't currently have, because it's easier to bulk up on the civilian side than on the military side.

Let me give you another example that is not human resources; it's public administration.

The DND corporate network and the CAF network are owned by ADM(IM). That person is doubled-headed, is both on the information management side and the chief information officer. What does that mean? We have a corporate network within which we run the military operations. The problem is that network security and offensive cyber are two very different problems. At present, the military operations side is actually under the civilian side of the department. That leads to friction and misunderstanding, but it also leads to different types of prioritization.

Imagine you had two competing attacks on the network. Your corporate senior network access goes down in Ottawa, and some access or some capabilities go down in Latvia. The current incentive structure is such that the DM and ADM(IM) would likely bring up the corporate civilian side first, because that's where their incentive lies in the way they're remunerated and in the way they report and so forth. We actually need a military side of the network that is run and operated on the military side.

Our dysfunctions on the cyber side are so serious that, in part, not only are we no longer being invited to the table with our allies, but in some cases we don't even know the table exists. We find out afterwards, because our allies find us so lagging and deficient in some of the capabilities we bring to bear. It's not just a cyber matter and defence matter; it is a matter of reputational risk.

● (1735)

The Chair: We're going to have to end Madame Normandin's time on that depressing note.

We now have Madam Mathyssen, for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: One of the things we were talking about on that retention side was whether it was necessary for a culture change. Is that drive necessary to make the CAF, and DND for that matter, a far more inviting and safe place to work, not just for women but for people of colour and people from equity-seeking groups?

One of the things that's been mentioned is that CAF should implement mandatory exit interviews. Everybody leaving the armed forces has to provide that necessary data. DND gets that necessary data to be able to improve those things.

Is that something that would help, and if not, why not?

The question is for both witnesses.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: That assumes that we have a disproportionate attrition problem among equity-seeking groups. It turns out that was the case in the 1990s, but in the 2000s the Canadian Armed Forces remedied that attrition problem.

The latest number I'm familiar with—and you can ask for those numbers; the Canadian Armed Forces has them and DGMPRA, the Director General of Military Personnel Research and Analysis, keeps those numbers—can show that we don't have a disproportionate attrition problem among certain equity-seeking groups. That doesn't mean we don't have problems that we probably should remedy within the organization, but I think the organization can show that it has remedied some of those lags.

It does have a problem with attraction among certain groups within Canadian society, that is to say disproportionately in urban centres, among women, but also interestingly among some ethnodemographic groups and socio-demographic groups. That's particularly interesting, because some ethnic communities sign up in considerable numbers and some don't sign up at all.

Rather than these big recruitment strategies in which we're going to spend how ever many million dollars to run some fancy television ad campaign, what we actually need is much more nuanced recruiting. The reserves, in particular in urban centres, are the ace in the hole, but again, they don't get the resources and they don't get the right people on the recruitment side. Those are the people who can also help to resolve some of the issues that were raised earlier about making sure we are more connected with the populations they serve.

Of course, your point is entirely well taken. The folks in uniform—the pillar that is there to defend our democracy, our prosperity and our security—must reflect our Canadian population.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathyssen.

For our final four-minute round, I have Mr. Motz and then Ms. Lambropoulos. I don't see her on the screen, so if that could be corrected between now and then, that would be good.

Mr. Motz, go ahead for four minutes, please.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr. Leuprecht, you mentioned early on—and were cut off unceremoniously by the chair, unfortunately—a plethora of activities and actions and responsibilities that CAF has right now, which are exacerbated by the mandates from this current government.

What are a couple of things that CAF is doing right now that you think it shouldn't be doing, and that CAF should be doing right now but isn't? Keep in mind that I have only four minutes.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: Mr. Robinson will have something to say here too, so I will try to keep it brief.

I think the three domains that are going to be the most important and the most contentious, and in which there's the most competition and the most transformation, are maritime, space and aerospace, and cyber. We need to disproportionately double down in terms of our efforts in those areas.

In terms of cyber—

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay. I'm sorry. I have one more question. You mentioned cyber. I'm going to cyber right now.

Both Your Excellency and Mr. Leuprecht, the U.S. has indicated that it's going after cyber-attacks like terrorism attacks. You mentioned over a year ago, Mr. Leuprecht, that our systems in the legislation are set up to protect us, basically, geographically, based on our borders, when geography doesn't apply anymore.

For both of you, should we also look at foreign-based cyber-attacks as a military issue?

● (1740)

Mr. Colin Robertson: They are in reality, but in our government we have tended to focus on the Canadian security establishment to watch and monitor, because while they may be military in intent, as we know, they are often aimed at vital infrastructure, particularly public utilities, which are managed on the civilian side.

I have looked at this issue around the world. I think the Baltics, which are often subject to attacks from the Russians, tend to consider this military, but it's a mix of military and civilian. We are de facto doing that anyway, so there's a military aspect to this; there's a civilian aspect, and then there's an industry aspect to this, which is trying to link the pieces together. I think CSE has probably been charged with doing that and seems to be managing it well, but it certainly is an area, as you pointed out, that is the future battlefield.

If you look at Ukraine, they are probably going to do cyber-attacks before they send in the rockets, and they have already used cyber-attacks to try to destabilize the Ukrainian government, as an example.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: We live in a globalized world where, ultimately, this is a space we cannot play defence; we have to play offence. We have to know what the adversary is up to, what its capabilities are and what its intent is before it is ever able to go after us. The biggest challenge that we have in the government is old networks. The attack on the GAC network, which is still not entirely back up and running the way it should be, is one example. We can invest, for instance, in people and so forth all we want, but the older our networks, the more vulnerable we become. There's an urgent need for an investment in our networks by the Government of Canada.

The Chair: Okay. You're not going to give me an opportunity to cut you off unceremoniously. Thank you for your deference.

I don't see Madam Lambropoulos on the call.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I am, but just give me a minute. Can you go to someone else, please? I apologize.

Mr. Bryan May: I'm wondering, Mr. Chair.... One of my other colleagues had her question cut off. Perhaps you could go, maybe, to Jennifer, if she wants to get her question in.

The Chair: Your thinking is strangely aligned with my own.

I'm going to ask Ms. O'Connell to use a minute to summarize her question, and then we will ask that the final three minutes go to our two witnesses.

With that, Jennifer, do you want to summarize your question?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Sure. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

As the time went on, Professor Leuprecht answered some of it, but perhaps both of you can speak to how we actually recruit based on expertise. What does that model look like, or how do we change that model to ensure that we have, as was said, a force that looks like and represents the Canadian public, which includes in those communities? That's my example about the challenges with police and fire. They are the same types of challenges of this being a dignified job or a career path for many in different cultural communities, as one example.

Dr. Christian Leuprecht: I'll make three quick points. One is that the CAF has done a pretty good job on families, on, for instance, parental leave and the way members are evaluated when they return from parental leave. There's been considerable progress made. There's still a lot of change that needs to happen, but I think the organization is doing much better here.

Inherently, organizations that are more diverse tend to perform better; they're more productive and more creative, so there's a general case to be made for diversity beyond the normative case in terms of setting the organization up for success.

The challenge that you bring up is that the CAF is on a 30-year timeline from the time you recruit someone until they actually rise to the senior ranks. Direct entry will allow us to remedy some of those shortcomings in staffing. Yes, it's about making the organization more diverse, but I think many of the skill sets that the CAF actually needs are now skill sets where the diverse components of Canadian society are disproportionately represented. Bringing people in laterally not only makes the organization more diverse; it also helps us remedy some of those shortcomings. The problem is within the current framework for recruitment, but also within the current framework for remuneration. This is extremely hard to do, in part, because remuneration is tied to rank. The CAF has resisted, tooth and nail, changing the system for remuneration that might decouple rank from remuneration.

● (1745)

Mr. Colin Robertson: You have to look at the terms and conditions under which people serve, and that should take in all those groups we've been talking about, because they vary.

The other piece I would suggest we need to look at is the recruitment. There, I would certainly endorse Professor Leuprecht's suggestion of looking at the German model, I think he said, in terms of bringing people in at the lieutenant colonel level. Again, we do this now in government across the board. I come from the foreign service. We began doing this because we found we were missing pieces. I think the military are doing it by bringing them in in a kind of ad hoc advisory role, but we probably need to, again, look at this in a systemic fashion so that we get the people and have it continue, so it's not just a question of having to be done by circumventing the rules.

Again, I endorse the professor's suggestion about looking at the German model.

The Chair: Okay. We'll leave it there.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank both of you for your insights and the brilliance of the way in which you articulated those insights, Ambassador Robertson and Professor Leuprecht. As we've seen in the last few days and weeks, if you don't have security, you don't have anything. I think this is a very timely discussion.

With that, colleagues, we will adjourn, and we'll see you on Wednesday.