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Chair: Mrs. Karen McCrimmon



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• (1305)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.)): Good afternoon.

[*English*]

I'm calling this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 17 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence.

[*Translation*]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of January 25, 2020, and members will be attending in person or participating through the Zoom application.

The proceedings will be published on the House of Commons website. For your information, the webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entire committee.

[*English*]

I think we have enough experience working in this current format, so I'm going to skip some of the detailed health procedures.

Please, before you speak, wait until I recognize you by name. All comments by members should be addressed through the chair. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, the committee is resuming its study of addressing sexual misconduct issues in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the allegations against former chief of the defence staff Jonathan Vance.

With us today by video conference are Dr. Allan English, retired captain from the Canadian Forces; Dr. Alan Okros, also retired captain from the Canadian Forces; and Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky, who is currently the honorary lieutenant-colonel of the Princess of Wales regiment.

Up to six minutes will be given for opening remarks.

I would like to start by welcoming Dr. Allan English to start with his opening remarks, please.

Dr. Allan English (Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Queen's University, As an Individual): Thank you.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Allan English and I teach Canadian military history in the history department at Queen's University. I have also taught senior officers at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto. I served 25 years in the RCAF and CAF as an air navigator on the C-130 Hercules, as well as on a number of instructional tours.

The title of my presentation, “Culture Eats Policy Every Time - Sexual Misconduct in the CAF”, comes from a statement by former Supreme Court of Canada Justice Michel Bastarache, when referring to attempts to change the RCMP's culture through policy changes. His statement applies equally to the CAF, which over the last 30 years has attempted to address sexual misconduct through policy changes and added training without successfully implementing what Justice Marie Deschamps referred to in her report on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the CAF as the “comprehensive cultural change” necessary to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour within the CAF.

In evaluating the success of Operation Honour in testimony before a Senate committee in May 2018, almost three years after the operation started, Justice Deschamps made these comments, which she reiterated in her testimony here this week. She said, “...in the public policies, the changes that have been made to them are so minor as to be virtually superficial. Much more could have been done in three years.... What I see is that not a lot of progress has been made.”

In August 2015, in the Operation Honour campaign plan, General Vance required the vice chief of the defence staff to complete a comprehensive strategy by September 30, 2015. However, no strategy was produced until 2020. Lacking a guiding strategy, much like Operation Minerva, one of the CAF's piecemeal and uncoordinated plans to implement mandated gender integration and to respond to its “rape crisis” in the 1990s, its actions in response to Justice Deschamps' report have been uncoordinated and unprioritized. While many early changes made by Operation Honour were positive and addressed the CAF's initial priority of meeting victims' needs, they only addressed the symptoms of the problem, they did not deal with its main cause, the CAF's “hostile organizational culture that is disrespectful and demeaning to women”.

Leader buy-in is essential if desired culture change is to be made and successfully implemented. Yes, despite emphatic public statements promising to eliminate sexual misconduct in the CAF, we now know that its senior leadership did not fully accept Justice Deschamps' conclusions, starting with the response to her report by the CDS at the time, General Tom Lawson, who said, "I do not accept from any quarter that this type of behaviour is part of our military culture."

Recently former vice chief of the defence staff, retired Lieutenant-General Guy Thibault, who was charged with the oversight of Operation Honour during its first year, said, "I know that I and many of my colleagues initially had a hard time believing the picture painted by Justice Marie Deschamps in her 2015 report on sexual misconduct as her descriptions of the CF work environment simply did not match our lived experience in the forces."

It is reported that the current CDS, Admiral Art McDonald, also recently acknowledged that as a senior leader, "he was himself guilty—even though it was unintentional—of having perpetuated some of the problems that the military is now trying to address."

The latest allegations of sexual misconduct against General Vance are not the first indications of his lack of acceptance of the Deschamps report's findings. His reaction to the December 2017 "party flight" cast doubt on the CAF's commitment to eliminating sexual misconduct.

• (1310)

In response to media reports of inappropriate behaviour on the "party flight", Vance said that what happened on the flight might have been exaggerated. That statement, combined with the lack of action to stop inappropriate behaviour by the senior CAF leaders on the party flight indicated to many that two years after being implemented and just over five months into Operation Honour's final maintain-and-hold phase, the CAF initiative to eliminate sexual misconduct in its ranks had failed.

In case there is any doubt that the CAF still does not fully accept Justice Deschamps' conclusions, "The Path to Dignity and Respect: The Canadian Armed Forces Strategy to Address Sexual Misconduct", released in October 2020, only calls for "realigning" the CAF's culture, not comprehensive culture change.

In conclusion, until the CAF makes the comprehensive culture change called for by Justice Deschamps, any change made by the bureaucratic methods used to date will be ephemeral and inconsequential, as was the case with Operation Minerva in the 1990s.

Unless the CAF addresses the cause of its problems, its culture, not just its symptoms, and has its actions monitored by effective external oversight, it is likely to face disappointment and problems in the future as the sources of the CAF's sexualized and hostile culture remain in place.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Dr. von Hlatky, please.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky (Associate Professor and Director, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University, As an Individual): Hello, everyone.

I am a professor of political studies and Canada research chair on gender, security and the armed forces at Queen's University.

I'd like to start with a question: Can a large organization like the Canadian Armed Forces transform its culture in five years, guided by an external review and driven by an order to eradicate sexual misconduct within the ranks? It might seem impossible, but in many ways the military, as a total organization, might be better suited than most when it comes to adapting quickly in the face of adversity. CAF personnel are trained to make and carry out decisions in complex environments.

So why is this reputation for operational excellence not carrying over organizationally? That's because military culture can have unintended consequences. It can also be gamed by predators. It can be idealized and made to look untouchable by routines, traditions and rigidly hierarchical command structures.

At this time, military leaders need to re-engage with the external review authority report, also known as the Deschamps report, and think more boldly about implementing its recommendations fully. Five years might not be enough time to implement deep, transformative cultural change, but it's certainly long enough to uncover the failings of the current approach.

I have chosen four specific issues to discuss with you today. First, there should be a greater focus on abuses of power. What I am referring to here is a social dynamic that is interlinked with sexual misconduct in highly asymmetric professional relationships. This kind of implicit or explicit pressure is far more endemic and ingrained in the culture than is currently acknowledged.

While the survey on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces has provided useful data, more is needed to examine how sexual misconduct interacts with consent in asymmetric professional relationships. A woman, or any harassed person, not speaking out against behaviour that is inappropriate does not mean that behaviour is welcome or that she is providing consent. There are many legitimate reasons for going along with these unwelcome interactions and staying silent. Many of these reasons are outlined in the Deschamps report.

People who are more junior or in more precarious employment conditions fear for their job. They might fear other types of consequences at work, like not being believed by their peers or being socially ostracized for speaking out. Another reason for not coming forward is not trusting the reporting process, or not believing you'll secure a fair outcome. The next step is to have this more nuanced talk about consent and about consent when power dynamics are at play. Some of those power dynamics are inherent to military culture. Some of those dynamics are about rank, and translate into abuses of power. Both types of power dynamics disproportionately impact women.

Regarding training, Operation Honour training should be improved to pull data from the StatsCan surveys to tailor the content to those receiving the training. The information in the training should be personalized by making clear that sexual misconduct affects friends and colleagues in the armed forces. Service members should engage in and practice difficult scenarios so that they know when to intervene and how. The resentment of mostly male service members who feel they are unfairly targeted by Operation Honour is common and unfortunate. At the same time, the training is too focused on the perpetrator, while it could engage with military culture, militarized masculinity, the under-representation of women, consent, the needs of victims and survivors, and empowering bystanders in small interactive sessions led by someone who can speak in an authentic way about the content. External experts can help in this regard, if only to provide a peer review function for the training materials.

With regard to the SMRC, one of the most talked-about ERA recommendations was that a reporting line outside of the chain of command was needed. That prompted the creation of the sexual misconduct response centre as an independent body. There is an inherent tension in the SMRC's work because of the nature of its mandate. On the one hand, the SMRC needs to hold the CAF accountable, but it also needs a good working relationship with the CAF, including with the chain of command, which might undermine perceptions of the SMRC's independence. Constant review and oversight of the SMRC through both internal self-assessments and external audits might be needed, as the protection of the SMRC's independence in the face of its growing mandate is paramount.

Finally, the path to dignity and respect strategy is a promising approach, because it puts culture and climate front and centre, thereby making cultural change everyone's business.

- (1315)

While it makes sense for this document to define culture and climate along with a series of indicators, it should dedicate more attention to describing the problem at hand, which is sexual misconduct and how it ties to culture and climate. Basically, the scope of the problem needs to be crystal clear before jumping into the solutions.

A journey of cultural change needs to convey shared responsibility for sexual misconduct. The percentage of CAF members who have witnessed sexual misconduct is pretty astounding, but how many people intervene, speak up or report? If one does not engage in sexual misconduct, it does not mean they perform their duty with

honour. The standard of performance is much higher than that if you want to get to zero tolerance. It is the notion of collective responsibility that should be stressed more forcefully throughout the document because everyone can do better on this front.

This is not about the duty to report; it is a standard of daily conduct. The challenge moving forward is not simply about how to eradicate sexual misconduct within the military. It entails identifying positive steps to create a culture of equality for women in the CAF and a culture centred around respect for all.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Doctor.

Dr. Okros, I know you gave a shortened statement the last time you appeared here. Would you like to go through your statement again? It has been distributed, but it might be helpful for people to hear it once again, if you're prepared to do that.

Dr. Alan Okros (Professor, Canadian Forces College, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am speaking to you from Toronto, the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Chippewa and the Wendat peoples.

I have been engaged on issues of harassment in the CAF for over 40 years, and I see strengths and weaknesses in the current version of the movie. Leaders at all levels are seeking to address issues and to do the right thing. The supporting functions provided by the SMRC are helpful, and "The Path to Dignity and Respect" has some promising ideas, but Operation Honour has not had the results intended. Why?

The reason, which my two colleagues have alluded to as well, has been an incomplete understanding of the issues, which has led to incomplete solutions, underpinned by an unwillingness to critically assess certain aspects of CAF identity and culture.

Six years ago, General Lawson said that CAF culture and behaviours had improved from the 1990s. While he was correct, the CAF had not been attending to evolutions across society. Expectations around the standard of workplace conduct have continued to rise. People are no longer prepared to ignore, endure or accept behaviours that may not have been called out in the past, so while there has been some progress in the last five years, the gap has likely grown yet again.

I'll note that two years ago, senior leaders said they didn't know what the root causes were. External experts said they did but weren't being listened to. The problem is that the issue has been framed as sexual misconduct. The description of the term in Operation Honour puts the emphasis on the first word, describing it as sexual advances, sexual overtures, flirting and so on.

There are CAF members who annoy people with overtures, but the key issue is not about sex. If I hit you with a shovel, you wouldn't call it inappropriate gardening. It is about power. It is using sexually and racially coded language to create and police social hierarchies about who is important and who is not. Death by a thousand cuts damages an individual's self worth, identity and sense of belonging. That is what is being broken, not people feeling uncomfortable seeing an explicit picture or hearing an off-colour joke.

"The Path to Dignity and Respect" starts to expand the framing of the problem. It has taken 40 years, but it's a good first step. It acknowledges that there are cultural factors that can increase incidents of sexual misconduct, but the door is only open very slightly. There are a couple of carefully worded statements that gender stereotypes, outdated conceptions of the warrior and a male-dominated workforce can create harmful cultural dynamics, but nothing more and nothing of substance in the rest of the document to address even these factors.

The key omission is the continued reluctance to name power and militarized masculinities. This requires a careful and critical analysis of the military construct of soldier, sailor and aviator, and equality of leader and commander. We need to examine the institutionalized and systemic processes that shape military identity, and to ask the question: how much of one's identity do they have to give up in order to be successful in the CAF? Most of those leading today have not had to think about this. Left-handed people know they live in a right-handed world; right-handed people don't. It isn't apparent to us when the world is constructed to fit us.

The CAF was likely a good fit for most seniors, and we still have some who don't realize or can't see why it isn't a good fit for others. They continue to use terms and narratives they believe resonate with all, but actually serve to accentuate the dominant identity, hence increasing the social hierarchies and leaving some feeling isolated, ignored or not valued for who they are.

"The Path" indicates that work will be done to update professional development and enhance leadership capacities. Both are needed but should be informed by analyses of CAF identity and the practices of militarized masculinities.

As part of the analyses, I would highlight a 2016 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission report that identified 12 factors that increase the risk of workplace harassment. The CAF has 10 of these and is at the high end on six. These are significant power disparities, encouraging alcohol consumption, a young workforce, use of coarse language, a single-gender-dominated culture, and a homogeneous workforce. Only two are reflected in "The Path".

• (1320)

Proper considerations of institutionalized and systemic factors that create the conditions in which sexualized language is used to diminish others requires the CAF to shift away from the current focus on the weak individual. Harassment incidents and lack of reporting are not due to people not having read the definition or not knowing how to report. There are strong social factors that are intentionally created by the CAF to set these conditions.

Addressing these factors means challenging some centrally held tenets of the profession, facets that are key to success but also to

creating unhealthy conditions. Obedience to authority, normative conformity and group loyalty are essential yet can also create intense social pressure to fit in, to conform and above all, to stay silent. Power and hierarchies are critical to effective command but signal that it is acceptable for individuals to use social power against others.

Members need to know that their buddy will have their back when the brown stuff hits the rotating object, but this means people are constantly judging others to see if they measure up, and outdated stereotypes continue to put women under the microscope to constantly be tested and forced to prove they can do the job.

My comments lead to a key issue. The first objective of Operation Honour is to have leadership-driven culture change. There still is no clarity regarding which aspects of CAF culture are to be changed and which will be allowed to remain the same. The central question for this committee is whether this is a decision CAF leaders will make on their own.

Finally, as would my other colleagues, I would identify that I am speaking on the basis of my academic expertise, but I would note a slight correction, that after 33 years, I retired with the rank of naval captain.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

• (1325)

The Chair: All right. My apologies, sir.

Thank you very much, Dr. Okros.

We'll open the floor for questions.

Madam Alleslev, go ahead, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): On a point of order, Madam Chair, given that this is our last day of scheduled testimony from witnesses, I have a couple of questions that I think will be key to how we spend our time with the witnesses today.

The first is whether we have any advice as to whether the military ombudsman will be appearing before the committee on the question of whether the former chief of the defence staff was allowed to remain in office when these allegations against him were known.

The second is whether we have had any indication that the minister would like to return now that we have had a second chief of the defence staff subject to investigation, according to media reports, for more than a month and, again, the minister did nothing but left it to the chief of the defence staff to voluntarily step aside.

I wonder if we have either of those indications, because those will, I know in my case, determine how we spend time today.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Mr. Garrison, but that is really not a point of order; it's more debate. I can tell you that the former ombudsman did reply to the summons and affirmed that he will attend next Wednesday. The other question is debate.

We will go on with questions.

Madam Alleslev, go ahead, please.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): On a point of order before we move on, Madam Chair, for whatever reason, when you're speaking, we get just a screen on here that says "House of Commons". We cannot actually see you through the Zoom in our virtual meeting.

Also, just to add to Mr. Garrison's point, I don't believe that what he is talking about is debate. He's talking about procedure and conduct for this meeting based upon any future meetings that we may have and witnesses that we may want to call, all of which is germane to the study at hand, so I believe that it is admissible to have these discussions.

The Chair: Mr. Bezan, I'm sorry, but I disagree. We have published the notice of meeting for this particular meeting. We have very esteemed guests with us today who have a lot to offer on this situation and to the discussion. If you want to have this discussion at the end of the meeting, I'm pleased to do that. If you are asking me to put aside 15 minutes at the end of the meeting, that I can do.

Mr. James Bezan: Please do so.

The Chair: All right.

Madam Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses for some fundamental testimony.

In each of your statements, you've made it clear that there remains a problem in the Canadian Armed Forces with respect to this topic; that progress has barely been made, if at all; that the military culture is, by design, strong; and that policy is not successful, necessarily, in changing that culture.

Also, now that we see that it's at the most senior level, that they're not isolated incidents and that more officers are implicated by their actions and/or their silence, we recognize that this problem has actually been 30 years in the making, because military culture starts at military college or as junior officers.

When it comes to the battle between policy and culture, policy is clearly losing. This is not the first time. We had the sexual harassment and racism prevention program in the nineties, and that sum-

marily failed. Now we have attempted to do a similar repeat with Operation Honour without changing the foundational elements.

My question for all of you is, how do we change the fundamental cultural elements? It clearly cannot be done from within. Also, even more importantly, how do we set the tone and hold accountable all of those who may be complicit in perpetuating the culture at these senior officer levels?

• (1330)

The Chair: If anyone has an answer, go ahead and jump right in.

Dr. English.

Dr. Allan English: I can start. That's a great question and a very complex one. It sounds like one that we go over in some of my seminars.

I think the short answer in all of this is that armed forces are very good—and the Canadian Forces are excellent—in dealing with short-term, well-defined problems. That's what they're set up to do, but because they have very rapid turnover in leadership positions—every two to three years, the leaders change—they have a lot of trouble maintaining focus over long-term problems. That's why they're generally not very effective at long-term problems, in my view.

Really, the only way to be successful—and I think just about everyone has mentioned it—is to have an external body, a truly external body, to hold people to account, even though the senior leadership might change. Just as a small fact that may interest you, over the five years between when Operation Honour was released and "The Path to Dignity and Respect" was released, there were seven vice chiefs of the defence staff. The vice chief of the defence staff was responsible for the oversight of Operation Honour. That is a pretty stark example of one of the reasons why it didn't succeed.

To me, an external body is essential. One example—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Would you include as well in that external body an external body to hold accountable people who potentially have committed infractions?

Dr. Allan English: Personally, I think I'd separate them out. I think there needs to be one to supervise the culture change and then another one, perhaps, to hold individuals to account, because the culture change job is such a big project. It really needs a dedicated group. The most recent example was that after the Somalia scandal and the Somalia reforms, the minister appointed a minister's monitoring committee that reported directly to him, and he was able to hold the CAF to account.

There are a lot of different models. I think I'll stop there and let others talk.

The Chair: All right.

Go ahead, Dr. von Hlatky.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I think we can recognize the opacity of the current culture. I want us to switch the framing from operational effectiveness to organizational effectiveness. Operation Honour framed misconduct as a problem that undermines operational effectiveness; and I think moving forward, it would be prudent to talk about organizational health. Organizational effectiveness is a prerequisite for operational effectiveness, and the way that the forces get ready for operations is through training exercises and certification. You plan and practice until your instincts are right, and even in difficult, complex environments with high stress and sleep deprivation, you will perform in a way that is consistent with your training.

On the other hand, we have Operation Honour training, which consists of passing on information about sexual misconduct. It's ticking the box, and we don't worry so much about how the information is retained or applied beyond monitoring who's up to date on their training and who's not.

While I fully agree with my colleagues that it's important to look at culture, I think it's important to look at culture through different phases of the career and at how military identity is developed throughout these stages. I also really believe in the importance of some more bureaucratic fixes, and training is one of them. We need to give this kind of training as much importance as the other types of training that happen in the military. Here, I think a different approach is needed, and—

• (1335)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

I'd like to hear from Mr. Okros, if I could.

Dr. Alan Okros: Thank you.

I'll make two shorter comments. The first one is we tend to talk about CAF culture, and I think it's important to recognize there are multiple facets of culture internally within the Canadian Armed Forces. It's a complex issue. One of the challenges is understanding what culture looks like and how it's lived down at unit levels and small team levels, because there are differences. That's the first part that I would offer.

The second comment, to concur with Dr. English's comment, is that there is a difference between understanding and implementing culture change versus investigations of wrongdoing. They require different mechanisms, they require different frameworks, and they lead to different outcomes and initiatives. I would agree we need to keep these two things separate—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Outside of the Canadian Forces...or do you believe they can do it from within?

Dr. Alan Okros: I do not have the expertise to talk on detail, but I would point out there is a lengthy history of research and review of military discipline and justice systems, including by previous committees. I think care needs to be taken when there are efforts made to make changes to those.

The Chair: All right, thank you very much.

We move on to Monsieur Robillard, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Good afternoon, everyone.

I know that what we are about to discuss is a sensitive topic. So I would like to thank the witnesses for their presence, their time and their service to the country.

My first question is for you, Stéfanie von Hlatky.

As the founder of Women in International Security Canada, can you tell us more about the work you do?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Thank you for the question.

I see that you have done your homework. It is true that I founded Women in International Security Canada, or WIIS-Canada, 10 years ago. The organization is dedicated to diversity and to increasing women's representation and participation in the world of international security.

I think that it must be understood in this context and in these discussions that diversity issues are closely related to the military culture issues we are discussing today. We all know that to be a real source of concern for the Canadian Armed Forces. We have seen this in the defence policy statement and we have seen it in the women's representation targets in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the famous percentage of 25.1%, which will apparently not be reached.

In short, I think it is important in this crisis context to double the efforts to increase the representation and integration of women. This is about representation both within the organization and in command positions, which are two important aspects. There is very reliable data on the impact diversity has on organizational performance, and this applies just as much in an organization like the Canadian Armed Forces. Diversity can only contribute to the achievement of objectives related to changing the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces.

WIIS-Canada is also very invested in mentorship, as it is important to provide the necessary support to the women in the Canadian Armed Forces who are experiencing challenges throughout their career. Those mentorship programs must be adapted, and new ones must be designed for the new generation to be strong and participate in the organization's cultural change, instead of promoting a culture of silence where assimilation is often a survival strategy.

• (1340)

Mr. Yves Robillard: Can you tell us more about women's role in defence to move toward that cultural change, given your experience as the founder of Women in International Security Canada?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I will begin by saying that we are really focused on the role of women, but that this should not be the limit. I think that focus must also be placed on other under-represented groups. In terms of diversity, I know that the Canadian Armed Forces have invested a lot in the representation of women, but other groups are also under-represented.

So we must continue to gauge progress on that front, and that progress is becoming encouraging because women's representation is increasing with the new generation. I also think that Canada has an important role to play as an international leader in women's representation in senior ranks. This is a great opportunity to showcase that direction for women within the organization, but also to promote networking that comes from the Canadian Armed Forces.

Professional diversity manifests across the entire defence team. In terms of these questions, we must also think about the cooperation dynamic between the civilian and military worlds. So concerning women's participation in the world of defence, our scope must be broadened a bit to think about women's participation both within the Canadian Armed Forces and on the civilian side of that large defence team, which also includes the entire staff of the Department of Defence.

Representation and participation at all levels, both civilian and military, would really help give women in leadership positions the place and visibility they deserve. Perhaps this should have been done earlier, but the crisis period we are going through suggests that it is even more necessary considering the next steps.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Okay.

I would now like to put my second question to Mr. Okros.

Mr. Okros, what kind of a role should the leaders within the chain of command play when it comes to changing the Canadian Armed Forces culture?

[English]

Dr. Alan Okros: I will start by saying that I believe there is a very strong commitment to do so.

As I mentioned, it's still not clear exactly what parts of the Canadian Armed Forces culture are to be changed and what parts are to remain the same.

I think that clarity would be helpful. I also would suggest that leaders require an expansion in their leadership tool kit to be able to do this more effectively.

When we look externally to other organizations that have put a focus on diversity, they have adopted inclusive strategies. There are approaches to inclusive leadership.

It's why I made the comment about the narratives that some leaders use when they seek to build teams. They don't necessarily use language or phrases that are going to resonate with all members of the team.

I think more support can be given to leaders so they can do what they know they should be doing.

• (1345)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Over to Monsieur Brunelle-Duceppe, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank all the witnesses who are with us on this beautiful Friday afternoon. We are discussing a very important topic that affects all of us, especially these days.

Ms. von Hlatky, while concluding that the duty to report leads to the under-reporting of inappropriate sexual behaviour, the Office of the Auditor General recommended that the armed forces establish clear guidelines for their members regarding regulations on reporting to the appropriate authorities.

The Operation Honour 2025 strategic campaign plan mentions the publication of a document that is part of the defence administrative orders and directives—"DOAD 9005-1, Sexual Misconduct Response". That was part of an effort to recognize victims' needs while clarifying the process for reporting sexual misconduct incidents.

Here is what concerns me the most: to what extent does the duty to report lead to the under-reporting of inappropriate sexual behaviour within the armed forces?

Other witnesses may want to answer the question, but I would like to hear your comments on the issue, Ms. von Hlatky.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: As you may know, I am not in favour of that policy because I truly believe that victims of sexual harassment or assault must have absolute control over the process and trust it.

I will use this opportunity to make another comment on informal procedures. Much is being said about formal reporting procedures, but there are also all sorts of procedures to resolve situations amicably or informally at the lowest level of the organization.

As a researcher on issues related to military staff and the armed forces, I think this is a blind spot for us. According to the statistics, this is a popular strategy, but we have to wonder whether victims of harassment are well served by those statistics.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: You have piqued my curiosity by talking about the lowest level of the organization.

What do you mean?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I'm talking about hierarchy and relationships. If an incident occurs, there is an option to resolve disputes informally. It's something that would be raised in a discussion. Formal reporting procedures are often brought up, but informal dynamics also exist. It is more difficult for us, as external researchers, to understand those dynamics.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you very much.

I think Mr. Okros would like to say something about this.

[English]

Dr. Alan Okros: I would offer that there are two principles that are intentioned in this discussion. One of the principles is legal accountability. Of course, formal investigations and legal accountability do not occur if formal reports are not made. On the other hand, the thing we do know is that on many occasions, individuals would prefer to have issues handled at a more interpersonal level, and not go through formal reporting and formal investigations. It's important for us to recognize these are intentioned.

One of the options that is being adopted in other contexts has been a shift more to a duty to respond. If you were aware of circumstances happening, you would have a responsibility to respond. That could be simply speaking to somebody to ensure they have support, to ensure they know they have gotten the right referrals, and potentially, to encourage them to put in a report. There's a range of ways in which individuals can support each other.

The duty to report, basically, creates a really significant dichotomization. If you recognize and acknowledge that something happened, if you wanted to reach out and support somebody, if an individual wanted to confront an individual simply to say, "What you did was inappropriate, I want an apology. Stop", the duty to report triggers a requirement to make things formal sooner. It can be a barrier that prevents people from doing some of these more interpersonal interventions which Dr. von Hlatky spoke to.

• (1350)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Since we started holding meetings on the matter, we have heard a lot of talk of culture within the Canadian Armed Forces. We realize that there may be a big issue in that regard.

Given that famous culture within the Canadian Armed Forces, what is the right solution? Could one or several solutions lead to more reporting or to cases being reported better?

Am I wrong in saying that the issue comes, in large part, from the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces?

My questions are for all three witnesses.

[English]

The Chair: Dr. English, go ahead.

Dr. Allan English: I've read the latest DAOD 9005-1 on sexual misconduct, and frankly, it's very long. I find parts of it contradicts itself. I was discussing with a colleague the other day about duty to report. On one hand, it would say that you report here, disclose here, and it doesn't get reported. You disclose here, and it does get reported. You disclose here, and it doesn't get reported at first, but maybe it will get reported later on, because someone or a professional has a duty to report.

For your average person, it would be quite complex to figure out exactly what's going on. I know why the DAODs are written the way they are. They're written by lawyers and bureaucrats to cover all the bases. For the average member, it would be quite difficult to decipher that.

Going back to the culture question, that really is the substance of my arguments. In the end, it doesn't really matter how good your rules and regulations are, or how open to reporting you are. If people know, within the culture, that anybody who reports will be ostracized, bullied, harassed, have their career ended, then it doesn't really matter how good and clear your regulations are, or how open you say you are. Many times, many organizations, including the CAF, have said this. That's why it goes back to the fundamental problem of changing the culture.

I have to re-emphasize that my colleagues are a little more optimistic than I am about "The Path to Dignity and Respect". If it calls for cultural realignment, it's assuming that everything is not so bad. I'm afraid most people have said it is pretty bad. It needs more than realignment. It needs comprehensive change. Until that change happens, it doesn't really matter how many rules and regulations are made about reporting, people aren't going to do it. We've had many reports done on that, and have explained why.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Garrison.

• (1355)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much.

As indicated by my point of order at the beginning, I do have a problem today, and I think it's a problem that other members of the committee share. These witnesses have many very good ideas I'd like to discuss with them about how we could make progress on attacking the problem of sexual misconduct in the military, but I have doubts, and I believe that members of the public and more importantly members in the Canadian Forces have doubts, about the understanding of this problem at the highest levels and about the commitment to actually making progress at the highest levels.

I think all of the witnesses have made reference to the importance, in one way or another, of leadership buy-in, so I want to ask them whether they believe it's possible to make progress in the face of serious doubts about senior leaders' commitment to and understanding of this process. I'd like to start with Dr. von Hlatky.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I think there is probably some doubt when it comes to the understanding and commitment in moments like these. You're right to highlight that. There has been a lot of defensiveness in the past as well in terms of reacting to problems as they arise, and of course, five years ago, that's where we were as well. However, despite these doubts, I don't think we should wait until the next CDS is appointed to take decisive action. The commander of the army has been asked to step up, and there needs to be an immediate call to action and stress on the importance of this crisis-like situation for the people. There are a lot of people in the Canadian Armed Forces, and right now they need to hear from their leaders. The well-being of the Canadian Armed Forces members, victims and survivors especially is paramount. People need leadership in times of crisis. General Eyre is it right now. This is obviously needed from the PM and the defence minister too, but Canadian Armed Forces members will look to their service commanders and CDS to set the tone.

We spoke to deeper change and cultural change, and that's certainly necessary immediately. Sexual misconduct cannot always be put away as a problem to solve on its own. We've tried, all three of us, to really emphasize the connection between military culture and the prevalence of sexual misconduct. Then there are the more immediate questions that have been raised in the last few weeks, and we need to reverse-engineer this problem. The question that needs to be answered immediately is how officers get to the top of the hierarchy while abusing power. How can the incentive structure within the CAF change so that abuses of power are not explained away or covered up by subordinates, peers and senior leaders alike?

I stressed in my opening statement that, in my opinion, abuses of power have not been adequately addressed as part of the Operation Honour journey, and this circumstance should motivate a series of adjustments across the board—from training approaches to communications to leadership to data collection—and should not distract from the broader effort of culture change, which we've all tried to really underscore today.

The Chair: Dr. Okros, would you like to contribute to this discussion?

Dr. Alan Okros: I would just offer that it's important to make a differentiation between commitment and understanding. I would state that I believe leaders at all levels are committed to addressing the issues. As all three of us have commented and has been observed by women's organizations externally, the gap is in the understanding. As I tried to say, it is at one level easy to see or easier to understand why it's difficult to understand it. Again, one of the phrases people use is that it's hard for fish to discover water. It's difficult for people who are completely immersed in a very strong, dominant culture to really understand what that culture is.

Again, I think this is the reason for some of the calls for the assistance of those who have external academic and professional perspectives to bear, to assist senior leaders in understanding the culture and then helping them to figure out what the culture change initiatives can be.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

Dr. English.

• (1400)

Dr. Allan English: To follow on from that, one of the issues is exactly about what leaders believe. General Thibault made a very perceptive comment, that his lack of belief in Justice Deschamps' conclusions was based in his own personal experience. He didn't see it, and we know from research that this is true, that we form biases and we tend to favour our own personal experience over, for example, academic studies.

However, it goes back to this key point, which is power. Many of the behaviours that go on—and they're not all related to sexual misconduct, as has been pointed out by a number of speakers—are related to maintaining and keeping power. One of the main things you have to do when you want to make comprehensive culture change is to make significant changes in the leadership, and the Canadian Forces has rarely, if ever, been willing to do that. That comes down to oversight.

I'll make the last point very briefly, because it was brought up, about demographics. Until you change the demographics of the forces, get more women in, get more diversity, the experiences are going to remain within this homogeneous group that doesn't really believe in change. I think the leaders have said that.

The Chair: Mr. Garrison, go ahead. Ask another question. I'll let you go a little longer.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay.

We had last week the very brave, I guess I'll call it testimony, although it was not formal testimony, but public statements by Major Brennan in which she pointed out, I think, what Dr. English just talked about, that it was both sexual misconduct and abuse of power in her case. However, the most disturbing thing to me was her allegation—and let me stress that I do believe that we should believe victims when they speak up in what are very dangerous circumstances for them—that her case was widely known among senior leaders in the military.

When I hear senior leaders saying they take this seriously and they'll make sure there are consequences, and then we hear from victims who say this was widely known and there were clearly no consequences, I find this is a major problem for trying to tackle this.

I would ask Dr. von Hlatky if she has any response to the testimony of Major Brennan.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: Yes, this is what I wanted to highlight in my statement. I think there are instances and certain scenarios and situations that haven't been properly embedded in training or how Op Honour has been presented and rolled out.

I think situations of asymmetric professional relationships and consent in those cases are not well understood as a dynamic, and people are often quite uncertain as to how to respond to those types of relationships.

When we're rolling out training, we're presenting some of the very obvious cases of perpetration of sexual misconduct, and we need to show the range of situations in which that occurs, and how questions of consent can manifest themselves across the board.

You practise these scenarios and you think about these scenarios and you have a broader conversation about this so you have a better understanding of the complexity of the issue, but also you then feel more equipped to respond and to speak out.

I wanted to stress this particular dynamic because it's been front and centre in the past few weeks, and when reviewing things like training materials—with the caveat that I do not have access to all training materials as an external expert—and reviewing the academic literature and research reports on this topic, it's a very perpetrator-focused approach. We need to engage with the complexity of sexual misconduct and other themes linked to military culture. I listed them during my statement so I won't repeat them here.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much.

• (1405)

The Chair: I need to go to Madam Gallant, please.

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

Through you to Dr. Okros, we now have two successive CDSs who have had allegations made against them, one of whom was in charge of Operation Honour.

Do you believe these events and the way they're being handled will hinder women coming forward with sexual misconduct complaints in the future?

Dr. Alan Okros: We all recognize that individuals are certainly watching the processes that are unfolding and are going to be paying attention to the outcome once investigations are completed and cases are deemed to be closed.

Beyond that, I don't have any factual information or sufficient knowledge of either of the cases to make any comments about how people are reacting to them as they're in process.

Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. von Hlatky.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I don't have anything to add.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Dr. Okros, we heard at this committee on Monday from a military law expert that Minister Sajjan could and should have launched an investigation using his powers under section 45 of the National Defence Act when he received an allegation of sexual misconduct against a former CDS.

Does the minister's failure to act undermine the credibility of Operation Honour and outreach to recruit more women since there is no safe recourse for military members, and they feel perhaps they cannot count on their own minister to investigate?

Dr. Alan Okros: My expertise is in military culture and military identity, it's not in military law. I don't know what factual information was reviewed in making any observations on the appropriate use of the NDA.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Do any other witnesses have any comment on that question?

In your opinion is Operation Honour salvageable, and I pose that to all three witnesses.

The Chair: Mr. English.

Dr. Allan English: I think the first thing we have to do is understand what Operation Honour is. It was a campaign plan. As a campaign plan, it was to be a short, two-year intervention to address Madame Deschamps' report. As a campaign plan, if you read it, the active phase of Operation Honour actually ended on June 30, 2017. The fact that there was no strategy published afterwards really left the Operation Honour group without any direction. That's why I say a lot of their actions were uncoordinated and ineffectual. The campaign ended on June 30. They were in the maintain-and-hold phase starting July 1, 2017.

You see a lot of progress reports, some fragmentary orders—FRAGOs—and this and that, but they contradict each other.

I think what "The Path to Dignity and Respect" strategy attempted to do was put out a new campaign plan. I'll be happy to comment on that later, but for now, let's just say Operation Honour is done.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Does the duty to report inappropriate sexual behaviour extend to everyone at the Department of National Defence, be they military, civilian, contractors or political appointees?

Anyone?

Okay.

To make comparisons with the United States in the nineties, there was a crisis of sexual misconduct that was already alluded to in the Navy and the Marines. The events and the culture were captured by that Tailhook scandal. That resulted in some big changes, notably a reporting system outside the chain of command. Can Canada learn some lessons? Should we be looking at what our Five Eyes allies and others are doing effectively?

The Chair: Dr. Okros.

Dr. Alan Okros: I would certainly say that the Canadian Armed Forces has been engaged in examining what has been done among Five Eyes in particular, as well as in other military contexts. The broader issue with this, of course, is there are many militaries that are recognizing they have some of these issues. There are some national differences across contexts, but based on the comments that the three of us have been making, I think there are some commonalities across many militaries.

The specific issues with regard to reporting and reporting mechanisms involve law and legislative requirements. There have been differences, particularly in the cases of the United States, Australia and France. The legal regimes they were working under have allowed them to explore some options that the Canadian Armed Forces has not yet been able to have.

• (1410)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to have to move on to Mr. Baker, please.

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much to the Chair and to our three witnesses for being here. I'm learning a tremendous amount and I think my colleagues are learning a tremendous amount from your testimony.

You have all spoken about culture, the role that culture plays in this problem and the role that it perhaps plays in the fact that it's not being dealt with appropriately. I have a two-part question. Why does this culture exist in the CAF, and do you think it is unique to the CAF?

The Chair: Dr. English, and then Dr. Okros.

Dr. Allan English: The culture that exists now in the Canadian Armed Forces is sometimes referred to as a warrior culture. Now, this warrior culture came into the Canadian Armed Forces in the early 2000s when we started co-operating very closely with the United States in Afghanistan, and after 2005 when General Rick Hillier became chief of the defence staff and wanted a warrior culture to replace what he called a bureaucratic culture that existed in the Canadian Forces at the time.

The warrior culture that was chosen because of our close association with the United States was a particular culture that had been created in the U.S. in the eighties and nineties, which was based on a hypermasculine, sexualized military culture that had actually been created to keep LGBTQ people out of the military, and later this was deployed against women.

This was an artificial, foreign, hypersexualized culture that, according to American researchers who have researched this culture, contributed to “creating or sustaining a cultural environment where sexual assaults can occur and thrive.”

By importing this American hypermasculine culture, we've really created a lot of our own problems. I think one of the first things any culture change would have to do would be to go back to what we put into “Duty with Honour”, our profession of arms manual in 2003, which was something called the “warrior's honour”.

This new Canadian warrior culture in response to the Somalia crisis was to be based on the warrior's honour that they would use the minimal amount of force possible to achieve their objectives, and that the warriors had a responsibility both to carry out their mission and also to respect the laws of war. This is quite different from what we have now. I would think that's the first thing that has to change.

The Chair: Dr. Okros.

Dr. Alan Okros: The other comment I would make with this is that there does need to be a unique military culture. Canadians require very specific things from the women and men who are providing security for them. That requires some very specific things. There is no other employer that has the concept of unlimited liability, that expects and requires people to put themselves in harm's way.

To do that, to generate those capabilities and the capacity to endure under what can be really arduous circumstances, does require something unique that most private sector employers don't need.

The issue is, what should that culture be? I think that's the issue that is really up for debate and discussion. Again, what the comments we're providing here...there is a tension in the military as well around evolving over time. One thing that is baked into the military philosophy is that there are really important lessons that have been learned, that were paid for in blood over the centuries, that we will never forget.

That is of importance, but that can hold the military back from trying to envision the future military culture that they need to be building within a 21st-century security context, and with young Canadians who are seeking to serve their country in uniform.

It needs to be a unique culture. The debate, really, is about what should that culture be, what should be retained and what needs to fundamentally change.

• (1415)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll take this time to please ask both committee members who are asking questions and our honourable witnesses to keep their answers as short as possible. We only have probably about another half hour of this discussion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, go ahead.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I unfortunately won't have much time. I had a lot of questions to put to the witnesses, who are all experts in their field. Like everyone, they also saw what happened in the news.

I will ask a question I would like the witnesses to answer based on their knowledge and expertise, and I would like them to be completely honest.

I will start again with Professor von Hlatky. The other two witnesses could comment afterwards.

Ms. von Hlatky, do you think the Minister of National Defence has assumed his responsibilities and done his duty in ensuring that sexual misconduct allegations would be dealt with appropriately at the highest level in the Canadian Armed Forces hierarchy?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: We just don't know enough right now to speak to that.

I would like to echo what my colleague, Professor Okros, said earlier. Some information that will come out during the investigation process may help us think through this issue in more depth. Right now, it is still too early.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Do you have at least some idea of how this was managed?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I have read the same articles as you in the media.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Yes, but you surely have more expertise than I do, since you are a professor. I am not.

Mr. Okros, can you answer my question?

[*English*]

Dr. Alan Okros: Again, I have seen in the media significant speculation over information that people are assuming; I don't know what the factual information is. I do appreciate the principles of maintaining privacy for individuals, and the principles of not confounding an investigation, because when information can be disclosed in the public domain before an investigation is completed it can undermine the capacity to see it through to a proper justice at the end of it.

Again, I just don't have the information to be able to answer the question at this stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I'm sorry about this, but I feel that I will get the same answer from Mr. English.

As you know, there is a difference between what happened in Mr. Vance's case and in Mr. McDonald's case. Mr. McDonald decided to step down from his duties.

Mr. Okros, do you think that was the right decision?

[*English*]

Dr. Alan Okros: Again, I don't have the factual information to make a decision, and it's not my area of expertise.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

We go to Mr. Garrison, please.

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

I will note that what we have is investigations into incidents. We're not having investigations into the way incidents have been handled. We're probably going to be just as blindfolded at the end if the only focus is on the investigation of individual conduct. While I do, of course, respect the need for that to proceed independently and fairly, there is the question of how the incidents were handled.

Because we have such little time, and I have particularly very little time, I want to ask a question to Dr. von Hlatky.

I'm not asking you to judge the qualifications of any particular person, although I will have to say that seeing General Whitecross go into retirement rather than into a senior leadership position seems like a missed opportunity to me.

What difference would it make in the Canadian military if we saw a woman commanding one of the forces or being the chief of the defence staff?

• (1420)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I suppose your question prompts me to think that if Whitecross hadn't retired she would have the perfect qualifications right now. You remember who was speaking five years ago and taking the microphone and speaking to these issues, and it was General Whitecross. She's moved on in terms of her professional trajectory to Rome as a commandant of the NATO Defense College. There could have been an opportunity there. She was at the appropriate rank level. When you have a woman holding the highest position of leadership within an organization, it has transformative potential.

While I don't want to speculate about who might be tapped on the shoulder next or what the selection process is going to look like into the future to replace the CDS, if that's the decision that's made, I do think that it's a very positive step for an organization to have a woman at the highest levels because it has a transformative potential for the culture, and potentially it can bring a new model of leadership, which can then inspire further change.

I'll leave my comments at that.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will go to Mr. Benzen, please.

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today.

We've talked about the defence minister and how he has handled these allegations over the past couple of years. We don't know all the details, but I think one of the things for sure we know is that he probably could have acted quicker in many cases. Because he hasn't, I think that's created a problem within CAF, especially for female members.

Could all the witnesses talk a little bit about how we retain female members in the armed forces so they don't want to leave early? Also, how do we recruit new females to join the armed forces?

I think we have two big problems here. Can you enlighten us on how we could do that? I know we talked a second ago about having a female CDS, but that's not going to happen right away. What other things can we do to make this a better environment for our female CAF personnel?

The Chair: Dr. von Hlatky.

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I would certainly welcome this opportunity to review how we can better focus on the unique needs and experiences of women in the Canadian Armed Forces. If it takes a crisis to precipitate more attention to this issue, then so be it.

In general, I think it's been the big push behind integrating a gender-based analysis plus tool into the way that the Government of Canada develops its policies, and here, this certainly applies to the Canadian Armed Forces. Because the experiences of women are different from men—and we pointed to some cultural factors for why that is—there are other reasons, as well, for why they may have different needs and different experiences.

At every career stage, once again, whether it's at the moment of recruitment or at the moment of release and the transition from being in the military to reintegrating in civilian life, women face unique challenges. If we can use this opportunity as a way to further study what these unique challenges and needs are, then I definitely think this would be a good step in that direction.

At the same time, I don't think we should assume that what's going on right now—what's playing out in the media—is a central decision-making factor for a woman, either in terms of considering her career options in the military or whether she's considering joining the Canadian Armed Forces. There are a host of motives and reasons for why women make decisions about their careers, and that may have an impact or it may not. Certainly, it's just one consideration among many.

• (1425)

The Chair: Dr. Okros.

Dr. Alan Okros: I'll start by saying that I'm probably the last person to speak on behalf of women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, and it's the point I'd like to make. Inclusion strategies, when we are looking at diverse peoples, use the phrase “nothing about us without us”. If we apply the women, peace and security agenda principles, one of the things it should lead to is the recognition that women need to be empowered to represent themselves, and that includes with agency, with voice.

I would offer, both in terms of what the CAF does internally and potentially for the deliberations of this committee, that it is important to ensure that the voices and perspectives of those we wish to speak for are being heard and being considered. In the long run, creating mechanisms of voice so that individuals and subgroups within the military can be heard effectively would be a good strategy.

Mr. Bob Benzen: I think what we're seeing here is that there are some cases where an institution cannot monitor itself properly and it needs outside independent review.

We can talk about Operation Honour. It probably needed some outside oversight for accountability.

Can you talk about any international best practices from countries in NATO or our Five Eyes partners that have some monitoring systems so they can monitor a program? As you said, Operation Honour doesn't exist anymore per se, but what about another program like that? Are there any ideas on outside monitoring or independent monitoring?

I ask that to anybody.

The Chair: Sorry, your time is up.

We go on to Mr. Spengemann, please.

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

I, too, would like to thank our witnesses for their expertise, their service and their presence here this afternoon.

I'd like to just briefly go back to the minister's statements before this committee just about a week ago and cite some of the statements that he made, which I think are strong and constructive. The minister said, "We need a complete and total culture change. Our actions to root out this insidious behaviour must match our words...the time for patience is over. Change will not and cannot happen on its own."

This, in my mind, really engages us with a fundamental connection with the concept of democratic control of the armed forces and with what we need to do to accelerate change and to really treat this as a watershed moment, if that's the right term.

Professor von Hlatky, your fourth point of your opening remarks is very pointed on that. You said that, and I'm paraphrasing slightly, if a person does not engage in sexual misconduct, that does not mean that person performs his or her duty with honour. You say that the standard of performance is much higher than that if you want to get to zero tolerance.

There was very helpful testimony this afternoon across party lines and across witnesses with respect to there being a constructive element to culture but also a toxic, negative element to culture. We also have to keep in mind that we have a system. The Canadian Forces is a system of recruitment, promotion, service and discharge. That system is in place, and it can yield positive outcomes, but also, with the wrong cultural direction, negative outcomes.

Bear in mind that even in 2016 there was a StatsCan report that came out that said, I think, 27.3% of women surveyed across the branches of the service elements and military contractors reported sexual assault—not just sexual misconduct but assault. This is really a moment where we need to think differently.

What are the disruptors that can help us to change the culture in a much more accelerated way? I'm thinking about things like rewarding people, even for broader actions like being gender champions, champions for women, peace and security, all the way up the pro-

motional chain. Are there currently, in the human resources part of the system of the Canadian Forces, sufficient incentives to reward those who want to stand up and drive the agenda forward in a constructive way? If not, what kinds of elements should we build and look at?

That's to you, Professor von Hlatky, if you don't mind.

• (1430)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: First of all, you mentioned the champion for women, peace and security, and while I think this is an important leadership role, I think that the question you raised, perhaps, isn't directly connected to the mandate of the champion for women, peace and security, which really refers to a broader agenda. Certainly, talking about women's representation and participation is part of that role, but when you're talking about specific career incentives, structures and promotions, that might lie a little bit outside of the scope.

However, I think that we're not satisfied with the status quo, and one way, of course, in a system like the military would be to take a look at the incentive structure around promotions. What are the professional incentives that could be reviewed and tweaked in order to encourage and reward the kind of behaviour that we want to see, which is more support for victims and survivors and a supportive environment for those individuals to come forward? We probably need to look at peer-to-peer support systems there and also leadership conduct. I do think there is merit to looking at how promotions are made and to reviewing incentive structures around career advancements in order to create a more supportive environment.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Just really briefly, because I'm tight on time, I'm going back to the minister's comment that we need a total culture change. I think those were his words. Is tweaking enough and, if not, what could be done that is more than tweaking that really helps us to accelerate these changes?

The Chair: Dr. Okros.

Dr. Alan Okros: I think all three of us have indicated that, no, tweaking is not sufficient. I go back to my comment that we need to have a proper understanding of military culture, of what's working and not working and what to keep and what to change.

To paraphrase a former prime minister, I would offer that now is the time to commit sociology. I would offer the work by Raewyn Connell that explains the military's masculinity and the work by Kimberlé Crenshaw that helps us understand that intersectionality is essential to bringing the right lens and the right perspective to really analyze the culture. That, then, can lead us to some identification of the changes that are made.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Bezan, go ahead.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Chair, can I pass on my line of questioning to Ms. Alleslev, please?

The Chair: Ms. Alleslev, please go ahead.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I greatly appreciate my colleague giving me the opportunity to ask some more questions.

I would like to actually continue the line of questioning we just heard around what fundamental comprehensive change means, and what sorts of experts should we be looking to. We have history and politics professors joining us, who are very knowledgeable, in order to give us a perspective on how we arrived at this point. However, there are things like war, morality, the military profession and the role of the military in a democracy. What should that culture look like in a modern era of defence and security? These are just as important questions as understanding what we need to do immediately.

Could you give me some ideas, in your opinion, from your background, on who we should be looking to consult next on such an important topic?

The Chair: Is that directed to anyone in particular?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: It's to all of the wise witnesses we are so privileged to have today.

• (1435)

The Chair: Dr. Okros had his hand up first.

Dr. Alan Okros: I referred to it briefly. My training is in psychology, and so I have an understanding of those interpersonal levels.

I would suggest, from an academic perspective, there are certain individuals from sociology who can apply critical feminist theory, critical race theory, analyze and understand. This is from an academic perspective.

There are women's organizations that have been looking at these issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace in multiple organizational contexts. They have perspectives, and years of experience working in this domain, which can be useful.

I would also point out there are civil society organizations that are specifically focused on the experiences of women in the Canadian Armed Forces, such as "It's Just 700". Those views and perspectives should be heard. They're talking to those who have served or are currently serving. They're hearing about lived experiences.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: If I could just take a dimension on that. Ultimately, because of a National Defence Act, and ultimately because a military actually is the only organization that has the ability to take a life in aggression, so to speak, and is responsible for the management of violence, all of those civilian organizations, while absolutely important, would not necessarily have the background and expertise of why a military needs to be part of a democracy, but somewhat outside of a democracy, because it has rights and privileges that go beyond what most citizens have. It's those two points, as you said, that we need to address.

Who, specifically, can we speak to where those two things in that context meet?

Dr. Alan Okros: I recognize that, however, the issue that we are talking about is interpersonal conduct among members of a team. In that context, there are organizations that understand those dynamics, and as I've suggested, to help us understand the multiple views and perspectives that need to be brought together.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. English.

Dr. Allan English: For me, the key is a multidisciplinary group that includes many different points of view. Ms. Alleslev's point is very well taken, as you need some people who understand the military culture, because to read some of the documents, it has its own bureaucratic language, and there are codes in there and things that are being said. If you don't understand that, then you don't understand what is being said to each other.

The bottom line is, what gets rewarded gets done. General Vance, between lieutenant-colonel to general, was promoted five times in 10 years, or one promotion every two years. What got rewarded was his operational success, and the forces always put priority on operational success. That would be an interesting debate to have.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Could you comment, though, on conduct—

The Chair: I'm sorry. The time is up.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Bagnell, please.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Bagnell.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madam Vandenberg.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: I just have one quick question for Dr. Okros and then I'll share my time.

It's something you said in your opening remarks about the daily things that can undermine identity and a sense of belonging.

I know that we're talking about the very overt and very obvious forms of sexual misconduct, or even sexual violence or sexual assault, but it's really those day-to-day interactions that create culture. It's the small things that happen to people as they go through their work lives.

It's things like an off-colour joke that is said in front of other people in an attempt to humiliate and diminish someone. Then if the woman actually files a complaint, she gets attacked. She's told she doesn't have a sense of humour.

It's even just dismissive and patronizing statements such as, "Well, I believe that you believe that", or other forms of gendered microaggressions and loaded language. From what you said, the things that people experience every day really form the culture, which then enables the other worse forms of sexual misconduct.

Can you talk a bit about the impact on the women, but also on the institution, of these kinds of microaggressions?

• (1440)

Dr. Alan Okros: The extension beyond this is the issue of creating social hierarchies. Every workplace, every group, has social hierarchies of who is the most important down to who is the least important. These are the things that are being policed commonly using sexualized or racialized language and references.

As the honourable member has mentioned, when people put in these snide comments, when women make an observation and are ignored and then their male colleagues say exactly the same thing and are applauded, these are the day-to-day practices that send signals about who's important and valued and who's not.

When people seek to create these hierarchies and police them by rewarding certain individuals based on characteristics and attacking others, that's what starts damaging identity and belonging.

It is important for us to be recognizing it. It isn't unique to the military. What I tried to identify are some facets of the military such as the importance given to normative conformity, obedience to authority, the differentiations of rank and the power differences. These things can accentuate those and make it more difficult.

As I said, these things are essential for operational effectiveness, but they're double-edged swords because they get used against people as well.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bagnell.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Thank you.

I thank the witnesses. You've been very helpful. It has been great to hear your input.

I'll just ask a couple of questions, because the time will run out.

Maybe I'll start with Professor von Hlatky and then go to Professor English.

I think you've convinced us all that culture is the major problem. I would just like some more technical steps, like action plans, that on day one you do this and this.

What exactly do we do now to change the culture that you've all said needs to be changed?

That's my most important question.

Professor von Hlatky, I don't know what your work has been, but at the end of that response, can you tell us whether you've noticed this culture in other organizations?

Professor English, I'm interested that you had done a study on the history of the military. What was it like way back?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I can start and be very quick.

I've tried to outline a few paths forward, because I do think culture manifests itself in things such as leadership and what they say in training, and so on. I tried to identify certain paths through which this can happen.

On the broader point about how you change culture, I think you have to cultivate an awareness and mindfulness of the behaviours that to someone outside might seem unacceptable, but within the organization they're routinized in the day-to-day practices to the extent that they become invisible. This is part of what we're getting at with the idea of culture change. It's to cultivate a sense of self-awareness and group awareness about which behaviours and practices are problematic but have been buried under the guise of normalcy through repeated interactions and day-to-day practices.

That's what's important to uncover, and that's where external engagement is especially needed and has been advocated for today.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm afraid your time is up, Mr. Bagnell.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

This will be my last opportunity to speak. So I want to thank the witnesses for their time. We are truly grateful they have taken the time to answer our questions and to share their expertise in our debates.

My last question is for Ms. von Hlatky.

Professor Hlatky, since the beginning of our meetings, we have often been told that potentially negative measures may be associated with the reporting process—in other words, measures associated with Operation Honour may have reduced the number of reported incidents. We know that Mr. Vance was in charge of that operation.

Do you think those measures exist? What are they?

• (1445)

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I'm sorry, but I'm not sure I understand the question.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I apologize. Perhaps it was unclear. Perhaps it was poorly worded.

Measures were implemented under Operation Honour. We saw that reporting decreased.

According to you, of the measures associated with Operation Honour, which ones could have influenced the number of reports?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: I think that certain measures that were implemented surely encouraged some people to come forward and to participate in the reporting process.

At the same time, the obligation to report puts a strain on victims and survivors, which I think is problematic.

I will reiterate that I truly believe the approach to emphasize is the one where victims and survivors would fully control that process and feel safe. Their needs must be a central concern when that kind of a process is being developed.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: As a woman and an expert in this field, what do you think the Canadian Armed Forces should prioritize when it comes to inappropriate sexual behaviours?

Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky: First and foremost, trust must be restored. Without that trust, there will always be issues with reporting.

As I said in my remarks, data has been gathered over the past five years. Data is important, but little blind spots have also been revealed.

Another important issue to underscore is that of power abuse and power asymmetries among individuals, which are exacerbated through the fairly rigid hierarchy within the Canadian Armed Forces. As a researcher, I feel that the other priority, the other issue, must be considered in depth.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: As far as trust goes, that may perhaps go through the Minister of National Defence....

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Next is Mr. Garrison.

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

Given that I was the one who made the request that we move on to some next steps here, especially seeing the importance of the rebuilding trust question, I would like to thank the witnesses today, and I'll give up my time so we can move on that discussion.

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

On behalf of all of the members of the committee I learned a lot today.

I've done a lot of reading on the topic and I learned a lot. I'm very grateful that you took time out of your very busy schedules to join us here today. You gave us a lot to think about. Hopefully, we'll be able to turn that into something that will make a difference.

We'll keep in touch. Maybe we'll need your help again some time in the future.

[*Translation*]

I thank all the witnesses.

[*English*]

All the very best to all of you.

Members, the former ombudsman has requested the presence of his legal counsel on Wednesday. It's not an extraordinary request but it does require the permission of the committee.

Is there anyone who is not in favour of allowing him to bring his legal counsel?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Chair, I have a question.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Given that the last time we discussed this, it was determined that he would have parliamentary privilege, what would be the course of action if his lawyer advised him not to answer a question? If he's released from any response by the government, why would he need his lawyer there?

• (1450)

The Chair: As I said, it's not an extraordinary request.

If he does not answer a question and you want the answer to that question, I think the committee will repeat the question. If he doesn't answer and the committee has asked for an answer, then it has to go to the House. That's where it goes. That's the next step.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: All right? There are no objections to our witness bringing his legal counsel? Okay. That's good. Thanks.

We have 10 minutes left.

Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

Today was the first time I learned that we are proposing a special meeting next week, and it would be helpful for all of us.... I know the official notice hasn't gone out and—

The Chair: It hasn't gone out because it is not confirmed, but I can tell you now that he has agreed to appear.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay. There is no implied criticism there. I know we are moving quickly, but given that's the case, and the military ombudsman will be appearing, I have one comment and one question.

As he reports to the Minister of National Defence, I guess we'll be asking him if he has been released from any restrictions on his testimony, because he's not an officer of Parliament, and there's a tendency to forget that. He is someone who reports to the Minister of National Defence. I'm not sure—and maybe it's our first question for him—that we're being assured that if he chooses to answer or not answer questions, that's on the basis of his own personal legal advice and not on the instructions from the department.

The second question is that, now that we're having him appear before us, I believe we should offer the minister an opportunity to return to the committee after that testimony, make any further statements he wishes to make and also make any clarifications he'd like to make on the current situation with the second chief of the defence staff under investigation.

If there's a desire to do so, I could do that by a formal motion, but I would like to see us agree that we extend that invitation to the minister as a courtesy to allow him to reply after we hear that testimony. I would hope that there would be agreement to do so.

The Chair: Who would like to talk to this?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robillard, go ahead.

[*English*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Yes. I wish to know this. Aren't we supposed to have only the one person coming as a witness?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

A francophone is speaking in English, and the interpreter cannot translate their comments. It's really the first time I see this.

[*English*]

The Chair: You are—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you for your comments, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

So I will ask my question in French.

We were supposed to hear from one individual. We have already met with the minister, but there is talk of meeting with him again, along with an expert. Is that correct?

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev: On a point of order, Madam Chair, could you ask him to move his microphone—

The Chair: Mr. Bezan was first, please.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: I couldn't hear Monsieur Robillard. Could he move his microphone closer so we can hear?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: I wouldn't want to take too much time.

I'm wondering why witnesses are being added for Wednesday even though we were supposed to have a single witness.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Fine.

Mr. Bezan, please.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Chair, just to answer Mr. Robillard's question, this issue continues to escalate within the Canadian Armed Forces. I believe that the minister needs now to respond to what has happened with the chief of the defence staff. I also think it's only fair, as Mr. Garrison pointed out, that he be allowed to respond to the testimony that we're going to get from Mr. Walbourne next week, and because this is undermining the morale of the Canadian Armed Forces, I think each and every one of us should be completely upset with what has transpired over here in the past five or six weeks.

Canadians deserve answers. We need to re-establish the confidence and trust of our men and women who serve in uniform and the only way we can do that is by bringing about some transparency here, which right now the government has been lacking.

I'm also of the opinion that we need to call in some of our top military commanders, navy, air force, CJOC, army, NATO, NORAD, our top commanding officers, to come forward to find out what they know and to see if they've ever been involved in any sexual misconduct. We're potentially looking at having to replace our current CDS.

I do believe that this is probably some of the most important work that we're going to do as a committee this Parliament. I think it's also becoming clear that this is an issue that Canadians are getting more and more concerned about and we have to restore trust, and the best way that we can do it as parliamentarians is by expanding the scope of this study and dive in even deeper.

• (1455)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, go ahead.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is a pleasure for me to make these comments, Mr. Robillard.

I agree to a certain extent with Mr. Garrison and Mr. Bezan. As far as I understand, the motion that may be moved would propose that we hear testimony from the minister immediately after hearing from the former ombudsman.

I suggest that we assess next Wednesday what we have learned at the meeting with the former ombudsman. After that, we could make a decision. Just like Mr. Garrison and Mr. Bezan, I would be ready, after next Wednesday's meeting with the former ombudsman, to vote with you to invite the minister, if that is what you want. We may want to invite other witnesses after the former ombudsman's testimony.

So here is my proposal. Let's wait for next Wednesday, following the former ombudsman's testimony, to see what is going on, and we can then decide whether we should invite the minister, and even other people. We may actually learn other things on Wednesday.

To summarize, I suggest that we continue this discussion after the former ombudsman's testimony and to then make a decision about inviting the minister or perhaps other people. That would be something of a compromise, but I think it's the most responsible way to proceed, since we don't know what we will learn on Wednesday. We don't know whether it will be necessary to invite other people.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Could we hold a vote?

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, Madam Chair.

All I was suggesting here is that we extend the invitation to the minister to appear at committee after the testimony of the ombudsman, should he choose to do so. I'm not suggesting on the same day, as Mr. Robillard seemed to imply. I think that's one reason.

The second reason is that we have a second issue that has come up in public and that is the media reports that say we have a second chief of the defence staff who appears to have been under investigation for a period of time and it's unclear when actions were taken, if any, or whether his suspension was a voluntary suspension. That's a second set of questions we didn't have before us when we started these hearings, we'll call them that, the study. For that reason, I would extend the invitation to the minister today to allow him time to consider whether he wants to respond to both of those things.

On the question of whether there are further witnesses, I do agree with Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe that the question of any further witnesses should be left to a later date. I'm only suggesting today that the minister be offered that opportunity.

The Chair: All right.

March 8 is our next official meeting. If you wish, we can put aside time for committee business at that time or we can have a steering committee meeting, and then we can discuss this. That way you will have all the information.

What do you think about waiting a week?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Chair, it's a good suggestion.

• (1500)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Chair, would a steering committee take up a regularly scheduled committee time slot and/or day from our regularly scheduled committees or would that be at a different time?

The Chair: It depends on House resources. If the wish is to find an additional time after March 8, then we will ask for that, and we'll see if we can find one that works. If there are no additional slots, then we might have to use one of our time slots.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

The Chair: Is that a plan? If everyone's happy, we'll have a meeting after March 8, and we'll put aside time to talk about this issue.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right, we have a plan.

Thank you, everyone. I think that was a very helpful session.

The meeting is adjourned.

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