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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the defence committee. We will be discussing the supplementary estimates (B), 2018-19, and the 2019-20 interim estimates.

I would like to welcome the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence—and sir, thank you for coming; Deputy Minister Jody Thomas; and Lieutenant-General Paul Wynnyk.

Thank you and departmental officials for attending today.

Sir, I will turn the floor over to you for your opening remarks.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the standing committee, thank you for inviting me again to discuss the supplementary estimates and the 2019-20 interim estimates for the Department of National Defence and the Communications Security Establishment.

Before I begin, I want to thank everybody for the work they do.

Joining me today is Deputy Minister Thomas; the vice chief of defence staff, Lieutenant-General Wynnyk; Shelly Bruce, the chief of the CSE, as well as other very important members of our team.

Mr. Chair, when we formed government, our Prime Minister asked me to ensure that our women and men in uniform are prepared and well-equipped when called upon to serve both here at home and abroad.

To do so, we conducted probably the most open and comprehensive defence consultations ever undertaken, resulting in our defence policy, “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, a rigorously costed and a transparent vision for the next 20 years of the defence policy.

As we work to implement the policy, our number one focus is caring for our people. That means ensuring they have the support, the equipment and training they need to do the important work we ask of them.

I am pleased to report that 68% of capital projects in the defence policy are now complete or under way. That percentage reflects the implementation or completion of 225 projects totalling \$2.9 billion in contracts awarded in 2018.

We are doing what we said we were going to do to support the women and men of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

While the previous government cut funding to our Canadian Armed Forces through its deficit reduction action plan, we are increasing our defence budget by more than 70% over the next decade. We are working to provide the best possible care to our women and men in uniform and their families as they transition to post-military life.

In December, National Defence launched the new transition group to help members as they move from active duty to post-military life. We want to ensure that when the time comes, our members and their families are ready to make a seamless and successful transition. We have also reintroduced the veteran's service card to recognize their tremendous dedication and courage. As of this month, DND has mailed out more than 6,900 cards to former Canadian Armed Forces members.

We are also making military life easier for families by advancing Seamless Canada. We are working with the provinces and territories to improve access to health care, education and licensing when our members relocate across the country. Mr. Chair and members of the committee, this is extremely important.

And for those just beginning their service with the reserves, we are funding the full-time summer employment program again this year to help them gain unique and relevant work experience while learning valuable life and leadership skills that will help them find jobs in the future. The program is hugely popular among new recruits, and a big reason we are on track to meet our defence policy's target to grow the reserves by 1,500 members.

We are also looking after our women and men in uniform through our paid summer training programs for indigenous young people living in Canada, which combine traditional teachings with an introduction to military skills and practices.

Mr. Chair, our government values the Canadian Armed Forces members who defend our country and project Canadian values around the world every single day. Our support for them has never been stronger.

When we formed government, we recognized the years of under-investment by the previous government that left our military facing extensive challenges, including the long-standing neglect of our air force. As a result of this under-investment, we discovered that our air force could not generate enough aircraft to answer our NATO and NORAD obligations at the same time.

In “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, we laid out a plan to deal with this shortfall left by the previous government, which included securing interim fighter aircraft to supplement our existing fleet of CF-18s. The first two jets arrived in Cold Lake earlier this month and will be proudly flying in Canadian colours this spring. Sixteen more will follow in the coming years.

As the Auditor General has affirmed, there is still more to be done to address the shortfall left by the previous government. Now, to address that, we are also advancing the competitive process to acquire 88 new fighters. Now, after a decade of inaction by the Conservatives, we are ensuring that we can meet our international commitments with the arrival of these fighters, while holding an open and transparent competition to replace the entire fleet. This was not done before.

• (1535)

The same holds true for our ships. Just last month, we signed a contract with Irving Shipbuilding, which then selected Lockheed Martin to design the new Canadian surface combatant.

Meanwhile, three new Arctic and offshore patrol ships that will help us to protect Canadian sovereignty in the north are in full production. Steel cutting for the fourth is planned for later this year. In November, we announced a sixth ship, which we expect to be delivered in 2024.

These ships will enhance our Royal Canadian Navy's presence in the Arctic and support a range of missions, including humanitarian aid, search and rescue, and drug interdiction. The ships will create and support thousands of jobs for shipbuilders in Halifax, a region with deep ties to our navy. Many of its residents serve and sail, and many more are connected through family and friends.

To keep the progress on these Arctic and offshore patrol ships moving, we are requesting \$159 million through the supplementary estimates (B).

Through “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, we are also renewing core Canadian Army capabilities. In December we received the last of 500 tactical armoured patrol vehicles.

In addition, we are acquiring C6 general purpose machine guns to replace our existing machine gun fleet. The C6 is the firearm of choice for many of our NATO allies, and is fundamental to the army's future effectiveness as a combat-ready force. We are also delivering much-needed new C-19 rifles to our Canadian rangers to replace the Lee Enfield rifles they had been using since 1947—another example of the previous government's not getting the job done.

These investments are essential to supporting our Canadian Armed Forces members on operations, whether they are defending our sovereignty at home, or demonstrating leadership on the global stage.

In my mandate letter, I was tasked with ensuring that Canada would recommit to serving alongside our international friends and allies. After years of neglect by the Harper Conservatives, we are re-engaging on the world stage.

With initiatives like the Vancouver principles on peacekeeping and child soldiers, the Elsie initiative and our support for the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, we are once again demonstrating the leadership that Canada is known for.

Earlier this month, this committee saw up close how Canada is contributing to international peace and security in Senegal and Mali. Through Operation Presence, our Air Task Force Mali is delivering vital airlift capabilities in support of MINUSMA.

Since July, our Chinook and Griffon helicopters have airlifted more than 344,000 pounds of cargo, flown 139 sorties, and conducted seven medical evacuations over a span of more than 2,300 hours of flying time. I visited Mali with the Prime Minister in December to personally thank the Canadian Armed Forces members. At that time, the group included 13% women, who have been shown to improve a mission's operational effectiveness. These members are doing tremendous work in challenging conditions. In fact, the Netherlands Armed Forces awarded a decoration of merit to Canada's recently returned mission commander, Colonel McKenna, for his exceptional contribution in support of Dutch reconnaissance units on ground patrol.

On behalf of the defence team and all Canadians, I commend the entire air task force for this distinct honour. The air task force is now moving into its second rotation, with Operation Presence to be completed in July 2019. To prepare for the transition, we are requesting \$75.7 million to cover costs up until the end of Operation Presence and the lead-up to the handover to Romania, which will take over once Canada's deployment is complete.

Our engagement on the world stage is also why we are requesting additional funds to support Canadian Armed Forces missions in Europe and in the waters of the Middle East.

Specifically, we are requesting \$67.2 million for Operation Reassurance, where almost 700 women and men in uniform are deployed to lead NATO's enhanced forward presence battle group in Latvia, contributing to NATO's maritime task force in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. Also, we request \$23.1 million for Operation Unifier, where nearly 200 Canadian Armed Forces members are training over 10,000 Ukrainian security forces troops on a wide range of capabilities. Canada's support for Ukraine is unwavering, and we will continue to support Ukrainians in their time of need.

● (1540)

There is \$222.7 million dollars for Operation Impact, where more than 700 troops are contributing in the combined efforts of our international partners in the global coalition to defeat Daesh, and where Canadian Major-General Dany Fortin has taken command of the NATO training mission. In total, we are requesting \$313.9 million in support of international operations.

Further, we are seeking to transfer \$18.4 million internally to contribute more to the NATO security investment program. This program supports global peace and security by funding NATO's communication systems, military facilities and navigational aids. As a founding nation of NATO and one of its biggest financial contributors, our commitment to the alliance is strong. Unlike the previous Conservative government, which cut defence spending, withdrew from NATO's airborne warning and control system, known as AWACs, and stepped down on multilateralism, Mr. Chair, we are stepping up.

Canada is also contributing to NATO's efforts to strengthen gender equality, because we know that empowering women is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. In fact, our own Clare Hutchinson is currently acting as NATO's special representative for women, peace and security. Clare was a gender adviser for the United Nations for more than 10 years, and she is now responsible for all aspects of NATO's contribution to the women, peace and security agenda.

Here at home, our government is taking steps toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Last year, we signed an agreement in principle with Treaty 1 first nations on the sale and transfer of the former Kapyong Barracks in Winnipeg. Today, we are requesting to transfer nearly \$57,000 to help remove unexploded ordnance from the Tsuut'ina Nation's land, part of the former Canadian Forces base in Calgary.

Mr. Chair, Canadians expect their government to deliver on its commitments, and that is what we are doing and why we are requesting \$569.4 million in additional funding under supplementary estimates (B).

Separately, we are requesting \$2.7 million for the CSE to increase its secure communications capability, along with the transfer of \$13 million, of which \$11.5 million will support the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security. I was happy to announce the launch of the centre last fall. Its important work in educating and advising Canadians on how best to deal with cybersecurity threats is increasingly important as we spend more and more time online. CSE is also working with our national security agencies to protect Canadians and safeguard our democratic institutions against cyber-threats in the lead-up to the 2019 general election.

On a closing note, I will address the interim estimates. In the first quarter of the fiscal year 2019-20, DND requires \$4.9 billion dollars, representing one-quarter of the anticipated main estimates. The bulk of this includes capital expenditures and operating costs to cover salaries, utilities and maintenance.

Our women and men in uniform are the country's greatest strength. These funds will make sure that they have everything they

need to ensure we are strong at home, secure in North America, and engaged in the world.

Thank you very much. I'd be happy to take your question.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

I also want to thank the department for their support on our trip to Mali. We couldn't have done it without that support. We were very impressed with what we saw, and we learned that our troops were setting the bar very high in the task they were asked to do on the mission they are undertaking. Thank you for that.

We're going to go to seven-minute questions.

As a reminder, I know that some of these questions will span across a couple of people, so check in with me visually every once in a while for a cue that I need you to wind down within 30 seconds. That way I can keep the conversation going and make sure that all members get their time.

I'll give the first seven-minute question to MP Spengemann.

● (1545)

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

Minister, it's great to have you back along with your senior leadership team.

As the chair said, members of this committee had a chance to travel to Mali a few weeks ago. I'd like to echo the chair's comments on the quality of the support we received. We had a chance to speak with the women and men who were deployed in in Task Force Mali in Operation Presence. We had a first-hand impression of the excellence and the strength of the team currently being deployed. There was an overwhelming message that Canada is back supporting peace operations, and more importantly, that our contributions matter deeply.

I'd like to thank you for your leadership, and the leadership of your team in taking us back.

Minister, as somebody who has served in a UN mission in a conflict zone, I know that the mere presence of an advanced air medevac and casevac capability gives tremendous comfort and confidence to the women and men serving under the blue flag. Knowing that someone has your back when you're in harm's way really matters.

Could I take you through your own personal impressions when you were on the ground in December and your conversations with the women and men who serve? What did you learn, and what conclusions did you reach about the kind of activity you were involved in when contributing to MINUSMA?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: As you learn about the challenges of a nation, and as we were looking at creating our plans at how we could help the United Nations with its reforms, you create the policy and you figure out the plan, and then you rely on your Canadian Armed Forces members to turn it into action.

When I visited for the first time, I think, just like you, having been part of the briefings for the plan and what they were going to do, it exceeded my expectations. The ingenuity they brought to the table took into consideration their experience in Afghanistan, and they completely enhanced it. They took the experience of the Germans and the Dutch as well. The Chinook helicopters have given them the ability to go further. The only security they bring with them, but... because on the ground when there's a challenge you can't just rely on security to make sure we are looked after.

The additional training they took upon themselves to make sure that the security folks had additional medical training has helped enhance their ability. Probably the biggest thing I took away was the confidence it brings. It has allowed ground forces to patrol further. They are able to reach areas they couldn't reach before. They enhance the current mission on the ground just by their presence.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Minister, thank you for that.

A number of initiatives introduced under “Strong, Secure, Engaged” have already been implemented by the Canadian Armed Forces, and we also have enhanced tax relief for members of the Canadian Armed Forces deployed on international operations. Could you confirm for the committee, briefly, whether those soldiers currently deployed in Mali would benefit from this tax-exempt status?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: That has resonated extremely well. What better way to say thank you, not just to the members who are deployed but also to the families they're leaving behind than to demonstrate to them that their sacrifice, their family's sacrifice...? Giving that extra money makes a huge difference.

I can confirm to you that all members of internationally approved operations get tax free, including in Mali.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: The committee learned—I think I speak for all of us—that the Mali conflict is incredibly complex. There are layers of activity ranging anywhere from skirmishes between cattle ranchers and those who grow agricultural crops, to smuggling arms, drugs and people along various routes. Layered on top of that is international terrorism. The context is quite fluid. There is some concern that it's getting worse and that it's also moving south.

Given the diversity of such conflicts, can you talk a bit about the need for diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces, specifically for women and men who are deployed in peace operations—diversity not just with respect to culture, but also with respect to life experience and being able to interact effectively with the local populations.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I've always said that diversity is one of the greatest strengths we have as a nation. The Canadian Armed Forces recognized this some time ago, from our UN peacekeeping operations in the past, to Afghanistan, and what they're doing in Iraq, and especially in Mali.

Having that diversity to making sure that how we grow up in Canada, understanding other cultures, respecting one another and just a genuine desire to learn from one another, results in how you interact with other people. That interaction has a tremendous impact. Whether it's from the diversity... Let's not forget our bilingualism—having French also gives us an added advantage as well, and the diversity of having more women. With the current rotation, we're at 15%, which is the UN goal, and we're far higher than their average.

Diversity is extremely important. I think we've done a really good job, but I think we can take opportunities to learn from the experience how we can further enhance it. I think we can draw more from within the Canadian Armed Forces, but as we start recruiting... When we talk about trying to represent the population, this is not just about making sure that everybody has an opportunity to join the Canadian Armed Forces, but an operational effectiveness for the Canadian Armed Forces.

• (1550)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I have about a minute left, Minister.

You spoke to this committee previously about the importance of a whole-of-government approach to international peace operations. If you see a conflict as complex and multi-faceted as Mali, I'm wondering if you could elaborate that context with a bit more specificity what you mean by whole of government, and how important it is for us to think in that way as we plan future engagements.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: This is one thing that Canada has been championing for some time, something that we've been trying to demonstrate by leading by example on this with every mission that we do.

Conflicts don't just pop up. What you see in a conflict is a symptom of something that has happened. The military mission there helps to stabilize the situation and buys time for the diplomats and the development workers to do their work. That's what we're trying to do.

As we provided our support, it wasn't just about the military. It's about putting the right investments in development, and it's about putting the right investments for capacity-building as well.

We can't do it alone. Other nations also have to do it, but because we're leading by example and the goal is to get more nations involved... This is what the UN has been asking for. We call it “whole of government” and the UN's been calling it the “comprehensive approach”.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: MP Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Minister, thanks for being here.

My first question is a very quick one. You've taken on the role now of acting minister of Veterans Affairs. You're the fourth minister of Veterans Affairs in the three-year term. Is this going to evolve into something where Veterans Affairs and National Defence get merged together, or is this just a short-term stay?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: First of all, to talk about it in terms of... I think the most important thing is our government's commitment to making sure that we look after our veterans, and regardless of who is in that position we are making sure that we continue to move in that direction. The investments that we've made, the programs that have been into place, but also—

Mr. James Bezan: Yes, but on the management side, how are you going to...? There are two big departments.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Ultimately, when it comes to the machinery of government, that decision is left up to the Prime Minister, but one thing is for sure: Our commitment to our veterans is extremely important to our government, regardless of who is in this position.

I've been fortunate enough to have an indirect connection with Veterans Affairs, because whoever the minister of Veterans Affairs is, is also the associate—

Mr. James Bezan: We'll get back to that.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer came out with a report on the interim fighter jets, the used Australian jets that are over 40 years old. The cost was 22% higher, \$200 million more. Why did you mislead Canadians on the cost of buying these Australian used jets?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the last part.

Mr. James Bezan: Why did you mislead Canadians when you announced that we were buying these used Australian fighter jets?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: One, I can assure you that we did not. In getting the interim fighters, as I stated in my remarks, it's extremely important that we meet the obligations we have made as a nation to NATO and NORAD, and not just wait until we replace all of them. We need to start doing it now as the full competition for the fighter is being done.

They should've been replaced 10 years ago. We've been very clear with the costing, making sure that we provide—

Mr. James Bezan: But you weren't very clear with the costing. You were 20% off.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: No. We have been providing the necessary information.

The contingency, I believe, was not used. We've been happy not only to work with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, but more importantly, when it comes to our defence policy and all procurements, we've been very transparent in our work, which includes probably the largest procurement in Canadian history, the Canadian surface combatants. The estimates and the costing that we did for that was pretty close to being in line with what the PBO had done, and we will continue to make sure that we do thorough costing while at the same time making sure that we provide the appropriate information.

•(1555)

Mr. James Bezan: I'll move on to supplementary estimates (B), vote 5, capital expenditures. In 2018-19, you're asking for \$4.2 billion. "Strong, Secure, Engaged" asked for \$6.6 billion. That's a difference of \$2.4 billion being underfunded. When you take in your last year being underfunded as well, you're now \$5 billion under

your own defence policy. That's just a statement that you're not throwing the money out of the door the way you promised.

Now, in capital expenditures, if you go online, you can see that there are a number of SNC-Lavalin contracts. If SNC-Lavalin fails, how can we secure the information they have? A lot of that is classified. Is that going to be done by making sure that all of those documents are collected, whether they're blueprints, engineering drawings or studies that they've done for the Department of National Defence, or is that why you're hoping they get a deferred prosecution agreement?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm glad you asked the first portion of your question. It's very interesting and clever how you tried to bring SNC-Lavalin into that piece of it, but in terms of the money that we had requested, as I stated last year, we are needing to spend a lot more money, while, at the same time, we need to get enough people to be able to handle the volume of projects. We need to get better at that.

One thing I can assure you, in terms of the actual... As we have progressed, the spending has also increased, but our efficiencies have also increased, and I'm just going to ask our—

Mr. James Bezan: We'll get around to that in the second hour.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I just want to make sure I answer your question correctly.

Mr. James Bezan: We'll get back into more detail on how it's spent, but I'm interested in how you secure that SNC-Lavalin information.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I think the member is constructing realities that are no more relevant to the testimony of the minister—

Mr. James Bezan: No. They're contracted; they're paid for under the supplementary estimates (B) on vote 5. They received contracts from the Department of National Defence. This is in order.

The Chair: I will allow it.

Mr. James Bezan: How do you secure those documents to make sure they don't fall into the wrong hands after failure?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: If I understand your question regarding this, when it comes to contracting we go through the appropriate process for any type of procurement.

Mr. James Bezan: I'm going to share my time with MP Gallant.

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

Minister, the acting vice chief of the defence staff told Parliament on May 30, 2018, that no assessment was done in relation to the need for a second supply ship. The Prime Minister and you have said that one was done.

Will you table with the clerk of this committee by the end of day tomorrow the report prepared by the Canadian Armed Forces indicating that there is no operational requirement for a second supply ship as proposed by this committee, the Senate and various other experts? Just answer yes or no.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: The work that has been done for this, the advice that we have received from the military—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I just need to know, yes or no, whether you can table that report tomorrow.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: —is that there is no need for us to have an interim supply ship.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay, so—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: For us to fill the gap of the navy for the two supply ships that were taken off-line is going to require a permanent, built supply ship.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: That's a no, then; he will not.

On January 24, the assistant deputy minister of materiel, Mr. Pat Finn, told the Canadian Press that the front half of the first joint support ship is nearing completion.

Will you table with the clerk by end of day tomorrow all evidence, including photos, to back up that statement?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: The steel cutting for the joint supply ship has started. In fact—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is there any evidence to back these statements up?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: In fact, I was actually at the plant when we pressed the button on the steel.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Did you take any pictures? Is there anything to provide to this committee to back up your statements—any evidence whatsoever?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I believe we tweeted out about it when that announcement was made.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Will you table with the clerk by end of day tomorrow all cost estimates your department has received or has prepared in relation to the Canadian surface combatant's costs increasing to \$77 billion as a result of the need for additional berths or beds, increasing the speed and, in relation to radars, specifically Lockheed's radar compared with the Australian radar on the T26?

The Chair: That's your time. I'm going to yield the floor to MP Garrison.

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

Just to make sure the record is clear, this committee has not supported a second interim supply ship in any documents I've ever seen, and certainly—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Yes, I don't support that.

I want to go back to Mali. I want to echo the thanks around the table to DND for facilitating our visit. I think it was very important for us to go there to visit the troops and see what they were actually

doing and also to help raise the profile in Canada of the importance of the mission in Mali. The consequences, if there were a failed state in Mali, would certainly, we all understand, be quite severe in terms of refugee flows, arms trafficking, human trafficking, destabilization of neighbouring states. It is thus a very important mission.

We heard three things. Two have been discussed here.

We heard about the excellence of the Canadian contribution. We heard it from everyone—from the UN officials, from other countries' ambassadors, from people on the ground.

Our contribution has set a very high bar, when it comes to air evacuation, that is very difficult for anybody else to meet. It includes new techniques that we're piloting in the field for delivery of blood products, which may end up being very important to emergency services at home. It also included—and people commented on this—a number of women in key roles in the mission, including heading up the supply hub in Dakar. If we're talking about doctors, I know most people's image of doctors in the field is men, but in fact doctors in the field there are women. That's all very good.

The second thing we heard, which the minister has mentioned, is that the medevac is key to operations. You singled out the most important thing: without the air evacuation services, MINUSMA has to scale back its operations. Canadians, I think, sometimes don't get what MINUSMA is doing. They're protecting schools, they're protecting transportation routes, they're protecting hospitals, they're protecting food delivery. Having that air evacuation capacity is really important for them to continue to do those things.

The third thing we heard, which neither of my predecessors mentioned, is the concern about the gap we're leaving.

Your government has set a hard date for departure of August 1. We met with the Romanian ambassador; we met with UN officials. The Romanians and the UN officials tell us that the Romanians cannot have a capacity in place before October 15, which means there would be at least a two-month gap there, without the services we're providing.

Mr. Minister, why are you not here today requesting the money so that we can extend that mission and prevent that gap in our support for the mission in Mali?

• (1600)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: That's a very important and valid question. Obviously, we wanted to have an impact on the ground. We have demonstrated that. From the beginning, if you'll recall, when we were doing our analysis of how we could better support peacekeeping operations, I also said that this was not the peacekeeping of the past. We needed to look at how we could help the United Nations become better.

Through those reforms, it's actually the UN themselves... I was meeting with Under-Secretary-General Lacroix about this. I had a discussion with him about a week and a half ago. These are their reforms. The smart-pledging concept we have put in place, which we will start up here, requires nations to step up so that no one nation is burdened with a high-level capability. Only some nations have that ability. When it comes to medical evacuation, this is why, if we keep extending our mission, it stops being a smart pledge. We're working very closely with Romania on this, not only on the political level but also on the operational level. We have sent people to Romania. The Germans have also been working with us, and the Dutch. We're working with them to make sure the gap is as small as possible.

That date has fluctuated back and forth a bit. In my last discussions.... It's the training aspect they're trying to speed up.

One thing I can assure you is that with the UN, there's always a transition period. We can be happy that countries like Romania stepped up because of what we demonstrated. What we also need now, and I've been talking with my counterparts, is other nations to step up. Once you have about four or five nations, you can get into a rotation. Imagine this high-level capability and other ones. We're working with the under-secretary-general, who has started identifying those high-level capabilities that only a few nations can provide. Look at how we can get into a smart-pledge concept, not just for this mission but for other missions as well.

Overall, what we're looking at here is the long-term aspect for the UN, so that all missions are supported properly. We have to start, and it's important that we stick to the one-year commitment and then have other nations start taking it over.

Mr. Randall Garrison: That sounds really good in Ottawa or New York. It doesn't sound so good in Camp Gao, where we're going to reduce our presence and leave that gap on the ground. I totally understand your concept of smart pledges and the UN reform, but a one-year term when you leave a gap—when you reduce the capacities of the UN mission—is not actually supporting peacekeeping. It doesn't sound so good in the field. There's going to be a big gap there. I think our national reputation is at stake. If there's a severe security incident during that period, when we have “left early”—that is what people are going to say, no matter what we pledged in New York, that we left before our replacements were in the field.... It's going to damage our reputation, and our support for peacekeeping, if we're not there and there's a major incident.

We're already there. The main costs have already been expended. It wouldn't cost that much more to make sure the transition is smooth. It's not indefinitely extending the mission that I'm asking you for. Can we match up with the Romanians and not have that gap?

•(1605)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: In fact, we took this into account. There was a transition period when we took over as well. We knew there was going to be a transition period when somebody new comes in. There's a transition period just in terms of the number of aircraft and the space that can be used. There's always that transition period.

This is where the UN has the ability, with a contracted method, to make sure that medical capability is there so that there will be no gap for those missions.

Mr. Randall Garrison: We know that contracted people will not go into active fire zones with their helicopters and equipment. They will not.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: We've been working very closely with the UN to make sure that they're comfortable with the contracted helicopters. It's more important to get other nations on the rotation, so that all missions can have that support.

Mr. Randall Garrison: The simplest thing would be for us to stay.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I understand that. People would also just like to have us take over a piece of territory, but we have to look at it differently. Imagine how long the UN has been in Mali or we have been in the DRC. We have to start looking at it differently. We're not coming up with the ideas. The UN itself has come up with these concepts, so it's very important we start supporting them on implementing these reforms. It's the only way to make sure that these missions are going to be more effective.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

The Chair: MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you so much, Minister, for your presentation and for being here today. I was very blessed and honoured to be part of the trip to Senegal and Mali and to get first-hand experience of our operation there. I think part of the story that we haven't quite said is that our being there is also a chance for us to test out this new model that the UN has around peacekeeping, around peace and security, around this multi-dimensional integrated stabilization mission and this type of concept. It's a lot of learning for us. I think part of what my colleague Mr. Randall was talking about was around how we deal with the gaps. I think this committee will also be bringing forward some recommendations that we think might be viable moving forward.

With that, one of the other key things we heard was that we do such a great job in terms of training police officers. The countries in west Africa really want to be able to protect their own borders and want to help build their own capacity. We heard quite a bit of positive news around the Canadian police training of police officers, I believe in Niger. As part of your presentation, you mentioned \$313.9 million in support of “international operations”. I wanted to know whether that was part of it and whether we were expanding some of our training of police officers in areas such as that.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: It's not with the RCMP, right...?

We do training. We do have military in the region doing capacity-building. I can have General Wynnyk talk about it in more detail. On the police aspect in terms of the RCMP, they either are going or will be going to be part of the EU training mission.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Yes.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I couldn't agree with you more; I am obviously very proud of the work done by the Canadian Armed Forces and all the military there, but the policing aspect is so important. They deal directly with the sense of security that the population is going to have. As I said before, we're trying to buy time for those things to be done properly with some of the other initiatives we have, such as with the CTAT training we are looking at doing.

How we can incorporate also, let's not forget, the training of women police officers? When I visited the DRC, I saw units of female police officers dealing with the sexual violence and actually arresting people. These are the things we need to support. We also know that the population is more trusting of women police officers as well. These are some of the things we need to work toward. We can't do everything alone, but once the CTAT concept starts, we'll be learning from that and sharing that experience with other allies.

General, do you want to add to that?

• (1610)

Lieutenant-General Paul Wynnyk (Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Department of National Defence): Yes. Thank you, Minister.

I would just add that the Canadian Forces is doing capacity-building right now in Niger under Canadian Joint Operations Command. It's a small mission, drawn primarily from soldiers from the Canadian Army and to a certain degree our Special Operations Forces Command. They're doing security capacity-building, essentially mentoring as they go along.

We are developing a fair bit of expertise in that particular area. The soldiers who are there right now are from Quebec, from 5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, but the funds that are being requested aren't specifically for that.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay. Thank you.

Minister, just to your comments, we had a chance to visit a UN peacekeeping school in Dakar. We met with a number of women police officers from right across northern Africa who were there. They were sharing knowledge with each other about some of the challenges they were facing. I think they were very happy to hear that this was an initiative we were funding also and that it was a priority we were making.

I'd like to turn our attention to something that I know I've mentioned to you before as being of great concern to me. I have mentioned it at committee as well. Several media articles have reported on racist attitudes or possible right-wing radicalization of Canadian Armed Forces members. Can you inform us of measures or steps that are in place to ensure that conduct reflecting such attitudes will not be tolerated?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: First of all, I can assure you that any attitude like that will not be tolerated. I've spoken to General Vance about this a number of times. He takes it very seriously and is monitoring any situations like this. What we want to do is make sure that we get ahead of any potential problem. I am actively looking at this. I will look at steps in terms of what more we need to do, which may even include a review.

We want to be in a position where we deal with something early. We can't be in a situation where what resulted in a sexual harassment, and we had to...what Op Honour is actually dealing with. We'd rather have a better understanding early on and deal with this. At the same time, I also want to make sure that Canadians know that the vast majority of the Canadian Armed Forces are absolutely professional. A lot of these reports that we find out are actually from members themselves.

This type of attitude will absolutely not be tolerated. It's a type of poison that we cannot have, not just in the Canadian Armed Forces but also in our society.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: If I can just add a few more details to the minister's comments, obviously when people join the Canadian Armed Forces, they're screened. There are a number of verification processes they go through—criminal record check, credit check, employment history. But if there is any indication at all of extremist beliefs or activities, they're automatically ruled out from enrolling, right away. There is just no leeway in terms of enrolment in that regard.

All applicants must then sign a statement of understanding that they must comply with Canadian Forces policies regarding racist or discriminatory behaviour, and obviously there's zero tolerance.

The second part is that, should we discover this at some point, then fairly significant administrative and disciplinary measures are taken.

So as the minister said, there is truly zero tolerance right from the beginning.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you. I appreciate that.

There is a motion before this committee, and if we get a chance to, it would be really great if we would be able to get some more recommendations.

How many minutes do I have left?

The Chair: You have 15 seconds for a question and a response.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Oh, well then I want to say thanks so much.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I welcome the work of this committee on this topic. The environment inside the Canadian Armed Forces is extremely important, and Canadians expect their Canadian Armed Forces to be making sure that they have an environment that allows everybody to succeed, and these types of attitudes will not be tolerated.

I will personally be looking at this as we learn more.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to move to five-minute questions with the first going to MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Minister, thanks a lot for coming.

On the occasions when you've been here, I've particularly been interested in asking questions about support for our military and reserve personnel and how that's translating into our individual communities.

Coming from Kingston, where we have CFB Kingston, I have a great appreciation for how our military personnel are really integrated into our communities.

You were talking earlier about the summer employment for reservists. We have the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment, the PWR, in Kingston. It is absolutely inspiring to see, in particular, although there is a range of ages in the reservists there, the young reservists who are getting involved, whether they're involved in doing outreach in the community or they're involved in various different parades and whatnot.

I am curious to know if you can share more information specifically about this program for young reservists for summer employment and what opportunities they're going to get out of this program?

• (1615)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: This program has been a major hit, and I probably hear more from the reserves when I travel, which is a good thing. It means that the reserves are connecting with their communities while they do their training.

Giving confidence to the reserves when somebody joins that for the first four years they're going to have guaranteed summer employment, that assurance, goes a long way to making sure that somebody won't have to look year to year at what they're going to be doing. It allows also the reserves themselves to make sure that the training can be done. It's been a huge success. I think there's a tremendous opportunity from training, but there are also opportunities when it comes to doing other types of activities or from supporting domestic operations as well.

The reserves have a particular priority in the defence policy, and it's one of my personal priorities because of the importance of the connection that they have with the community.

I know that the chief and the vice are working actively to operationalize the reserves even more. We're looking at getting more equipment for them and aligning some of the benefits. A lot more work needs to be done, everything from, for example, getting them night vision goggles. We're getting down into the weeds as to the types of things that are needed.

The TAPV has also now been allotted to the reserves, but it's about equipment and allowing them to actually put things into action, which is what we're trying to demonstrate now.

I have also been talking to the deputy minister to make sure that the reserves have enough money for class A pay as well, because as we start growing the reserves, we need to make sure that the pay is going to be there as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm glad you mentioned that. I'm also curious to know—and if you don't have them, perhaps somebody with you does—what the statistics are for people who transition from being in the reserves to being full military personnel?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Do you want to give them?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I can provide some statistics. It's called component transfer; you're probably aware of that.

We're relying more and more on that as we seek to expand the regular force and the reserve force. To put that in context—and it speaks to what the minister said on the growth of the reserves—last year the reserves grew by over 2,100. That's the first time we've seen reserve growth in about seven years.

On top of that there were over 1,000 people in the reserves—and this is army, navy and air force—who actually did a component transfer, which is more than we've had in the last seven or eight years as well.

We anticipate, with the full-time summer employment and more recruits coming in, that that will only increase. I would say that the first year was an unqualified success, and we look forward to future successes.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Sir, can I just add to that because you guys went to Mali? I visited the reserve unit in Quebec, though I forget the name of the unit, unfortunately. I met members there who were going to go on the new rotation as gunners on the Griffon helicopters. So there's also the incorporation of the reserves into these missions as well, and that plays a very important role for them to take part and look at component transfer.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I only have about 30 seconds left, so perhaps this is more of a statement.

I also want to commend the particular action taken in decreasing the time it takes for a reservist to be approved to get into the reserves. That screening process was a real deterrent, as I heard a lot about before, but there've been significant improvements. Of course, they're always looking for it to be even faster, but there's been a significant improvement and we're seeing more people entering the reserves, including on the ground in my riding.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: That's good news.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It's very good to see that.

The Chair: MP Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): We're here to talk both about spending and as much about what you're not spending on, specifically the indemnification of Admiral Norman. Recognizing that he was acting in the interest of the Crown and within the scope of his duties as a naval officer, I have a yes or no question. Will you indemnify Mark Norman?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: When it comes to this case—

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I have a point of order. What is its relevance?

The Chair: How are you tying this to the conversation?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: To the spending, to the vote.

The Chair: Under which vote and which line?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: The main vote.

The Chair: Which one specifically?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Vote 1. Salary. It comes out of the operational budget.

• (1620)

The Chair: I'll allow it.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Yes or no?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: His salary is being paid.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: No, indemnification is not salary.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: When it comes to the case itself, it's before the court.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: So that's a no? Thank you very much.

My next question: We understand from the media—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Excuse me, I have a point of order.

Mr. Chair, it's absolutely acceptable for the member to disagree, but to infer and to put words into the minister's mouth would be unacceptable. I think there's—

Some hon. members: That's debate.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: —a way to continue to do this, but I would encourage members—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Debate.

An hon. member: It's debate. You're eating up our time.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: No, there's a certain level of integrity that the member is trying to impugn, and I don't think it's appropriate.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Put his time in.

The Chair: Everyone just chill out. I'm stopping the clock. I'm going to manage this.

He has a point of order, and I'm going to address it.

I bought up the fact that you're trying to tie this to the conversation. I understand that. We do have to, and we all know this is the rule. There's a criminal case going on right now. So tread very carefully in how you ask your questions.

We'll proceed, and if I feel you're going outside the lines, I will—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Indemnification is the question. It is outside the criminal trial. It's a very specific thing.

The Chair: I understand that completely, and I would caution you about putting words in the minister's mouth

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's what my point of order was.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: So I would ask one more time if I could just have a yes or no: will you indemnify Admiral Norman?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I'm going to be very clear about this. This is before the courts, and I will not be discussing it.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

We understand from the media that the CDS met with two unelected partisan staffers over dinner to discuss the criminal proceedings. The CDS is under your direct authority. He reports to you, and to you alone. I'm wondering if you will be seeking disciplinary action for a breach in chain of command.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I have a point of order. Is this relevant?

The Chair: How does it feel?

An hon. member: How is that tied to the budget?

The Chair: Yes, how? We're starting to stretch this thing out.

Mr. James Bezan: There's no evidence on this case, so can I speak before you?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: No.

The Chair: Okay, James.

Mr. James Bezan: That point of order falls under, one, operations. The operations of CDS is command and control, and he reports directly to the minister. This is definitely part of spending, and so we should have a chance to speak about this when it comes down to any concerns about the CDS.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I have a point of order. I would like to add to that point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: The line of questioning Ms. Alleslev has now gone into has nothing to do with the budget. It's specifically about a particular individual and somewhere they may or may not have been and had done. This has nothing to do with the supplementary estimates before us today for our review with the minister.

The Chair: I'm going to go to Ms. Alleslev and then Mr. Garrison.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: It has to do with the overall spending of the Canadian Forces on good order and discipline for which the Minister of National Defence is here to be held accountable. He is responsible for good order and discipline in the Canadian Forces and the real or perceived neutrality of the forces not to politically interfere. It is a legitimate question within the operational environment, responsibilities and scope of the Minister of National Defence.

The Chair: Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Today we have before us not just the supplementary estimates, but the interim estimates. In debate of the interim estimates, traditionally in all committees in this Parliament there's been wide latitude to talk about the general operations of departments under those interim estimates because this is funding for the coming year for the overall operations of, in this case, DND and the Canadian Forces. Traditionally there's been wide latitude on the interim estimates. It has been somewhat narrow on the supplemental estimates, I will agree with you on that, but we have both before us today.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: The chair should make a ruling.

The Chair: Yes, and I'm going to do that right now.

I've tried to give you some latitude. I think the particular question you asked started to stray, and this is how we go in that direction: We start narrowing and start going into the ditch. So I would agree and I'm going to sustain the point of order on the question. You can resume your questioning, but change your question. If you can tie it to whatever it is you want to talk about, that's fine, but I'm going to rule out of order the particular question you asked.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Will the Minister of Defence seek disciplinary action on behalf of Admiral Norman for not reporting directly to you, but rather speaking with two political staffers about a

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Again, that question has absolutely nothing to do with the budget.

The Chair: We're drifting.

That's a stretch. I'm going to rule that one out of order as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: You can challenge the chair if you want, but let's move on with this.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

I'm going to turn my time over to Ms. Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Minister, Irving is contracted to build five Arctic offshore patrol ships, AOPS, under a ceiling price. Will you table with the clerk, by the end of day tomorrow, the exact ceiling price for the AOPS and all information related to Irving's request for AOPS six, seven and eight?

• (1625)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm sorry. I don't understand your question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Irving is contracted to build five AOPS—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: That's right.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: —under a ceiling price. Will you table with the clerk, by end of day tomorrow, the exact ceiling price for the AOPS and all information related to Irving's request for AOPS six, seven and eight?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Originally, when we put our defence policy forward it was five. We have now exercised our option for a sixth AOPS. They will start building the fourth one shortly—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: They're reporting more AOPS, so we would like the information—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Just to answer your question—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: —related to their request.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: We announced the sixth AOPS. I'm not sure about where you're getting that there are seven and eight in the discussions.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Are there no AOPS seven and eight, then?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: The Canadian Armed Forces—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: There's no information available then on seven and eight.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: —are purchasing six AOPS.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Minister, was there any political direction given by you or anyone in your office in relation to Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's suspension, because this has to do with the supply ship. The decision to deny him legal assistance and the decision to charge him all relates—

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: A point of order on the relevance.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: —to the potential for—

The Chair: Ms. Gallant, we have a point of order on the floor.

MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I'm sorry. I know that we have a broad definition of anything to do with operational funding, but I don't see how that question is relevant to any of the operational funding, any of the interim estimates or any of the supplemental estimates that we have now.

The Chair: Agreed. That's sustained.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: With the money that is allocated to the forces in the estimates, is there not enough money to provide Admiral Norman the legal assistance he requires and for which he has asked to defend himself?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Point of order on the relevance.

The Chair: It is sustained.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is your office in complete compliance today with the court order for the production of documents?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Point of order, relevance.

The Chair: It's sustained, otherwise we'll be here all day.

You have 15 seconds left.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I have asked for documents four times. I have not received a "yes" or "no". I have asked, will you...? Can you provide documents for the items that I previously requested—any of them?

The Chair: That's the time.

I'm going to move on to Mr. Samson. Welcome.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you very much, Minister, for being here with your staff today.

I, of course, want to talk a bit about shipbuilding. You know that provides very important middle-class jobs for workers and communities. In Nova Scotia, it's crucial. One of the major funding requests I see is \$159 million to support the construction of the first five Arctic and offshore patrol ships. I have to add that these are being constructed in Halifax, which isn't in my riding, but it's very important because of the outskirts. Twenty per cent of the workers are from my riding, so that's really crucial and important. They're good-paying jobs.

We need to be talking about some of the programs happening there, because they're very impressive. They have the pathways program for indigenous peoples. They have a program for African Nova Scotians. They have a program for women in partnership and a program for the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans. There are up to 100 in the next five years. Those are very impressive programs.

Can you share with us how those are going to benefit these jobs and this construction in my riding and the surrounding areas in Nova Scotia?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I want to say that I'm very proud of the work the workers are doing there and the creativity the companies are showing to make sure that the workforce is inclusive of women, indigenous people, and also the black community. These are high-quality jobs that are going to be sustained. Let's not forget that we have the AOPS, but also 15 Canadian surface combatant ships. These jobs are going to be there for a long time.

You can say sustainability and 15 ships, but you have to put the money behind it. Originally, when we took over, there wasn't enough money in the national shipbuilding program for this. Now, even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed our estimates for the Canadian surface combatants. The money is going to be there.

These jobs are going to be sustained for the long duration. Our goal out of this is making sure that the skills continue. As the skills improve, the actual cost of building the ships goes down.

• (1630)

Mr. Darrell Samson: I brought a number of veterans from my riding to visit the shipyard, and we had a tour. It was quite impressive. Some of the veterans worked in other shipyards in B.C. or in New Brunswick. They were very impressed with what they saw.

My final question is very important as well.

I've seen that in supplementary estimates (B) monies are being moved to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust for HMCS *Sackville*. HMCS *Sackville* of course means a lot to me and to Nova Scotia. It has an impressive history, as you would know. The name *Sackville* is part of my riding's name, *Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook*. I like that as well.

I had a veteran, Brousseau, from Bedford do a painting of HMCS *Sackville*. It's very interesting and it's something close to us.

Can you tell us why it is important to ensure that HMCS *Sackville* gets the \$3.5 million in federal funding for repair and maintenance in the years to come?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: As you said, it's important for Canadians to know the history, the pride people take—the pride the navy takes in the work they do. You need to know where you came from to understand where you need to go. This is an investment in the future, inspiring younger Canadians to do more regardless of what profession they undertake. You can't put a price on that.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you very much, Minister. I can tell you that when you come to Halifax, the people in Halifax and surrounding areas are very happy to see you, so keep coming down. Thank you.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'll look forward to it. Thanks.

The Chair: Before I move on, let me say that the commitment was to have you for an hour. It's been about an hour and two minutes. I know that in the past you've been able to accommodate us for extra time, but I don't know whether that's the case today, so if you have to go, I'm happy to suspend and let you go.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I appreciate that.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming, Minister.

• (1630)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you for remaining behind so that we can continue to ask some important questions concerning our military expenditures.

I'm going to yield the floor now to MP Robillard.

I'm going to give you seven minutes, Mr. Robillard, instead of five.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In December 2018, close to 40 members of our armed forces were deployed to Bahrain on Operation ARTEMIS. The department is asking for approximately \$313.9 million for its many missions around the world.

The deployment to Bahrain is supposed to end in April 2019. Does the department plan to extend this mission?

[English]

Ms. Jody Thomas (Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence): The funding in the supplementary estimates is for Operation Artemis. You may note that we often ask for all of the funding for operations at the end of the year, and then we have a proper accounting of how much money we've spent.

As we look forward to next year, as we table the mains, we'll again have information on all of the operations, as we work with the minister on which ones we'll continue to be involved in.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

In January, you made a joint announcement with the Minister of Democratic Institutions and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness highlighting the fact that our democracy and ensuring our next election is fair and free are priorities for our government. Can you tell us what the Canadian Security Establishment is doing to protect our elections?

Ms. Shelly Bruce (Chief, Communications Security Establishment, Department of National Defence): Thank you for your question.

[English]

The Communications Security Establishment is very well-placed to support the initiatives that were outlined in the January 30 announcement by Minister Goodale, Minister Gould and Minister Sajjan. CSE has a foreign intelligence mandate that allows us to look at foreign targets outside of Canada, to understand their motivations, intentions and capabilities, as they would pertain to or have a nexus with Canada.

We have been looking for foreign threats of all kinds, whether they're cyber-threats or more physical threats, such as terrorism. On the other hand, we also have a mandate to conduct cybersecurity and cyber-defence operations, so we've been working with Elections Canada to help bolster the security of the infrastructure that will be used to support the elections. We've also reached out and been briefing political parties to make sure that they have the best information around cybersecurity best practices and good hygiene, and we work very closely with Elections Canada as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you very much.

[English]

Mr. Spengemann will share my time.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thanks very much.

The Chair: You have four minutes.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: I have a follow-up question on MINUSMA. Could you give the committee an appreciation from the department's perspective of how missions that we choose to participate in are selected, in as much or as little detail as you're able, under whatever constraints you're facing? In other words, how do we pick where to go?

• (1640)

Ms. Jody Thomas: I'll start, and the vice chief of the defence staff can certainly jump in.

All missions for the Canadian Armed Forces are an extension of foreign policy, and so, of course, we work with Global Affairs Canada to determine where the Canadian Armed Forces can be an extension of foreign policy for Canada. We respond to requests, as happened with the NATO training mission in Iraq. We are a partner in the UN, so we look at UN missions, and we receive requests from the UN as well.

We also look at where we have geographic interests to protect. For example, we participate in Op CARIBBE, the drug interdiction effort in the Caribbean. That is useful for us and protects Canadian interests more broadly. There are number of methods by which we get asked. They're all an extension of foreign policy and government will.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Are there any discussions underway that you could share with the committee?

Sorry, General. Please go ahead.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I just want to add a layer on top of that. When the chief of the defence staff provides advice to government, there are a number of factors he will look at. First of all, if there's a desire to operate in a particular area, he'll look at whether we have the capability and the equipment. He'll look at what we can do there and what effect can be achieved, both tactically and strategically. That's part of his advice. He also makes an assessment of risk. That's layered on top of the points the deputy minister mentioned.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Would you begin to formulate some of those considerations proactively, or would it always be in response to either a Global Affairs request, a UN request or some combination thereof?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: We are constantly doing contingency planning based on what's happening around the world so that we are prepared to respond to government requests.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: If it is even right to ask you this, are you able to give some indication of what other potential missions, geographic regions or contexts Canada could deploy in, in the context of smart pledging in our commitments to the UN?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Well, we don't want to get ahead of a government decision, so once again, no, I don't think it would be appropriate in this forum to publicly talk about things like that.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Fair enough. Your previous answer was helpful.

Have the UN structural reforms to reflect political and peace operations by combining the department of political affairs with the former department of peacekeeping ops given you any impetus to structurally reform the way you do business inside the Government of Canada?

Ms. Jody Thomas: What's interesting about the UN structural reforms is that they actually align very nicely with other Department of National Defence structure. As the deputy minister, I run the bureaucracy and the infrastructure and the support to the Canadian Armed Forces, and the chief of the defence staff runs the operations and administers the Canadian Armed Forces. It's not unlike the new structure that they've set up. Whereas previously the various arms were intertwined and confused, now it's operations one arm, administration another and policy another.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: In 15 seconds or less, is that approach supportive of the minister's vision of a whole-of-government approach?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I believe it is.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thanks, Chair.

I want to go back to the \$2.4-billion shortfall in the budget, on vote 5. When you compare the supplementary (B)s to the defence policy, the projection was \$6.6 billion. The funding is \$4.2 billion. Which capital projects aren't getting done?

Ms. Jody Thomas: The carry-forward for vote 5 funding this year is in fact at \$1.3 billion. We've had \$700 million, more or less, in efficiencies, so we didn't need that money. The money that wasn't requested that we could have spent is \$1.3 billion. Of that, \$700 million is attributable to the Department of National Defence. Some of it is because, again, industry wasn't ready, we had supply-chain problems and any number of things.

Of the \$700 million, more or less, that the Department of Defence is responsible for, about \$500 million of that is for projects that are either in identification or options analysis. In ID and OA, we're still spending money, but it's vote 1 money. As we look at the capital spend, it is broader than vote 5.

When we built the defence policy, the reallocation between vote 1 and vote 5 that was set out by Treasury Board had not yet occurred, so we put all the money for ID and OA in vote 5. We're spending money in vote 1, so we have to do some rebalancing there. We have restructured the governance of the department to ensure that we're spending money, and right now we spent \$563 million more in 2018-19 than in 2017-18, and we carried forward \$480 million less in 2018-19 than we did in 2017-18. We are in fact spending unprecedented amounts of money.

It's not perfect. There is work still to be done, but 68% of the projects that are in SSE are in some form of implementation now, so we are working actively and pushing to move projects out and on the table.

The vice chief of the defence staff and Mr. Rochette are two of the key people in moving projects. They run a program called the PMB, which is infamous within the Department of National Defence. It is now where all projects go to get approved. If they see money is not being spent, they call the principals in to ensure that they understand what's happening with the project and to get it back on track.

● (1645)

Mr. James Bezan: Last year, I noticed that when the question came up, even at CANSEC, the minister actually blamed industry for not doing projects fast enough. Are you saying that is the case again this year?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Absolutely. We are completely transparent about what's not getting spent. In every project, or in the scope of a \$6-billion budget with 333 projects, there are going to be some slowdowns by industry. There are going to be some slowdowns by us. If money isn't moving quite quickly enough because of a problem with a particular supply chain, a particular supplier, a contract or the way we've defined a project, we work with industry to try to resolve that.

Mr. James Bezan: I want to go back to the contracts and to SNC-Lavalin, which has contracts under vote 5. In the event that the company becomes bankrupt or shuts down, it has a lot of different contracts—drawings of buildings, designs of ships. It has done a lot of engineering work for National Defence over the years. A lot of that is classified. How do you secure those documents?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I'll certainly ask Pat to get into it, but the point that needs to be made first and foremost is that we own the material. We have contracts where, if there's a default on any contract, we have methodology for obtaining our material. I'll ask Pat to get into detail with you.

Mr. Patrick Finn (Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel, Department of National Defence): The major contracts we have with SNC-Lavalin on the equipment side speak to the minor warships and auxiliary vessels. We hold the intellectual property, the drawings and everything. It is recomputed periodically. We would do that as a matter of routine, to ensure that in the execution of any contract of this nature, irrespective of the circumstances in which the contract is terminated, we hold the material. We hold all of that.

Another long contract they have deals with camp support, and the same sort of approach applies to that as well. We hold the material for both of those large contracts. Pretty much everything they have is

unclassified. Anything that's classified within that work, we hold and retain. All of that intellectual property is within our possession.

Mr. James Bezan: If that's—

The Chair: I'm going to have to hold it there. I let it run over because the committee wanted to hear the answer to that. I'm going to have to move on to MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Bear with me a minute here. One of the goals of the Canadian Armed Forces is to be more diverse. We've targeted recruitment of additional indigenous people. I'm going to tie that to reserves. We're trying to grow the reserves, and that's one of the ways we can sometimes get people into the Canadian Armed Forces.

When you look at the location of reserve units throughout the country, you find they're mostly in downtown areas. I'm not really exaggerating here. If you look for northern locations of reserve units, you get Yellowknife and Prince Albert, which is almost northern, in Saskatchewan. You get Rouyn, in Quebec. You don't really find any of the reserve units in northern and remote areas, where there are a lot of indigenous people who might be very interested in joining the reserves.

I wonder if any consideration has been given, in the expansion of the reserves, to creating some new units in locations that would tap new populations and help the diversity.

● (1650)

LGen Paul Wynnyk: It's a very good question, and I have a bit of background in this area in my former job as the army commander.

We have a number of indigenous development programs. You may be familiar with the Bold Eagle program. We're setting up similar programs in all four army divisions. There is one called Raven, with the Royal Canadian Navy, as well. We've done a good job over the years of putting people through these programs, but not necessarily putting emphasis on their joining the reserves. The feedback we've gotten from elders and parents in particular is how valuable these programs are and how the participants would like to join the reserves.

We've looked at where we've drawn these people from. The Bold Eagle program in Wainwright is an example. We get about 1,000 applicants. We can take about 150. We're doing a much better job now of aligning those applicants from places where there are reserve units, capitalizing on the training we're providing and giving them the opportunity to carry on. I will say, particularly.... We can use any area as an example, but I'll focus on Bold Eagle in the west. We do have a lot of reserve units where there are heavy indigenous populations. You mentioned Prince Albert, and the B company of the North Saskatchewan Regiment. Saskatoon.... We just recently set up a company of the Rocky Mountain Rangers in Prince Albert.

We're very much drawing the majority of applicants from about a 50- or 60-kilometre radius in these areas. Last year alone, we saw a significant uptake. Previous statistics will show maybe 3% to 5% will carry on and join the reserves. Last year was significantly higher. I don't have that statistic, but we're very much following that model.

I might add, once again, that we're setting up similar programs in Quebec and Ontario this year. The four army divisions, and the navy, will have this.

There's a lot of good work under way. To get back to your question, there's no work under way to relocate units. I don't think we have to at this point.

Ms. Jody Thomas: I'd add, as well, that the chief of defence staff and I have been speaking with the deputy minister responsible for youth, as well as our colleagues, indigenous leaders and Senator Sinclair about the youth bubble and how we can be of assistance more broadly in some inner cities, where I think there is also a need. With new Canadians, for example, there is a huge opportunity for youth employment—people who hadn't previously considered the Canadian Armed Forces—but also with indigenous youth. I think there's a real opportunity and we're working on that now. We don't have any plans yet. We're still at the conceptual stage.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Certainly, there's no doubt.... I'm from Esquimalt. I know that the Raven program is extremely successful, and we've learned about Bold Eagle, but they're underfunded, I would say. When you look at the number of applicants.... We're trying to achieve diversity. We're not actually taking the people in who are knocking on the door. Is there an increase in this budget for programs like that, which help us increase diversity?

Ms. Jody Thomas: There's money in the budget for full-time summer employment for reservists. Certainly, diversity would be an aspect of the recruiting into the reserves broadly. The other programs that we discussed are still very much at the conceptual stage.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I'm trying not to be impolite, but that's an answer saying that ongoing efforts being funded but there really isn't any expansion of funding for things like Bold Eagle and Raven.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: No, we actually are, and the deputy minister is funding it—not out of this, but out of next year's budget, which is what we are talking about. Those two additional programs in Ontario and Quebec are quite significant.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Then there is money in the coming budget for those?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Yes, but the limiting factor as we go forward will be instructors, broadly speaking. We're putting much emphasis on increasing the size of the reserves, as you're aware, with particular emphasis on getting the numbers of indigenous recruits up.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay, I think that's good news.

I want to switch channels very quickly here. I'd love to talk about fighter jets—though being from a navy town, that obviously does not get me lots of support at home. Some of our allies have run competitions and have selected jets and are already taking delivery in the time we're still not doing a competition. What I've learned in discussion with people is that we have another constraint coming up here—and we heard this certainly in Mali—that being pilots and the training and retention of pilots, both for fighters and helicopters. I'd like to know if there are any measures being contemplated for helping us in that regard.

We've got terrible competition from the private sector, so how are we going to train and retain the pilots, fighter pilots and helicopter

pilots, who we need in the face of that competition from the private sector?

• (1655)

LGen Paul Wynnyk: You're absolutely right. This is not a problem that's unique to Canada. There's a lot of pressure on the Five Eyes countries, and we're benchmarking. The big draws are the civilian airlines as they increase substantially. We're studying that right now, and there are a number of things, some of them fairly obvious.

I know, Mr. Chair, you were a pilot. Pilots actually like to fly. They don't join to do staff work.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

LGen Paul Wynnyk: As we're going forward, we have a number of pilots who are assigned to staff jobs, so we're looking to be more innovative with our allies, sort of saying, maybe there's a career stream where you will not necessarily progress in rank, but will get to fly more.

We're reaching out to retired individuals from the Canadian Forces and seeing if they'd like to join as well, and particularly making it more flexible for pilots who have retired to go into the reserves to perhaps look at ways of getting into Cold Lake or Bagotville, or wherever we need to fly them, and potential bonuses. There are a number of things that are being looked at right now.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

The Chair: I'll now yield the floor to MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I have a couple of questions. How has our feminist international assistance policy impacted National Defence spending priorities? I know that we spent money on the Elsie initiative. I know that we probably spent money around NATO and gender equity. We probably are funding female police officer training abroad. If you could give me a little bit more of an understanding of that, I'd be grateful.

Ms. Jody Thomas: Certainly, we're very proud of the role that we play in the women, peace and security initiative, and the fact that we are meeting the gender targets for women in UN deployments, for example. You spoke yourself about the importance of the women who you met in Mali.

The programs you mentioned are actually managed by GAC rather than by us. We certainly work hand in hand with them in developing them. We provide trainers when they have decided we're going into a country, and provide trainers for certain initiatives if they're Canadian Armed Forces related, but those are GAC's programs more than ours.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay, so it's less spending on our side. It's more GAC.

Then I know that every budget has to go through a GBA+ assessment. How has that affected the National Defence budget and priorities?

Ms. Jody Thomas: We're very proud of the work we're doing on GBA+. We've built an extraordinary team. It's the most powerful team in many ways in the department. They meet with the vice chief of the defence staff and every L1, meaning ADMs or three-star directors who report to the CDS or me, who are putting in budget submissions to ensure that there is a thorough GBA perspective on everything they're doing. We worked very hard on the gender part of it, and we are now moving to the plus, which is indigenous people and diversity and other ways of looking at people, programs, procurement, and policies within the Canadian Armed Forces. It has infiltrated everything we do.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Can you give me an example, so that I can understand what that assessment is? Give me one example so that I can absorb it.

Ms. Jody Thomas: General Wynnyk would love to.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: If I may, I'll give you two examples.

The first one certainly wasn't obvious to us, but when we conduct operations now both domestically and internationally, GBA+ is actually part of the operational planning process.

A good practical example close to home is that of the floods we had in Gatineau recently. You're well aware of the magnitude of the flooding and the number of troops we needed. We had to be very selective in where we deployed troops.

In the Gatineau region, by applying a GBA+ lens—and we compared this afterwards—we deployed the troops to help people in areas where we probably wouldn't have done so if we hadn't done that assessment. We think we were more effective because of it. That's a practical application of applying it.

In terms of procurement, for every project now that we go through the program management board, there's a GBA+ assessment of things. Take, for example, ejection seats in fighter planes based on the average weight of pilots. We have to take into account the fact that it's a little less than that it used to be. It seems obvious, but we hadn't been doing this in the past.

For everything—trigger pull weight, how clothing is designed—I can assure you that in every project we do, because these fall under my...there is a GBA+ assessment: have you looked at this and what have you found out? Some of the things would seem obvious, but we've overlooked them in the past.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I have one question on cybersecurity, and then I'm going to give the two minutes left to our chair.

On cybersecurity I think we're spending \$2.7 million. I think that's in the supplementary estimates; I'm assuming we're spending more overall.

How do we evaluate how much we spend and whether the funding is enough? How do we know it's enough? Cybersecurity matters. Wherever in the world we go, it's a huge issue, and everybody talks about its priority.

• (1700)

Ms. Shelly Bruce: Thanks. That's a very interesting question.

The government has invested over the past several years in CSE specifically around cybersecurity. Our mission has been bolstered

over the past few years, with \$155 million last year, into designing the cyber centre and setting it up. We've been able to pull together cybersecurity operational expertise from other departments and bring it together.

Much of it is about consolidating this and making sure it's operating under one roof so that we can get the efficiencies and the effectiveness of having a singular space for consistent advice and guidance not just to Canadians but to small and medium enterprises as well as to owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

There has been some work, then, to pull things together in that space. We have a broad base of online programs, whether for training or all the way through to our social media platforms, to make sure we can use cost-effective ways to get information out to Canadians through our Get Cyber Safe program and through our regular programs.

It's very difficult to measure impact in this space.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay, I appreciate that.

The rest of the time is over to you, Chair.

The Chair: My question is for Pat Finn. There's a lot of discussion about the Australian aircraft that are arriving in Canada, and there's a rumour going around that we're sending the engines back. I'm pretty sure that's not the case, but I wanted to ask you directly whether it is the case and we're unaware of it.

Mr. Patrick Finn: We are in fact sending the engines back—that model of engine. We have sufficient spare engines, so we dropped the engines, put the aircraft in for paint, and we're using our spare engines to re-engine the aircraft.

The Chair: I know that seven are spares and 18 aircraft will be flown. Out of the 25 aircraft, how many engines are going back to Australia?

Mr. Patrick Finn: We're still looking at whether or not we actually take the seven at this point. What we're finding is that the number of spares they've been able to provide to us is more than adequate. Rather than take aircraft apart and go through that cost, we're taking the spares. We may not in fact, at this point, look at any of the seven.

The Chair: And the 18...?

Mr. Patrick Finn: Of the 18, we will return all the engines, again because of the kind of the model or the nature of them. It's the same thing we're doing with ejection seats and ANVIS lighting and targeting pods. We're trying to create exactly the same aircraft, so that pilots, maintainers—everybody—has the exact same airplane. We had a significant number of spares because of the original fleet and what was existing.

That's the approach we're taking.

The Chair: The \$90 million, then, was for the 25 aircraft minus the engines, and then we start to add up paint, ANVIS lighting and seats and get to the numbers we're familiar with.

My other question is this. I know there hasn't been a significant combat capability upgrade of the aircraft for a number of years and that there is some work being done.

Can you comment at all on what you guys are looking at for a combat capability upgrade until we receive our new aircraft?

Mr. Patrick Finn: Mr. Chair, to your previous statement, the overall acquisition, as we have said at this committee, is about 360. I just want to be clear that the 90 is about the aircraft and the spares. There are other things we're doing. Some of the soft work, sensors and things like we're doing, are all encompassed in there.

We have a road map that we're looking at, such as the immediate upgrades I just talked about. We're looking at some upgrades around IFF, Link-16, and that's across the entire fleet. That is the next wave that will happen. The air force is in option analysis right now to look at what we would do, but also looking at numbers of aircraft.

As you'd well appreciate, it's not the number of aircraft that we're acquiring here; it's hours in a fleet of aircraft that we can consume. As we go forward in anticipating the future fighter—the first delivery will be in 2025—and we look at the follow-on upgrades, it's unlikely to be against all 94 aircraft that we'll now have. That work is under way.

We are replenishing missiles, looking at different areas, and the air force I'd say is in the beginning of that next phase of what they would need to do. At the same time, we execute future fighters and say that at the tipping point at which the fighters will start to deliver, we'll have squadrons of fighters and therefore less of a requirement for the legacy fighters.

• (1705)

The Chair: I'm going to yield the floor to MP Cormier.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to be asking my first questions at a committee meeting. I would like to thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Thank you to everyone for being here today. Thank you for the work you do. I know that it takes a long time to prepare. Thank you as well for acknowledging my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence.

I would like to raise a subject to obtain more information and also to show Canadians that the Canadian Armed Forces have many roles. As you know, natural disasters are occurring more frequently.

In 2017, in my riding of Acadie—Bathurst, an ice storm caused a great deal of damage and we were without electricity for 15 days. New Brunswick asked for help from the Canadian Armed Forces, which deployed troops on an Operation LENTUS mission in the province. I think that Canadians, and certainly the people in my region, saw that the Canadian Armed Forces could do something other than take part in conflicts and combat missions.

I would like you to tell Canadians a little more about this type of Canadian Armed Forces mission. Given that natural disasters are becoming more common in Canada and around the world, I would

like to know a little more about Canadian Armed Forces deployments in Canada as part of Operation LENTUS.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Thank you for your question, Mr. Cormier.

[English]

Domestic operations are first and foremost. Our number one mission is to protect Canadians and Canadian interests at home. We are prepared at all times to do domestic operations. I think you're all familiar with the search and rescue operations that are conducted on a daily basis. Between the Canadian Rangers and our search and rescue teams, there are well over a thousand missions a year, obviously in support of local authorities—RCMP, etc.

For larger operations, as you've referred to, I think you're familiar with the process. It is a request from the province to the federal government. We maintain immediate response units throughout the country—units that are on a certain degree of notice to move—to respond to any domestic contingency as directed by the Government of Canada. Those are normally the first units that go in. Depending on the nature of the operation, we can bring in more troops, and we have in the past. Some of you may well recall the ice storms in 1998-99, and floods in Manitoba.

This year, for the first time, we are putting more emphasis on reserve immediate response units. It goes hand in hand with developing the reserves. We're in the process right now of developing in one of the particular divisions in Canada—we haven't picked it—an immediate response unit that, over the summer period, will be drawn exclusively from reserves.

I'm looking at the notes that the deputy minister passed to me. If we look back over the past year, there were some significant operations here in Canada—in Kashechewan; the New Brunswick floods, as you referred to; significant flooding in British Columbia, and the B.C. wildfires last August, as well, in central and northern B.C.; and the Little Grand Rapids, Manitoba wildfires.

We have seen an increase in the number of domestic operations that have been required over time. I want to assure you that the Canadian Armed Forces continues to be prepared to respond to any and all domestic operations as requested by the government.

Mr. Serge Cormier: As I've said, I've seen it with my own eyes and the work they've done was tremendous. Even last year, with the flood that we had in New Brunswick, it was amazing.

I went to visit the base at Gagetown a couple of weeks ago and was very impressed not only with the operation going on on the base, but also with all the resources that the military personnel have. I visited the military resources centre and we also talked about the Seamless Canada program. There's a lot of good things, good work... even from the military personnel. The Canadian Armed Forces members are very happy with this program.

Can you maybe just give us some more information about the resources the Canadian Armed Forces members have when they are moved from one area or base to another? Also maybe talk a bit about the Seamless program that we have. I think it will be beneficial for Canadians to hear that.

• (1710)

Ms. Jody Thomas: Certainly, I'll start, and the vice chief can jump in.

Seamless Canada is an initiative that was started by our military personnel commander to look at the challenges to a military family moving: driver's licences, schools, doctors, accepting credits for education. Every province attended the most recent conferences. We have significant support from the Province of New Brunswick. They were leaders in it. The Province of Ontario has stepped up. British Columbia has stepped up. All of the provinces are very interested and helpful in ensuring that they don't add burdens to military families, especially military families where one spouse is often doing the move on their own while the other is deployed; and that we make things as seamless and easy as possible for the families. It is part of the strong, secure, engaged initiative to ensure that we make life better for military families.

The Chair: I'm going to have to move on to MP Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Through you to our witnesses, General Wynnyk told Parliament on May 30, 2018, that no assessment had been done of the need for a second supply ship. The Prime Minister and the minister have said that one was done. I, for one, do not want to see the honour of another vice chief of defence staff impugned. Will the deputy minister table with the clerk of this committee by the end of day tomorrow the report prepared by the Canadian Armed Forces indicating there is no operational requirement for a second supply ship as proposed by this committee, the Senate and various other experts, with the exception of Mr. Garrison, as he so noted?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you very much for the question.

"Strong, Secure, Engaged" is the defence policy that lays out the requirements for the Canadian Armed Forces. In that we continue to pay for the interim AOR and we are directed to build two joint supply ships at Vancouver Shipyards. The work on the first joint supply ship has begun. The analysis that was done for this is the defence policy.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: So there is no report indicating there's no operational requirement for a second supply ship. Okay.

Ms. Jody Thomas: We have a January interim—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: An interim, okay.

On January 24, Mr. Finn told the Canadian press that the front half of the first joint support ship is nearing completion. Will he table with the clerk by end of day tomorrow all evidence, including photos, to back up that statement?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I'd like to start, please.

I would just clarify two things, Ms. Gallant. One, it was not General Wynnyk; it was General Parent, okay?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

Ms. Jody Thomas: I think that's important.

Also, I think there was a mistake made in the report. Mr. Finn did not say that the front was completed. He said that the beginning blocks were being cut and constructed. There was a clarification, I believe, made to the reporter who cited him as having said that the front end of the ship was ready. I just want to be very clear about actually who said what.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: All right. Thank you very much for that clarification.

Would the deputy minister table with the clerk by the end of day tomorrow all cost estimates that your department has received or has prepared in relation to the Canadian surface combatants' costs increasing to \$77 billion as a result of the need for additional berths, increasing the speed, and in relation to radars, specifically Lockheed's radar compared with the Australian radar on the T26?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you again for that question. I'll ask Mr. Finn to get into the detail.

The requirement for the Canadian surface combatant sets standards for speed, berths, etc., so there's no cost increase to the bid because of speed or berth. There has been no documentation prepared and nothing has come across my desk that says there's a cost increase to \$77 billion.

Mr. Finn.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Okay.

Mr. Patrick Finn: Thank you.

To build on that very quickly, we have just entered the definition, doing the requirements reconciliation and preliminary design. We are operating within the budget envelope that has been established, and we view ourselves as there. Over 30 of the type 26 frigates will be built in three countries, so there will be a huge number of economies of scale and a fair amount of commonality around the hull propulsion and electrical work. We continue to operate within the budget established, which was also independently verified by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: We have a company that's been contracted to build five AOPS, under a ceiling price. Can you tell us what the ceiling price is and table with the clerk by the end of the day tomorrow the exact ceiling price for the AOPS and all information related to any request for AOPS six, seven and eight?

If you only have it for six, then I'll take six.

• (1715)

Mr. Patrick Finn: In the fall of last year, the contract was amended for six Arctic offshore patrol ships. The contract value is \$3.4 billion. That includes more than the ships. It includes all of the training, spare parts and the things we do in all of our major contracts. That is the negotiated amount. Contract amounts of that nature are made public. In this case, PSPC would be the contracting authority who makes that information public.

It's six ships. That's what we're working on. As our minister said, that is our requirement, and that is the contract value.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: I was told—

The Chair: I'm going to have to leave it there. Your time is up.

I will give the floor to MP Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I noticed, and the minister mentioned it today, the transfer of \$18.4 million to the NATO security investment programme. Deputy Minister, can you comment a bit on that program, what Canada is providing and how it compares with what other NATO countries are contributing?

Ms. Jody Thomas: We are very proud to contribute to NATO, as you're well aware. It is money we contribute to conduct operations within the NATO infrastructure and the NATO coalition. The NATO security investment programme helps finance capital costs for NATO, such as communication information systems and installations at various facilities, such as radar and military headquarters, airfields, and fuel and navigational aids to support NATO military structure, such as for deployed operations.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: How does that compare with what other countries are contributing?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I can get you that information. I'm not sure if my CFO knows it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Even anecdotally—

Mr. Claude Rochette (Assistant Deputy Minister (Finance) and Chief Financial Officer, Department of National Defence): We are the number 6 contributor of the 29 nations. We contribute between 6.1% and 6.4%. I don't have the exact percentage, but it is around that percentage.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Deputy Minister, do you have a sense of how that is received within NATO?

Ms. Jody Thomas: It is received very positively. I was just at the NATO defence minister's meeting with Minister Sajjan. What is extraordinary when you're at NATO as a Canadian is the appreciation for our contribution and efforts to acquire new equipment and our leadership in so many missions. For such a small country, in our leadership within NATO, we punch above our weight significantly, to the point where we took on the NATO mission in Iraq because we were requested to.

Our soldiers, sailors and air persons are second to none, so the contributions we make—and I'll ask General Wynnyk to elaborate further—are commented on. The Canadian perspective is appreciated and sought out at NATO.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: General, do you want to comment on that?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I will take every opportunity I can to brag about the great men and women who serve Canada in uniform.

Certainly—I'll use a number of examples—our ships providing deterrence in the Mediterranean are getting rave reviews. The battle group we have in Latvia is an example of interoperability. We're up to 10 nations now. Our allies are effusive in their praise. I could go on, but just to echo what the deputy minister said—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm sorry, did you say we're up to 10 nations who have come under that brigade?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: Yes. It's not a brigade. It's a battle group—essentially a battalion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: In the battle group.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: —essentially a battalion. However, it is a very good question. That's very significant. I can't think of a time, when I look back in military history, when 10 NATO countries have been integrated in one unit. It's cutting edge in terms of interoperability.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I find it very interesting that you make that comment. I've mentioned this at the committee before. When we were in Latvia a couple of years ago, we had an opportunity to chat with some of the members there. We're not supposed to name names other than to provide context, but we were told specifically—which I found very interesting, and it resonated—that other nations were choosing to be part of that battalion because Canada was leading it. I think what is not captured quite often when we have this discussion of spending, as it relates to Canada's spending, is that it's impossible to capture the value that Canadian Forces being present brings to a mission.

You can contribute 4% or 5% of your GDP to defence and never show up, and it's really not going to count for much, but in Canada we have this ability, and when we're present somewhere in another part of the world, other nations pay attention to that. As we're seeing through 10 other nations wanting to be part of that battalion, people are lining up and going there, and we were told it's because Canada is leading it.

Thank you for that.

• (1720)

The Chair: I'm going to yield the floor to MP Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: I'll pass my time on.

Mr. James Bezan: I'll start.

Thanks for the comments, General Wynnyk, on the great work that the men and women of our Canadian Armed Forces are doing.

You and I were just recently at an event to celebrate the troops that had been part of Operation Unifier and saw the appreciation shown by the people of Ukraine and by the Ukrainian Canadian community here. Op Unifier is about to come to an end. We haven't heard if there is going to be a renewal of the mission.

As you know, the Government of Ukraine has been asking for an expansion and extension of that mission. Do we know if that's going to happen?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Certainly, our work in the Ukraine is very much appreciated and we're very proud of it. We know it makes a difference. The minister, in NATO, had multiple meetings discussing our mission in Ukraine. At this time, we can't comment on the future of it. We anticipate it to be positive, but we can't comment.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay.

Before I ask my next question, I want to move a notice of motion:

That the Committee undertake a study to determine the level of political interference that forced the Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould to resign as the Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs and that the study be composed of no fewer than three meetings.

I'll share that with the clerk for distribution.

It was reported in the news that National Defence spent about \$161,000 on travel photographers from the armed forces to take pictures of the minister. In vote 1—I suspect in operations—how much is budgeted this year for the minister's vanity project?

Ms. Jody Thomas: That money comes from CAF operations and it's allocated. We have combat camera photographers who are sent on various missions. There's no specific budget for the minister.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

I'm going to share the rest of my time with MP Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Obviously, the state of our capability in the military—and not the individuals serving, because they do wonderful jobs and their training is excellent—the overall state of the equipment and the operational capability, is of concern. Our aspirational NATO commitment over the next 10 years is to achieve 2%. We're just barely at 1%.

We have national security tariffs from the United States citing that we're a national security threat. Whether we agree with that or not, that's how the Americans have characterized it. We've heard from the U.K. and from France and Germany that they are looking for us to step up on our NATO commitments and the operational capability within that alliance.

We used to have three operational AORs. We have one interim AOR, and the JSS, the joint supply ship, is delayed. We have the Canadian surface combatant that is currently on hold because of procurement issues. We have used fighter jets from Australia—not the advanced fighter capability that we were promised, obviously in a campaign—and we don't have a competitive procurement document on the street. Then we find out that we're significantly short on military operational pilots and maintainers.

Those are just the highlights.

Defence is not a luxury. What confidence would you give to Canadians and what metrics and what specific critical success factors would you point to such that they should not be concerned about the ability of our Canadian Forces to meet foreign policy by other means, security at home, and what the government has asked the military to achieve?

● (1725)

Ms. Jody Thomas: That's a very important question and certainly one that we appreciate.

It is critically important that Canadians and I would say parliamentarians, if I may, understand the importance of continual investment in the Canadian Armed Forces. The boom and bust that we have gone through—not just in the shipbuilding industry, which is a phrase used about NSS all the time, but with regard to reinvesting continuously in the Canadian Armed Forces and equipment procurement, and capital equipment in particular...

I would submit that as soon as we finish building the Canadian surface combatants, we should be beginning the next program. We should be working with government to ensure that we don't have large gaps between equipment purchase programs.

The Canadian surface combatant project isn't delayed. It's not on hold; we're proceeding. We signed the contract, as Mr. Finn mentioned, for requirements reconciliation. We're proceeding with that work.

The RFP for the future fighter capability project, will be on the street in the spring. We are meeting every single milestone that we have laid out for that project. We are working on a program to recruit pilots and to improve the number of technicians in the air force.

We are being very transparent in the reporting of the milestones we are meeting in “Strong, Secure, Engaged”, to the point of making the investment plan public so that everything we do can be tracked by Canadians and they can question us on whether we are getting money spent, whether we're doing it efficiently and effectively and whether we're buying the right equipment.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: That's absolutely—

The Chair: That's your time. I allowed it to go long so that the deputy minister could respond to your question.

I'll give the floor to you for a little more time, if you want. That was a long question. I'd like you to respond, if you want more time.

Ms. Jody Thomas: Thank you.

I think Canadians can also be reassured, as can parliamentarians, by the fact that we are continually asked to lead missions around the world. The quality of the Canadian Armed Forces is unchanged and is probably only increasing. We are working toward meeting our diversity targets and changing the nature and culture of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think confidence can be taken in the Canadian Armed Forces from the work we're doing on Op Honour. We're not perfect. We're working very hard at executing “Strong, Secure, Engaged” and being the Canadian Armed Forces that we are—I'm speaking for the forces here, but I'll ask General Wynnyk to do so—and that Canadians are proud of and have a reason to be proud of.

Go ahead.

LGen Paul Wynnyk: I very much appreciate your kind words about our men and women in uniform.

Right now we have the equipment we need to execute the tasks we're executing. For the missions we're requesting extra money for in the supplementary estimates—missions that you're all familiar with—when the CDS makes the recommendation to government as to whether or not we deploy, a critical part of the recommendation is about whether we have the necessary equipment, particularly, if we're putting our men and women in harm's way, to make sure they have the equipment they need to address force protection and get on with the job.

Certainly, with the missions we're doing right now, I would say that Canadians have no cause for concern.

The Chair: Thank you, General Wynnyk.

There are about two minutes left. I'd like to yield the floor to Mr. Spengemann for the last question.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Mr. Chair, thank you. I very much appreciate this.

I'd like to circle back to MINUSMA and Task Force Mali, being mindful of the arguments raised by our colleague Mr. Garrison.

Have you been asked for or have you given advice on questions relating to the transition between Canada and, as it stands now, Romania?

Ms. Jody Thomas: The Canadian Armed Forces and our team on the ground and the training team here are working very closely with Romania to ensure a smooth transition. We're assisting them in their preparation. That's been a very close relationship from the moment Romania announced that they were replacing us.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: What would be the operational constraints, if any, from the perspective of the Department of

National Defence if the Canadian Forces were to be asked to stay—I'm not going to use the term "extend the mission", but to stay longer—for two, four or six weeks at full deployment past July 31?

LGen Paul Wynnyk: The advice that the chief of defence staff has provided to the minister is one of sustaining that capability as we go forward, and essentially mortgaging our ability to do other operations. The aeromedical evacuation, the pilots, and the actual airframes could put a limitation on future operations, or even, getting back to what Mr. Cormier said, on domestic operations and on using those helicopters later on.

Once again, it's a government decision whether we go forward, but one of the biggest factors would be sustaining it over time. That was the original reason the one-year period was put out there.

• (1730)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Have you been briefed on or have you given advice on the concept, as understood by the UN, of smart pledging?

Ms. Jody Thomas: Certainly our policy group and Global Affairs Canada have been very engaged on that.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Is it your sense that the UN and the Canadian Forces have the same understanding of what smart pledging is?

Ms. Jody Thomas: I believe so.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's helpful.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: I want to thank all of you for appearing today on this very important issue.

Have a pleasant evening.

The meeting is adjourned.

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