HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on National Defence

NDDN • NUMBER 007 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, October 20, 2011

Chair

Mr. James Bezan

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (0850)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)): Good morning, everyone.

We're going to continue with our study of the readiness of the Canadian armed forces.

Joining us today is Major-General Steve Bowes, who is no stranger to many of us at committee. He hosted us just at the beginning of the week on Monday and Tuesday at the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre at Camp Wainwright.

We're going to open it up for your opening comments, General. You have the floor.

Major-General Steve Bowes (Commander, Land Force Doctrine and Training System, Department of National Defence): Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide you with a briefing on the army doctrine and training system.

I am Major-General Steve Bowes, commander of the land force doctrine and training system at Canadian Forces Base Kingston.

As you saw during your recent visit to the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre, we go to great lengths to ensure that our soldiers are trained in a realistic way to prepare them for the challenges of operations. Doctrine and lessons learned provide the underpinning for effective training. Doctrine is a word that is often misunderstood, but in essence it means a common understanding of the nature of land warfare, and thus a consistent approach to how we solve tactical problems.

This approach is grounded in theory, history, and the experience gained in fighting Canada's wars. But it is also informed by the latest lessons we have learned from operations. Before you are four slides providing a broad view of the Canadian army's doctrine and training system. I would like to walk you through this quick briefing, after which I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Slide 1 is on the army training continuum.

Army training follows a well-defined methodology, the army systems approach to training, and that in itself is nested in the Canadian Forces system approach to training, which ensures the most effective and efficient training possible. This methodology is applied in a pyramid training paradigm that starts with a broad base of institutional training, layered by a central core of foundation training, followed by a regime of high readiness training for specific units and, finally, topped off by mission-specific training.

Throughout all levels of training, from individual to collective, the army's soldiers and officers are provided with ample opportunity for professional development in the form of general education, trades specific training, language training, and ethics, to name a few. The system of army training produces quality individuals and formed units capable of carrying out missions and tasks across a broad spectrum of employment, ranging from domestic and expeditionary response, to natural or man-made disasters, peace support operations, stability operations, support for failed or failing states, and through to the higher end of full spectrum operations.

Army training must be general enough in nature to cover the full gamut of tasks and missions Canadians expect its army to be able to carry out in times of need. Army training is based on the Canada First defence strategy that prioritizes at-home requirements over those of an expeditionary nature. The reserve component of the army is heavily involved in training for likely domestic tasks, as reservists are well suited to respond locally given that they are embedded in communities across the country. In more northern communities, the Canadian Rangers play a similar and equally vital role. The regular component of the army, while often employed domestically, focuses much of its training on preparing for expeditionary operations. The flexible nature of army training has allowed us to transition effectively from a combat to a training role in Afghanistan.

Turning to slide 2, the army's doctrine is the intellectual foundation upon which all of our training and professional development is built. Doctrine is defined as the formal and authoritative expression of military knowledge and thought that the army accepts as being relevant at any given time, covering the nature of conflict, the preparation of the army for conflicts, and the method of engaging in them to achieve success.

The army's approach to doctrine development is achieved through a process of five phases: analysis, development, production, approval, and validation. This process ensures that we continuously adapt to maximize our effectiveness in a given situation, while respecting the understanding of the nature of conflict that we have developed as an institution over many years. We must continuously monitor and analyze changes in our operating environment, including technological developments, deficiencies identified during operations, and the experience of allied nations, in order to determine whether our doctrine may need to be adapted or reconsidered.

Once a problem is identified, the development phase determines how best to achieve a solution. Options will be developed, informed by research, experimentation, discussion, debate, and war gaming. Allied and joint approaches, as well as professional journals and research papers, can be used to broaden the examination.

Once we have decided on a resolution, we enter the production phase, which covers the processes required to draft, comment, publish and disseminate army doctrine, including any additional debate and experimentation. The army commander and I are the approving authorities for publishing and disseminating doctrine. Doctrine approval briefs are provided to governance forums, such as the army council, prior to dissemination.

The validation phase is really a continuous activity whereby we assess the relevance, accuracy, and currency of doctrine, whether from lessons learned or from issues raised by the schools or observed during training activities. The validation phase can also drive doctrinal changes and thus overlaps with the analysis phase in what is really a continuous cycle of doctrine development.

We'll now consider the army learning process.

The army learning process ensures that the Canadian Army collects, analyzes, and assimilates the experience that we have gained from operations, in order to continuously improve our performance and to keep ahead of an adaptive adversary.

The reporting process starts with the observations and insights of our personnel on operations, whether in Canada or overseas. These observations can be submitted directly, as a result of an after-action review, but frequently they are collected by embedded lessons liaison teams. The army commander's critical topic list also provides direction and focus to the collection and priority efforts.

After an initial analysis, observations are prioritized based on their relevance and importance. Those designated as key lessons identified—that is, those that relate to an urgent operational problem, require acquisition of new equipment, or involve a significant re-evaluation of existing doctrine—are moved forward for detailed analysis.

Responsibility for each key lesson identified is determined by the army learning working group. Subject matter experts then analyze and validate the observation and recommend solutions to address the issue.

The observation and recommended plan of action is then briefed to the appropriate authority and their decisions and direction are tracked by the army lessons-learned centre. The director of the army lessons-learned centre periodically reports to army senior leadership on the progress of these key lessons identified. The director of land staff ensures that Canadian Forces agencies outside the army, as well as other government departments, are kept apprised of issues that are relevant to them.

Once the commander of the army has concurred with the direction issued by the line of governance, the director of army doctrine and the centres of excellence implement the necessary changes, and the army lessons-learned centre uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that the changes are understood by all the units and soldiers.

The Canadian army can be justifiably proud of its record in the Afghanistan combat operation, but we are well aware that the skills we developed at great cost are perishable. The challenge for army training is to sustain the successes we have achieved while continuing to adapt to the changing environment. We also need to work on some of the deficiencies we have identified—and, regrettably, we will need to allow a few mission-specific skills to degrade gracefully.

Our focus needs to remain on training combat-effective, medium-weight forces that can adapt to any task. The experiences in Afghanistan have validated some of the central concepts of our doctrine. The all-arms battle group remains the core of our capability. It delivers effects on the ground throughout the spectrum of operations, from humanitarian assistance all the way to full-scale combat. The brigade group headquarters, forming the nucleus of a task force headquarters, provides the essential link that plans and synchronizes operations, sustains the force, and integrates the enormous range of capabilities available in a coalition context, including satellite imagery, air power, unmanned aerial vehicles, long-range fire support, civil-military cooperation, medical evacuation, etc. We need to continue generating confident and well-trained battle groups and brigade headquarters to meet the requirements laid out in the Canada First defence strategy. Our managed readiness plan will ensure that high-readiness forces receive the right amount of training at the right time, while disciplining the natural desire of commanders to expand the training envelope.

All of this rests on the quality of our people. We need to continue to provide individual training that prepares soldiers for operations in complex environments based on the hard-won lessons we have learned. Above all, we need to continue developing outstanding leaders.

I'd like to highlight a few of the specific successes we need to sustain and build upon. In a few short years, we have developed a superb level of integration and cooperation with our colleagues, the airmen and airwomen of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and I know that the air force leadership is as committed as we are to keeping this flame alive. We have also made huge strides in building mutual respect between the regular and reserve components of the army. The implementation of common training standards for regular and reserve soldiers means that we can continue to incorporate reserve personnel into high-readiness forces with full confidence that they will perform to the same level as their regular-force counterparts, although in a narrower range of tasks without high-readiness training.

In the near term, there are a few areas where we need to catch up. The focus on counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan has inevitably led to a reduction in the time available to train in the fundamentals of combat operations. Our exercises, starting with Exercise Maple Resolve 2011, will include a near-peer adversary capable of armoured manoeuvre, while retaining the challenges of a complex, heavily populated battle space and the integration of allied forces. We will also be placing more emphasis on medium-intensity combat operations at the army staff college course and on other professional development activities.

● (0855)

Finally, there are two longer-term training challenges that I would like to highlight. Having gone through a very intense period of activity, we are entering a stretch of time when there is no immediate prospect of another major operation. This could change very quickly, but for our soldiers there is a risk that they might want to seek other challenges if we don't keep them engaged.

The army commander has coined a phrase, “train to excite”. This means there will be an increased emphasis on training in Arctic and jungle operations, mountain warfare, and littoral operations, as well as in parachute and air mobile operations. Some might find the word “excite” hard to square with the prospect of slogging through the jungles of Brazil, but this is the sort of professional and personal challenge that will keep soldiers interested and motivated.

The other challenge to the training system is to sustain the adaptive culture that has served us well over the last few years. We need to continue to incorporate lessons learned into our training in a rapid and efficient way. But we also need to exploit emerging technology, particularly within the realm of simulation, to make our training not just more efficient but also more effective.

I hope this brief outline has provided you with a better understanding of how we train Canada's soldiers. Our soldiers are our most valuable resource. Well-trained, they can be prepared to meet any challenges in Canada and to go anywhere in the world to represent Canadians and our values.

I'm ready to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you, General.

We'll start our first round of questions, for seven minutes.

Mr. Christopherson, you have the floor.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

And thank you very much, General. I appreciate the briefing. I'm sorry I couldn't be with you earlier in the week. I've just been appointed the interim—and I emphasize interim—defence critic for the official opposition, so I'll be with the group for at least a little while.

I'm starting at square one, and my questions are about as fundamental as you're ever going to hear, General.

First of all, help me understand the difference between doctrine and a mission goal.

● (0900)

MGen Steve Bowes: Doctrine is simply a body of knowledge, the foundation that we use to solve a tactical problem. Let me talk about doctrine in the highest sense. In Canada we follow a doctrine of mission command. That means that as we move through solving a tactical problem, we identify what needs to be achieved and we enable our subordinate commanders to exercise flexibility and initiative in solving any tactical set. So we identify that, we give them the resources they need to accomplish the mission, but we let them figure out how to do it. That's an example of doctrine.

To go to the next point, sir, to—

Mr. David Christopherson: I'm probably not using the right terminology. When I read it, I thought it seemed very similar to what a mission goal would be, that as soon as a mission starts out, the things that you listed under doctrine would, in my mind, also seem to fit a specific mission goal.

There has to be a difference; I was looking for that differentiation.

MGen Steve Bowes: A mission goal is an effect that you want to achieve on the ground, and that's a task that's assigned through by the Government of Canada through CEFCOM to the forces that are going out the door. We prepare them for the broadest range of tasks, but it's actually after they get into theatre and are conducting the analysis of the campaign plan for that particular operation that they determine the tasks that have to be achieved to achieve the goals of the government.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thank you.

Explain if you can for me the challenge of being combat-ready, trying to maintain your readiness—which is the focus of this—while at the same time actually being at war. Are these two separate streams of thinking and responsibility, or is it the case that, because of the nature of war, there has to be a fundamental impact on your readiness?

Do you understand my question? You're trying to do two things at the same time: you're actively engaged in war, while at the same time you're getting ready to respond to any situation.

MGen Steve Bowes: In order to prosecute any operation overseas in a sustained fashion, you have to build a base from the soldiers who are recruited in the door to the units that will relieve those who are overseas in operations. It's a continuous cycle of training.

We have forces that are deployed somewhere in the world, wherever that theatre may be. We know they're not going to stay there indefinitely, so we prepare the forces back in Canada that are going to take their place.

At the same time we're doing that, we're still doing—if you go back to slide 1— the institutional component. People are being recruited by the Canadian Forces in the door every day. They go through courses in Saint Jean. Once they graduate from those basic training courses, they proceed into the army, the Royal Canadian Navy, the air force as appropriate, and our institutional system kicks over. We train them up in various qualifications, we put them into units, and those units go to the field, to sea, into the air, to do their training and build up through a road to high readiness.

When we talk about the road to high readiness, it's not a case of everybody in the army doing the same thing every day. We are challenged by our geography in Canada and by the diverse nature of our organization, so we have different elements in the Canadian Forces doing different components of that training paradigm on a daily basis.

Mr. David Christopherson: Very good. Thank you.

You mentioned in your remarks, General, that "In a few short years we have developed a superb level of integration and cooperation with our colleagues...." Then you go on to list which ones.

Can you describe for me where we were that makes you feel so proud about where we are now, just so I can get a sense of that evolution?

MGen Steve Bowes: We just need to take this back even 20 years, sir, to where we were at the tail end of the Cold War.

Canada had an army, navy, and air force designed to work with other armies, navies, and air forces within a NATO context. Even though we were heavily engaged in peace support operations, we didn't have a robust history of that joint environment within a national context. We went through a difficult period through the nineties. As we moved through the middle part of this decade, we moved into a phase of operations in Afghanistan in which it became apparent that we would need to further define the relationship with, for example, the air force.

The first thing your colleagues saw when they visited us on Monday was a Chinook helicopter. Although in the Canadian context we equate that with the Royal Canadian Air Force, as we should, and the fact it was an allied helicopter, it is an essential component of land combat power.

What we have done is to redevelop that synergy overseas. We've had an air wing with us in Afghanistan. As part of the task force, besides having combat troops on the ground, we've had an air wing. Tactical aviation has been supporting us—tactical and strategic airlift getting us in there—and although our CF-18s weren't deployed to southern Afghanistan, other NATO air forces were, and we had tactical air parties and forward air controllers working as part of the team.

We've developed a level of integration that has come at a great cost, and that is something we definitely want to maintain as we go forward.

● (0905)

Mr. David Christopherson: Very good. Thank you.

How's my time, Chair?

The Chair: You have a minute and a half.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thanks.

I might get two questions in, but one for sure.

I'm interested in the phrase "train to excite", and you acknowledged that the word jumps out. Could you expand on that a little for us?

MGen Steve Bowes: I have to be cognizant of my age and relative experience in the army versus that of some of the young men and women who are coming in the door now. It's naive to think that everybody coming in the door is going to say, "I was born to be a soldier and I'm going to serve for 35 years and I'm going to make a career out of this." You need to keep young people today continuously engaged; you need to challenge them. Because we spend a great deal of time and effort recruiting and training them, the last thing we want to do is to see somebody head for the door.

Challenging training means multiple things. It doesn't mean just physically, but also intellectually, challenging. It means giving them an opportunity to develop as a whole person, with professional military education, but also through developing their citizenship skills. At the end of the day, it's really about keeping that person engaged. It's a word that we have chosen specifically because it resonates with the young people, not necessarily with the way we perceive it.

Mr. David Christopherson: Very good. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. Opitz, it's your turn.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

General, many operations involve more than one environment of the CF, and as such there's obviously a need for cooperation among the army, navy, and air force.

Sir, to your knowledge, are there any established guidelines that these environments can refer to during missions where cooperation is needed?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. NATO has a complex system of doctrine that governs joint operations, and so NATO itself has a joint operations publication that we all use to inform ourselves.

We have our own joint doctrine. Getting the army, navy, and air forces to work together in this context is more limited by the platforms and systems available than by our ability to work together with one another.

So there is a framework at play. There is a framework that allows us, as an example, to put Canadian soldiers to work with allies, even in a littoral context with the United States Marine Corps, with the Royal Marines, with the Brazilian marines. That framework exists.

Mr. Ted Opitz: That's wonderful.

Just as a follow-up to that question, can you describe how joint operations are run? For instance, what's the decision process when deciding what environment or division is to be given the lead on a particular mission? Or are the operations run through the chain of command at NDHQ?

MGen Steve Bowes: That piece is well above my focus on training the army, but in a broad context, once the Chief of Defence Staff is given direction by the Government of Canada, he looks at the effect that has to be achieved and examines how best to achieve that effect. He would determine which environment, which component of the Canadian Forces would take the lead. That would be done in consultation with the CEFCOM commander.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Okay.

Now, the LFDTS wears a lot of hats, as you can see from the Directorate of Army Doctrine, DAD, and from the lessons-learned centre.

Can you give us a brief overview of the role and responsibilities that each organization has within the CF?

MGen Steve Bowes: As the commander of the land force doctrine and training system, I would point out that we have a number of principal formations, but that it's not just an exercise in command. We also have staff directorates, if you will, of the army organization. So we have the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre that you saw out west. That delivers collective training. We have the individual training centre of excellence in Gagetown, called the Combat Training Centre. It's where all our schools are: armour, artillery, infantry, combat engineer, and tactics schools. We also have three other schools: the communication school in Kingston, the electrical and mechanical engineering school in Borden, and the Land Advanced Warfare Centre in Trenton. Those eight schools belong to the Combat Training Centre.

We also have an army staff college in Kingston. Underpinning that, we also have the Directorate of Army Doctrine, the Directorate of Army Training, and the Army Lessons Learned Centre. I also have an influence activities task force. It's all part of the organization. DAD's responsibilities are fundamentally to make linkages. The director of army doctrine is an up-and-out person. That person is constantly looking to see what's going on the international level, surveying how our allies are thinking about evolving doctrinal issues, and linking in with other services.

The Army Lessons Learned Centre is a very small organization. It's actually only about five or six people in total. That includes our use of augmentees in operations. I have two individuals assigned overseas as part of Operation Attention in the mission in Afghanistan. Their job is to bring back lessons learned and observations. Although they report on a daily basis to Major General Mike Day overseas, in effect, they work for the army. They help bring the lessons identified back, and then we work through those and determine what we need to incorporate into doctrine and what we need to use right off in training.

I can give you a specific example of how that process works in a very rapid fashion. We take pride in our ability to adapt—if you wish to pursue that in a subsequent question.

● (0910)

Mr. Ted Opitz: What I would like to get to right now is slide 4. You mentioned a few mission-specific skills that will degrade or fade. Can you elaborate a little more on what those are?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. We've spent the years since 2005 focusing on counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan, and southern Kandahar in particular. We recognize that we need to step back from that. We've already turned a page. Although the world operating environment wherever Canadian soldiers can go would probably demonstrate characteristics very similar to what you see in Afghanistan, we're not training for that specific mission. Our knowledge, as an example, of Pashtun culture and some of the things that were necessary to develop a cultural awareness in that particular area need to degrade while we will begin focusing on a baseline to prepare our soldiers to go anywhere else in the world. That's just one example.

In Wainwright, we used a more generic scenario. Our Afghan diaspora that we hired in past training events has been replaced with other actors to simulate the complexity of dealing with another language in another environment. That's just one example.

Mr. Ted Opitz: I may be a little dated right now, but is that CATS, the common army training scenario.

MGen Steve Bowes: Yes, the common army training scenario.

Mr. Ted Opitz: You mentioned military education—and here I would note that I spent three years at the Canadian Forces College. There's training on the ground, as the committee has observed recently. Can you talk a little bit about the military education system and its value in maintaining skills, knowledge, and professionalism, not only through our own system but also because we work cooperatively with other forces and nations around the world in terms of military education?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. To achieve my rank, we effectively spend about four years in professional military education, that is, courses and development. We like to pride ourselves that we have a continuous learning environment. We have to learn something new every day. As members of one of the four classical professions, we have a responsibility within that subset to improve ourselves, our knowledge, on a daily basis.

If you look back at slide 1, it talks about institutional training, foundation training, and high-readiness training. That doesn't mean that everybody in the Canadian Forces, or the army in particular, is doing the same thing at the same time. There are people at different stages all the way through to heading out the door on operations and preparedness, but we're always taking individuals at various levels of training. Even courses in Gagetown have a component that would be more accurately framed as military education—the history, the traditions, the ethos, ethics. We build up that body of knowledge. We move through a system where we assign development period levels to each officer and each soldier as they move through DP1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. We have specific goals assigned, and all of this is a subset of the Canadian Forces framework.

Going back to some of the lessons that were learned from hard issues in the 1990s, we have taken great steps towards a degreed officer corps, as an example, but have also moved beyond that towards graduate degrees in conjunction with the Canadian Forces College and the Royal Military College in Kingston, and incorporating a greater body of professional military knowledge, but also knowledge that is applicable across Canadian society. That's something we pride ourselves in.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Fantastic.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Ms. Fry, you have the floor.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, Chair.

As you all understand, I'm substituting for my colleague Mr. McKay.

But there are some things that have piqued my interest. If you go into a joint operation with NATO forces, for instance, in Syria, or in Libya at the moment, or in Afghanistan, what are your challenges in trying to mesh the Canadian set of doctrines, aspirations, etc., with those of your allies? That must be extremely challenging, I would think. Or is it?

● (0915)

MGen Steve Bowes: There would be no value here in underestimating the challenge that it poses, and Afghanistan is just one example. There were at one time 46 or 47 different nations contributing troops. The majority of the countries there might be from NATO, but there are many officers and soldiers from countries other than NATO, and that is a true challenge.

But through NATO we do have organizations that are designed to.... For example, for officers joining a joint headquarters, ISAF has two major headquarters. One has overall campaign responsibility, and there is a joint command headquarters that really looks at running the operation.

A couple of years ago, I was but one of 14 general officers serving in that headquarters, which represented about 11 different nations. So we come from diverse backgrounds but we also link back into that joint doctrine we have from NATO. That joint doctrine is taught at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto. So I first learned about the NATO joint doctrine when I was a major at the Canadian Forces College some 15 years ago. So that's a constant theme all the way through.

We continually strive for opportunities to train alongside other allies. We have a group of officers through the Directorate of Army Doctrine and Directorate of Army Training who attend working groups on a near monthly basis with our NATO allies and who constantly work issues and keep lines of communication open. That provides a core, and that core capability in any organization will provide the impetus for joint operations.

There are always going to be friction points in any organization just by combining more than one person. These are just things that we teach our individuals to work through.

Hon. Hedy Fry: You talked about ethical training. Is there going to be a difference, let us say, with the natural ethical bent of a certain group of people within the joint forces that you might find yourself butting up against, for example, in terms of their understanding of human rights, or sense of understanding the culture of the particular country you're in? Do you find these kinds of ethical challenges?

MGen Steve Bowes: I haven't found the ethical challenges in that sense. And for our Canadian soldiers, to be clear, we represent Canadian values, so we take that forward. And that's an expectation that I think all Canadians share, that we represent those values overseas.

The challenges have more to do with linguistics and the ability to communicate for many of the organizations, rather than ethical values. I've done two extended tours in Afghanistan and I haven't seen that kind of challenge you speak of.

Hon. Hedy Fry: The work that you are doing, for instance, in Libya is very different from what you did in Afghanistan. Do you pick specific soldiers or specific leaders with specific skill sets to go into the different theatres that you occupy? Do you have to have different sets of skills to go into, say, Libya, versus being in Afghanistan where you encounter an insurgency, and in Libya where you do not?

MGen Steve Bowes: Ground troops are not committed in Libya. And I'm not in a position to speak on the influence or the nature of the decision-making for the commander of the Royal Canadian Navy or the Royal Canadian Air Force.

But if you were to step back, there is a core capability that we expect any soldier in the Canadian Army to perform. And if we were going into a particular region, we would look at the operating environment and say, “Wouldn't it be great if we had particular experts on that culture?” And we'd build that into our theatre specific mission training. As an example, if we were going into an area where Spanish or Portuguese were the language, if we had some soldiers who could speak the language, not just in terms of communicating but actually in helping to help develop your own soldiers' ability to speak Spanish—because we would start that training—we would do that as well.

So we look at the mission set that's required for any mission and determine what we need. That's not just in terms of equipment but also in terms of people. We also look at the training they need and we adapt the training, and we have done so quite rapidly. But sometimes it takes a rotation or two to get exactly where we would like to be. So we do go through a deliberate process that way.

Hon. Hedy Fry: How am I doing for time? Two minutes? Okay.

You talked a lot about cultural training, etc., and you say that the forces go with Canadian values. Do your values always mesh with the values of some of your allies?

What I'm really trying to get at is, how do you deal with the challenges where your Canadian values may be at odds, even in a minor way, with people who come from a totally different country, who may have a different set of values? We know that this is so. I go to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, where we do hear some very different values around that table of the 57 nations, some of whom are participants in NATO.

So the question then is, when you meet those challenges, how do you deal with them? If you're making a decision, who has the ability to make that decision? Does somebody have the overarching ability to decide? Do you have to negotiate it then and there?

● (0920)

MGen Steve Bowes: I appreciate your sincerity. That is a really hypothetical question. I'll take it back into training. We try to produce a level of friction in the training environment where we're dealing with people from other cultures, and their value systems are different. I could relate my own experience in Afghanistan, but at the end of the day, we are Canadians. Some of those issues you're talking about can be so minor that you just say they're because of the individual concerned. You have personalities, even within our own country and our own value set.

When we talk about not violating fundamental Canadian values, that's a different story. We're well schooled in the law of armed conflict. We're well schooled in what Canadian moral and ethical standards are. If we're going into operations, we make sure our soldiers adhere to those.

Hon. Hedy Fry: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...in fact, chain of command?

MGen Steve Bowes: The chain of command kicks in. With what we provide in training, for senior NCOs in particular, who are the heart and soul of the army, our sergeants are going to step in to make sure that Canadian soldiers do the right thing.

The Chair: Thank you. Your time has expired.

We'll start our five-minute round.

Mr. Chisu, you have the floor.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much, General, for the excellent presentation and the information you provided us.

Are the difficulties in Afghanistan for our troops a result of differences in capabilities and standard operating procedures between us and our NATO and ISAF allies? I am asking this question because you know very well there are different rules of engagement and different procedures, making it very difficult to conduct operations in that situation. We need to balance that issue, so maybe you can elaborate on that.

MGen Steve Bowes: Sorry, I think I'll just take a step back. From a training perspective, if we're going into an area and we know we're going to work with allies of particular nations, we make sure that our leaders are aware of the caveats those nations may be applying within that tactical environment. That way they know exactly what one nation will do or won't do in a given situation.

I will tell you that many times we tend to overestimate some of the differences between our nations. Most of the differences occur on the outside when going in. In other words, they occur more between the nations' capitals than between the men and women who are serving on the ground. The fact that you're in a hostile environment and somebody is trying to harm you has a wondrous unifying effect on your ability to focus and work together.

I have personally served, and I gave you an example before and I won't go into detail, with soldiers of other nations who have put their own lives in harm's way to protect me. That's a tremendous statement.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: There's another question that I would ask Steve about Afghanistan, because I served there also. Afghanistan presented a whole new array of combat challenges for our forces, which they handled with great distinction and did Canada very proud. With the drawdown in Afghanistan, can you please describe for the committee some of the lessons learned on how the Canadian Forces conduct operations, as well as training, and how we can implement these lessons in future missions?

I would also like to talk about the reserve force, which has provided 25% of the troops for operations in Afghanistan. Now, when we are drawing down this operation in Afghanistan, how will the reserve force continue to be trained and ready for operations?

MGen Steve Bowes: Sir, absolutely.

As an example of some of the challenges and the lessons learned, we reacted very fast to an emerging improvised explosive device and suicide bomber threat. In Afghanistan during my first tour, the challenges in that environment weren't seen and evolved quite rapidly. We reacted in a way that allowed us to acquire the capability, the doctrine, and now the tactics, techniques, and procedures, that our allies are very interested in. That's an example of a hard won lesson; we lost lives. That's a capability we do not want to see pass because, if we look around the world, in just about any scenario we could go into, we could find similar threats. So that's an example of a lesson learned that we need to retain and be pretty good at. I could go toward intelligence, cultural awareness, and apply it to theatres in a different standard.

With regard to the reserve force, there's not a senior leader who would diminish the role the reserve played in sustaining our role in Afghanistan. We could not have done that mission without them. Where the regular and reserve components of the army were seven to ten years ago and where they're at today, it's phenomenal. We will not lose that either.

In the immediate missions that just went out the door, we might not have achieved the percentage of reservists that we would like. But I can tell you that in a subsequent rotation that will come of the Secteur Québec de la force terrestre, we'll have close to 25% reservists. So we're going to continue to go down that road, because of the skills they bring to the table. They are value added.

The reserve force also serves in a domestic context. In my previous job as commander of Land Force Atlantic Area in Halifax, two-thirds of the soldiers who responded on the ground to Hurricane Igor in Newfoundland were reservists, and they performed brilliantly. We can't do without them.

● (0925)

The Chair: Okay, the time has just about expired.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Moore, you have five minutes.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Chairman, my questions will be on the reserve.

Even though many reservists volunteered for missions in Afghanistan, for example, not all have been in operations overseas. How do you make sure that those can acquire the new knowledge that was learned in Afghanistan? How do you make sure that those units integrate that knowledge?

[*English*]

MGen Steve Bowes: The reserve force is a challenge, and there are a number of different ways to take that question.

In terms of the body of knowledge the reservists have learned—and many of them will come back and move on to other challenges—that is true. We're also seeing that many reservists are staying, and the body of knowledge they've acquired is relevant to a domestic operational context. Fundamentally, what they've done is to develop leadership skills that are usable across the spectrum of operations within Canada. So this is a piece that we're working hard to ingrain within the reserve community.

We're also working much harder than we have in the past recognizing there is a natural turnover in the reserve and that because of the time it takes to get a soldier to develop those skills and to learn, it's even more important now than ever that we retain those skills and work on them.

Lastly there are some areas where reservists are uniquely qualified to provide a skill set that isn't replicated in the regular force. Because they are not full-time soldiers, they have part-time careers—and full-time careers otherwise in many cases—and those skill sets translate into very usable experiences overseas. As an example, trying to build that culture within the entire framework of the reserve force is very important. Civil-military cooperation comes to mind.

I hope I answered that fully as you intended.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: All right.

When we talk of the members of the regular forces, we talk of people working on a base. There are several regiments or units on a base and people are used to see the other units at work.

On the other hand, when we talk of the reservists, they only work with their own regiments and with people in their own trade. So, if they are in a region where there is an engineering regiment, for example, they will see things related to engineering but not things related to other trades.

You have talked about the new doctrine. We have seen the importance of working together. How do you make sure that the reserve units learn to work with other trades when they are geographically removed from them?

[*English*]

MGen Steve Bowes: Ma'am, that's an excellent question.

The way around that is that we have 10 reserve brigades across the country and each one of them is responsible for generating internally a territorial battle group. Knowing that part-time soldiers are not always available at every given time, it takes a certain number of reservists to ensure that you have a territorial battle group that is able to train. That's an all-arms team.

What that means is that all the different units are represented inside the territorial battle group: engineers, artillery, infantry, armour, and armoured reconnaissance in particular. That territorial battle group goes through stages of training that are similar in concept and principle to the regular force. They go to the field. They start out working in the field at an individual level and within their particular unit, but we bring them up through the training year together to work as a team.

As an example, some of the units will go to Gagetown to spend a week of training. This past summer, we had 1,100 reservists in Wainwright from two different land-force areas, in some cases representing 11 or 12 different units working together in a similar unit doing the job. We bring them together. That is crucial to the way forward in providing a capability so that we can respond to any incident scenario in Canada. We're using the territorial battle group in the reserve as a way of ensuring that reservists get training together and are also able to provide a response capability as required. That is very important.

The second aspect to that is that we're looking for increased opportunities to continue with regular and reserve training together. As we deploy a regular unit, we will bring out elements of the reserve. And even if the regular unit may be in the field for three or four weeks, the reservists can go out, spend a week with the regular unit, and then go back to their jobs. So we seek to bring those opportunities together.

● (0930)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much. Your time is up.

[*English*]

Mrs. Gallant, it's your turn.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and through you to the General.

Afghanistan has shown us that we're no longer involved in conventional warfare necessarily, but have gone to asymmetric warfare. We're no longer engaging in battles in open fields, but with an enemy that hides itself within the actual population.

Can you tell us what changes there have been in training, operational planning, and doctrine to that end, and if there is any training on identifying behaviours of people in a crowd to help the soldiers distinguish potential belligerents hiding amongst civilians?

MGen Steve Bowes: No matter where we go today, we are in some ways heavily influenced by the perception that there is either conventional conflict or counter-insurgency. The reality is that the conflict scenarios produce a level of asymmetry that you talked about, where the threats can vary, so that at any time we could encounter a threat from a near-peer, that is, somebody who is capable of an armoured manoeuvre, has armoured fighting vehicles, and has the capacity to inflict great damage, all the way down to insurgent-type activity in that environment. So we expect to be going into that scenario.

The term we coin is “full-spectrum operations”. We have to be able to do a little bit of that every time we go out the door; then we simply shift as required to meet that challenge. We do train soldiers, and I remember my own training. We looked at behaviour patterns and what were the tell-tale signs. I can't go into a great deal of detail as to how we do that, but we use a consistent process in-theatre where we are continuously watching and trying to develop what we think are the enemy's tactics, techniques, and procedures, how they're going to conduct an operation. Then we inform our soldiers. This is a daily process. “What did you see?” “Well, I saw this, I saw that, here's what happened.” We try to train our soldiers about the things to look for. Even on my last tour as a general officer in Kabul, I was particularly aware of that , because I was in a different area of operation with a different group that used a different methodology to prosecute its attacks. So we continually seek to do that.

It will be no different going into any other theatre. We would look for those kinds of signs. That's simply part of our training.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The tempo of training on an individual basis seems to have really sped up. A few years ago, you used to graduate maybe two primary leadership courses in a summer, but last summer there was a graduation every two weeks. How long will that tempo continue in training?

MGen Steve Bowes: It will take years. There's a perception that the army has gone through Afghanistan with a lot of resources dedicated towards it and that it is in good shape coming out of this. That's a superficial view. What we have to be aware of is that we've been putting a tremendous amount of resources towards prosecuting a mission, and this has led to that increased tempo of soldiers.

We also were under-strength. If you think back to 2005, we had a number of units that were under-strength, so we recruited soldiers. Those soldiers are now junior leaders, the primary land qualification that you referred to, the master corporals. Those master corporals are our future sergeants and warrant officers.

We have many units in various occupations where we lack sufficient warrant officers and sergeants to bring the units up to full strength. In the future, we will continue to train those. At the same time we're training them, we have to backfill that base, otherwise we will go right back to where we were, to the hollowness that we had pre-2005. That didn't stand anybody in good stead—certainly not Canada. Our capability was not what it should have been.

The tempo is going to remain high.

● (0935)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Training is a huge component of the army's operational readiness. I have to say I'm impressed. I sat in on some of the courses getting soldiers ready to go to Afghanistan and witnessed the speed with which you're bringing the lessons learned right to the people who are about to go out. There's nothing more powerful than having a recent amputee give that IED awareness course to a group of people.

What is the speed? If something happens in a deployment, how fast can you get that knowledge to the people who are getting ready to go?

MGen Steve Bowes: Sometimes we can do it in days. I wouldn't want to say less than that, but sometimes in days. Sometimes it can take a month to get it properly instituted, or a couple of months. If you're dependent on equipment to enable it, it can take longer.

As an example, I sent a team to conduct a reconnaissance of the mission in Kabul right now, to ensure that the training we are doing is what they need. They provided feedback. I brought that reconnaissance team back. I've modified my direction in response to this guidance. That is being used in Gagetown right now by the 2nd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment to train the soldiers who are going to go in the new year. We can be that rapid. It depends on the complexity of the issue.

The Chair: Thank you. Your time has expired.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Thank you.

The Chair: It goes by fast when you're having fun.

Mr. Kellway, it's your turn.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Speaking of having fun, I looked at the subject matter for today and I wasn't all that excited. But full credit goes to you, General, for making doctrine a very interesting subject.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Matthew Kellway: But I would like to take a step back from some of the questions that you have been asked to try to better understand what doctrine actually is or means. In the material you presented today, either your speaking notes or the slides, is the doctrine actually expressed? Is slide 4, for example, a reduced statement of our current doctrine?

MGen Steve Bowes: As I alluded to in my comments, doctrine is one of those words that really throws people. Somebody could say, as an example, that a certain tactic—how we do a thing—constitutes a doctrine. That's not really true. Doctrine is a higher-level piece; it's how we solve problems. It's things like mission command, understanding a commander's intent, giving subordinates resources.

Training for full spectrum operations, the example you referred to on slide 4, I wouldn't necessarily call that doctrine. Those are principles that underscore our environment. Doctrine is not something that you would find, as an example. Many soldiers would express it that way. I'm trying to simplify a complex piece.

When I think of conducting land operations, those principles are embedded there. As I move down to that particular level of doctrine, it is embedded. From some perspectives, what you see there is part of it.

The thing to remember about doctrine is that it's layered. We have capstone manuals and then we work down, all the way down through a series of levels to the appropriate arm. How does armoured reconnaissance conduct its mission set? How do the engineers conduct their mission set? There are many different levels.

I find that sometimes people want to use doctrine to wrap it all together, and that sometimes is not helpful.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Okay, that helps me. So if we were to try to read the current doctrine, we would effectively be talking of mountains of paperwork, in a sense. It's not reducible to X. It flows, if I understood you correctly, from some principles that are set out.

Where do those principles come from?

● (0940)

MGen Steve Bowes: To perhaps bring that back home, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, they come from an accepted body of knowledge within the profession. We look at what our allies are doing. We look at what we have done. We look at our history and what our experiences have been. We look at our values. In many senses, how we conduct operations is a direct result of our Canadian value set. All of that is used by the profession to determine our doctrine, our problem set.

Canadians are very accustomed to exercising initiative. That is in contrast to many other armies around the world in different sets. We rely on individuals. We relied on NCOs, as an example, in World War II.

There are so many examples we are familiar with, where individuals recognized that an order that was given might not survive the friction of conflict, and they've had to exercise their initiative to achieve a higher commander's intent. They go on to do that, because it is the right thing to do. That value system we have developed over years is embedded in our doctrine.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Are the principles politically influenced or given to some extent, or is it all internal to the Forces?

I can give you an example. The notion of having full spectrum operations is a kind of statement of principle. Is that something that's provided to the Forces as a principle from which its doctrine flows?

MGen Steve Bowes: You need to be cautious there. The tasks or the expectations—the missions sets that Canadian Forces are expected to fulfill and, therefore, the Army—are provided by the government. But that expression of doctrine and how we do that is a professional body of knowledge; it's no different from the legal profession, the medical profession, etc.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Somewhere in the doctrine today, can we find statements about humanitarian missions or peacekeeping missions? Does that form part of the doctrine?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. We have doctrines on stability operations. Even within the context of the counter-insurgency manual, you find very clear indications of what the expectations are for Canadian soldiers when they prosecute operations.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Mr. Strahl, you have the floor.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

General, I want to thank you again for being part of our experience at CFB Wainwright and the CMTC. It was certainly eye-opening. Some around this table had been there before, but I had not. It is a first-class facility.

We discussed training while were there and a bit of what a soldier goes through prior to being deployed in the field. I am wondering if you could walk the committee through how long and what levels of training they go through, from the time they walk into a recruiting centre to the time they are deployed. What is a typical timeframe for that to take place?

MGen Steve Bowes: It would almost be impossible for a Canadian soldier to be recruited and end up overseas in an operation inside one year. A Canadian soldier goes through recruiting through Saint-Jean, and a basic military qualification can take two to three months. Oftentimes, there'll be a period of a few weeks, perhaps even a month or two, before the next series of training would begin for their various occupations.

Let me use an infantryman as an example. They would undertake training at one of the army training centres across the country and become qualified. They would then be posted to their battalion. They immediately embark on another series of qualifications on platoon level weapons, and things that they would be expected to use.

Then when they go into the collective training cycle of that particular unit—say if this recruit were in a battalion that was going to go out the door for operations—they would begin by conducting a series of what we call levels 1-to-7 training. They would go through individual battle task standards, then they would work as a team within the section under the leadership of a sergeant, with a master corporal as the second in command, and work through the tactics, techniques, and procedures in the drills they would be expected to perform. Then they work within the context of a platoon, then within the context of a company. There's a lot of that training that has to be done in garrison before we get to the field.

When they get to the field, they're ready to work together as a team, normally implying they can go to the field and train at a platoon level. So a platoon can literally just go out and do its training and normally that platoon commander would be training the younger sergeants beneath him. And so it goes all the way up to what you saw, which was a brigade and a brigade commander. And although we were doing things to help train his staff, the primary training audience was actually the companies inside the battalions.

So there's training ongoing at multiple different levels concurrently, because we have to do that. Resources are finite, but the primary audience there was a level 4 to 5, within a level 6 context. To us that means the company level within the battle group.

● (0945)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Thank you.

Can you compare, perhaps, what the state of operational readiness of troops was prior to 2001 when we deployed to Afghanistan to where it is now? Is the situation different? How has that improved?

MGen Steve Bowes: The situation has improved. Gains are always tenuous, because every day brings you a new challenge.

We have equipment. Without being able to quantify where we were at in 2001 and where we're at now, what I should really do is to emphasize that we're trying to recover all the equipment from Afghanistan—the mission transition task force is doing that—and bringing it back, refurbishing it as required, doing the checks, and getting that equipment ready to go. That's going to take us about a year. It's a process, in the military parlance, of reloading the army, getting it ready to go again. So we're working that piece.

At the same time, readiness to us is an ongoing issue, because every day there may be an officer or an NCO who is retiring, somebody else who going needs to be promoted, or somebody else who has to be trained to take their place. It's a continuous process for which we have coined the term “perpetual training”.

So as you move across the army and you look at all the various brigades, not everybody is training at the same high level on a daily basis. We have good equipment now. We have soldiers and we're intensely proud of what they have achieved, but we're only as good as today when we start again.

Frankly, we can be informed and proud of our past, but we have to face the challenges that we have. And we have significant readiness and training challenges to move forward to adapt the army to whatever reset the government wants us to do in the future.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Mr. Cleary, you have the floor.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I enjoyed the presentation. Thank you very much, Major-General. I have a few questions.

You mentioned that the military has made huge strides in building mutual respect between the regular and reserve army. That leads me to believe there wasn't always that mutual respect there.

Can you expand on that?

MGen Steve Bowes: Sure. Absolutely.

It was not common 5 to 10 years ago for the regular and reserve components to train together. So when you don't train together and you don't work together, you don't know each other.

So it's not a question of respect in the sense of there being something opposite, but when you eventually work with somebody, regardless of whatever walk of life they are from, you gain respect for the skills they bring to the table. In many cases, you did not know that individual. You did not know what they were capable of, and so that's where the army really was.

Afghanistan has provided that context through the last five to seven years, where a significant number of reservists came out in support of the operation and performed brilliantly. We have a level of integration now and a level of respect that needs to be maintained, because it makes the army more efficient, more effective, but it also connects us as a base to Canadians.

I like to use this analogy. We have our three regular brigades, and we're very proud of them, but they work in three locations across the country with some smaller detached units. But the reserves are in every major community across the country. They are connected to Canadians in a way that makes it difficult for us working in those larger bases and being more isolated.

There are strengths that the reserves bring to the table that we clearly recognize we do not want to lose. And I think that's where that respect is today, as opposed to not working together, which is where we were 5 to 10 years ago.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I have to ask this question. You mentioned the reservists in Newfoundland, which is where I'm from. How big are the reserves in Newfoundland?

MGen Steve Bowes: There are about 800 reservists there.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: You mentioned, as well, that for our soldiers there is a risk they might want to seek other challenges if we don't keep them engaged. Did you mean they might leave the military?

MGen Steve Bowes: That's correct.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Do you have any projections of the size of the force you could lose if you don't have those challenges available?

● (0950)

MGen Steve Bowes: I have no indication. That's really something in the field of the Chief Military Personnel command, which does that kind of analysis based on questionnaires and the like. So we have some military personnel analysis for that. We run through a process called the annual military occupation review, which projects what those rates are going to be.

But to me, it's more intuitive than that. It's just common sense. If you provide people value, if you give them a reason to smile and to say, I'm happy to put on my boots today, I'm going to be challenged....

I think of my own reasons for joining. I did not go to military college, but joined a little bit later. The things that drive me to put on my uniform every day are the things we continue to want to replicate, because then we will have strength in the team so that it's both more efficient and more effective.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: When you talk about “train to excite”, with more emphasis on training in the Arctic and jungle operations, I'm interested specifically in the Arctic. Why the training in Arctic operations?

MGen Steve Bowes: It's because the Arctic environment. We would often say that we train for winter warfare.

I served for a few years in Valcartier. We used to go out in the back forty, and it would be -40. Now -40 in Valcartier and -40 in the Arctic are not the same things. Until you go to the Arctic, you don't realize that survival brings on a whole new consideration. And you need to get soldiers up there to be able to work in that environment, to be able to move, to adapt, to understand the things they need to do and not do. Working too hard and working up a sweat can threaten your life in the north. So there are things, depending on the environment, that we want to be able to expose our soldiers to and test our equipment in, so that we're able to do that. You can't replicate that down east.

I once saw the tongue from a forklift snap in -40 degree weather, and I thought that was instructive.

Mr. Ryan Cleary: I have a last question on "train to excite", which stands out as a term. But is there a danger there? When a soldier is trained to excite, when you excite a soldier, then when that soldier leaves the military is there a danger? How do soldiers deal with that once they leave?

MGen Steve Bowes: I don't think so, because the soldier is never alone. We work in a team. There are leaders at every level—master corporals, sergeants, who are all part of a team. So when you're talking about training the soldier to excite, that is to give the soldier a reason for putting on boots in the morning and going to work.

I'm actually very understanding of what that statement means to the young people. It's no different from being an entrepreneur in any industry. If you don't properly compensate people, give them pride in what they do, and give them a reason for coming to you, they're going to go to somebody else. And that's the reality we face.

We have a younger generation with a different value set from the generation on the other side of age 45 or 50. So we need to recognize that it's not about us; it's about the young men and women who are going to go out the door to represent Canada in various operations around the world. We need to motivate them. We need to keep their skill sets, which we have spent a great deal of money on, in the Canadian Forces. It allows us to have that kind of flexibility, that pride in what they do.

So that part of the excitement is not something that concerns me, sir.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much. And through you, Mr. Chair, to the witness, thank you very much for the exposure we had earlier this week to some of the training that our men and women go through.

I want to change the focus a little bit, sticking with the theme of the preparedness of our Canadian armed forces and going more towards the humanitarian side.

Of course, I have the 8 Wing in my riding. We have purchased the tactical and strategic lift aircraft. A lot of people think it is pretty expensive hardware, using their hard-earned tax dollars to go to foreign places and do things.

But what many of us don't realize is that it affords us another capability, and I'm referring specifically to Haiti. Of course, you can relate what I'm about to say to some domestic things, such as floods, and forest fires, etc.

I'd like you to relate how you prepare and train for missions like the one to Haiti and how these differ from traditional military missions, because of the training involved and, specifically—because of our capabilities now—how our experience with Sri Lanka compares with that in Haiti, in terms of the timeliness of our arrival at the scene of a terrible catastrophe.

I'd like you to talk a little bit about the training there, because it's not the traditional military mission of protect, repel, and then neutralize, but about humanitarian efforts. So could you expand on that, please.

● (0955)

MGen Steve Bowes: The reality is that in many of the environments we go to, including the examples you've cited—and not assuming the more traditional peace support missions we've been on in Haiti—a response to a significant crisis within a country happens on such short notice. Where our capability and our preparedness allow us to react, we can then turn to the units that are at a high level of readiness and used to working together, and we can react on short notice.

I'd like to remind people that because I have received two taskings to go overseas on relatively short notice, I still have my kit packed at home. Other than needing a lawyer to sign a power of attorney in a matter of hours, I can be on a plane to go anywhere in the world. That's something we try to inculcate in the culture of our soldiers: to be adaptive and react to any situation.

The reality for soldiers, though, is that many of the situations they may go into can be benign but there can also be criminal organizations there that can represent a threat, or there may be insurgent activity occurring in the midst of a humanitarian calamity. The soldiers need to be able, first and foremost, to defend themselves and then to work that process through. The fundamental piece of that is working as a team.

The C-17, for example, and the new Hercules aircraft that we're buying provide tremendous capability for us to express Canadian values in a time of great need anywhere in the world. We're just a part of that. So we work with the air force and a variety of organizations beyond the army. It's important to recognize that this is a higher level Canadian Forces piece.

But in terms of training our soldiers, we try to train them with that mentality in mind. They have to be ready to go anywhere anytime and respond with a skill set obtained through a level of training that allows them to react to the greatest range of tasks they could possibly confront.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

I guess I'm relating to the experience we had. It was in a highly volatile situation not unlike something that could happen in a place like Haiti.

But my primary question referred to the type of training that goes into time elements, because we know in disasters that how quickly we get there means something. Perhaps you could relate, number one, to our the ability to get there. You did refer to the C-17 in its ability versus having to getting in line to rent an Antonov to go somewhere, and having to get in line for that rental.

Specifically could you talk a little bit about how we get DART from Kingston to Trenton. Are folks continually trained on how to assemble and disassemble water purification and those types of things?

MGen Steve Bowes: The short answer is that they are trained on those things. That level is above me in terms of training, because it becomes an operational piece. It's actually the commander of 1 Canadian Division who has DART and the non-combatant evacuation task, as an example. But we do train our people. We maintain them at a higher level of readiness. In one of my organizations, which is in Trenton as well, the Land Advanced Warfare Centre, we have parachutists who are tasked with being ready. Their kit is checked daily, and they are prepared to go in response to a major airline disaster, as an example. So there are various organizations involved. And this is all based on a task set that works from the Government of Canada back down through the chain of command. We do exercise those on a continuous basis.

There's an irony in regard to Newfoundland, where I was once planning an exercise for the soldiers at the very time the unit was deployed out of Gagetown and linked up with the reservists. At the time, I was planning an exercise for them that was very similar to the deployment. The fact that I told them to go, they knew that they were going to get something coming down the road.

This has to be part of our culture.

Hopefully I'm answering that question.

The Chair: It seems that five minutes are flying by quickly.

Last in our second round is Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Thanks, Chair.

General Bowes, thank you again for the experience earlier this week. It was really impressive for all of us.

Tell us about how our readiness and the training investment that has to stand behind readiness stack up against our major allies, the ones that have the high tempos of deployment as we do. I know it's very difficult to quantify in dollars and cents and with hard statistics how much we invest in training and readiness, but where do we stand compared to the United States, the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and other highly deployed allies?

● (1000)

MGen Steve Bowes: Thank you, sir. That is a very hard question.

It's comparable to our allies, as one would expect, but each nation has unique characteristics. The U.S. Army is so large in its services that quantity has a quality all its own. So they're able to specialize to a far greater degree. We don't, so we have to be more generalist in nature. We have a smaller base and we ask our people to do more. We train subordinates, for example, to be able to step up at a moment's notice to take the responsibility of the boss. That provides us with that institutional flexibility.

Training costs money. Maintaining an army, regular and reserve, costs money. We try to move through a system of graduated readiness. So we're not like we were back in the days of the Cold War, when a huge number of soldiers were always ready to go to face that set. We try to move through a system to make it predictable, to mitigate the tempo, to balance the individual courses and career courses that are necessary, and to balance the professional military education. But that means that the army is continuously engaged in a training cycle, and it's managed by brigades, units, and sub-units, all the way down right across the army.

I would say, trying to put it in the American context, that we're more comparable perhaps to the Dutch. On the equation with the British, right at the moment it's very difficult for me to say, because I haven't been exposed to them and they're undergoing some profound changes. So we need to understand that we stack up on a pretty good basis, but it comes at a cost. It truly does.

Perhaps there's a more specific piece you'd like me to answer.

Mr. Chris Alexander: No, your general response was good enough.

What we saw at Wainwright was collective training as part of your foundation training. Obviously some units will go on to high readiness training this year and next year for a mission that hasn't necessarily been defined, unlike those cases of successive rotations to Afghanistan, or even to Libya.

We saw in Wainwright a kind of hybrid scenario, with some elements of it perhaps being familiar to those soldiers who had been in Haiti. Some elements recalled Libya, particularly the air component. Some hearkened back to Afghanistan.

What kind of high readiness mission is a battle group being prepared for in the Canadian army in 2011-12?

MGen Steve Bowes: We're trying to prepare a battle group for medium-intensity combat across the full spectrum of operations. In one area they could be conducting humanitarian assistance of some kind for a local population, all the way across the spectrum literally ti combat operations of that medium intensity with tanks, armour, and artillery. So that's the broadest range. We try to give them the generics, so we expose them to need and cultural awareness without necessarily exposing them to a particular culture or area of operation. In other words, it adds something they need to think about.

Mr. Chris Alexander: We still have the battle group at the core of our doctrine. We saw from the United States, certainly in Afghanistan and Iraq, and also more and more from European allies, that the brigade combat team is the dominant unit of measurement for readiness and our contribution. Obviously the Canadian army is smaller, but we do train to command brigades. Should we be moving toward at least some level of focus on the readiness of brigade combat teams?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. In a sense I would offer that we are. Although we express ourselves as saying that 1 Battle Group is the cornerstone, the brigade, which is the nucleus of a task force, is the only piece. We are a formation army, not a battle group army. We are a formation army because that's the piece that brings all of these enablers together.

In Afghanistan you had a brigade. It may have had a provincial reconstruction team. It had soldiers that were out on the operational mentor and liaison team. But with all of those other assets that were in theatre, the formation brings that all together. Without that you can't coordinate all of the elements that go toward the whole-of-government team, which, from a military perspective, we are just one layer of that team working up through our senior representatives.

● (1005)

The Chair: Before we start the third round I have a couple of questions.

When we were at Wainwright, one thing that stood out for me in one of the presentations that was made, I think, by Colonel Thomas, was the whole paradigm shift in how you train. Now you're looking at being able to deal with a near peer in battle readiness, rather than dealing with insurgencies, which we've been concentrating on for the last five or ten years.

Can you talk about how that changes the training right through? We got to see the end result, of the troops working together as an entire brigade, as a battle group, but how does that near-peer training start right off at the basic level as you go up through the different regiments?

MGen Steve Bowes: Soldiers need to train in offensive and defensive operations. The counter-insurgency operations we did in the past were very different. The threats they were exposed to, although regrettably so lethal, were different in nature. When you're now out in an environment where you're concerned about the presence of a near peer, you're not only looking on the side of the road for an IED and the presence, perhaps, of a suicide bomber, but you're also looking for other weapon systems to be there that could have a negative effect.

The one scenario you saw that included the school bus, as an example, also had the presence of other military forces in the area. So when they reacted to that, they reacted in a way that told them there were other people there with weapon systems that could hurt them from a distance. It imposed another level of tactical problem solving that the commander had to go through in his estimate. Recognizing that it was very early on in his training, that's a very good thing to push him through because they're able to work that through in their head.

The issues of time and space are very different when you're going into near-peer situations. An enemy has a stand-off capability and you need to be thinking beyond only the immediate environment, but about what is out there behind the next hill. And that's the piece they're trying to work through.

The Chair: We could see in the training at Wainwright that you guys are incorporating the lessons learned, but how do you now set up an example or exercise knowing what's happening in the world? How do you use internal intelligence, I guess, on what's happening from the standpoint of global affairs to determine what type of exercises you should incorporate into training?

MGen Steve Bowes: We'll do that this weekend, in the sense that the scenario that you saw was evolving. Each day it's escalating to where soldiers in uniforms from opposing forces are going to cross the border inside the manoeuvre training centre at Wainwright, and it's going to cause our commander to have to go through a deliberate tactical estimate. There will be other armoured forces and other infantry—regular soldiers, not irregulars—who are going to be there and that he's going to have to deal with at the same time as a possible threat of insurgent activity along his lines of communication. So we're moving through that now.

That's what we talk about when we talk about full spectrum operations. That's where we're injecting a near peer. He would, in theory, have sufficient forces to deal with the problem, but if he doesn't solve it the right way, he's going to learn some hard lessons.

The Chair: As our committee continues with its work on this study of readiness, we're going to be talking to other segments of the armed forces, with the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force. How do you, in your role as commander of land doctrine with the army, interact with those other two components?

MGen Steve Bowes: Because the operations at Kandahar were land-centric ones, the relationships have developed more on the air side. Obviously, our pilots were flying Chinooks and Griffons and were resupplying the airfield, which has built up a level teamwork that has been replicated in the collective training environment.

The doctrine exists for us to conduct thorough operations working with the Royal Canadian Navy. The issue for us is simply that it's a platform and a training opportunity. We do work within the context of other exercise scenarios, whether on the Pacific or on the Atlantic coasts, so I would link with them.

At my recent army training council, I had representatives from the air force, from Canada Command, etc., and we were talking through future training opportunities. In my job it's very difficult to actually track what we do on a daily basis in the army. I'm actually trying to look out 12 to 24 months to set up the training opportunities to help prepare us, and then align the resources so we can work together.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll start off our third round. We do have time for a third round.

Who, from the NDP, wants to start the questions?

Madam Moore.

● (1010)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Many analysts believe that we should take advantage of the post-Afghanistan period to start a complete overhaul of the Canadian Forces. In his report on the transformation of government, lieutenant-general Leslie recommended the reassignment of 3,500 public servants to more important tasks, the reduction of headquarters staff as well as the reduction of the funding of the Canadian Forces.

Do you believe that the readiness of the Canadian Forces could be maintained despite those proposals or that it would be jeopardized?

MGen Steve Bowes: That is an hypothetical question, madam, and it is very far removed from my responsibilities.

[*English*]

There are a lot of initiatives discussed on a daily basis. And it's important that the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces, the civilian members of the department and our political leaders, discuss them in a full and honest way. But within the context of General Leslie's report or some of the other initiatives, there's a level that is well beyond me. I literally deal with guidance from Lieutenant-General Devlin, the commander of the army, and I work within the resource envelope that he's given. But there's a level between him and higher people in the department that as a trainer I don't work with.

There are many discussions of which I'm not aware; I'm not in on those debates. There are things that even General Leslie himself throws out. He might say there's a panoply, a smorgasbord of ideas out there, things we ought to consider. Right now, that's being digested and analyzed at the departmental level. It is a long way from getting down to me. I really can't answer it any other way.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Do you believe that there have been some recruitment difficulties in some army occupations and that it is difficult for those occupations to be fully operational because they do not have enough members, or that some are in a more critical situation than others?

[*English*]

MGen Steve Bowes: The way that we're set up in the Canadian Forces, the Medical Branch works for the Surgeon General. You saw medics on Tuesday that performed well, particularly at the hospital. They work with us, but they're not actually in the army chain of command. I am completely unaware of their recruiting issues. Recruiting comes under the Chief Military Personnel and the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group.

But I would say that recruiting is an ongoing issue. It's one of those issues that, from time to time in the past, we have done well at, and then we backed off. We'd made some assumptions, and then we found ourselves realizing that we needed to put more resources into recruiting. Across the board in the Canadian Forces, and for the army in particular, we need to apply constant effort to recruiting.

But within the medical chain, I'm unaware of any of the various occupations and where they're at in terms of their status. The Surgeon General would be the one to address that question to, along with the Chief Military Personnel.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: At the present time, if I am not mistaken, all occupations under your chain of command are operational and do not face any shortages.

[*English*]

MGen Steve Bowes: There are shortages. You break officers out and you break soldiers out, the non-commissioned members. There are specific occupations.... We're short of armour officers, as an example. We are flush with infantry at the moment. It wasn't the case three to four years ago. So these things come up and down within the spectrum.

From an overall standpoint, the manning level of the army at the moment is pretty good, but that's because we're doing really well in some occupations and less well in others. We're trying to balance that on a consistent basis, but that's always a challenge. We have problems with vehicle technicians. We're working that through, recruiting and qualifying the individuals and getting them into the army.

We have our challenges, absolutely. But beyond just recruiting, there are rank gaps. There are shortages at certain rank levels where we need to run more courses, where over the last four or five years our soldiers weren't available because they were continuously going back into operations. That's part of the reset. We will bring individuals back and try to get them onto their career courses so that we can take a master corporal and make him a sergeant, or take a sergeant and make her a warrant officer.

● (1015)

The Chair: I'll allow you one quick question, because we don't have a Liberal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Earlier, you answered a question from my colleague, Mr. Strahl, on training and on the way it is adapted to circumstances. I would like to know the more about the training of officers. How has it been adjusted over time to take account of the new reality of our Canadian Forces?

[*English*]

MGen Steve Bowes: That's an excellent question.

As an example, a number of years ago the Granatstein report highlighted that the officer corps didn't have degrees and needed more formal education, which would be beneficial to the officer corps. The army—the Canadian Forces—embarked on a deliberate process.

If you move it forward, even in the 2003-05 time period before Afghanistan kicked in, we embarked on a renewed emphasis on professional military education. The old OPMEs, as they're called, are an example. On various subjects, such as the impact of science and technology on modern warfare, or the procurement system, or whatever, we would train those officers up. We called it the army junior officer staff qualification, which would link into various courses. We constantly renew our courses and our professional military education.

When I was commander of the combat training centre at Gagetown, I coined the term that many now use, that there is no such thing as a steady state. Every course we run is a pilot. What that means is that we have to be honest and reflect on what we have just done and make sure that the next serial is ready to go. So we have evolved education and training.

We have taken a really good look at our army operations course, which is the most important course in the officer corps. It's taught at the staff college in Kingston. It used to be entirely done in residency. It now has a significant piece, about seven weeks long, that's done by distributed learning. It keeps the officers at home and allows us to align the training of the reserves with the regular forces in the same way, along similar subjects, although they're taught by different members of the directing staff. It allows us to focus what we do on the residency piece more towards operational training. So we've evolved.

We're trying to introduce more and more simulation, and more and more technology into training. But we still want to make sure that it's grounded. So every day we try to make sure that the balance between education and individual training is within the experience set.

So I would like to think that we've responded in a way. We spend a lot more time on those subjects—on law of armed conflict, etc.—than, say, 10 to 15 years ago.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Opitz.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General, Madame Fry did ask you—and I think it bears a little bit of elaboration—about Canadian values applied overseas on missions, and things like that. I think we would all agree that we do have a foundation and it's called the army ethos. Could you elaborate on the way we train towards that and help reinforce those values through this particular program?

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely. There is a piece of doctrine, a book called *Canada's Army*, that underlines the values. Without describing the entire book, it is mandatory reading for all. We use it as the cornerstone of what we expect. We expect Canadian soldiers, wherever they go, to represent that ethos and to reflect the values that Canadians want us to represent. So we can never forget that. We must ensure, day in and day out, as our soldiers train and get ready for operations that they understand they are Canadians first, and are representative of Canadians. That ethos underlines that.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Is that a component taught within the army education system?

● (1020)

MGen Steve Bowes: Yes, it is.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Perfect.

Now, regarding training to excite, I'm going to shift to reserves right now. As many know, we have had different periods between regular force and reserve interaction. The seventies were positively droll, quite frankly, and so were the eighties until we got into the early nineties through Bosnia. And then the next thing you know, missions were being topped up, as they were very much in Afghanistan—with 20% to 25% reservists, depending on mission—and that's now carried through. So we've had almost two decades of that kind of integration, which is great.

However, as you have suggested, we do want to prevent skill fade as much as we can. We're not going to have a 100% solution on that. That's never possible. But in terms of the reserve training system, what are some of the measures being taken now? We do have the DP system, but is there flexibility or are there other things being looked at, like putting reservists on regular force serials on courses—say, the AOC course—having a number of reserve officers, if they are available, attend the whole seven- or eight-week course, and that sort of thing? Do you follow what I'm saying?

MGen Steve Bowes: Yes, sir, absolutely.

We do that now and, in fact, if a reservist is available for the AOC, that reservist is welcome to be loaded on the course. And we do that on a number of other fronts. We also cater to it in that way I mentioned, doing regular and reserve training to the same standard, but not necessarily on every task. So we try to align the system in a modular format to allow reservists to be able to take that. That provides a cornerstone, and if a reservist comes out into operations, they will go through a deliberate road to high readiness. We will address the delta that they may have had in their training and top them up so they're ready to go.

With the way that the army has reinvigorated the collective training regime, we now have reserve units that train alongside regular units inside a context or scenario to their benefit. But we'll also apply collective training standards more formally to reserve units.

As an example, in my past job we deployed the reserve territorial battle group, the 36th brigade out of Halifax, to Prince Edward Island to conduct an exercise in the Summerside area. We had air support from the Royal Canadian Air Force. We had two maritime coastal defence vessels, and one was used to transport troops. So we had the army, navy, and air force working together in the reserve. That's an awesome statement. The scenario, although it was a weekend training event, was set up so that they went right into the scenario. So, from a company level, the young soldiers got to do some pretty neat stuff. And at the same time at a higher level, I had a domestic response situation where I was exercising the command and control of that reserve brigade and the territorial battle group to verify that they could respond and organize in a time of crisis, just as they had done in Newfoundland, which was another brigade at the time.

Mr. Ted Opitz: At times it's very difficult for a reserve to make it to all of the training courses all week, because many have full-time jobs, as you know, and sometimes it may take an officer, for example, several years before he gets through the proper sequence of courses. Is there an ability, or is any thought given, to maybe writing off COs and EOs on an OJT basis if you are deployed or augmenting, say, 3 RCR for six months plugged into a position...?

MGen Steve Bowes: Yes. As part of the healthy review process, we're going through another level of review right now to make sure that our awarding of equivalencies, if you will, is fair and based on an individual's level of service and the skill sets they bring in. That's a constant thing.

There are always checks and balances. We want to be cautious that we don't create two groups, in the sense of allowing that foot in the door to grow apart the two components of the army, because it really is one army at the moment. So it's a fine balance, but we do look at that. We look at the experiential skill set whenever a soldier transfers in and does a component transfer. We use a format, a methodology, that allows us to look at all the skill sets, the courses they've taken, and to figure out what they need to do to top that up. And it's a risk assessment in terms of your institution. We can accept more risk at more junior levels. As you get into higher leadership levels, you have to accept a little less risk because then you don't necessarily have the time to catch up on all they've missed.

Mr. Ted Opitz: On training systems, we mentioned that earlier we're using CATS in Wainwright essentially, but 2 RCR you mentioned is training the next rotation that is going out to Kabul. So they are still training for COIN.

MGen Steve Bowes: They're not training for COIN in the Afghan sense of what you had assumed in Kandahar. They're training to trainers, mentors, and advisers and capacity-builders. It is a training missions, so we are preparing them with those skill sets.

They're going into an environment where there are still threats and there is still an enemy that would like to inflict harm and casualties, so it's a combat environment in Afghanistan, even if we're not prosecuting offensive combat operations. So we do teach them the skill sets necessary to be able to defend themselves, and we'll go through to make sure that the appropriate number of soldiers are qualified in tactical combat and casualty care, to be able to provide first aid, and those kinds of things. Those are the kinds of things that are part of the package.

And then there's a cultural awareness piece, because, as an example, we've been focused down in Kandahar where the overwhelming majority of the population is Pashtun. Although they were working with Afghan National Army and police from time to time who weren't Pashtun, up in the Kabul area they may be dealing with a lot of people who are from different ethnic backgrounds, and there are things to address in that context.

● (1025)

Mr. Ted Opitz: Do I have time for one more?

The Chair: You can ask one more.

Mr. Ted Opitz: I know this is more of a CMP thing, but what would you estimate the attrition is right now, post-mission—

MGen Steve Bowes: Sincerely?

Mr. Ted Opitz: Yes.

MGen Steve Bowes: I don't know. My job is that of a coach. I use this analogy out on the field, that I train what's on the bench. That which is within the context of the army, that's my focus. I train those people.

The general manager and the director of player recruitment, they've got that part. They get a little edgy with me when I venture into that area. So I want to keep my job.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a couple of quick questions for you, General. When we were out at Wainwright, one of the comments you made was the need to have more cooperation and more training with other departments from the Government of Canada. Can you talk about that for a little bit?

MGen Steve Bowes: We know that if we're going to go to the door, in any environment you pick, we're going to work with other government departments.

The challenge we now have is that without the real-time operation, the same way we had in Afghanistan, everybody is extremely busy. We don't have all of the personnel, so we are using actors and other military personnel with skill sets. As an example, if I weren't in this job, as a former provincial reconstruction team commander, I could play several different roles within the context of the exercise.

We use those people to simulate those roles. We still play the whole-of-government team within the context of the exercise, but we don't have the full representation of other government departments.

We understand their challenges. That is in no way a criticism. It's simply the reality that we want to be prepared because we learned some hard lessons in 2005-06. It took a while to build up the team and you don't want to lose that.

We are ending the mission on a level such that as I sat in Kabul and listened to the many other nations pulling out, they were saying that what Canada was doing was an example, how all of the members of the team—not just the military but the military and civilians—were working together. I would not want to see us have to relearn hard lessons.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a final question. I know it will be useful to our studies.

The Government of Canada has implemented United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. I'm wondering if you've made any changes to training to implement it, or has that impacted in any way, shape or form on how the army is trained?

MGen Steve Bowes: I can't pull out the numbers specifically. I profess that I'm not certain. This is about—

The Chair: It's United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 that the Government of Canada has implemented. It's being applied across all relevant federal government departments. It's about women, peace and security, and I wonder whether or not that has changed—

MGen Steve Bowes: I didn't hear that. I'm sorry.

Mr. Chris Alexander: It's about the role of women in peace building.

MGen Steve Bowes: Absolutely.

In terms of what we do, we train soldiers, which is a wonderful way of being gender neutral.

● (1030)

The Chair: Yes.

MGen Steve Bowes: We respect the diversity. We're at a stage in the army now that is truly something to be proud of, in the sense of the debates that occurred in the nineties are a thing long past. In fact, if you were to hear somebody talk in a way...we would invite them to leave, because we are so far down the track.

But we train soldiers. Regardless of gender, you need to be able to operate a weapon to defend yourself, to be able to support others within the team. So it's within that context. Also, within the context of going into operations, as an example, Afghanistan would only be one. But to take the other extreme, we would be addressing cultural sensitivities, the various cultural aspects of that area of operation, how men and women interact in that environment, so as not to give offence. To use the example, I said that we don't want to do harm; first and foremost, do no harm. That's one of the things that we take into consideration.

I'm not entirely certain that addresses your question.

The Chair: It does.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Chairman, I have a related question.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Chris Alexander: It only occurs to me because of the questions you asked.

Gentlemen, we discussed this in Wainwright to some extent. It was the reality that you and I and others around this table lived in Afghanistan. One major distinction between recent missions—in Haiti, Libya, Afghanistan, and smaller missions to Africa, and even missions as recent as the one in the Balkans—and past missions, and certainly in contrast with Korea and the world wars, is that there's a new organizing principle in recent missions, which is that we are supporting the local government. We are not going into an environment where the UN has administrative authority—and Canada hasn't recently gone anywhere where it was an occupying power. We are there to support. That creates a whole new set of challenges for training and readiness, many of which you are meeting, obviously.

Could you summarize for us—and this relates to the question of working with other government departments—how much doctrine in training has changed to reflect the new reality that often in your operations centre, in your brigade headquarters, in your divisional headquarters, your main interlocutors are the ministers of the local government or the generals or the civil society or even the private sector of the host country? Many of the principal tests that you will face are winning their trust and confidence, working in partnership with them, identifying the ones that are effective and the ones that are not, and being on top of that aspect of the mission. Is that as close to the core of training and readiness and preparation as we would probably agree it should be?

MGen Steve Bowes: It is close to the core, and in that way I think there's a definite asset that Canadians bring to the table when they walk in the door. I have truly seen that among very young and junior soldiers, in the way they approach people, in the way they conduct themselves in working in diverse environments, and even in training environments.

I was reminded of this when we were down on a mission to help train some of the nations of the Caribbean island chains. I was approached by one of their officers who said they admired Canadians because we spoke to them in the right way.

I think we just bring that as Canadians. And I think that's very important to put out there, because as we come in, one of the harder things to do is to train soldiers on a combat level and where they have to go. Then when we build on this, and when I look at the context of where your question is going, I would point out that we're always working as part of a team. We recognize that. It's why, as an example, some reservists who have so little time in the army have been able to respond so brilliantly in domestic operations. So I think we bring that there.

Has doctrine been modified? At the higher level piece, I think, if anything, it has only reinforced what we already had. It has allowed us to look at that, underpinned by the army ethos, as an example, where we see diversity in Canada as a strength. As we work in teams, in coalitions, yes, we can find things that divide us and that cause friction, but there's always more that unites us. I was reminded by our men and women in uniform overseas that we probably have more in common with one another than we do with many of our own sectors of society back home.

So I think that it has amplified some of the existing doctrine and, for sure, there are elements of this that have changed. But I think that's just been a gradual evolution and it's been heavily influenced, not so much by the operations necessarily, but by who we are as Canadians. From where we were 15 to 20 years ago to where we're now, it's been a gradual evolution of Canada and our values, and these are the people who are coming in the door to represent you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I understand that we're going to have some bells going off here right away.

I know you have an incredibly busy schedule, General, and that you're going to be travelling back to Alberta, so I'm going to call the meeting a bit early and give you some extra time to be on your way.

You talked about training to excite and your enthusiasm is infectious. I don't see how the troops cannot get excited about all the great work that you're doing. I definitely understand your responsibility to make sure that our soldiers are properly trained so that they can get out there and do the job in the most effective and safe way they can.

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us, not just here today but also for hosting us in Wainwright and really showing us how first class our soldiers really are. They are the best of the best, and we're going to make sure they can do the jobs the government calls on them to do from time to time.

With that, we're out of here. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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