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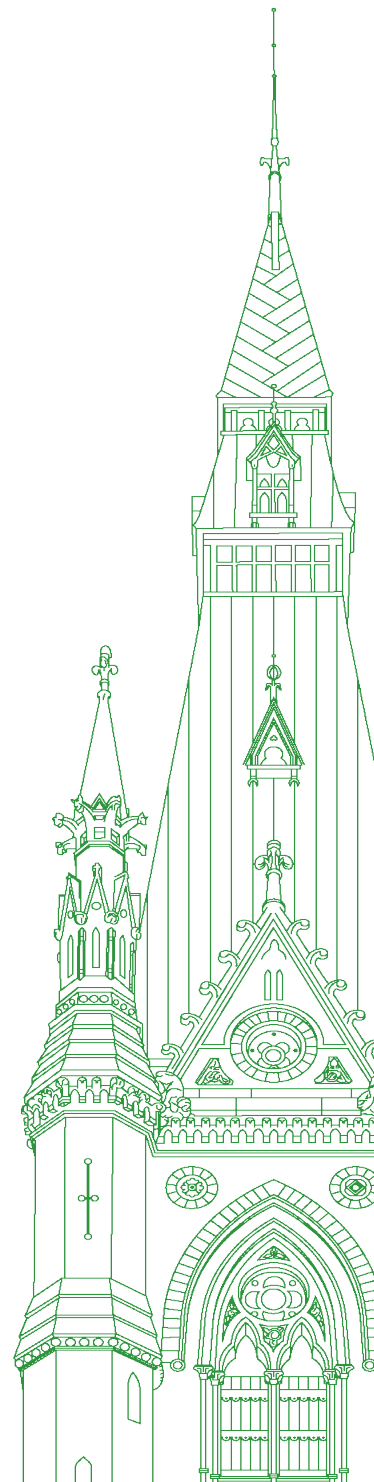
Standing Committee on National Defence

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Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Chair: The Honourable John McKay



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• (1540)

[English]

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

I appreciate everyone's attendance. I particularly appreciate that the minister came in early. It's a good example to your colleagues, may I say.

The minister has a hard stop at 4:30. I'm going to ask for her opening five-minute statement, and then we will follow our usual questioning order.

With that, Minister Anand, thank you for your prompt attendance. I think I speak for the committee when I say that I particularly thank you for all of your incredible work in the past few weeks and months. Thank you, again. I look forward to what you have to say.

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

[Translation]

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the supplementary estimates (C) for the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Communications Security Establishment.

Last month, when I was here to highlight my mandate letter commitments, I shared with you some of our ongoing efforts within our organization to defend Canada, protect North America, and strengthen our contributions to NATO.

[English]

The crisis in Ukraine over the past month has underscored the importance of this work and of upholding Canada's military presence across the globe. I had the opportunity to reaffirm and further discuss Canada's commitments last week, when I joined my counterparts from all 30 NATO countries during the extraordinary defence ministers' meeting in Brussels.

In the face of our biggest challenges, we must remain engaged internationally with our allies and partners in the name of peace, security, freedom and, of course, democracy, while also safeguarding our own borders and people.

We recognize that the people who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces are the most valuable and essential element of Canada's defence. I want to thank, in particular—

The Chair: Excuse me, Minister. I apologize.

Apparently, there are some hissing sounds in your microphone. I'm not quite sure what advice to give other than to, perhaps, push it up a bit. Is it, as they say, at your moustache line? You don't have one. Okay. Let's—

Hon. Anita Anand: I was just going to say that I hope this isn't too loud.

The Chair: No, I think that's good. Is that good with everybody else?

Thank you. Please continue.

Hon. Anita Anand: What I wanted to say was that the Canadian Armed Forces are the most valuable and essential aspects of Canada's defence.

Today is an important day, because we actually have Canadian Armed Forces members en route to Latvia from Valcartier. They are travelling as part of Operation Reassurance, and I want to wish them well.

[Translation]

Your country thanks you, and I also thank you.

[English]

The strength of our armed forces comes down to the well-being of those who serve in them. All that we do, from procurement to health care to culture change, must be focused on the people who put service before self, the members of our armed forces.

These priorities are reflected in the \$673 million we are requesting in these estimates, which is what I'm here to discuss today.

[Translation]

With this funding, we will maintain our international commitments, make further investments in our Canadian Armed Forces, accelerate our culture change efforts and strengthen our physical and digital footprint across the country.

I'd like to talk a little bit more about each of those areas today.

Our efforts on the world stage are only possible because of our skilled and dedicated Canadian Armed Forces personnel and the civilian personnel who support them in their essential duties.

[English]

Everywhere I go, in Canada and around the world, people say they want more Canadian Armed Forces. They want more Canada. This is the reality, and it is one of the reasons we need to invest in our people. We are only as strong as the people who come forward to wear a military uniform.

We know our people are at their best when we work to ensure their success and their well-being; where they are well supported throughout their entire careers; where they receive fair compensation for their work; and where they feel safe, respected and protected every single day. Simply put, our armed forces need to know that Canadians and the government have their back.

• (1545)

[Translation]

As we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we see regularly during natural disasters, our Armed Forces are there when we need them. We need to be there when they need us.

[English]

To that end, we are requesting \$108 million to expand long-term disability and life insurance coverage for CAF members; \$25.6 million towards the CAF health care plan; \$8.5 million to increase compensation for certain occupations within the CAF, such as pilots, special operations forces and search and rescue technicians; \$6.7 million towards the restorative engagement portion of the DND-CAF sexual misconduct class action settlement; and \$4.5 million as well as \$3.8 million to address gender-based violence and expand the reach and service of the sexual misconduct response centre.

To touch briefly on our engagement in the world, and to ensure we maintain our much-needed presence in the world, we are requesting funding for several ongoing CAF missions, including \$27 million for Operation Unifier in Ukraine, \$65 million for Operation Reassurance in eastern and central Europe, \$129 million for Operation Impact in the Middle East, and \$5.6 million for peace support operations in Africa.

[Translation]

We are also requesting \$103 million to support the NATO Readiness Initiative.

In the face of global uncertainty, we must maintain strong relationships with our allies and like-minded partners.

[English]

Mr. Chair, to conclude, it's no secret that our organization is facing challenges within our ranks and in our efforts to safeguard our country while remaining engaged abroad.

[Translation]

The funding requested in these supplementary estimates (C) covers a wide range of priorities, given these challenges.

[English]

By approving these requests, we will ensure that our people in uniform remain well positioned, well supported and well equipped in a time of incredible change and uncertainty.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

With that, we will go to our six-minute round.

My notes say that it's Ms. Findlay with Mr. Doherty. How you divide your time is up to you.

I'll go to Ms. Findlay first.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll divide it half and half, basically. That's the equitable way to do it.

Thank you for being here with us, Minister. We very much appreciate it.

We have a few questions.

Last week, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Canadians are convenors and “not a military power”. Do you hold with your colleague's view that we are not a military power, that we're just convenors, and therefore that military spending is not a priority?

Hon. Anita Anand: I want to begin by thanking the Canadian Armed Forces for their historic and ongoing service to this country. The reality is that our Canadian Armed Forces have consistently stepped up to serve our country. Whether it is in long-term care homes in COVID-19, fighting forest fires and floods in Canada, or assisting with the evacuation from Afghanistan or with Operation Reassurance and occupying NATO's eastern flank in support of the deterrence and defence posture of NATO, our Canadian Armed Forces have always been there for Canada. We must be there for them as well.

• (1550)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I appreciate that, Minister, and I appreciate those statements. It's good to hear.

If this government wants to help the people of Ukraine, what is stopping Canada from buying Stinger and Javelin missiles on the open market and sending them to Ukraine? Why aren't we doing that now?

Hon. Anita Anand: I want to be clear that we have announced five tranches of support for Ukraine in the military area, consisting of anti-tank weapons, rocket launchers, hand grenades, sniper rifles, ammunition and cameras for drones. We have also, of course, trained 33,000 members of the Ukrainian army, including 2,000 members of the Ukrainian national guard.

Your question goes to what else we can do. I want to assure this committee and all Canadians that we are doing whatever we can to assist Ukrainian soldiers at this time, including exploring the possibility of procurements from third party suppliers, as well as liaising with our international partners to contribute to efforts to support Ukrainian soldiers in a bilateral way. We will have more—

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I'm sorry. I have very limited time with you.

We also have surplus equipment in terms of Bisons, Coyotes and TLAVs. Are any steps being taken to send them to Ukraine to support the forces there, including as ambulances?

Hon. Anita Anand: As I said, we are exploring every opportunity and possibility to provide support to Ukraine. In the case of the cameras for drones that I mentioned, we were able [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] matter of three days to make sure we had those cameras in place for Ukraine. The items that you mentioned in your question are important to us, and we will continue to explore them.

Thank you.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

I'll hand it over to my colleague, Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you, Minister.

If NATO engages in war with Russia, is CAF ready to respond, and if so, how and to what extent?

Hon. Anita Anand: CAF and the Canadian government are in constant communication with NATO. We have made a series of pledges, including 3,400 Canadian Armed Forces members being at the ready in case they are called up by NATO. In fact, the frigate HMCS *Halifax*, which left Halifax on the weekend, is part of the NATO contribution that Canada is making.

The answer is yes, Canada is ready to assist when called upon.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, last year you failed to spend \$1.2 billion. Is that correct?

Hon. Anita Anand: Could you be more specific with regard to the item you're referencing?

Mr. Todd Doherty: You can't answer that. That's okay.

Do you know that the combat system has been declared “for U.S. eyes only”, and all Canadians working on the combat system have been fired?

Hon. Anita Anand: I am interested in your further explanation of which combat system you're referring to.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, do you know that all maintenance on the combat systems will be done in the United States?

Hon. Anita Anand: I will ask my deputy minister if he could respond to this question.

The Chair: Maybe Mr. Doherty could help by being specific about what combat system he is referring to.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Minister, the government's future surface combatant program has grown in cost. It's gone from \$60 billion to

an estimated \$100 billion. Has the government given any thought to an off-the-shelf foreign purchase?

Hon. Anita Anand: As part of Strong, Secure, Engaged, we are continuing to proceed with our planned procurements, including the procurement of 15 surface combatants. We will begin construction of the first ship in the 2024 time frame. The anticipated delivery will be in the early 2030s.

Thank you.

Mr. Todd Doherty: I'll cede the rest of my time.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you.

Minister, we're still getting a bit of static from your microphone. You may have to move it around a bit over the course of the half hour we have left.

Mr. Fisher, you have six minutes, please.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you very much for being here today. I want to thank you for all you've done on this very, very challenging file that you've been handed.

I also want to thank you for coming to Halifax last week to offer an incredible send-off to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces as HMCS *Halifax* left port. Your interaction with members of the families and members of the Canadian Armed Forces was nothing short of moving. Thank you for that. It was very much appreciated by all.

Minister, the supplementary estimates indicate \$65.5 million for Operation Reassurance. We've been hearing an awful lot about that operation recently, in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Later this afternoon, in fact, we are looking forward to meeting with Latvia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence to hear more about our bilateral relationship and co-operation as NATO allies.

Can you describe Canada's contribution? How does this emphasize Canada's commitment to NATO?

Hon. Anita Anand: Most definitely Canada remains strongly committed to its partnership with NATO allies and to reinforcing our support for NATO's eastern flank. Up to 915 Canadian Armed Forces members could be deployed on Operation Reassurance at any given time, making this Canada's largest international military operation involving the deployment on air, land and sea, elements that are so important to reinforcing NATO's eastern flank.

To strengthen NATO's deterrence and defensive effort, we announced on February 22 that we would expand Operation Reassurance by providing an additional 460 CAF personnel as a ceiling, along with further CAF military assets, including the *Halifax*, which we visited on the weekend before it set sail.

Shortly thereafter, the Prime Minister and I announced that we would also extend Operation Reassurance, one year ahead of schedule, for an additional number of years. What that means for Canada is that the battle group in Latvia, where Canada is the lead nation for a multinational NATO battle group composed of 1,500 soldiers from 10 allied nations, will continue; a battery of M777 artillery guns with forward observers and an electronic warfare group to [Technical difficulty—Editor] enhanced forward presence battle group in Latvia will continue; standing naval forces are continuing; there will be a second frigate, the *Halifax*, which left port on Saturday. An air task force which with [Technical difficulty—Editor] Hornets and approximately 140 [Technical difficulty—Editor] have supported NATO air policing in Romania since September. The most recent deployment will continue with a rotation scheduled for July 2022.

I could go on. We have a number of additional measures under Operation Reassurance that I could describe to you, but in the interest of your questioning time, I'll cede the floor in case you have further questions for me.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much, Minister. I do have another question.

The conversation around defence spending has shifted significantly since February, when Russia commenced its aggression against Ukraine. It's been pointed out many times that we live in a different world. That might be the understatement of our time. The rules-based order is under threat, and in fact, over the past weeks, we've been studying the threats that face Canada.

Where do you stand on the question of defence spending and re-sourcing the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Anita Anand: I will say that our government has been making critical smart investments into our forces, and I want to ensure that you know that we are increasing spending by 70% under Strong, Secure, Engaged between 2017 and 2026, to ensure that our CAF have the right people, equipment, training and culture to do the difficult tasks that we ask of them. We are actually seeing results from our procurement, in particular, six Arctic offshore patrol ships, two of which have been delivered, and one of which, the *Harry DeWolf*, has circumnavigated the North American continent.

We are going to be putting in place a contract for 88 new fighter jets, 15 surface combatants, two joint support ships, and 16 fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft.

The bottom line is that we will remain focused on the Canadian Armed Forces and on making sure they have the capabilities and culture needed to meet current and emerging threats.

• (1600)

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's fine.

The Chair: We seem to be continuing to have difficulties with the static. I don't know whether there's anybody there that can help out, but my attitude, colleagues, is just to plow on unless the translators really—

Hon. Anita Anand: What are you hearing?

The Chair: We hear static, and then every once in a while you cut out.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Can I suggest, Mr. Chair, that the minister just bring her mike up a bit more, by her mouth. That might help.

Hon. Anita Anand: Don't worry about interrupting me to tell me to move my mike around. I appreciate the collaboration.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay, let's give that a go.

Madame Normandin, go ahead for six minutes, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you very much, Madam Minister, for your availability and for being here.

My first question is about weapons requests from Ukraine. Ukraine recently asked for small arms, but Canada has exhausted its ability to send weapons. It would have to empty stockpiles from its own units to meet Ukraine's requests.

However, we know that in the United States, civilians have offered to send weapons including AR-15s, which are now banned in Canada. It had intended to buy them back and destroy them.

Was consideration given to sending those weapons to Ukraine rather than destroying them?

Hon. Anita Anand: Thank you for your question.

This is obviously a complex issue. First, I'd like to say that I have already announced six tranches of lethal and non-lethal military assistance for Ukraine since February alone. That's \$100 million in military aid for Ukraine.

As you said, it's important that we continue to support—

[English]

The Chair: Apparently, we're having additional difficulties.

Have you any suggestions?

Hon. Anita Anand: They're going to switch out my headset. One second....

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): John, no officials are on the same.... They can't all stream from the same spot. They don't have enough bandwidth, so shut off their video and then we can hear them.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): It's the headset.

The Chair: Apparently, Minister, what I'm told.... I'm getting amazing amounts of advice from people who are about as technologically proficient as I am, but what I'm told is that our connection with your colleague is actually sound. Your connection is not so sound, so for the time being could you maybe borrow your colleague's connection? That might work a bit better.

Hon. Anita Anand: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I've just switched out the headset.

The Chair: Oh my goodness....

Hon. Anita Anand: Can we just start this whole thing again?

The Chair: Well, I want to be fair to Ms. Normandin, because she has asked an important question.

Hon. Anita Anand: Exactly.

The Chair: Could you recommence your answer, please?

Hon. Anita Anand: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

First, I have already announced six tranches of lethal and non-lethal military assistance for Ukraine since February alone. That's over \$100 million in lethal and non-lethal military assistance for Ukraine. We are working tirelessly with our allies to deliver it.

As to my colleague's question about what we can do in the future, we're working with our partners and allies to make sure that we can continue to send and provide lethal and non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine.

• (1605)

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much, Madam Minister.

Yes, we can hear you much more clearly now. May I suggest that you consider repurposing the banned weapons and expediting the program that is now scheduled for fall 2023?

The last time I asked a question about what the Operation UNIFIER personnel were doing, since they were relocated from Ukraine to Poland, they were helping to look after refugees, primarily in Poland.

I'd like you to give us an update on the current role of those involved in Operation UNIFIER.

Hon. Anita Anand: Thank you very much for your question.

With respect to the last question, I am in direct contact with Ukraine's defence minister, Mr. Reznikov, and we often talk about what more we can do for Ukraine. I will continue to provide military aid to Ukraine based on these conversations.

As to your other question, our mission in Ukraine is a training mission, of course. It's not a combat mission, but our soldiers want to help if they can. We will continue to work closely with our allies to improve the situation there.

Because this is also an operational security issue, I can't give you a lot of details. We need to ensure the safety and stability of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Ms. Christine Normandin: We are currently discussing an increase of more than 2% to the National Defence budget. However, some things will admittedly take a long time. I'm thinking, for example, of the culture change in the military and changes to the procurement system.

Madam Minister, given this rapid increase, could you name one thing for me that can be done in the short term, at least, with respect to recruitment and retention, an important issue facing the Armed Forces?

Hon. Anita Anand: Thank you for this very important question.

For example, we need women in our military. They need to be able to work in an environment where they feel safe, protected and respected. The National Defence team is working to change its culture to create a better, safer work environment for women. The team is looking at new ways to reach out to women to promote the Canadian military and better serve them by creating more inclusive policies and work environments.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you, but your response was more about long-term measures than short-term ones.

Briefly, are you communicating with whoever is now in your former position about making changes to military procurement methods, which is another issue?

Hon. Anita Anand: Could you repeat the question, please?

Ms. Christine Normandin: I'd be happy to, if Mr. Chair will give me a little more time.

Considering that procurement is really an issue with respect to the forces, could you tell me if you speak frequently with the minister in your former position at Public Services and Procurement about improving the military procurement system?

[English]

Hon. Anita Anand: We are constantly focused on supply, and in particular recruitment and retention. That is a main priority for the chief of the defence staff and me. Part of what we are asking for in supplementary estimates (C) today is to have funding to continue to create a diverse, modern and agile Canadian Armed Forces.

What are we going to do? In the short term, we're going to be prioritizing efforts to enact meaningful culture change. We're launching a new retention strategy in 2022 to retain members, including from under-represented groups, and we're reviewing training at every level.

Those are short-term efforts that we are taking to address supply and improve recruitment, retention and reconstitution, but this is not going to be a process that is improved overnight or even within the next week. We have to maintain consistent efforts to improve recruitment, retention and reconstitution, because the forces are one of the most important institutions in this country. As I've said in my remarks, we need to do everything we can to ensure their longevity.

Thank you.

● (1610)

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Normandin.

My sense is that the minister's microphone is working reasonably well at this point. Am I correct about that? Good.

Madam Mathyssen, the final six minutes are yours.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Minister.

Just last year the Taliban seized stockpiles of U.S. weapons after the group overthrew the Afghan government. In 2011, the Libyan civil war resulted in the spread of weapons across Africa. According to the UN, some of those weapons went to terrorist groups via the black market. Now, of course, with shipments of weapons going to the Ukraine, some are really quite concerned and warning that parts of those shipments could end up on the black market or turned actually against the Ukrainian people if they end up in the hands of the Russian military or local paramilitary groups. There have been a lot of skeptics of Canada's tracking of those weapons as per the Arms Trade Treaty.

Can you tell this committee what measures you've put in place to guarantee the tracking of these weapons?

Hon. Anita Anand: I'll begin by saying we are working as quickly as possible to deliver new tranches of aid to Ukraine. As I said, two shipments of our lethal aid arrived prior to February 22. I can confirm that millions of dollars' worth of our aid has arrived in Ukraine and is making a difference on the ground as we speak. I want to be clear, however, that given the nature of this conflict, we are taking the security of the aid, and the personnel delivering it, very seriously and are unable to provide more detail for operational security reasons.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Putin has threatened that if foreign national fighters, including Canadians, were captured, they would be treated as mercenaries, not legitimate prisoners of war. They would be charged criminally, and they wouldn't have those protections guaranteed for them under the Geneva Convention.

Does your government have contingency plans for Canadians who could fall into this category, and what protections or supports are you putting in place for retired or former CAF members doing that fighting in Ukraine?

Hon. Anita Anand: I just want to reiterate on the last question that National Defence has signed a declaration with Ukraine's armed forces that all weapons provided will not be transferred to any other entity. In my in-person conversation with Minister Reznikov in Kyiv, before the further invasion occurred, he assured me that would be the case. We also have had a long relationship with the Ukrainian army. We have been able to work very closely with them in terms of the transfer of weapons.

In terms of your question related to the Canadian Armed Forces, I'm going to ask my vice-CDS if she would like to respond.

Thank you.

Lieutenant-General Frances J. Allen (Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces, Department of National Defence): Certainly, one of the things that we are always concerned about, as the minister identified, is that we are working closely with

our allies in ways that help them and meet their requirements and their needs moving forward. That is one of the key components of everything we do, from providing aid through to the work we do with allies prior to the conflict and the time frame we have. I would say that is one of the key components of making sure the capabilities we're delivering and the training we provide meet the needs of the ally we're working with.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: For the minister, because I didn't actually hear a response in that in terms of what supports will be put into place, especially if we're talking about former CAF members, former military members: What supports will be put in place to protect those individuals despite Putin's aggression against them and his claims that they would not be protected under the Geneva Convention?

● (1615)

Hon. Anita Anand: Military service places a unique demand on members and families, as your question suggests. We have the service income security insurance plan, which provides financial and insurance services and products to Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans and their families. This includes life insurance, long-term disability coverage, insurance benefits, financial planning, counselling and education services—

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: I'm sorry, Minister. That's not at all what I'm asking. I'm not sure.... I can repeat it again.

Specifically, Putin has threatened foreign nationals with not being protected under the Geneva Convention. This is not necessarily about those income supports or what have you. This is about if they are criminally charged, if they are taken. What supports are you and the government giving to former armed forces members who may be in that situation?

Hon. Anita Anand: Thank you for the clarification.

Global Affairs Canada advises against going as mercenaries to Ukraine. I believe the vice-CDS has a comment that she would like to make.

LGen Frances J. Allen: Thank you, Minister.

I apologize for having answered the wrong part of the question in what the member was looking for on that last part.

As the minister just stated Global Affairs has identified for Canadians the risks that are associated with going into a conflict zone at any given point in time, not only to their own physical safety and protection, but also in terms of the disinformation, the ways in which foreigners who may be engaged in the country can be used in ways that are difficult and counterproductive to the work that is going on there through the disinformation campaigns that we know Russia is very apt to use.

From a Canadian Armed Forces members' perspective, the CDS has sent a directive that prohibits members of the Canadian Armed Forces, regular force and reserve, from being in the area at this point in time unless they are on CDS-approved military missions. Current CAF members are not permitted to be in the area, even if they were to be on leave.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: So if—

The Chair: Unfortunately, Ms. Mathyssen, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. I appreciate your frustration, because it took some time to get closer to the answer. You may have to use some of your other time.

I have 10 minutes, colleagues, and 25 minutes' worth of questions. The minister has a hard stop at 4:30 p.m. I could do a lighting round—two minutes, two minutes, one minute, one minute, two minutes, two minutes—unless you just want me to treat this as one ongoing hour and a half of questions, and when the minister leaves, the minister leaves.

What is your preference—short snappers?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Let's continue on for the full length of the meeting.

The Chair: We'll continue on? Okay.

There will be two questioners in the second round—Ms. Gallant and Ms. O'Connell—and then the minister will have to leave and you'll have to carry on your questions with the others.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: If I have time, I'll share with my colleague, Mr. Motz.

Given that Canada is suffering such a severe shortage of deployable troops, and it takes years and tens of thousands of dollars to have an individual trained up to the deployment standards—for the special forces, it's even in the millions—with Canada at its highest threat level since World War II, how much is CAF going to allocate additionally to replace the decades of experience and loyalty being cast aside in the name of mandates that the chief medical officer indicates may soon be lifted?

Hon. Anita Anand: There's a lot in that question.

What I want to say is that as you can see from the supplementary estimates (C), we're focusing to a very large extent on recruitment and retention. We have to make sure we are building up the CAF for the long term, ensuring the right training and the right equipment. That's why we're focusing on recruitment. That's why we're focusing on reconstitution. People are our priority, for the forces and for me, and we're taking very serious steps to ensure mitigation and recruitment initiatives so that we can bring our forces to full strength to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.

That is important not only for domestic operations but also internationally. We are very careful about what we are committing, because we need to make sure that reconstitution occurs.

I'm not sure if the VCDS has anything she would like to add.

• (1620)

LGen Frances J. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister.

You're absolutely right in identifying that people are critical to us. During the time of COVID, we've certainly seen a decrease—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: She gave me a fulsome answer, so....

LGen Frances J. Allen: Thank you.

The Chair: Sorry. It is the member's time, and she apparently wants to move on.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Given the potential to be in a hot conflict zone involving CBRNs, how much is being allocated to ensure that our 3,400 troops committed to Operation Reassurance have, should it become necessary, the personal protection gear in place?

Hon. Anita Anand: This is a question for my officials. I will ask my deputy minister, Bill Matthews, if he would like to respond.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: We can save that for the next round, then.

What amount is being allocated for the pre-deployment readiness exercises for these 3,400 committed troops?

Hon. Anita Anand: We are committed to a range of options for NATO and a range of pledges. The 3,400 troops make up just one of those components. They are being very well resourced in terms of their readiness. Truth be told, we are at the ready, if we receive the call from NATO, to defend with our allies every inch of NATO territory under article 5 of the Washington treaty.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What would be the name of that readiness exercise to get them prepared for that deployment, should it become necessary? Do we have the name of that op or exercise?

Hon. Anita Anand: The operation is Operation Reassurance, and it would be—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: But the exercise for readiness—what is that called? Then I can match up the amount spent.

LGen Frances J. Allen: I couldn't give you at this point in time, although I can later, the actual name of the exercise. We have what we call the joint exercise and training account, through which we identify the costs that are associated with the readiness training that we do. Then, as you've seen through the supplementary estimates, these are the opportunities to go back and identify that funding.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What amount has been allocated towards technology to detect under-Arctic ice incursions in Canadian waters?

The Chair: It's a fairly technical question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Has any money been allocated to that?

Mr. Bill Matthews (Deputy Minister of National Defence, Department of National Defence): There's nothing in the supplementary estimates (C) specific to the capability that is being referenced here. The member may be trying to associate detailed costing with specific activities as opposed to overall readiness and capability. I suspect that we may come back to this in the second part of meeting, but I don't want to waste any more of your time, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay. What amount is being allocated to supplement the forces and the rangers we have in the far north, along our shores around the Northwest Passage? What has been allocated for additional supplementary protection, human-wise, should it become necessary?

The Chair: Please answer very briefly, if it can be answered. If not, we'll come back to it in the second round.

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Chair, am I able to answer that?

The Chair: Okay, that's it for the answer.

For the final five minutes, we have Madam O'Connell.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thanks for being here.

In your opening speech, and then throughout questioning, you spoke about the importance of people. We certainly have been hearing testimony at committee that some of the most significant investments Canada can make are in recruitment and in its people.

I have two parts. Can you speak about the short term, ensuring that we are ready, as well as the medium and long term?

Then, one area that was brought up, which a number of us spoke about, is in regard to policy changes that will see more diversity in hiring, and for senior positions. It's the issue around years of service before you can reach a higher rank, for example, to have more women in high-ranking positions or in cyber. If we need specific cyber-expertise now, how long does it take for that individual to enter, to serve and then to reach the rank of the expertise we actually need?

Can you elaborate on some of that work?

• (1625)

Hon. Anita Anand: I most definitely can.

As I have reiterated a number of times in this appearance, investing in people for the Canadian Armed Forces is extremely important to me personally as minister, and to our government. It means ensuring that members of our defence team have a workplace that is free from misconduct and sexual harassment and discrimination, which goes directly to your question. It means ensuring that members of the Canadian Armed Forces have the equipment they need. It means ensuring that they have financial supports.

Your question was about the process for ensuring we have diversity as we move up the ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces, and also how long it will take to ensure we have diversity across the board. This is an extremely important question. It is one that I take very seriously and that I discuss with my chief of the defence staff and the larger defence team on a daily basis.

Lieutenant-General Allen would be best placed to elaborate on the specific efforts that the Canadian Armed Forces is taking to ensure diversity in promotions.

LGen Frances J. Allen: Certainly there is the point you brought forward about needing to identify at intake...so that we're starting to increase the number of women and diverse communities we're attracting into the Canadian Armed Forces at the same time as we are looking to recover the numbers we have. That is an important element, from our perspective, moving forward. We prioritize women applicants at the military colleges and are creating mentorship opportunities for women officer cadets as they come in.

You also asked the question around the amount of time it takes for people to be ready to perform the duties they have, and that varies, depending upon the nature of the occupation and the nature of the task they undertake. Retention—

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: I'm sorry. I don't mean to cut you off, but I'm limited in time. My question is around the policies around rank as well. I understand the prioritization now, but if we're looking at a pool of individuals who have served a certain amount of time, it's like a capsule in time of who actually served to get them to a place where they could exist now. We heard testimony that there are countries that remove some of the requirements for service when it's based on expertise. For example, I use the example of cyber, or to bring us to a level today of what our country looks like instead of waiting for that level of service to actually have that diversity. Are you looking at those sorts of policies?

Sorry, I just want to be clear because of the limited time.

LGen Frances J. Allen: Yes, and thank you for the clarification.

I would certainly say that we're not looking at a waterfall approach, whereby we simply have to wait for generational recruitment to achieve its outcomes. We want to be looking at opportunities to streamline and go forward.

To that end, I would say at this point in time we are looking at that even at the senior officer level, so looking down at the lieutenant-colonel and colonel level and saying—knowing that there are indeed some critical requirements in moving forward for a promotion—which are the critical ones and which aren't.

That's how I would answer that. The minister probably also has input that she could provide on this.

Hon. Anita Anand: I most definitely do. We have an employment equity plan between the years of 21 and 26 that recognizes diversity and the LGBTQ2+ community as a designated group. We also have a new promotion and selection process with selection boards that feature procedural improvements, including mandating that one voting member be from an employment equity group. We have ongoing recruitment efforts where we target engagement with communities across Canada to increase representation programs and indigenous representation prioritizing women [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Unfortunately, Ms. O'Connell is out of time.

Colleagues, this is where the minister has a hard stop and needs to leave. I would propose we finish out the second round of questions and then go to the first round on the second hour.

Again, on behalf of the committee, Madam Minister, thank you for your attendance. We appreciate all the work you do and appreciate your continuing attendance before this committee. Again, thank you.

● (1630)

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Chair, could I just make one comment?

The Chair: By all means, yes.

Hon. Anita Anand: I just wanted to mention that there was a question from Madame Normandin, my honourable colleague. When she was using the word “supply”, I thought she was referring to supply in terms of our people power, and she may have been referring to supply in terms of *approvisionnement* in procurements. I'll take that off-line with her and try to make sure I answer her question.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate that, and I'm sure Madame Normandin appreciates that.

With that, again, thank you. We'll no doubt see you again.

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

[*Translation*]

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

I'd like to come back to one of Madam Minister's last comments regarding policy changes that would help improve recruitment and retention. I know that efforts are being made.

Can the witnesses elaborate a little more on the general approach in this new attempt to improve recruitment and retention of personnel?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you for your question.

I will answer first and then give the floor to Ms. Allen.

First, we're putting a lot more emphasis on the health of personnel to ensure that they want to stay in the Canadian Forces. As the Minister has already mentioned, we will be launching a new strategy in the coming months.

I will stop there and turn the floor over to my counterpart.

[*English*]

LGen Frances J. Allen: You asked about some specific policy activities that were under way. I would say targeted recruiting is one of those policies that we are looking into to ensure that we are attracting in the right ways and at the right locations for the people we want to bring into the Canadian Armed Forces.

Even as we take a look at basic training after we have done the recruiting, we have moved to a diversified basic training while we are still working within the constraints of COVID. Hopefully, when that is lifted, we won't be doing basic training only in St. Jean. It's truly our centre of expertise for providing basic training, but we're doing small pockets of basic training in other locations around the country while we are looking to increase back to our steady state capability and looking for the increase we need to make the recovery going forward. This temporary, decentralized basic training is another initiative to improve the input that we have of people moving through.

Retention issues and policies related to retention are equally important. As one of your colleagues identified, it's because [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] lots of money and training in them and it takes time to deliver those capabilities. Retaining individuals is as important as attracting them in the first place. We're looking to—

The Chair: Ms. Normandin's time is finished.

Ms. Mathysen, do you want to take another stab at your question? You have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Ms. Allen, you said the answer, ultimately, is that if Canadian former soldiers go against the advice of the Canadian government, they do not receive supports from DND or the government. Is that correct? Is that what you meant?

LGen Frances J. Allen: I reiterated that we are encouraging all former CAF members to adhere to the guidance that's provided by Global Affairs, which identifies the risks to individuals of moving into conflict zones and the risks that can arise from that.

● (1635)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Okay. I'll move on.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has been doing some tracking of actual capital expenditures since 2018. Those have been under-spent in the four years of Strong, Secure, Engaged. The updated spending profile reveals a significant shift in those expenditures to subsequent fiscal years. The issue the PBO found is that if you're shifting the costs to other years, there are increased costs to equipment, delays purchasing needed equipment, and supply chain issues, which cost a lot more money.

What are the additional costs that are going to be incurred by DND? If there aren't any additional costs, what are the long-term affordability....? What will we miss out on in terms of being able to afford...or will we be able to afford less with that money?

The Chair: It's an extremely important question, but she's left you 30 seconds to answer it.

Mr. Bill Matthews: I'll give it a shot. Maybe we can take it up later.

The member is quite right about the PBO's analysis. It shows a slide into the right. It's not a huge shock in the most recent year, given COVID. There is regular inflation, plus you're also seeing inflation in defence markets. Often it's slightly higher, so there is an impact.

That means one of two things. You have to descope your project to a certain extent. If you were going to buy 10 of item X, maybe you buy only nine. A lot of the initiatives are scalable.

The other possibility is to reallocate resources if there are high-priority projects and you don't want to make that decision. You move money from a lesser-priority project into a higher-priority project.

The third option is additional funding. Those are the three choices one has.

The Chair: The third option always seems to be attractive to everyone except the person who has to write the cheque.

Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Chair.

Far be it from me to help the NDP get an answer or ask a question, but I'm going to take their question a bit further.

The question referred to mercenaries. If mercenaries go over, we understand from the minister's answer and your answer, Ms. Allen, that there probably will not be any supports for them.

Regarding non-military, non-mercenary, humanitarian efforts from Canadians who are on the ground in Ukraine, if something happens to them, what will the government's response be in terms of supports?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think, Mr. Chair, if we're dealing with the counsel or advice to former or current armed forces members, that's one thing. If we're going to this broader subject matter, that's a better question for Global Affairs Canada. Possibly we can take it offline to see if we can get an answer through them and come back in writing.

Mr. Glen Motz: Sure. Thank you.

We know the CF-18 is not combat-ready at all. We know the studies have shown that it's no longer a viable option in a fight. We know the competition is basically over. The scores are in. We know who won.

When is that contract going to be filled? I know government answers it, but you guys are on the ground. Will that be filled in 2022?

Mr. Bill Matthews: There are two aspects to this question. Number one, when will the results of the competition be known? That process is under way. Our colleagues at PSPC are leading that, and we'll leave it to them to announce when they are ready.

Given the CF-18 will be in service for a number of years to come, there are ongoing programs and projects to upgrade the capabilities, because we will be flying those planes probably for the next eight to 10 years. Perhaps the vice chief wishes to add further clarity there.

There are ongoing programs to upgrade the capabilities of the CF-18 as a stopgap.

Mr. Glen Motz: Who did you say, Mr. Matthews, is doing the procurement process?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Public Services and Procurement Canada actually runs the procurement process, so that's in their hands—

Mr. Glen Motz: It's been six years. Can someone light a fire under them? When is this actually going to come to be? I'm having a little trouble.

I don't see Ms. Crosby here. Will she be here in the next hour?

● (1640)

Mr. Bill Matthews: She's available if we need her.

There she is—

Mr. Glen Motz: Awesome. Thank you.

You are the CFO, basically, for the armed forces arm, as I take it, because you're here for them on the finance side.

My friend, Mr. Doherty, asked the question of the minister on the \$1.2 billion that was unspent in the national defence budget last year. Can you tell me how much was lapsed and returned to the consolidated revenue fund from that \$1.2 billion, please?

Ms. Cheri Crosby (Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance, and Chief Financial Officer, Department of National Defence): You're absolutely right. Every year, every department usually has an amount of money that is lapsed. Last year we did technically lapse \$1.2 billion. However, we are not leaving that money on the table. It does not go into the consolidated revenue fund. We are actually able to repurpose and reprofile and realign it to where we need it.

Particularly with the capital investment fund, given that we have a new model that follows an accrual process, we are able to move that money to the projects that need it when needed, and we are also able to respond or spend a certain amount of money that carries forward on our operating—

Mr. Glen Motz: How much was reprofiled to later years, and what years was it reprofiled to?

Ms. Cheri Crosby: I don't have the exact figure handy now for last year, but we reprofiled primarily to this year. There were some delays experienced with COVID. Travel was reduced. We reduced the number of exercises we were doing, and so forth, so our operating budget was able to be carried forward to this year.

We don't usually reprofile the operating budget beyond one or two years.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Chair, I can maybe add to that. Of the \$1.2 billion lapsed last year, I think we have reprofiled \$1.06 billion, so the vast majority. I believe it's mostly into the current year, as the CFO said.

Mr. Glen Motz: It's for what projects?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Typically, when the money lapses, it stays with the same project. There is flexibility there, but the working assumption one can use is that it would stay with the same project, because things are generally sliding to the right. There is flexibility there should we need it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Madam Lambropoulos, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses.

I was hoping to get to ask Minister Anand a couple of questions, but I'm sure you guys are more than capable of answering my questions.

On Monday we heard from several witnesses, professors who spoke to us about Arctic security, so my questions are more about what efforts we're currently making in order to make sure we are ready in the north, considering that Russia is currently our biggest threat and given the actions it's taken in the last couple of months.

Professor Ferguson specifically mentioned that there are gaps in defence in the north and that we currently don't have good enough systems to identify hypersonics in order to detect them. I know that Minister Anand plans on bringing forward a robust package that is meant to modernize the systems that are up there.

I'm wondering if the technology needed in order to be able to detect these hypersonics is actually available, if it needs to be created, and if companies in Canada can be put to work in order to make sure we get to the point where we need to be? Can you give me any information on where we stand currently and what needs to be done in order for us to be ready on that front?

Mr. Bill Matthews: There's a lot in that question, Mr. Chair. I'll do my best, and I will then turn to my colleague, the vice chief, to see if she wishes to add anything.

First and foremost, an ongoing presence is important. There were exercises with allies up there in recent weeks, but even sailing ships up in the north is important as well.

In terms of the specific question around future proposals, it is in the mandate letter to the minister to bring forward a proposal to modernize NORAD and the continental defence. I can't comment much further on that today, but that is in the mandate letter.

In terms of technology, it's one of those things. There's technology now, but it's also an ever-evolving field and the department does indeed have a research program to monitor the latest and greatest and ensure that industry is engaged, but I think it's premature to comment on what type of technology would be best suited to the risk.

Maybe I'll pause there and see if the vice chief wishes to add anything.

● (1645)

LGen Frances J. Allen: Certainly, a physical presence everywhere in the north, given the size and the vastness of our great Canadian north, is never going to be the approach we take. One of the key elements is surveillance and having sensing capability to understand and to be able to see what is happening across our country. The investments that we have seen in the recent budget letter, as they pertain to R and D moving forward in support of NORAD modernization and our sensing, are a big part of what we need to do on those first steps to make sure we start to create an appropriate capacity to have sensing and surveillance.

Obviously, the purchase of the AOPS also gives us a greater capacity to sail in the Arctic offshore. There are a number of things we need to do, but having sensing and surveillance capabilities so that we can act appropriately in the right place at the right time is the best strategy for security in the Arctic.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you very much.

As one of our witnesses also suggested—I'm mentioning this because it's fresh in my mind, and I guess they made me think a bit—we don't necessarily have a way to identify or understand the threats that face us from a purely Canadian context in order to know how much we should be investing in defence and how much we should be, I guess, pulling our weight within NATO.

I was wondering if you could comment on whether you believe that we understand to what extent we need to be delivering and investing, and whether or not this is something you've asked about.

I know you're also here to discuss what asks have been made in the budget and all of that, so could you comment on what you think we should be spending and how much of an increase there should be?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds to answer that question.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Like anything else, our job is to develop options. Obviously we're having ongoing discussions with allies, because they're also curious about what the government's plans are there. It will be done in collaboration with our allies, but I can't offer more in terms of views on what should be spent. As always, we will work on options.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Lambropoulos.

That finishes the first hour. We'll go to the second hour, a six-minute round, starting with Mr. Doherty.

You have six minutes, please.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Matthews, can you confirm that the future surface combatant ship designs have gone from 5,000 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think it's premature. What I would say is that with the initial design versus where we are now, it's certainly heavier. I wouldn't confirm the exact weight at this stage. There are some ongoing discussions. It's a really critical time for that project in terms of working with both the navy to identify requirements, and our key contractors, Irving, BAE and Lockheed to nail down exact requirements. We will have a better update in months to come in terms of what the actual weight might be.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Are you aware that Irving and Lockheed Martin have recruited British and Americans to work on the program, and that Canadians need not apply?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I am aware that there's ongoing knowledge sharing between our service contractors, as well as with the U.K. industry. That's important because the U.K. launched the surface combatant equivalent ship before us, so learning from their expertise is a really important aspect in terms of delivering this project. The sharing is actually a really good thing. It's not an all or nothing; it's about learning from our colleagues.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Can you tell us why the gun selected for the warship has the worst reputation of jamming of any naval gun?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I would have to defer to the navy in terms of the actual requirements that they have identified and how the bid provided by the winning bidder meets those requirements. That might be something we have to get back to you on off-line.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Can you tell us why the radar used is not used by any other navy and is an orphaned system?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Again, it's a matter of matching up the requirements identified by the Royal Canadian Navy with those that were proposed by the bidder and ongoing discussions there.

I have one of my colleagues here with me, Troy.

If there's anything to add here, Troy, just come on screen. If not, I'll just carry on.

Mr. Troy Crosby (Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel Group, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Matthews, for the opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The radar that's been selected in the proposal by Lockheed Martin and through ISI is in development now. It's modern, cutting-edge technology that will serve us well for the decades to come. It's

also being worked on to be incorporated into the Spanish navy as part of their solution.

• (1650)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Can either of you tell us how it will keep up with the carrier battle group, which travels at 30 knots, when these ships can do only 27 knots?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think, Mr. Chair, I'll go back to the initial answer, that we are still nailing down exact design requirements with our service providers. In terms of studies on speed, we'll know more as time passes on.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Matthews, can you confirm that the combat system for those ships has been declared for U.S. eyes only, and that all Canadians working on the combat system have been fired?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I'm certainly not aware of anyone being fired. I will turn to my colleague, Troy, to see if he wishes to add anything in terms of U.S. eyes only and so on.

Mr. Troy Crosby: There's no indication that it's U.S. eyes only on the Canadian portion of the solution. Undoubtedly, where there is technology transfer from a parent technology from the United States, there are elements of design there that I have no doubt are within the hands of the U.S. or the U.S. Navy, but we have the access required in order to bring into service our Canadian surface combatant for operation.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Is it true that all maintenance on the combat systems for those warships will be done in the U.S.?

Mr. Troy Crosby: No. The maintenance will be done in Canada. Some of the materiel will be returned to the original equipment manufacturers, wherever they happen to be, whether that's in the U.S. or elsewhere, because that's where the expertise lies. However, the touch labour, the ongoing labour and the sustainment of our combat capability will be a Canadian domestic requirement, in fact, for the long term.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Can I ask why we are not choosing the F-35?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think on that question we've already said what we can today in terms of the fact that the government ran a competitive process. There are two bidders left in the running, and news will come in the following weeks in terms of what the next steps are.

Mr. Todd Doherty: When will construction start on new polar icebreakers?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Polar icebreakers actually belong to the Coast Guard, so I'm not in a position to comment on when their construction might start.

Mr. Todd Doherty: In your opinion, how are we going to protect the Arctic? Do we have the capabilities for UAV surveillance?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I'm going to likely turn to the vice chief in a moment on this one.

As we've already touched on, there is ongoing work to look at modernizing NORAD continental defence, etc. The Arctic is obviously a big part of that. In terms of exact capability, it's too early to say what will be required and what will be put in place.

Vice, do you wish to add anything?

LGen Frances J. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A number of technologies can be used to provide the surveillance I spoke about previously. That is critical to being able to know what is happening in such a vast north as we have.

There are many technologies. There are satellite and UAV technologies. There is obviously physical presence as a representation of ships. These can all serve to provide an increased understanding of activity in the north, as well as of presence in the north.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Spengemann, you have six minutes, please.

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

I have two areas I'd like to ask about for roughly three minutes each. One is peace and support operations. The other is women, peace and security. I hope to get to both of them.

Thank you for being with us today.

The committee received information earlier in the first session that \$5.6 million, I think, have been requested in the supplementaries for peace and support operations in Africa. This area is not in the spotlight at the moment, but I believe it's fundamentally important that we discharge our obligations. I think there are a dozen UN peacekeeping operations around the world, and about half of them are in Africa.

I'm wondering if you could tell the committee about our strategy for those kinds of operations. Let us know if there are any current requests from the UN to Canada that have not been answered yet. Also, what do you see as potentially Canada's next area or mission of involvement following operation presence in Mali?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I will start and then turn to the vice.

I'm not aware of any outstanding [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Obviously, any decision for the government to employ the CAF in a peacekeeping mission comes in concert with discussion with our colleagues at Global Affairs Canada. Africa is an important area. We've seen events in the news of the changing circumstances there.

I'm not aware of anything in the hopper on that front.

Vice, you may wish to chime in here.

• (1655)

LGen Frances J. Allen: If we're speaking about the line item in the supplementary estimates that was identified by the CFO when she spoke, this is the snapshot of captures of costs of our previous activities moving forward.

Certainly, peace support operations are important from the government's perspective. Clearly, every set of circumstances and every particular military operation gets assessed as it pertains to the requirements of the UN or of the multinational organization that is

providing the peacekeeping or peace support function. Obviously, the appropriate amount of protection and security then need to be applied to ensure that CAF members or multinational forces are able to properly execute the duties they have to do.

Where and when asked by government to consider something, the Canadian Forces puts together options for the government to consider.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much, both of you.

Would these \$5.6 million be additional costs that CAF would incur by going into theatre, like Africa, or would they be the proportional costs of equipment, troops and CAF personnel that's already ready to go, that are simply then reallocated to a mission?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Generally speaking, this cost relates to tactical airlift. It's on an as-demanded basis. It is a bit of "if and when requested". That's the funding that has been set aside.

There are support staff involved in that activity as well. It is really just a placeholder for tactical airlift as required, generally speaking.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's very helpful, Mr. Matthews. Thank you.

In the 42nd Parliament, this committee had a chance to go to Mali. We studied Canada's role in international peace operations and conflict resolution. The committee made a number of cogent and very relevant recommendations, one of which is the following:

That the Government of Canada supplement our military contributions to peace operations with support for peace processes and with support for multidimensional programs addressing the challenges of stabilization and transition out of conflict.

Just briefly, in your assessment, is it currently the case that the Government of Canada is adopting and following a whole-of-government approach when planning and executing obligations under UN peace operations?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think that when there's deployment in these types of activities, it is never just the Canadian Armed Forces. There are other players as well—Global Affairs, as already mentioned. Sometimes we involve colleagues from the RCMP and other departments as well.

When and as required, we certainly engage other departments and have those discussions, but every opportunity is unique, so depending on the request that has been made and the type of mission, that may dictate who we engage with in terms of colleagues from other departments.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Would a request for a specific amount—like \$5.6 million—be developed in coordination with the kinds of international development aid we already do that would generate peace dividends? Is there lateral coordination across to the other departments that are involved in these kinds of questions?

Mr. Bill Matthews: There is coordination to a certain extent, and this is more of a theoretical answer. If it's largely one department that's footing the bill, we would carry the can for other departments.

If you're contemplating something where you would see other departments requiring resources, there's one of two possibilities. They put in their own request, or the money effectively sits with this department and then is transferred to the other departments when required, based on the rollout of the mission.

All is possible. The engagement is there. The funding models could vary depending upon the exact specifics.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you again.

I'm not doing this justice, because I have only 30 seconds left, but could you give us a thumbnail update on women and peace and security, Lieutenant-General Allen, and how it relates to the estimates?

LGen Frances J. Allen: In the estimates themselves, \$4.5 million—if I have the figure right—has been identified for addressing gender-based violence. It has really been around conducting research to prevent the perpetration of sexual misconduct, response options for providing legal assistance to victims of sexual misconduct, and developing.... Part of this money is a separate line item that you'll see in there—not necessarily this one—for developing peer support models. When we're talking about gender-based violence, which I think is the submission, if I'm answering your question correctly, sir, that is what the supplementary estimates submission relates to.

• (1700)

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

Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

[Translation]

Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Several witnesses have spoken to the magnitude of defence acquisition and procurement issues. It takes a very long time to get access to the equipment the military needs. Canada is known to have a relatively small amount of modern antitank and antiaircraft weaponry, and it has sent what it had to Ukraine, even if that has meant taking from stockpiles in its own units. Officials have always been relatively reassuring. However, whenever they have been asked about Canada's support for NORAD or NATO, for example, they keep repeating that we have allies. Canada really needs to become functional and autonomous one day.

When can we expect the various pieces of equipment we sent to Ukraine from our stockpiles to be replaced?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you for your question.

First, National Defence has given Ukraine equipment that we could part with.

[English]

The equipment was effectively spare or surplus, so most of what was provided was equipment that we felt we could do without.

There are some exceptions to that. The ammunition stocks will need to be replenished. That work has started, and it is important to replenish those.

We were never in a position where, by donating to Ukraine, we would be leaving the armed forces short. It is a concern, but it's a manageable risk is what I would say.

[Translation]

Second, I will reiterate that our defence policy is spread over 20 years and we are only in year five. As previously mentioned, the procurement process for new fighter jets is under way.

[English]

We will start to see new assets like ships and planes as time marches on over the coming years, but SSE, the defence policy, is indeed a 20-year policy, and we are only in year five.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Yesterday at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates meeting, they learned that we still don't know when the CF-18s will be replaced. Questions were asked about how many hours of maintenance per hour of flight time the new aircraft would require, but they were unable to get an answer.

With that in mind, are you able to give us an update on the CF-18 replacement process?

Furthermore, does the fact that we don't have adequate equipment to provide threaten NORAD operations? We are a NORAD partner, so doesn't that put us in an awkward situation?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I will talk about two things.

On the one hand, as we've said before, the process to replace the fighter jets is under way, and we will have news about that in the coming weeks or months.

[English]

At the same time, we have ongoing projects to continually upgrade the CF-18. We will be flying those planes for years to come, and it's important that they remain as modern as possible, because they will be a key asset from a NORAD perspective while we wait for the replacement planes to arrive.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: I understand what you're saying, but the CF-18 replacement process began six years ago. It was announced that it would end soon, but we still have no new date. In addition, we're unable to say at this time how many hours of maintenance are required per hour of flight for this aircraft. I just want to make sure that we have the correct information.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Unfortunately, I can't share that information with you at this time, but I will at a later date.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Thank you.

Speaking of procurement, based on what we've heard from several witnesses who appeared before the committee, the procurement process with local businesses is often very time-consuming. They are often given projects to keep them afloat between major procurement projects.

Given how slow procurement goes with more local businesses, wouldn't it be helpful in some cases to consider ready-made solutions, even if it means going beyond Canada's borders more?

• (1705)

[English]

Mr. Bill Matthews: That's a complicated question.

I would start by saying that the process to replace any type of equipment starts with a requirements definition. What is it that the military needs? Could we do things to speed up that process and identify options? Absolutely.

You'll often hear in public discussions about speeding up procurement, and that could be done as well. There is a desire to engage Canadian industry to the extent possible, because we want economic benefits that spin out of defence procurement. I'm not aware of local suppliers being slower than international ones.

The one thing I would flag for committee members, though, is this notion of off the shelf that often comes up. On big, complicated assets, it doesn't really exist. When you think of ships or planes, you think of the hull and the engines or the hull and the wings, depending on what you're talking about. Where the complications arise is in all the weapons systems that have to go with that. They have to be interoperable with our allies, so a true off-the-shelf solution rarely exists. Where it exists, you can absolutely look at it and it will certainly speed things up.

The Chair: Madam Mathyssen, you have six minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Thank you to the witnesses.

During Mr. Doherty's question time, I believe, Mr. Matthews, you said we would know about the fighter jets in a matter of weeks. Just now, with Madame Normandin, you said months. She also referenced the government operations committee, where they heard "by the end of the year". It's now weeks or months or by the end of the year.

Could you clarify what you meant? Is it actually weeks when you say weeks?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Weeks turn into months pretty quickly. It is a process that is being run by the Department of Public Services and Procurement Canada, so whether we're into weeks or slipping into a month or two, I can't really comment at this stage. The process will be done when it is done, and they'll be updating with the next steps at that point.

I can't really be more precise at this stage. I apologize.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: In my previous question, which I didn't have a ton of time for, we were talking about the PBO and

those increased costs to equipment. You mentioned that the delay in purchasing equipment or what have you would potentially work against us in terms of the scalability of the project.

Were you talking about that in theory, or has that actually happened? If so, where has it happened?

Mr. Bill Matthews: It hasn't happened yet that I'm aware of on any projects, but I will ask my colleague, Troy, to correct me if I've got that wrong. It's more of a theoretical concern that will eventually begin to impact some of the projects that come online. Inflation is real, so as items move to the right, you will see some erosion there and there are choices to be made.

Troy is shaking his head that there are no real examples yet, so at this stage it's a theoretical discussion.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: In terms of that theory, though, what would the percentage of that scalability be? I know you've given the example of buying nine versus 10, but if you could give us something more specific, I would appreciate that expansion.

Mr. Bill Matthews: It's a difficult one in a theoretical environment, because you could look at just fewer trucks—that's an easy one—or you could look at having the same number of trucks but less capability. My colleague, the vice chief, may offer something here, but that's a trade-off that would be made only with the direction of the experts who understand what the requirements truly are. When you're into army projects versus navy projects versus air force, the army projects tend to be a little more simple in general, and you have more things to play with. If you're looking at a plane or a ship, you see that it's not a decision to go down to fewer ships or planes. The army projects are probably easier examples to get your heads around.

I'll turn to the vice to see if she wants to offer anything here.

LGen Frances J. Allen: I would just add to the deputy minister's point that I think when we take a look at what we believe we are going to need to deliver our capabilities in the investment plan, we occasionally see that the requirements we identified as being good to have or that we'd like to have may not be available at a given point in time. They are desirable qualities that we'd like to have, but perhaps they aren't available. So sometimes we will then end up scoping down the size and the cost that's needed to deliver a project, because we have actually settled on a different set of requirements from the ones we may have had initially, in the very early stages.

I just wanted to provide that as an example, in the early stages of a project—before definition and implementation—of where there may be opportunities for some scaling with respect to cost and cost requirements for particular projects.

• (1710)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We would all understand scaling back in terms of numbers. In terms of operability or capability, my concern, of course, would be in terms of what our incredible men and women in the armed forces can do with that, and their health and safety.

When you're talking about scaling back, could you speak to what that means for the actual work of the Canadian Armed Forces?

LGen Frances J. Allen: Certainly, as we are defining the requirements for capabilities, we're working on a system whereby we have high-level mandatory requirements, which are the mandatory elements of the project that need to be delivered for the capability to be useful to deliver for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and for our outcomes.

Those aren't the types of elements we are talking about compromising on. It might be around additional elements that would make it even more versatile, potentially, but that is where the scalability and therefore the potential for cost adjustment can come in.

The Chair: Thank you. That completes our six-minute round.

Colleagues, again I'm in the same position, which is that we can have 15 and 25 minutes' worth of questions. We have the Deputy Prime Minister of Latvia coming, and that's going to require us to go in camera. As you know, that's a bit of a process in a hybrid committee setting.

I'm going to be my usual arbitrary self and go two minutes, two minutes, one minute, one minute, two minutes, two minutes. That will take us close to the end, and then we'll go from there.

Mr. Glen Motz: It's faster to do the full amounts.

The Chair: Well, the problem with full minutes is that it will take us to a quarter to six, and we'll cut off the time.

Mr. Glen Motz: Just one round.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Why don't we just use four minutes up to this intervention?

The Chair: I appreciate all of the assistance I'm getting to chair this meeting, but we are going with two minutes.

Mr. Motz, you have two minutes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: [*Inaudible—Editor*].

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: This is for the vice-CDS. Perhaps she could finish replying to the questions that we asked, the first one being the amount of money allocated to our 3,400 potential troops that would be deployed to Op Reassurance, should it become necessary. What amount is being set aside for CBRN personal protection equipment?

LGen Frances J. Allen: I'd like to clarify, just to make sure I understand the question correctly. Were you wanting to know about the preparation of the personnel who might be called upon to go augment in NATO, or about CBRN training and protection in general?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: How much has been set aside for the protection and how much has been set aside for the training of those troops to go to Operation Reassurance, if need be?

LGen Frances J. Allen: Thank you for the clarification.

As we take a look at the type of environment that any military capability is going to be entering into, we do a threat assessment of the environment and make an assessment of what we think the CBRN requirements may be in that environment. We then make those adjustments and add them into the training if we believe that's a necessary step for us to take.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you. That's great. I get the idea now.

To get back to our troops, some of them are over 20-year veterans who've been cast aside because they didn't get all their jabs. What amount is being set aside to replace them, or is it a cost-savings exercise because it's less expensive to pay brand new recruits than somebody who has been there 20 years, plus a potential pension if they go all the way to 25?

• (1715)

LGen Frances J. Allen: The Canadian Forces certainly has the funds set aside to have us at our manning level, so there's no additional funding that needs to be set aside as we're bringing new recruits into the Canadian Forces.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: What amount is being set aside for StratCom?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gallant. You'll have to get that answer at some other point.

Mr. Fisher, two minutes.

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

I just want to begin by responding to a comment made by Mr. Doherty earlier on, when he talked about Irving Shipbuilding and said Canadians need not apply.

Mr. Chair, that is an incredible disservice to the thousands of Canadian shipbuilders building our warships every day. There are thousands of Atlantic Canadian shipbuilders, many from my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, and we should be extremely proud of those shipbuilders. I, for one, am.

Could I get the vice chief to just elaborate on the challenges associated with major capital expenditures?

You talked about COVID. COVID is an excellent reasoning for perhaps the inability to spend that money, but what factors challenge the ability to spend on large capital projects as planned?

LGen Frances J. Allen: The challenges that can arise are many and diverse. Those types of things, I think, are probably seen by our implementers, be it in on the information management, the infrastructure, or the materiel side of the house. It's possible that Mr. Crosby has additional information that he could provide to you on the types of challenges that he sees on capital expenditures.

Mr. Troy Crosby: Sure. Quickly I would bring COVID, of course, into the conversation. As well, though, we have challenges with industry's capacity at times to move programs forward. As was mentioned earlier [*Inaudible—Editor*] with the technical challenges, the integration challenges of some of the very sophisticated technology that we're seeking to deliver come with their own problems that we have to work through, and the spend, of course, is the outcome of the delivery of this equipment. When we run into difficulties, us and industry, then we see that manifest as delays in the project and money being moved forward into future years where it's required.

The Chair: Madame Normandin, you have a minute.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Drones are something we will discuss later, but L3 MAS, a Quebec business, was willing to work with other companies to “Canadianize” operating systems for drones. However, it appears that the government may be more inclined to go with a California solution.

Could you tell me if Quebec businesses are still in the running?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I will ask Mr. Crosby to answer this question.

[*English*]

Mr. Troy Crosby: L3 remains one of the two qualified suppliers in the competitive process for the remotely piloted aircraft system.

The Chair: Madame Normandin, I hope that makes you happy.

Madam Mathysen, you have one minute.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Of course, we've heard so many increasing reports of extremism, incidents of racism, continuous reports of sexual misconduct in the CAF and the leadership being charged. Many people within CAF have asked for a fuller picture. They've asked for each of the branches to develop annual reports to give a sense and scale of the scope of the problem.

I imagine this would be for Mr. Matthews in terms of the direction that the government would be willing to go in.

Mr. Bill Matthews: There's lots of discussion about how best to tackle this, mostly around culture change. Reporting is part of it. How far down you push the reporting, I think, is a live question, and maybe I'll turn to the vice chief, because she has more history on this issue than I do.

I'm not sure that pushing down detailed reporting at every level would be on my list of the best ideas, but there are others with differing views, and that's fine.

Vice Chief, you may wish to add here.

The Chair: Unfortunately, the vice chief is not going to be able to answer that question.

With that, I'm going to turn to Mr. Motz or Ms. Gallant for two minutes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I have a question about StratCom. How much has been allocated to StratCom?

LGen Frances J. Allen: Is that from the annual budget, ma'am, or the...?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes, I mean from the annual budget.

LGen Frances J. Allen: I would probably have to ask our chief financial officer for the allocation of funding for our public affairs branch, if that would be a satisfactory answer to you. We may need to get back to you on that.

● (1720)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Given the situation, are we giving anything extra? Even if you don't tell me how much we're actually giving, is it going to be more as a consequence of the situation that has arisen in Ukraine?

Mr. Bill Matthews: I think that maybe what we can do, Mr. Chair, if it's agreeable, is come back with a written response in terms of budget, current year versus budget past year—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

On Operation Unifier, has any additional money been allocated to Op Unifier should we be able to re-engage in that way, given the situation?

Mr. Bill Matthews: Maybe I'll start on that.

Unifier was pretty much focused on training, but there was a donation piece. The donation piece has actually been accelerated, while the training piece, for obvious reasons, has been put on hold. I'm not sure there's more I can add at this stage, but as events unfold, the government can always look at its posture and decisions can be taken at a—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Mr. Motz can finish up.

Mr. Glen Motz: What I'll do is make a statement, then, Mr. Matthews. This may be directed to you, based on my question before on procurement.

We know that to date we haven't even been able to procure a sidearm, a new sidearm for the Canadian army, yet we are still.... I think we look a little foolish, quite honestly, in that we can't procure a pistol, yet we're still fighting about how we need new fighter jets, new surface warships, new submarines and new icebreakers and drones.

Where's the breakdown? What's going on that the procurement is struggling so dramatically that it's affecting our readiness for our armed forces?

The Chair: The statement turned into a question and you ran through your time, so I'm sure that Mr. Matthews will—

Mr. Bill Matthews: Can I respond to that, Mr. Chair, or is it...?

The Chair: You may, in response to Ms. O'Connell's final two minutes.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, but my question is actually around the Middle East strategy and supplementary estimates and CSE's contribution.

I'm wondering if you can elaborate on what this specific investment in the supplementary estimates looks like. It's an additional \$4 million, but what is that additional \$4 million for?

Ms. Shelly Bruce (Chief, Communications Security Establishment): CSE has a mandate to collect foreign intelligence and also a long track record of supporting military operations with CAF, so that money has been dedicated to analytic resources to produce intelligence that can help Government of Canada decision-makers use foreign intelligence to inform their policies, but also to help CAF with the Operation Impact objectives and to provide force protection for the forces that are deployed.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

Without going into operational details and, again, without getting into the obvious protected information around that, is some of that additional money for additional personnel, or is it equipment-based or a mixture of both?

I'm just curious. Are we hiring more analysts, or is it equipment upgrades, etc.?

Ms. Shelly Bruce: It is predominantly based on analytic resources that are required to do that work, so people.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. O'Connell.

I shouldn't do this, but I'm going to ask Deputy Minister Matthews to respond to Mr. Motz's question, only because of my great appreciation of Mr. Motz and his contribution to this committee.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On pistols, I wanted to flag for the committee that this is a great example of the requirements that were initially laid out by National Defence through PSPC being so specific that a competitor said this was not a fair and open competition because they had effectively made them so narrow that the competitor couldn't compete.

They appropriately challenged it at the CITT and went back to the drawing board. We were able to turn the request for proposal around very quickly and get it back out, but it's an example of how, if one is too specific with the requirements, they actually limit competition and effectively maybe limit the solution. I think there are valuable lessons in that for all of us.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Matthews and General Allen.

I appreciate your contribution here to the study of the supplementary estimates.

Colleagues, there is no vote required, because it was deemed reported on Monday, so we won't have to go through the usual votes for vote 1c, 5c, 10c and 15c.

Our friends from Latvia have just arrived.

With this hybrid form of Parliament, we're required to adjourn and then to come back in.

With that, this meeting is adjourned, and we will re-empanel as soon as we are back online.

Thank you, again.

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