



HOUSE OF LORDS

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The Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Inquiry on

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

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Questions 26 - 32

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3.40 pm

Witnesses: Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster and Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on
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Members present

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne (Chairman)
 Lord Black of Brentwood
 Bishop of Derby
 Baroness Goudie
 Baroness Hilton of Eggardon
 Baroness Hussein-Ece
 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead
 Lord Sterling of Plaistow
 Baroness Warsi
 Lord Williams of Elvel
 Baroness Young of Hornsey

Examination of Witnesses

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster, former Canadian Military (via videolink), and **Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson**, Ministry of Defence

Q26 The Chairman: Good afternoon, Major Lancaster. Can I double-check that you can hear us? Thank you very much for joining us. We are very grateful to you. We are also pleased to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Johnson.

By way of introduction, I should remind you both that this discussion is on the record. It is being webcast and the written transcript will go to you before it is put on the official record in case you want to make any minor corrections or changes. We have a large number of Members and quite a lot of questions, which you have been able to look at. I should remind Members that as they are speaking on the public record, they should declare their interests if they have not already done so. However, our witnesses know what our interests are. These sessions never really cover everything, so if either of our witnesses has written evidence that they want to give afterwards, please do so; the more the better. We are grateful to you, and we look forward to hearing your answers, and more afterwards.

Do not feel obliged to answer every question. If you do not have anything else to add, please do not worry about it. Would you both like to make some opening remarks before we talk directly with you? Perhaps I should start with Major Lancaster.

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Thank you. Perhaps it would be useful to explain that I have been retired for nearly 17 years. Since my retirement I have spent most of my working life in conflict zones in Africa and Afghanistan, but I am not as confident in my own expertise as I might once have been. My knowledge of military forces is no longer intimate.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: I will just give a little context about who I am and where I am coming from with this. I am not a trained gender adviser. I know that the Committee requested one, but unfortunately they tend to be quite in demand at the moment, which is very good news. The brigade of which I am part, 77th Brigade, is a new organisation created

under the reforms of Army 2020 to bring together all the non-lethal effects that the Army has to deliver. That is everything from media operations to stabilisation operations and the whole spectrum of non-lethal effects that come with those. That is why we have started to develop the capability and capacity that we have with gender advisers and gender field advisers. We recognise that this is not only a fundamental part of understanding the nature of the conflicts we are involved in but a key part of the advice that we as an organisation can bring to other headquarters when they are doing their planning. So while I am not formally trained in this, I look after that element of the Army where at present our deployable gender adviser and gender field adviser capability sits. Over the past year or year and a half that I have been in this post, I have worked intimately with them, particularly on the development of their roles in a variety of operations.

Q27 Baroness Young of Hornsey: My first question is to Lieutenant Colonel Johnson. I want to clarify some of what you have said about the gender advisers. I understand that you are not one of those advisers. Can you tell us how many there are and where they are deployed? Can you also tell us in broad terms what their responsibilities are?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: It is quite a difficult question to answer. We have a variety of people with a variety of experience and training in this area, so it is a little too black and white to describe someone as being trained as a gender adviser. We are trying to instil in everyone who we work with in the brigade a level of knowledge about this area so that they have a level of awareness, as well as getting individuals who have formal NATO-accredited training. We will provide in writing afterwards the answer to exactly how many we have at the moment.

I will probably come back to this in later questions, but the only adviser we have who is properly deployed, if you count it as such, is Major Rachel Grimes, who I know a number of members of the Committee have met before. She has just flown out to New York to work with the United Nations in developing some of this law in the wider United Nations peacekeeping operations. We can provide the precise details in writing afterwards, if that would be helpful.

Baroness Young of Hornsey: That would be very helpful, as would the job description and those kinds of things. It will give us a sense of what the specific tasks are.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: The best description I have come across of gender advisers and gender field advisers is in a NATO Bi-Strategic Command directive, which has a really good annex describing the roles and responsibilities and how they support headquarters in their planning processes. It is a good, publicly available document.

Baroness Young of Hornsey: Is that what we are following?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: That is the most accurate and up to date definition of a gender adviser and a gender field adviser, and it is the definition that we use. All the formalised training that we undertake is NATO-accredited, so that is the framework within which we work and the framework within which the training that we attend is delivered.

Lord Williams of Elvel: Do all NATO countries have gender advisers in their armed forces?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: I do not know. I cannot answer that, I am afraid.

Lord Williams of Elvel: You say that there is some sort of NATO directive.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: There is a NATO definition and standardisation of what a gender adviser and a gender field adviser is, and what their roles, responsibilities and training should look like. I could not comment on how much other NATO countries have adopted it. It is certainly something that we have adopted, but I cannot comment for other NATO countries.

Baroness Warsi: When were gender advisers first appointed to the British Armed Forces, and why?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: Again, that goes back to a little before my time in this job. The first publication of the NATO directive was in 2009. We have only relatively recently had formally trained individuals and really started to get to grips with the importance of this. I could not really comment on what happened before 2009 when the NATO directive was first published. We absolutely recognise that this is a fundamental part of the way a lot of state and non-state actors are waging conflict at the moment, so it is an extremely important thing for us to be aware of and to integrate into the planning that we are undertaking.

Lord Williams of Elvel: Could we address that question to Major Lancaster as well? Does Canada have a gender adviser?

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: I believe we do, but as I said I retired some 17 years ago. I recently came back from an EU training mission in Mali, and we had gender advisers there. All the participating countries seemed to be quite comfortable with the role taken by those advisers.

Baroness Hilton of Eggardon: Which countries participated in Mali?

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Some 27 countries participated. I do not remember them all, but just about everyone was there. All the western nations and members of NATO had at least some participation.

The Chairman: How many gender advisers are there in post in the British military at the moment? Is it just one? How many do you anticipate there being in the future, and within what timeframe?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: We do not have any individuals whose posts are dedicated to this. No one has a job description saying that they are solely a gender adviser or a gender field adviser. This links into some of the broader work that we do. We have a number of individuals with a range of specialist qualifications, so this is a qualification that a number of individuals would have as part of their wider job description, rather than their sole role being a gender adviser or gender field adviser. As I have said, we can provide the details of exactly how many we have trained in a written answer afterwards, if that is acceptable.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: I would like to ask a supplementary question on the gender advisers. Is there a balance between male and female? Secondly, it is always important to know to what level in the service they report.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: That is a really interesting point. We have a variety all the way through. We have staff sergeants who are trained, and then all the way up to majors and lieutenant colonels, who are also trained. One of the key nuggets of our experience in what we have learnt from this is that you have to get the level of advice you are giving to

resonate with your audience. For example, we were doing some training for the battalion that has gone out to Erbil to train the Peshmerga in northern Iraq. If you have a battalion's-worth of young, 19 to 21 year-old, soldiers, having a major or a lieutenant colonel lecturing them might not come across particularly well. They would just feel that it is another lecture that they are being given without really understanding the importance of it. If it is someone who is of a similar rank and experience, such as a senior non-commissioned officer, then our experience is that that resonates much better with them. So we have both male and female officers and soldiers. It is about picking the right individual to resonate with the training audience that you are delivering to. We have found that to be of key importance in making sure that the message gets across and resonates with your training audience.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: I could not agree more. Thank you.

Q28 Bishop of Derby: I want to invite each of you to say a little more about UN peacekeeping operations. You have already alluded to the fact that gender advisers are part of the armoury of a UN peacekeeping operation, but to what extent alongside that role do you see UN peacekeeping involving not just the kind of holding operation and then sensitising, but more positive elements such as education and new opportunities for victims, so that they can be prepared possibly to be witnesses and to be put on to a positive road ahead and not just in a holding context really? Would you like to comment on anything that we might aspire to for making a contribution to UN peacekeeping operations, that positive element, as well as the holding element?

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Perhaps I could say a few words on that. As I said, I have spent much of the time since I left the army wandering around conflict zones either as part of a UN peacekeeping mission or closely associated with one. The first problem on any mission is the composition of that mission. Today, there are very few western armies represented as troop-contributing nations, and very few western contingents, so we find ourselves faced with the difficulty of trying to work with armies that have been recruited from the developing world with a wide range of skills, education and cultures that need to be persuaded in the first instance that the western view of gender equality is the correct one. That is problem number one.

Much could be said about the need to get western nations back into taking up their share of military responsibilities in peacekeeping, but that is a different issue. What could very easily and usefully be done, if you want to look closely at mitigation methods and procedures, would be to look at supplying people to Human Rights Watch or to the UN human rights organisation. That is where instances of gender violence are first picked up. They are generally reported through the human rights chain. If we think that deterrence through the application of legal process is worthwhile, that might be the place to start. However, that is a tall order in places like Congo where the legal system just has no purchase. It is also very difficult in places like Mali where the legal system is virtually non-existent.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: I would echo many of the points that Major Lancaster has just made. I do not have significant direct experience of UN peacekeeping operations myself, but countries are deploying where there is little formalised or UN-mandated training. Troops from a wide variety of cultures are deploying to countries where there is naturally increased instability and decreased rule of law within those countries. The UK deployed the first gender field adviser into a UN peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo about a year ago, and that individual is the person who we have now sent to New

York to try to develop that role within the wider UN peacekeeping operation. It is something that the UN is really starting to get to grips with. So while I do not have any direct experience, it is certainly an area where the UN realises that there is a deficit and that more work needs to be done, and hence Major Grimes, who works for me, has gone out to New York for six months to try to develop this.

Baroness Goudie: I would like to ask a supplementary question. As we know, in all areas of conflict it is women, at the end of the day, who say that enough is enough, and it is women who should make up 50% of the peace table. Also, however, there is a problem, as Major Lancaster has just said, with the community allowing women to be at the peace table, although it is now part of human rights legislation. We know that, and Britain and other countries support it. Also, some of the peacekeepers are women. What are we doing to ensure—I do not mean train, but ensure; it is a different word—that that agreement is respected? I ask, because we have seen in Angola and other places that it is not respected. The men sit around the table and forgive each other, and that is it. I have the proper gospel if you want it, but I do not think we need to do that here. How are we going to respect that ongoing agreement in terms of the conflicts around the world just now?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: I am afraid that that is a little out of my level of experience.

Baroness Goudie: That is how we sorted out Northern Ireland. Do you remember Northern Ireland?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: We absolutely understand that if you ignore women and do not have them as part of the development of the solution, you are not going to have a sustainable solution. All I can say is that the role of the gender advisers that we have is both to provide advice to the UK on the planning that is ongoing and to mentor. In Somalia at the moment, for example, we have a team of UK military who are mentoring the African Union force headquarters in Mogadishu that is looking after the various countries that are providing troops into Somalia. We provide mentors to those headquarters to make sure that this is something that they consider, as well as pre-deployment training for the troop-contributing countries before they go in. They include Rwanda, Ethiopia, Burundi—a variety of countries. We are providing their hierarchy with training before the troops from those countries deploy as well as mentoring the headquarters in the country itself. That is the one place where I know we are trying to do something positive in ensuring that gender is at the heart of their considerations and the planning that they are undertaking.

The Chairman: I have just a quick question for Lieutenant Colonel Johnson. What is the gender qualification that you kindly referred to?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: A variety of courses are being run by a number of organisations around the world. The predominant NATO-accredited one is held at a NATO school in Sweden that formally trains NATO-accredited gender advisers and gender field advisers, but there is a variety of other courses. Recently we had a number of individuals attend the Peace Support Operations Training Centre in Sarajevo, which runs a two-week course that looks specifically at the role of gender in peace support operations. There is a spectrum of training and courses covering everything from two days in the Stabilisation Unit up the road to having individuals who are qualified to train other people in this area. We try to maintain a broad spectrum of qualified people through the wide range of qualifications that exist.

Q29 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead: Thank you both for sharing your knowledge and information with us. Major Lancaster, what assessment would you make, given what is clearly your extremely wide experience in many countries, of the effectiveness and success or otherwise of efforts to make sexual violence a priority? I note from your record that you are very familiar with DRC. I wonder how it is managed there and what priority has been given to the importance of engaging with local women living in villages close to where these things happened. Obviously the military will not give those women the confidence that they often need after their terrible and violent experiences. It would be helpful if you could give us some background, perhaps using DRC as an example. That will enable us to take useful elements from your experience and learn from them.

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Thank you. DRC is a very complex place, but it is the place where we see a wide array of competencies, which are brought together under the auspices of the UN peacekeeping mission, or in some cases just working loosely alongside it. A lot of those agencies are aimed particularly at dealing with gender violence—with victims of rape. I think you are quite correct in saying that the military is probably badly placed to do that, particularly since most rapes seem to have been the result of people in uniform.

The problem I see in contexts like that is that there has been a degradation of traditional values and the complete erosion and destruction of the legal system. While they are trying to find their way back to some kind of stability that holds, violence of all kinds is being carried out at very low levels, as different vulnerabilities are addressed and as people try either to deter attack or to so dominate their neighbour that the risk of attack disappears, and rape is part of the arsenal that they use, sadly.

What have we done in DRC? There is a fairly active gender awareness system within the UN family. UN troops are quite closely watched and disciplined if there are transgressions. They are asked to serve as a sort of example for the local forces. But it is a really difficult task, and getting behavioural change out of that seems to me to be pretty challenging.

Baroness Goudie: Perhaps I may ask a further supplementary question. What percentage of the personnel receiving gender training are women?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: Of those we have trained in the last year, I would say that the ratio is roughly 50:50, but again we can provide the precise details afterwards. I come back to the point I made earlier: you have to get the right person to resonate with your training audience. We find that if you just have this as a women-only sport, you do not get a significant amount of traction.

Baroness Goudie: No. There must be men and women working together.

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Can I perhaps weigh in here? I am concerned that by creating gender advisers and a gender advisory structure, there is a danger of taking responsibility for gender violence out of the chain of command—displacing it from where it needs to be. I would be very careful about looking at exactly what the content of gender adviser activity is and at how those responsibilities link into the chain of command.

Baroness Goudie: That is a very good point.

Baroness Warsi: I agree that that is a helpful intervention, and perhaps I too can ask a supplementary question on the back of it. My question is in two parts. First, Major Lancaster, have your own armed forces ever faced allegations of sexual violence in conflict, and if so, what has been your experience of how that was dealt with? That is not necessarily on the

ground in terms of the local civilian population but, for example, as a means of questioning combatants who may be picked up during a conflict.

Secondly, I should like to ask Lieutenant Colonel Johnson a really straight question. Can you tell me how seriously our Armed Forces actually take the PSVI? My own sense was that the Armed Forces—not you personally, but Armed Forces representatives—got there, but kicking and screaming. How seriously do you now take that initiative and, on the back of the statement just made by our other witness, is the gender adviser a convenient way of parking the issue?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: Certainly the way I see this evolving now is that the role of the gender adviser is to make sure that this is at the heart of the thinking and the planning that we are doing. Essentially, there is a lot of use of the phrase “mainstreaming of gender”. You make an extremely valid point: that people see this as a niche activity, that “We can put the gender bit to one side while we do the main bit of our activity”. But the whole rationale for having a gender adviser or a gender field adviser is to make what would be considered to be a niche activity part of the core thinking and the core planning in a headquarters of whatever size or shape. The role of the adviser is to do precisely that: it is to make sure that the commander who might not have a deep understanding of these issues is forced to consider them; he is forced to consider the views and particular circumstances of 50% of the population of the country that he may be operating in and to consider what activity the adversary is using—how they are using sexual violence as part of their campaign. He must make sure that that is a key consideration in the operation that they may potentially be delivering.

As I have said, this is something that we are very quickly realising is non-discretionary; it is something that we have to consider. It is perhaps only relatively recently that we have come to realise the importance of it, but I think that we have been doing an awful lot in the last few years to bring the issue into the mainstream.

Baroness Hilton of Eggardon: Can I reinforce that point in relation to my experience as a police officer? When we had a race relations department, that issue was felt to be its business and not the business of everyone in the organisation. I think there is a serious danger that people will feel that it is not their responsibility. It has to be handled very carefully so that it permeates the whole organisation.

Lord Williams of Elvel: When you say that the commander should be “forced”—that is your expression—to consider these things, it should be noted that he or she is an adviser and not part of the command structure as such. How can an adviser force someone to listen to their advice?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: A deployed military headquarters has a variety of advisers. You would certainly have a cultural adviser and a political adviser in it. It is difficult to force a commander to take account of these things, but it is done by having an individual who has the credibility, training and experience to point out to the commander why these things should be taken seriously and be part of his plan.

The Chairman: Before I invite Lord Sterling to speak, would you mind telling us what rank the gender adviser is?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: We have trained a number of people at a variety of ranks ranging from, I think, staff sergeant through to lieutenant colonel.

Q30 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: I could not agree more than with what Major Lancaster has just said. Anyone who studies the history of what happened to the Russian Army during the war will know that everyone had a senior-level commissar attached, and that led to huge problems. If the gender adviser gets out of kilter, it will finish up being a very political role, which will then make a commanding officer deeply concerned about what his responsibilities truly are.

Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, you come from a very proud regiment, and I know a lot about it. Anyone who has done square bashing will always remember that the real backbone of any army is of course its non-commissioned officers, and you have already talked about the role they play. I had the pleasure of having a long discussion with General Messenger, who has the lead role in all this. He said that the problem is that when people join the Army or when Reserves come in, they come because they want to learn how to fight. They want the excitement of what it is all about, and the balance of how much you put into their social responsibilities, so to speak, and what you are teaching them at the same time, is quite important. I should like to get your views on that, but I get the impression that the role of non-commissioned officers in all three services—I am somewhat involved in them all—is probably the crucial area both when soldiers are being trained and when they are on the battlefield, which is when it really comes down to it. I would be interested to learn about the experience of both the major and the lieutenant colonel as to how this works out and how well trained the non-commissioned officers are in this role.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: We are just in the process of starting an across-defence training needs analysis to work out exactly where the gaps in our training are. We are asking what sort of training should be delivered and at what level. It is being taken through from the basic training that an individual coming in off the street receives all the way through to the high-level and highly experienced gender field advisers. That work is ongoing within the department to look at where the gaps exist and how we should then design the training to get the right amount of understanding, experience and expertise at all levels. We have taken the opportunity to use the existing training courses that are out there to get a number of our individuals trained, because there is a call for them. We can see how busy these individuals are in east Africa, west Africa, Iraq and other countries, which just shows that there is a real demand for them. So we have taken the opportunity in advance of the broader defence training needs analysis to get some individuals trained. I think that will be the real development that will hopefully provide the answer to your question. It is about what it is that you deliver in the course that your junior non-commissioned officers and senior non-commissioned officers are going on. At every level of that training, from private soldier to general, we need to look at what we need to include in the training that we are delivering to ensure that this becomes part of the mainstream. If I were talking to any of my gender advisers now, I think they would say that hopefully in 15 years' time they would not be required, because it would become part of the mainstream, something that is just part of the DNA and the thinking of our commanders and soldiers at every level.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: As we are sitting here today—this has been asked before—forgetting about what might happen in due course, what is the role of a corporal, a sergeant and a sergeant-major in talking to new entrants and so forth about their responsibilities and how they are to behave in action, not tearing a village apart or whatever it might be? That is nothing to do with a gender adviser or any other kind of adviser, it is how they are—their instincts and their pride in what they are doing.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: We absolutely pride ourselves on being a professional armed force that routinely operates within the law of armed conflict. As part of their training, which is updated annually, every soldier receives training on the law of armed conflict and what is appropriate and proportionate, and what legally they must do. Within the Geneva Conventions there are specific comments about the protection of women. As I say, all our soldiers are routinely trained on and routinely updated on the law of armed conflict, their responsibilities and their roles in conflict.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: Thank you. May we now have Major Lancaster's observations?

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: I quite agree with the statement that senior and junior NCOs are absolutely critical in this process. Perhaps I can draw a parallel with my recent experience of trying to teach international humanitarian law to African soldiers. The main challenge was getting their NCOs and junior officers to accept the operational necessity of respecting international law. Once they could be brought to see that they could undo their own battlefield victories by poor behaviour afterwards, they began to get it. If you can get that idea through and then confirm it with clever and realistic training that puts them in the picture and in the frame right down to the corporal level, which perhaps exercises the chain-of-command responsibility for incidents going all the way up, you can very quickly get across the idea that there is a danger to be avoided and a way and a process for doing that. If you are looking for a concrete idea of what the junior or senior NCO's role is in all this, you can exercise that in and demonstrate it by just working through incidents.

Baroness Hussein-Ece: My question was going to be about how training on gender and sexual violence in conflict is being delivered, but you have both already started to answer that. I am particularly interested in considerations of mainstreaming, which again you have talked about. When we consider mainstreaming, we talk about the fact that the most junior officer or member of staff will understand exactly what is meant by that rather than the more senior officers or those who are facing it on the front line. Are you satisfied that it is in place? How far down the track are you in terms of mainstreaming?

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: Interestingly, there is a meeting ongoing just at the other end of Whitehall with a number of my officers with the Stabilisation Unit and our Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre. It is looking at exactly how we do this: that is, what needs to be delivered to soldiers of whatever rank deploying. I believe that we will be making a commitment that, by November next year, every single UK soldier deploying overseas on operations will have had an element of gender awareness and sexual violence in conflict training as part of their pre-deployment training. So admittedly it is not immediate, but within a relatively short period every single UK soldier deploying overseas on operations will have received some training at what we hope is the appropriate level. It is designed to be at the appropriate level for the individual as part of their routine pre-deployment training.

Q31 Baroness Young of Hornsey: I shall speak first to Lieutenant Colonel Johnson. You have now talked quite a lot about training and you have mentioned how mainstreaming should be at the core and the heart of this. There is something slightly different about something being mainstream from having it absolutely embedded within the whole ethos and doctrine of how military operations are run. I wonder if you wish to make a comment about that.

Major Lancaster, I am interested in a number of your earlier comments, but do you think that if there was a different gender balance in the military, that would make any difference to the ways in which forces would think about the whole issue of gender violence? In fact, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson might like to respond to that as well.

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Boy, I really have no idea. You are asking me to speculate on something that has been slowly evolving over, in my experience, at least 30 years now. But if I think of my mother's experience as a WREN in the Second World War, perhaps it goes back further than that. I am not sure that changing the gender balance would be possible in the combat arms. If I can be snide for a moment, I think that women have more sense than to get involved in that sort of thing. How you would achieve it is part of the challenge, and what that would look like on the ground I am not entirely sure. I think it would be liable to bring in more problems than it would solve.

Baroness Young of Hornsey: One of the reasons I have asked you about this is because earlier today we had a witness with lots of military experience who suggested that there would be a different feel to things. Yes, it is speculation, but he based his suggestion on his experience and his commitment to trying to change some of those areas in the military.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: Without going too much out of my area, the Chief of the General Staff has spoken several times on the record about the importance of maximising the talent that we have within the Army, and perhaps we have not done that in the past with the number of women we have had and how those individuals have been managed. So there is certainly a real desire on the part of the current CGS to make sure that we do get the best out of the broad talent that we have. It is about ensuring that, where it is appropriate, those individuals are used in these sorts of roles. I think it is about having a culture—again, the CGS is very much on the record in the Army Leadership Code, which talks quite explicitly about having the right culture within the Armed Forces. It is one that is not discriminatory and does not tolerate bullying or inappropriate behaviour at any level. That can only be good for the overall balance and atmosphere within the Army. Whether that would have a direct positive effect on our interactions overseas is, again, a matter for speculation and probably not something that I could really answer.

Q32 The Chairman: We had an excellent session this morning with General David Morrison, the former head of the Australian military, who made an interesting comment that it is important to ensure that the soldier himself and herself understands the benefits in operations of receiving training on gender and on sexual violence in conflict. What benefits would the Canadian or the British soldier see from this effort in terms of operations in theatre, or would they see it as something that was purely outside that because the abuse would be elsewhere?

Major (ret.) Philip Lancaster: Perhaps I may take this one first. From the Canadian point of view, and I think from the point of view of most of the western armies that I have worked alongside over the past few years, that it has become increasingly obvious to us all that any gross violation of human rights undoes the operational effectiveness of those who commit it. Simply because of the nature of war today, we are often involved in stabilisation operations or perhaps counterinsurgency operations where we are working among civilian communities. The most important thing that we must achieve in those conflicts is to keep or win over civilian support, so any abuse by our own side has a very obvious negative impact on that objective. It is very clear to Canadians. We just reject the idea that rape is in any way

excusable on or off a battlefield, and our military folk treat it that way. It seems to work and to help us.

Lieutenant Colonel Alcuin Johnson: I would absolutely echo those comments. Again, certainly in our recent experience on stabilisation operations, the point was made earlier that if you ignore the views and the responsibilities of 50% of the population of the country you are working in, you are making your job significantly harder. That is becoming a broad understanding among the military of every rank, from the soldier all the way through to the senior commander. If you do not consider those views, you are making your job that much harder, and ensuring a stable country at the end of the operation is going to be a significantly more challenging enterprise.

The Chairman: We thank you both very much. I am particularly pleased to see that the videolink has worked well, because it is such a complicated thing. Thank you for putting up with the occasional blips. The whole Committee is grateful to you both. We value your interventions and we look forward to any written submissions that you wish to add to what you have said today. I hope that we will continue to be in touch with you.