



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on National Defence

NDDN • NUMBER 011 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

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Chair

The Honourable Maxime Bernier

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• (1540)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC)): Good day to all of you and welcome to the 11th meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on Monday, March 2, 2009, we are holding a briefing on the recent incident of a Russian military aircraft approaching Canada's airspace.

We have a presentation from the Department of National Defence. General Duval, Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, Canadian NORAD Region, is with us today.

General Duval, the floor is yours. Afterward, the committee members will have time to ask you questions.

MGen M. Duval (Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, Canadian NORAD Region, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for your invitation, I would like to point out that I am appearing before your committee on the 85th anniversary of Canada's Air Force.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak about NORAD in general, and in particular, about the events of 18 February 2009 involving Russian military aircraft that approached Canada and the United States.

The members of Canada's military, working in a myriad of roles to defend North America, appreciate your interest and continued support.

[English]

Before I go into detail about the February 18 incident, I feel that it is important to provide some background on NORAD, on my mission as commander of the Canadian NORAD region, and on some of the differences between sovereign air space and the Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone, CADIZ.

[Translation]

NORAD has a long history of success as an integrated by-national command, providing aerospace warning and aerospace control of North America. We are now in our 51st-year, and the Command continues to serve as an excellent example of the close and cooperative relationship between Canada and the United States in ensuring the defence of North America.

Prior to the events of September 11, 2001, NORAD was focused primarily on the air approaches to North America, concentrating its

attention on defending Canada and the United States against threats from foreign militaries. However, as demonstrated on 9-11, there are threats that come from organizations and actors other than nation-States, using non-conventional tactics and weapons. We call this the asymmetric threat, and it has increased NORAD's attention on the interior of North America, even while we maintain our vigilance outward for classic symmetrical military threats.

During the last renewal of the NORAD Agreement, the governments of Canada and the United States decided to enhance NORAD to include a maritime warning mission alongside our aerospace control and aerospace defence role. The maritime warning mission leverages NORAD's long-established command and control mechanisms and information-sharing arrangements between Canada and the United States to ensure the security of the maritime approaches to North America.

[English]

I command NORAD'S Canadian region, working alongside my partners in the NORAD Alaska region and in the continental U.S. region. I am responsible to the commander of NORAD, General Gene Renuart, who answers to the Government of Canada through the Chief of Defence Staff and to the American government through the Secretary of Defense.

The NORAD agreement-mandated aerospace warning mission requires the detection, validation, and warning of attack against North America by aircraft, missiles, and space vehicles. This is achieved by the processing and assessing of information on global aerospace activities. Our areas of interest are not geographically bound by this mission, as threats could originate anywhere in the world. The aerospace control mission includes the responsibility to monitor and address all unwanted and unauthorized objects approaching or operating within North America. This requires a range of capabilities to enable detection, tracking, interception, identification, shadowing, and in the extreme, diversion or destruction of manned or unmanned air vehicles that are assessed to pose a threat to North America.

When airborne objects are detected approaching Canada or the United States without correlated flight information, actions are taken to validate NORAD systems to ensure that they are performing correctly and to research the identity of the contact in real time. This is conducted through coordination with civilian agencies, such as NAV CANADA and the U.S. Federal Aviation Authority, along with law enforcement agencies and allied militaries. When these efforts cannot determine an object's origin or intent, military fighters are used to provide visual identification. Once an approaching aircraft has been identified by NORAD, it may be shadowed from the air or monitored from the ground to ascertain intent and to prevent unauthorized and unwanted aircraft from entering North American air space or interfering with safe commercial flight activity.

In its most extreme form, NORAD's mission includes the application of deadly force to destroy approaching or dangerous objects and aircraft when specifically authorized.

[*Translation*]

Canada's sovereign airspace includes the airspace above Canada's territory, territorial seas, archipelagic and internal waters. Both Canada and the United States claim 12 nautical miles from land as territorial seas in accordance with international law.

Our sovereign airspace differs from what we describe as the "air defence identification zone", or ADIZ. The ADIZ is an area encircling the continental land mass of Canada and the U.S., established to facilitate NORAD's efforts to monitor the approaches to North America. It is primarily within this zone that the identification, location and control of perspective unknown and/or unauthorized aircraft are performed in the interest of national security.

The Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone, or CADIZ, generally extends further from land than the 12 nautical miles claimed as sovereign airspace. The exception to this is in the Arctic Archipelago, where the outer boundary of the CADIZ follows the 72nd parallel and thus positions the CADIZ entirely within sovereign airspace.

The boundaries of the CADIZ and requirements for transit are openly published in recognized and internationally available flight planning publications. However, these requirements are not legally enforceable beyond the limits of sovereign airspace. Our actions within the CADIZ, but outside the 12-nautical-mile limit, cannot interfere with other aircraft operations, unless there are indications of hostile intent.

[*English*]

However, Canada and the United States have internationally recognized responsibilities to ensure the safe and effective use of international airways that approach and transit North America. It is only through timely, advanced coordination via accepted channels, using recognized procedures, that aircraft can operate safely.

The internationally recognized process—the ICAO or International Civil Aviation Organization and the FAA or Federal Aviation Administration procedures—for notification of a flight into international airspace in proximity of another nation's boundaries is via a flight plan filed with a recognized air traffic control authority. In Canada, this is NavCanada. A flight plan will ensure that other

airspace users, be they civil or military, will be aware of the activity. For a pilot, situational awareness of other aircraft is a basic tenet for aircraft safety.

While it is possible to operate aircraft safely in international airspace without filing such a flight plan, it requires technological support to guarantee safe separation from other aircraft operating under such procedures. This can be in the form of on-board radar systems, as is the case with airborne early warning aircraft, or of radar control from other support units, such as an aircraft carrier. Such flight operations are said to be operating under legally required "due regard", and they require the organizations using them to ensure safe operations. Where aircraft operate without the on-board systems or support to maintain safe separation from other traffic, their conduct is characterized as unsafe.

"Due regard" is a recognized procedure applicable to military aircraft, first promulgated in the Chicago Convention of 1944, article 3, and endorsed by ICAO, NavCanada, and the FAA.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

In the absence of a filed flight plan for aircraft flying in proximity to another nation's boundaries, there is no way to ensure the required information reaches all military and civilian participants involved in aerospace and air traffic control to ensure flight safety.

For example, the bilateral Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), signed between the United States and the then Soviet Union in 1991, includes a provision for the United States and the Russian Federation to provide each other notification of the relocation of air-breathing nuclear weapons platforms—such as long-range bombers—between named bases in each country within a set period of time after the aircraft has been moved. I repeat: after the aircraft has been moved, not before.

However, this does not in itself constitute flight notification of aircraft approaching North America, nor does it answer to the need for improved flight safety, as movement of other aircraft types and other flight activity are not required under START. START does not provide advance notification of flights, nor does it provide the details of destination, routing, timing, altitude and air speed necessary to permit identification and deconfliction with other aircraft activity. The treaty was not intended to address real time actions by either nation. It is a method of accounting for nuclear forces and was designed as a confidence-building measure in the waning days of the Cold War.

[*English*]

It is not unexpected for foreign militaries to conduct flight operations outside their sovereign airspace in the pursuit of training and execution of assigned missions. Canada also conducts flights in the international airspace beyond our 12-nautical-mile limit, in support of operations in the high seas, transit to overseas theatres, and in the conduct of training.

As stated at the onset, it is NORAD's mission to respond to all unidentified or unauthorized flight activity approaching or operating within North America, whether the flight turns out to be accidental or intentional, military or civilian, allied or non-allied. Until the identification and intent have been determined, we do not have the complete picture of who or what we are dealing with and must treat all incidents equally. That is NORAD's mission.

[*Translation*]

The flight by two Tupolev 95 Bear H on February 18, 2009 is typical of flights conducted by Russian Federation strategic long-range aviation (LRA) aircraft since the resumption of out-of-area patrols, as announced in August 2007 by then-president Vladimir Poutine.

The aircraft entered the CADIZ at approximately 5:22 p.m. Ottawa time without a filed-flight plan or other coordinating information. As is our mission, NORAD CF-18 alert fighters were committed to identify the traffic. Typically, NORAD fighters are tasked to determine aircraft type and nationality, and to assist in providing information necessary to determine whether the traffic constitutes a threat.

The NORAD intercept confirmed the aircraft as Russian Tu-95 Bear H, and identified two aircraft flying in a lead-trail formation, with the aircraft in the rear three nautical miles behind the one in front, on a course towards Canadian territory. Following identification, the CF-18s maintained a safe distance of approximately 10 nautical miles, and were soon instructed to return to base. As the fighters were preparing to depart the scene, they were tasked by NORAD ground controllers to make three formatted radio calls to the Russian aircraft pursuant to the 1991 Canada-Russia Agreement on the prevention of dangerous military activities. A radio call was made warning "CLOSE TO TERRITORY" at approximately 5:33 p.m. Ottawa time, after which the Russian aircraft were observed changing their course towards the west.

The CF-18s continued their flight back to base as the Tu-95 H aircraft continued west through the CADIZ, monitored by ground radar sites. At 6:05 p.m., the aircraft departed the Canadian ADIZ and entered the Alaskan ADIZ, at which time monitoring continued by the Alaskan NORAD region.

● (1550)

[*English*]

Once they were identified, it was clear these aircraft did not pose a military threat to North America. Their closest approach to the Canadian land mass was 41 nautical miles, or approximately 76 kilometres. The conduct and airmanship of the air crew was very, very professional.

I must point out that 41 nautical miles at the speed of the Bear represents anywhere from three to five minutes from our domestic territorial air space.

However, we wish to see this professionalism extended to the timely and transparent communication of flight activities that approach or operate near the sovereign territory of North America. The commander of NORAD, with the support of both the Canadian and American governments, has engaged his Russian military counterparts in the past to encourage the exchange of flight

information. While there is no international legal obligation to require the Russian Federation to provide this information, we believe it is in all of our nations' interests to contribute to flight safety, particularly when operating in an environment as austere and difficult as the Arctic region.

As commercial traffic increases in the area, all three countries, along with the other Arctic nations, share responsibility for search and rescue activities, as well as a moral obligation to do all we can to protect this fragile environment. The Canadian Forces, along with our American partners in NORAD, look forward to cooperating with our Russian counterparts, as we continue to assess the effects of the changing global climate on the Arctic. However, any decision to pursue a formal agreement on the exchange of flight information will be a decision by the government involved—not by NORAD or the Canadian Forces.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the men and women of NORAD on both sides of the border stand ready 24/7 to respond to all incidents—north, south, east, and west—to ensure the security and defence of North America.

I'll be happy to take your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Major-General.

I will give the floor to Mr. Coderre.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Major-General, welcome to the committee. I would like to thank you for helping us to understand the role and operations of NORAD.

I would like to review certain parts of your statement. We would like to know what really happened with the Russian aircraft. I understand that the two Tupolev aircraft were not flying dangerously.

MGen M. Duval: That is correct, sir.

Hon. Denis Coderre: However, would you describe their flight pattern as threatening?

MGen M. Duval: No.

Hon. Denis Coderre: That leads you to state that they did not represent a threat.

MGen M. Duval: That is correct. Their conduct, professionalism and the fact that they reacted to the warning calls clearly indicate that there was no imminent danger. The flight was similar to many others conducted since August 2007, when Russian strategic aviation activity increased.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I will come back to that.

The minister made a big deal about the incident in the media and was given to bombast. He said that Canadian airspace had been breached. I wouldn't qualify coming within 41 nautical miles as a breach.

MGen M. Duval: I cannot comment on the minister's statements; that would be inappropriate.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Forget the minister. In your view, would you qualify coming within 41 nautical miles as brushing up against Canadian airspace?

MGen M. Duval: That might not be the case in terms of distance, but given the speed of the aircraft, that represents a three-minute flight; so it is in terms of time.

Hon. Denis Coderre: That amounts to a return trip between Montreal and Joliette. That is quite a distance, all the same.

MGen M. Duval: Given the speed of the aircraft, sir, we are talking about a few minutes. In terms of time, I would say that is quite close.

Hon. Denis Coderre: So they came quite close in terms of time.

I would like to thank you for your clear statements. We have heard the Prime Minister say that there have been some 30 Russian interventions within a short time span, and that NORAD made 28 intercepts. Is that accurate?

MGen M. Duval: There were approximately 30 interventions in 2008. These were similar to those that began in August 2007. In fact, the number of flights declined somewhat in 2008 compared to 2007. As well, there were 11 intercepts.

•(1555)

Hon. Denis Coderre: There were 11 intercepts. The Prime Minister said that the Russian flights were increasingly aggressive. I am one of those who believes that the issue of Arctic sovereignty is at play and that they will try to gauge reaction times. In a certain sense, they are also making a political gesture.

I am not asking you to comment on the political nature of these activities, but is it your sense that the flights of the Russian Tupolevs or other aircraft have become increasingly aggressive? In other words, are they increasingly testing your capacity?

MGen M. Duval: I think that we have to be careful not to try and guess what the Russians' real intentions are. The fact remains that the Russian armed forces went through some lean times over the past few years; their level of training was reduced to a minimum that I would consider almost unacceptable in order to maintain forces in good standing. Their economy has since revived, and they have been taking up the slack. According to what we have been seeing in recent years, their military is simply regaining strength.

With regard to the conduct of the aircraft and crew during this time of increased flights over the Arctic, I have not sensed any aggressive behaviour. However, it is not for me to judge whether the political intent is aggressive or not.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I agree with that.

How close have the Russian aircraft come? To where did they fly? To your knowledge, were the 75 kilometres or 41 nautical miles the closest they came this year?

MGen M. Duval: I am not sure I can answer that off the top of my head, but I could certainly get back to you with an answer.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you. That is of great help to us. I got the impression that this incident was being used for political purposes. You have confirmed what the Russian embassy official told us, i.e., that NORAD did not find anything out of the ordinary, that there had been no threat and that everything had been justified.

How is detection carried out? Is it all conducted under the direction of NORAD or do you make use of Canadian tools, for example, when there is a flight over Canadian airspace?

MGen M. Duval: We have all the tools at our disposal, especially those of NORAD, with our line of radars in the North or across the country, if you will. All those tools are also available to us within Canada.

Hon. Denis Coderre: A lot has been said about the Russians. Have other countries tested your capacity?

MGen M. Duval: Since becoming commander of the Canadian NORAD region, I can say that all activities involved Russians.

Hon. Denis Coderre: The Russians are the only ones to have engaged in this type of activity.

I suppose that NORAD is not only on the lookout for aircraft. Are you able to state whether other actions were carried out by the Russian army?

MGen M. Duval: I cannot really talk about things outside the purview of NORAD. In the case at hand, there is nothing else of note.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Would you have anything to say about submarine activity?

MGen M. Duval: I must admit that is outside of my mandate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

I now give the floor to Mr. Bachand. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Major-General Duval.

MGen M. Duval: Thank you.

Mr. Claude Bachand: You have just confirmed a number of things.

I have questions concerning the distant early warning line. To your knowledge, did the distant early warning line or North Warning System detect these aircraft on February 18? Were you on duty in Winnipeg that day?

•(1600)

MGen M. Duval: Sir, I travel so often that I would have to check my day planner to see if I was there that day. I was aware of the situation and kept up-to-date. It is not uncommon for me to be away when such things occur; I travel a great deal. I can simply say that NORAD's aircraft detection systems functioned properly that day.

Mr. Claude Bachand: They detected the approaching aircraft. Now, I understand the difference between the CADIZ and the ADIZ. In your presentation, you indicated that the event occurred around 5:22 p.m. in the CADIZ. You then said that a call was made warning "CLOSE TO TERRITORY" at 5:33 p.m.

Am I to understand that the CF-18s took off at the time of detection, i.e., at 5:22 p.m.? From where did they take off?

MGen M. Duval: They took off from one of our forward-operating bases in the Arctic. There are four such bases: Inuvik, Rankin Inlet, Yellowknife and Iqaluit, from west to east. In this case, the aircraft took off from the Inuvik base.

Mr. Claude Bachand: That makes sense. If they received the order to take off at 5:22 p.m., they could already be in intercept mode 11 minutes later.

MGen M. Duval: No, let me clarify that. I can understand there being some confusion. Detection was done before the aircraft arrived in the identification zone. During the time it took the F-18s to fly to... The aircraft entered the CADIZ, but they had already been detected, and the F-18s had already taken off. The intercept occurred a little while later. The aircraft were identified, and the call was made 11 minutes later. The identification process takes a few minutes, we have to come into position and identify the aircraft. The call was placed 11 minutes later.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Being an aviator yourself, you must have some knowledge of Russian equipment. The Tupolev Tu-95 aircraft must be equipped to pinpoint its location in the airspace.

MGen M. Duval: I can only hypothesize because I have never had the opportunity to board a Bear aircraft. Based on the international standards maintained by leading-armed forces, of which I consider the Russian air force to be a member, I would not be surprised that they have all the modern navigational systems, including GPS. In answer to your question, they should be able to keep to a very accurate flight plan.

Mr. Claude Bachand: You said that the F-18s took off from Inuvik. How many aircraft are assigned to the various bases? How many aircraft are there in Inuvik, in Iqaluit? Is that secret information?

MGen M. Duval: I will not disclose those details, because they are of a tactical nature.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Is that classified information?

MGen M. Duval: That is classified information.

Mr. Claude Bachand: When all is said, we can only conclude that nothing special occurred. Canadian airspace was not breached on February 18.

MGen M. Duval: No. The Russian bombers entered the identification zone. That is not a binding mandate. However, we would appreciate receiving their flight plans, something they have not chosen to disclose to us up until now. They simply entered the identification zone, the CADIZ. They did not enter into our airspace.

As I have already indicated, at the speed they were flying, it was only a matter of minutes before they reached our airspace.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Who orders the F-18s to take off? Is it someone at NORAD or in Winnipeg?

MGen M. Duval: Everything originates from NORAD and goes through Winnipeg. Under the region's command, you have the tactical control centre, the Canadian Air Defence Sector, which is located in North Bay, Ontario. The tactical intercept managers are in direct communication with the fighters and deal with in-flight fuel needs, if need be, depending on the duration of a mission. Consequently, things start out at NORAD and are relayed to the region and then to the sector.

Mr. Claude Bachand: With regard to command and control, who is responsible for the F-18s? Is it NORAD, Winnipeg or the tactical group?

MGen M. Duval: It's the entire organization. Ultimately, General Renuart is the supreme commander of the command.

Mr. Claude Bachand: The general?

MGen M. Duval: Yes, General Gene Renuart, who was recently in Ottawa. He is commander of NORAD. I work for him; I am one of his three regional commanders. This type of mission is coordinated through NORAD by the region, from the sector to the aircraft.

Mr. Claude Bachand: In the case of any aggression that we needed to respond to, who would give the order to engage? Is that also NORAD?

MGen M. Duval: It is NORAD, with regard to military aircraft. General Renuart has a mandate for both countries.

Mr. Claude Bachand: So even in Canadian airspace it would be the Americans giving the order to engage in a more aggressive response if this type of aircraft were to violate Canadian airspace.

• (1605)

MGen M. Duval: That is the nature of a bi-national command. General Renuart has a mandate from two governments.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Okay. I have no further questions. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Merci, Monsieur Bachand.

I'll give the floor to Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Major-General.

I guess this is a similar question to Mr. Bachand's. Can you say who gave the orders to scramble those interceptors? Did that come from NORAD?

MGen M. Duval: Yes, it did.

As I said, it's passed through different layers. With respect to the individual who will talk to the fighters and say "scramble now", that's done at the tactical level. But he has received—

Mr. Jack Harris: This happens pretty fast, I take it.

MGen M. Duval: Yes.

Mr. Jack Harris: They're not putting papers around anywhere, but the chain of command is pretty clear.

You indicated that altogether there were eleven situations where flights were intercepted since they resumed this type of activity. Can you tell us in what way this was different from the other ten or eleven?

MGen M. Duval: It was in line with the level of activity and the type of activity that we have seen since August 2007.

Mr. Jack Harris: You talked about flight plans. I don't imagine the Russians show up at the airport and file their flight plans the way a civilian aircraft is supposed to. Where would you expect these flight plans to be filed, and did they file flight plans in the other ten or eleven situations?

MGen M. Duval: There is a process to filing flight plans to proceed into international airspace. The same process is followed by both military and civilian....

Although it is not our mandate to do so, from a safety perspective, as I said in my opening comments, it would be good for everybody, all the operators, civilian and military, that could be in that area at the same time, to have that visibility. It's an avenue to inform others so that safety of flight can be ensured.

I'm sorry, what was the other part of the question?

Mr. Jack Harris: There is a process for filing. But they didn't file them in any of the other eleven incidents you referred to, so this is nothing new.

MGen M. Duval: There were only three cases we can trace with these types of airplanes where the Russians filed a flight plan. There was one not too long ago where they transited two Blackjack bombers from Russia to Venezuela for an exercise, which was publicized at the time. There was a flight near Iceland by the Russians. And the third one where there was a flight plan was off the coast of Alaska, if I'm not mistaken.

These are the only three that are known, and that's researching through international air traffic control agencies, Eurocontrol and others. If you look through the database, there were only three confirmed flight plans that were submitted.

Mr. Jack Harris: And there was no interceptor scramble in those cases?

MGen M. Duval: I can't say that for sure.

Mr. Jack Harris: You indicated you don't want to talk about submarines, but didn't you say in your presentation—and it sounded very thorough, so perhaps we could have a copy of that for the committee—that there was a maritime warning mission as part of NORAD? Is that something you mentioned in your remarks?

MGen M. Duval: When the agreement was redrafted and signed, in 2006, the two countries elected to put the maritime warning component in the NORAD mission, basically leveraging the command and control capability and the passage of information, which was very mature within the NORAD organization after some 47 to 48 years.

Mr. Jack Harris: If it's under the same command, why do we hear nothing about the submarine in Arctic waters that had an explosion? Is there some explanation for that?

MGen M. Duval: There's a difference between getting the mandate and then putting in the procedures, the protocols, and the concept of operations to apply that mandate. This is fairly recent. It's a work in progress. I cannot comment on the presence of submarines. I think other witnesses here have commented. I think Commodore Gardam has provided testimony on this subject.

• (1610)

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Major-General.

The Chair: Merci.

Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Now, Mr. Hawn, will you be sharing your time with Mr. Boughen?

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): We'll see how it goes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General Duval, for being here.

I want to follow up on just a couple of things that were mentioned across the table, just to clarify.

When we're talking about 41 miles from a spot, in air operations that is a very short time.

MGen M. Duval: Yes, very short.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: If fighters are scrambling from even as close as Inuvik and perhaps as far away as Cold Lake.... If they're scrambling from Cold Lake, for example, it takes about three hours to get there.

MGen M. Duval: Yes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: So obviously the early warning is important, and those distances are very small. The reaction time is very important. From my information, they have come as close as just outside 12 miles on previous missions.

Just as a clarification of who controls who in NORAD, because it is a binational command, Canadians can be controlling American fighters in American airspace and Americans can be controlling Canadian fighters in Canadian airspace. Is that—

MGen M. Duval: That's a true statement, and we have done so. Our recent deployment of CF-18s to help out our friends in Alaska not too long ago, in 2007, actually, is an example of that. They were under the command of the U.S. commander in the Alaskan NORAD region.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: That's clearly what binational means. It doesn't matter. There may be a Canadian commander sitting in the chair in NORAD and he's the one who picks up the red phone and calls the President.

MGen M. Duval: Yes. As to the last question, if I recall, on February 18 it was my deputy commander who was in the seat, and he's an American.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Yes. Thank you.

These intercepts have been going on for decades.

MGen M. Duval: Yes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: They stopped for a while because frankly the Russians had no money. They've picked up, as you said, in the last couple of years.

We know they're coming from a variety of means. Can you comment on the desirability of exercising the entire system when we know they're coming, regardless of whether they've told us or not, and on the training value and the exercise of the entire NORAD command and control system that these Russian flights offer us?

MGen M. Duval: It's training that doesn't compare to anything else that you can simulate. It is the real stuff. Although there is no ill intent in the conclusion, it certainly is motivating and exciting for our young folks who train for this. They can apply and confirm their training. It is a golden opportunity. The Russians are probably thinking the same way.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: It's a good mutual training opportunity.

MGen M. Duval: Yes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: In terms of being aggressive, you obviously have two markedly different aircraft types. When we say “aggressive”, do you expect a Russian bomber to manoeuvre aggressively with an airplane like an F-15?

MGen M. Duval: I don't think they could match the capability of the F-15, but perhaps what the formation of two could do, the proximity of our airplanes, and that sort of thing...

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Aggressive behaviour is also things like jamming and electronic behaviour and so on.

MGen M. Duval: That's right.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I don't expect you to comment politically, but the Minister of National Defence recently had a conversation with Mr. Lavrov, his counterpart in Russia, and did point out that filing flight plans would be helpful. Can you just confirm that typically no flight plans are filed and obviously we've managed the intercepts?

MGen M. Duval: That's correct.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: But it would be helpful if flight plans were filed?

MGen M. Duval: Certainly. If we can identify and correlate the information on the flight plan with the object that we detect, even with radio calls confirming that you are who you are, it would simplify matters dramatically for everybody.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Thanks.

I'll pass the rest of my time to Mr. Boughen.

The Chair: You have two minutes, Mr. Boughen.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair

Thanks, General, for availing yourself to the committee this afternoon. We appreciate the time you're giving us.

From your presentation, we're aware of eleven intercepts and thirty different flights in the past year and a half.

• (1615)

MGen M. Duval: They did it in 2008.

Mr. Ray Boughen: It seems to me that this is definitely a training pattern. I mean, it's happening over and over again.

Is this enough that we should say, as a country, to Russia that you're going to have to file flight plans? “We're concerned about your number of flights. We're concerned about what you're doing in the airspace around our country. We request that you file flight plans, and we in turn will file plans with you if our aircraft are going toward Russia.”

With the number, mathematically I'm thinking sooner or later we have a chance for a real foul-up here. If it's one kind of flight, who's going to worry. But in thirty different flights, somebody might not get the message that this is a training exercise.

It's not necessary to get too aggressive, as you said, but some young hot-blood is in that cockpit and decides this is serious stuff, and now we have an international incident.

I'm thinking that if everyone is aware that an aircraft is in the vicinity, then you lessen the probability of accidents occurring.

I have one other question for the General, Mr. Chair.

From what I heard you say, sir, we really have very limited information from the Russians in terms of their coming toward our airspace. We have limited notification. It seems we have to notify them to tell them they're on our border. They're not saying they're in this airspace, or they're close to our border, or asking whether they are approved to go ahead. We're instigating the questions.

MGen M. Duval: Yes, this is a fair statement.

As I said earlier, we have three documented cases of flight plans being submitted in the last few years, and if I take it to 2007-08, we're talking about some 70 events, so that's not a lot.

Contrary to perhaps what was mentioned in a previous session of this committee, and I referred to it in my opening comments, you can claim the START treaty is sufficient warning, but that is not a warning. As I've said, it's after the fact. And it has nothing to do with the bilateral agreement that we have in NORAD. This is a Russian Federation and U.S. treaty. And as I've said, it's not before, it's after the fact. This is not to be considered notification, from a NORAD perspective.

The Chair: We don't have enough time, so thank you for your answer.

I will give the floor, for five minutes, to Mr. Bagnell.

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

Thank you for coming, General. I'm a great supporter of the military.

You don't have to comment on this, because it's not your area, but you said in your paper:

This requires a range of capabilities to enable detection, tracking, interception, identification, shadowing, and, in the extreme, diversion or destruction of manned or unmanned air vehicles that are assessed to pose a threat to North America.

It's too bad that there's nothing the least bit similar that we've heard related to submarines. So it depends what vehicle they come in.

In response to Mr. Coderre, you said you didn't have the figures with you about the distances of the flights. I wonder if you could get that to the committee clerk later. Of those eleven occurrences, could you tell us how close they came, and whether there was any other military plane within that time from another country that came closer than any of those eleven flights?

MGen M. Duval: Yes, that's being done, sir.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Great, thank you.

I have a question. You talked about CADIZ, and you said on page 3: “The exception to this is in the Arctic Archipelago, where the outer boundary of the CADIZ follows the 72nd parallel and thus positions the CADIZ entirely within sovereign airspace.” So in the archipelago, then, they're all within 12 miles, because that's our sovereign airspace. That's according to that statement.

Then you go to the top of page 5, and they said the aircraft entered CADIZ. But if all the airspace in the archipelago is within 12 miles, as per page 3, the 41 nautical miles would not be in there, as it says at the top of page 5. I don't understand that.

MGen M. Duval: Let me explain.

You're very familiar with the shape of Canada. At the top of the archipelago, it's in a triangle shape, and you've got coastlines on either side. So our CADIZ, if I can draw it beyond our territorial waters in Canada, from the U.S. border it will go completely outside of the land mass to the northwest, outside of the land mass as well. It's over the water, and a portion of it is also outside of the land mass on the east coast. When it gets to the triangle, then it follows the parallel. So it's the top part of our country that's beyond the CADIZ. In this particular incident, we're saying it happened where our CADIZ is beyond our land mass. In no case—

• (1620)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: It's always 12 miles beyond, but it's farther than that.

MGen M. Duval: No. The territorial waters are from the coast line to 12 miles out. The CADIZ is beyond that into international airspace.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: How far beyond that was where the plane came?

MGen M. Duval: How far beyond that did the plane come?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Where the plane came, how far beyond the CADIZ...? Is the CADIZ boundary beyond our territorial water mark?

MGen M. Duval: Yes, it is.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: How far, though?

MGen M. Duval: I think, if I understand you correctly, the two Russian Bears penetrated the CADIZ from the north. At that point, they were 41 nautical miles.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Oh, at the point they entered the CADIZ?

Mr. Jack Harris: From the land mass or from the 12-mile limit?

MGen M. Duval: They were 41 miles from the land mass.

A witness: That was the closest approach. They entered at the CADIZ, which is the 72nd parallel, which is farther than 42 miles away. So that was the point of entry, which I would estimate off the top of my head is approximately 180 nautical miles away from our land.

MGen M. Duval: So the penetration was much higher up, but the closest point they came was 41 miles.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Sir, I have a short question, but I just want to make a comment. It does seem a little absurd that when we're in these tight timelines—you said three minutes—and we've got our planes way down south, they have to come all the way from Cold Lake in the middle of the country.

I'm going to share my time with Ms. Neville, so go ahead.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I don't understand the timelines you're referencing in terms of the response time, the fighters getting up there. Just explain the timelines for me. I came in late and maybe I missed it, but I don't think so.

MGen M. Duval: Our airplanes were already at the forward operating locations. They originated in Cold Lake, but they had been deployed to the forward operating locations, which we do on a regular basis for training or for this purpose. From that point on, they're not very far away, and at the speed they can operate, they're not very far away from where the Russian Bears were coming in.

Hon. Anita Neville: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Bagnell, just 20 seconds.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: It just seems to me, as a northerner, that it's embarrassing that we have more planes and air force in Alaska than we do in the whole three northern territories, which is a third or 40% of Canada. But I'll leave that as a comment.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to thank General Duval for coming here today.

It's interesting information in your notes. Being kind of an individual who's not quite familiar with the notification process, I guess my first question, General, would be this. You talked about a radio warning, "close to territory". How is that communicated?

MGen M. Duval: Within the agreement, there are frequencies that we can communicate on to warn each other and to pass these warnings.

Mr. LaVar Payne: They would be monitoring that? Okay.

When that communication goes out, would that be in Russian or in English, or would it be in French? Is it just Morse Code?

MGen M. Duval: I know we don't give Russian training to our pilots.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

MGen M. Duval: No, it's transmitted in a plain language, in our language.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you.

The Russian foreign minister was here and we talked about notification in terms of flights, and it sounds as if it's fairly easy, but obviously they haven't done that. I'm guessing. What additional things would need to be done before we would get a regular notification before those flights would be coming into our airspace?

• (1625)

MGen M. Duval: Engagement and discussion. General Renuart, in his role as commander of NORAD and supported and blessed by both nations, has tried to engage with his counterparts to do just that, to increase, to take activities and actions to increase the transparency and promote transparency.

It's in the best interests of everybody, not only the two countries but anybody operating in the Arctic over the international waters. And the commercial traffic is increasing. So it's an issue to me of safety of flight, and the need is only going to increase because the traffic is increasing.

So to me it's fairly simple. If you claim to be transparent and you want to be transparent, you take the appropriate actions to be so. So we need to engage them and continue to engage them. We had some success. The commander of NORAD had some success a few years ago, and then it seemed everything was stalled.

Mr. LaVar Payne: So if they're not providing us with any kind of notification, basically these flights are testing our ability to intercept and defend our territory.

MGen M. Duval: As I said in the exchange I had with Mr. Hawn before, that's certainly a possibility. I must reiterate, though, that it's in international waters, and they don't necessarily have to do so, but it would certainly be a good gesture in promotion of transparency to do so, as I said, in the interests of safety.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you.

I'm going to share my time with Monsieur Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Welcome, major-general, and thank you for your concise answers.

The ADIZ includes territorial waters, over 12 nautical miles. Is that correct?

MGen M. Duval: No. The zone—

Mr. Steven Blaney: Pardon me. It is the continent, plus the 12 nautical miles around the continent, is that not correct?

MGen M. Duval: No. The continent, plus 12 nautical miles represent our territorial zones, as well as the sovereign space above.

Mr. Steven Blaney: That is called the ADIZ, correct?

MGen M. Duval: No. It's simply the sovereign space and the territorial zones.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Okay.

MGen M. Duval: Further, at a greater distance in international space, an identification zone has been established around North America.

Mr. Steven Blaney: That is called the CADIZ.

MGen M. Duval: It is called the CADIZ; in the U.S., it is the ADIZ, or the Air Defence Identification Zone.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Okay. Do the Russians have a CADIZ?

MGen M. Duval: I don't know whether they call it a CADIZ. There is something equivalent to it.

Mr. Steven Blaney: During deployments or exercises, does Canada ever enter into that zone?

MGen M. Duval: All I can tell you, as regional commander for NORAD, is that our planes do not do to Russia what—

Mr. Steven Blaney: Okay. Were we to enter their airspace, would we give notice?

MGen M. Duval: When we operate outside our zones, our experts file the necessary flight plans for all our aircraft abroad.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Paillé.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Thank you very much for being here.

I will be touching on the same subject. Do you have any information as to whether the Russians similarly intrude on or pass through other Nordic countries?

MGen M. Duval: Yes. In fact it is in the public domain. There have been instances in Norway, Denmark, Great Britain and Japan. This is essentially the same type of activity that occurred during the Soviet Union's existence.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: Okay. You said earlier that there are four bases in the North where there are fighter planes. Are they CF-18s? Are there also American planes at these bases?

MGen M. Duval: They are CF-18s. These are deployment bases. These aircraft are available if needed. This is called forward deploy. We are prepositioned on these bases. There are no American planes on these bases, only CF-18s, as well as tanker aircraft to support operations.

These are, therefore, deployment bases for Canadian aircraft.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: For example, when NORAD is notified that an aircraft has entered the CADIZ, presumably because of its equipment and satellites, it then notifies one of these deployment bases, in accordance with procedure, and gives the directive or order for these planes to take off. Is that correct?

MGen M. Duval: That's correct.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: In the process, are the Americans informed by NORAD of such an intrusion?

• (1630)

MGen M. Duval: Absolutely. Since it is a bi-national command, everyone is aware of what is happening, be it NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs, the operation centre in Alaska, my equivalent, or the continental States in Tyndall, Florida. Everyone within the command is aware of what is happening, thanks to our communications networks, the information exchange networks, computers and all systems available to NORAD.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: Do the United States have deployment bases like ours, in Alaska, for example?

MGen M. Duval: The United States have a permanent base in Alaska.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: With regard to the February 10 situation, it was normal for the Americans not to deploy an aircraft. It was to some extent the responsibility of the CF-18s to intercept those planes.

MGen M. Duval: The aircraft entered the Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone, the CADIZ, and were approaching our territorial waters. Once they veered off, they headed towards the American identification zone. That was when fighter aircraft in Alaska took over.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: Did the United States deploy their aircraft after the Russian planes had altered their course?

MGen M. Duval: Based on our experience with such flights, to some extent we were expecting these aircraft, once they exited our identification zone, to head off probably in the direction of the ADIZ. So resources were in place.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: I'd like to ask you one final question.

Speaking about Arctic sovereignty, is the CADIZ recognized by the Russians? Do they recognize the same zone or is there a grey zone? There is the issue of the nautical miles, of a certain distance. We have indicated approximately where we draw the line, but have the Russians drawn a similar line?

MGen M. Duval: I don't know the details about their equivalent. Perhaps they don't call it a CADIZ.

A number of countries, including Russia, England, Japan and the Nordic countries, have set up something similar. The goal is simple: it's to have a better warning system. If we wait until the aircraft reach the 12-mile limit, it's too late. So it's quite simply a way to ensure a better warning system.

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paillé.

Mr. Coderre.

Hon. Denis Coderre: General Duval, I want to ask you some brief questions in order to properly clarify the matter. What we're doing today is important. I love your candour. I must tell you that you are quite an exceptional witness. I want to thank you. It's very refreshing, rather like a breath of fresh air.

Let's talk about flight times. You said that at 5:22 p.m., the aircraft entered into the CADIZ. Clearly, the planes did not leave from a base, they were already on patrol. Is that correct?

MGen M. Duval: Our planes?

Hon. Denis Coderre: Our planes were already in flight, is that not correct?

MGen M. Duval: The detection had already taken place.

Hon. Denis Coderre: When did this detection occur?

MGen M. Duval: I wouldn't be able to tell you.

Hon. Denis Coderre: The outer edge of the CADIZ follows the 72nd parallel. So, we are entirely within sovereign territory. I imagine this as the top of the pyramid. Am I to understand that the aircraft did not enter into the CADIZ at the top, but rather from the side, hence the explanation?

MGen M. Duval: Yes. The territory located above the CADIZ is recognized as being Canadian territory.

Hon. Denis Coderre: In other words, if the aircraft entered from the north, they would have ended up in Canadian territory, but they were in extra-territorial waters.

•(1635)

MGen M. Duval: Exactly.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Very good.

Under the START treaty that has been in effect since 1991, you were able to send the message: "CLOSE TO TERRITORY". In this particular incident, the message was: "CLOSE TO TERRITORY", immediately following which, there was a response. In the

11 incidents that occurred over the past year, or even in the 30 some interventions over the past two years, have you ever had to repeat several times: "CLOSE TO TERRITORY"?

MGen M. Duval: I am not able to answer that. I could look into that.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Could you verify that information, please?

MGen M. Duval: I am not familiar with those details, but I will check.

Hon. Denis Coderre: With regard to submarines, I understand that you have a MOU. You are currently organizing something in the naval and maritime fields. Perhaps this is a little more than empty promises, but nothing has really been done with regard to submarine detection.

If a submarine were to navigate along our coastlines, it would be strictly the Canadian government that would resolve such issues, correct?

MGen M. Duval: In territorial waters? Absolutely.

Hon. Denis Coderre: And outside? If I understand correctly, we do not have the preventive measures that NORAD could provide us, because you are not prepared. Is this what I am to understand with regard to submarines?

MGen M. Duval: Are you alluding to the CADIZ equivalent for submarines?

Hon. Denis Coderre: Yes. You just said that an agreement was about to be reached.

MGen M. Duval: NORAD has been given the mandate to ensure maritime surveillance. Currently, the process to define exactly how that mandate will be executed is underway.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Chair in conclusion then, in light of statements by the Prime Minister—

[*English*]

I'll say it in English to make sure that our friends listen to it in the back. The reason the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence did that was purely as a diversion. I understand, with the NORAD point of view, that there was no threat there. I'm very disappointed that the government tried to put oil on the fire regarding the relationship between Russia and Canada.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

We will now move on to our final questioner, Mr. Hawn.

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry, I can't let that go by. That statement by Mr. Coderre was absolute rubbish. As General Duval has said, these flights happen all the time. They're training exercises for the Russians. The reaction is training exercises for us. They're valuable in that respect. There's no requirement for them to notify. It would be nice if they did. All that was made clear.

There's a lot of misunderstanding on the other side about the difference between START—which has absolutely nothing to do with these missions, nothing to do with the close-to-territory radio procedures that are carried out; this is apples and oranges.... I suggest there's a lot of confusion in the committee about some of those things.

Mr. Chair, I think what would be helpful is to bring a map to the committee next time, just for the people to see visually where the CADIZ and so on are. That would be helpful, because there's been a bit of confusion on it.

I'll ask General Duval a final question, and it goes back to what I just said. If we have foreign military aircraft, Russia's or anybody else's, operating towards our airspace, or towards our airspace of interest in the CADIZ, do you consider it prudent and necessary to be able to detect them and intercept them and make sure they know that we know they're there and that we can be on scene to do whatever it is we need to do?

MGen M. Duval: Absolutely I do, because we cannot afford.... Our mission is very clear. It's to defend against any threatening air vehicles approaching our coastlines and our sovereign airspace. With that mission in mind, we cannot speculate; we have to go out and verify. Once we have verified that there is no threat, we have accomplished what we needed to do.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: So Ronald Reagan's statement about "trust and verify" would be as true today as it was then.

MGen M. Duval: Absolutely.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

You still have two minutes. I don't know whether you want to use them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Coderre seems to be trying to trivialize everything.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Questions were asked and I wanted to distinguish these from the questions regarding NORAD which specifically concerned military business. When I made a comment about your political games, I was also responding. We are not trivializing anything: we are congratulating and thanking the witness for his candour and transparency.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

You have 2 minutes and 15 seconds.

Mr. Steven Blaney: It isn't a point of order but rather a matter for debate.

We have clearly said that the limits and requirements concerning crossing the CADIZ are set out clearly in recognized flight planning publications that are available internationally. We are talking about standards to which you refer in your document. The Minister of Foreign Affairs for Russia said himself that it would be good practice to advise us when flights crossed our international waters. I think that we want to be good neighbours and that the rules of being good

neighbours start with respect for territorial integrity as well as for internationally recognized zones. To that end, I think it's important to share our position with our partners. Finally, I want to thank you for your very clear answers. We will continue to be vigilant and to ensure that Canada's sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic is respected.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Major-General Duval. I greatly appreciated your testimony.

I would like to give the committee members the following information, if they are not already aware of it.

[*English*]

Major-General Duval will be promoted to lieutenant-general later this year and will become the deputy commander of NORAD in Colorado Springs.

Congratulations.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mgén M. Duval: Thank you very much.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Chair, we could unanimously move a motion for congratulations.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I will suspend for a few minutes because we will then continue in camera.

•

_____ (Pause) _____

•

• (1645)

The Chair: Good day to everyone. We will continue for a few minutes in public, and then we will move to in camera. I would like to let Mr. Coderre speak.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think that all my colleagues will agree with me today. It is a little sad, but we are going to lose a colleague. I would like to pay tribute to my friend Dawn Black. We must move beyond partisanship. While we may sometimes have our differences, nonetheless, the work of the Standing Committee on Defence is extremely important and Dawn is without a doubt one of those individuals who makes a significant contribution here. I have asked that this statement be public so that all Canadians can hear this tribute. On behalf of the official opposition, I want to thank Dawn for her exceptional work. I want to tell her just how high she has raised the bar politically.

[*English*]

She's truly made a difference, a great woman with a big heart who has truly contributed to the well-being of our troops. She's a wonderful human being, and we will miss her.

We don't support the same party, but who knows, one day....

I think it's important for the purpose of this gathering to say thank you. I'm very proud to have been on the committee when you were.

Thank you very much.

•(1650)

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you. That's very kind.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Mr. Hawn.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: I'd just to like to echo on behalf of the Conservative Party, the government, and me, personally, Dawn, that you've been challenging, and that's good. That's your job; you've been very effective at it. As Denis has said, we all have our moments when we disagree, sometimes more loudly than we should from time to time. But we all know that we're all here with the best interests of Canadians in mind, and I want to add my appreciation for your demonstration of that in the time I've known you here.

On behalf of all of us, we certainly wish you well.

Ms. Dawn Black: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Bachand.

Mr. Claude Bachand: On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I too would like to thank Dawn for the work that she has done on this committee. I think that a woman's perspective is extremely important for this committee. There are not a lot of women, but they are extremely competent. Dawn has sat on this committee for a long time and I must admit that she has made it much more humane and convivial. Furthermore, she also insisted on the study on post-traumatic stress disorder and health care. She has clearly given the committee the benefit of her knowledge, her wonderful personality and her humanity. I want to come back to her humanity. We were extremely pleased to learn that we will now have another friend—and likely one who's a minister—at the British Columbia legislature. I want to wish her good luck in her career.

Some honourable members: Bravo!

The Chair: Ms. Black.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black: Well, I'm really rather overwhelmed. I didn't expect this today. I want you all to know how much I've appreciated working with you.

I know that sometimes we have very strong differences of opinion, but that's healthy; that's part of democracy. It's the way it's meant to work. And it's better that than what happens in other countries, where they resort to violence to try to resolve their differences.

I've been very proud to work with each and every one of you. The highlight for me was our trip to Afghanistan by many of us together. The opportunity to meet with the men and women serving there really had a huge impact on me.

I also want to mention both Jim and Wolf, and our new clerk and the clerk before that. Without the work of the people who support our committee, we couldn't do half the work we do.

I feel like I've made friends here. I hope that if you're in beautiful British Columbia, where the daffodils are in bloom as I speak today, you will look me up. You'll be able to find me pretty easily. I'd be delighted to show each and every one of you around the legislature or take you on a little tour. So in the future, please contact me if you're in B.C.

Thanks very much for all your support and your kind words. I really appreciate them.

Voices: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Bravo! Ms. Black, on behalf of the committee, I want to say in closing how much I have enjoyed working with you, even if for just such a short time. My colleagues with more seniority have highlighted the hard work that you have done as a parliamentarian. It's a very difficult job, and you have done it extremely well on behalf of the people in your riding. Bravo, congratulations and good luck!

We will recess for 30 seconds before we continue in camera.

[*Meeting resumes in camera*]

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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