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Mr. Bernard Patry

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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Welcome.

Now, consideration of the Department of Foreign Affairs estimates....

[Translation]

The committee will resume its study of the main estimates for 2004-2005. Today, we will be reviewing the Department of Foreign Affairs budget. With the committee's consent, we will be focusing on votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, L25, L30, 35 and 40 under the heading Foreign Affairs.

[English]

Appearing today we have the Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Foreign Affairs. As witnesses we also have Mr. Peter Harder, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ms. Kathryn McCallion, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Passport, and Consular Affairs; and Mr. James Wright, Assistant Deputy Minister.

[Translation]

Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to appear before the standing committee today, and to present to you the Performance Report for 2003-2004 and the Report on Plans and Priorities of Foreign Affairs Canada for the 2004-2005 estimates. These documents show the impressive and wide-ranging accomplishments of the department and its employees over the past fiscal year.

I have been in the job of Foreign Minister for only four months now, but I have been impressed with the breadth, scope and ambition of Canada's international activities, and the calibre of our foreign service.

Once again last year, our network of missions abroad, and the expertise and professionalism of our foreign service, have served this country well through the services we provided to Canadians, at home and abroad.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to interrupt myself at this point, because I neglected to introduce the people accompanying me.

The Chair: Minister, I did this for you, at the very beginning.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: The estimates both looked back at our efforts of the past year, and forward to our plans and priorities for next year. Yet, as committee members will appreciate, the world does not stand still, and I want to reassure you the government has been very active on behalf of all Canadians in recent months. I would like to quickly mention just a few recent actions.

To succeed in our goals abroad, we have to work effectively with other key countries. I have in recent months visited my colleagues in several G-8 countries including France, Germany, Russia and the US, as well as Spain and Mexico, and found a strong desire in every capital to work closely with Canada, particularly in our efforts to strengthen our multilateral systems.

Canada is promoting UN agreement on States' responsibility to protect their citizens, and the obligation of the international community to step in when they manifestly fail to do so. We see this as both an important goal in its own right as well as a significant step in renewing international support for multilateral action under international law. In this respect, Canada has made important contributions to the UN high level panel on threats, challenges and change which is expected to produce its final report for Secretary General Kofi Annan in early December.

We have made major contributions to promote reconstruction and nation building in Afghanistan, and our troops continue to play a significant role there.

The recent US election has resulted in a duly elected leader who will promote a stable and democratic Iraq. We remain committed to supporting Iraqi reconstruction, although our efforts have been hampered by the very difficult security situation. Having just participated in the Charm el-Cheikh international conference on Iraq's future, I can report that, while challenges remain, there is a clear commitment from the regional and international communities to support Iraq's political process.

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's passing may have opened the door to new efforts to revive the Middle East peace process. We have seen encouraging responses from the international community, notably President Bush's intention to re-engage in supporting peace. Prime Minister Martin has declared unequivocally Canada's intention to help, including by offering technical and financial support for Palestinian presidential elections.

Canada remains committed to supporting modernization and development throughout the Middle-East region, and has joined with our other G-8 partners in the Broader Middle East/North Africa Partnership to achieve these objectives.

I recently returned from meetings of APEC foreign ministers in Chile, where among other things we considered how to combat terrorism while respecting humanitarian and human rights law, including how to facilitate the legitimate movement of goods and people across borders, protect civil aviation from terrorist threats, and address challenges such as bioterrorism.

I should also note our engagement in seeking to ameliorate the difficult situations in Haiti—including my trip there as well as the Prime Minister's recent visit, which were very productive—and Darfour.

[English]

I would be pleased to discuss any of these issues with you in greater detail, but in the remaining time I prefer to look ahead to what we will be doing over the coming year to promote Canada's interests in the world.

Canada will continue to be active at the global level. Our national interest is so closely tied to global developments that we must act assertively on the global stage to protect our security and prosperity here at home.

Multilaterally, we will continue to push for the Prime Minister's vision of a meeting of G-20 world leaders. The objective is to seek innovative ways to address emerging global challenges, such as the threat of new pandemics, terrorism, the challenge of promoting development in poor countries, and the need for reform of our multilateral institutions. We will continue to push for progress on the responsibility to protect and international safeguards to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For our international efforts to bear fruit we must make sure they are focused so we can make a real difference. That requires clarity about our interests and priorities as Canadians, and a coherent approach to dealing with the world. Here too we are taking innovative steps that will help us be more effective abroad.

The international policy review was launched in December 2003 as Canada's first-ever integrated, whole-of-government review of its international policies. The review was built on the 2003 foreign policy dialogue, and took into account extensive discussions and reports of this committee as well as others. Your reports on the Muslim world and North America in particular were extremely useful.

I have been working with my colleagues, the Ministers of Defence, Trade, and International Cooperation, to ensure that the IPR will provide the Government of Canada with a comprehensive framework to defend our security at home and abroad, to promote prosperity and economic development around the world, to extend good global citizenship internationally through democratic and social development, and to promote international action to protect the global common interest.

There were compelling reasons to undertake this review. It had been a decade since Canada last reviewed its foreign policy—a

period of profound international transformation. Geopolitically, the United States has emerged as the world's pre-eminent military power. At the same time, limits to its power are also evident—fiscal limits, limits to the reach of its diplomacy, and limits posed by the difficulty in dealing the asymmetrical threat of terrorism. Despite some differences, we share many values and objectives with the United States, and we are working productively together within North America and around the world.

With the end of the Cold War, failed and failing states also have emerged as important security concerns. There are as many as 50 dangerously weak or failed states where, in addition to grinding poverty, we often find human rights abuses, crime, conflict, terrorism, and disease.

The non-proliferation regime is under increasing pressure, as can be seen in the challenges we face in Iran and North Korea.

The past decade has also seen the emergence of urgent threats to our common global heritage. These include overfishing, global warming, and the potential for new global pandemics.

The global economy is also changing. The United States and the European Union have economies that are comparable in size, at around U.S. \$11 trillion each. China's economy has now reached U.S. \$6.4 trillion and is growing faster than any other sizeable economy. Around the world, continued scientific and technological innovation puts ever greater importance on investments in innovation, research and development, and the commercialization of ideas.

● (1545)

At the same time, the spread of globalization and its benefits is uneven, with some countries squarely being left behind. This is particularly true in Africa, which attracts only a minuscule share of world investment.

The IPR will set out an ambitious policy agenda to guide Canada's responses to these new international challenges. Success will require important changes in how we do business inside the department, across the federal government, with the provinces, and with Canadian citizens across the country and around the world. I look forward to hearing the views of parliamentarians and Canadians on the review's outcome and proposed directions. I want to move toward more regular dialogue with members of Parliament and Canadians on foreign policy in the future, and the international policy statement will reflect that desire quite concretely.

For me, the IPR process has reinforced the importance of Foreign Affairs Canada as being a key interpreter of international events and an integrator and coordinator to move Canada's foreign policy forward. It is already something of a cliché to say that globalization blurs the distinction between international and domestic policy, yet we cannot lose sight of just how profound this change really is. We must ensure that we have the right tools to protect the interests of Canadians in this more open environment.

Foreign Affairs Canada must be an organization geared for globalization. It needs strengthened policy capacity to anticipate and respond to an international environment in which change is a constant. It will require reinvestment in our people and in the core skills that remain central to effective diplomacy. The Department of Foreign Affairs will need greater institutional agility to plan for and respond to the kinds of crises we see today in Haiti, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Middle East.

We need to maximize our assets in the field. Our network of missions is often cited as our greatest institutional asset, yet we are the most headquarters-heavy foreign ministry in the G-8, with only about 25% of our officers serving abroad. There is a clear need to rebalance that ratio over the next few years. In the meantime, our advanced communications platform helps us to coordinate work more efficiently between our posts and headquarters, while changes to our secure communication system will enable us to communicate more directly with other secure communication systems within the Government of Canada.

In the past decade, and especially since 9/11, the changing international security environment has required a much more vigorous and systematic approach to the security of Canada's missions abroad. Our missions are part of Canada's critical infrastructure and we have spent millions of dollars over the past three years in bolstering the physical security of our missions, acquiring armoured vehicles and other security-related equipment, and improving our secure communication systems. More investments will be necessary to protect our missions and the dedicated employees who work within them.

For a medium-sized country like Canada, our international influence is closely related to our success in marshalling all available foreign policy instruments in pursuit of our international objectives. Foreign Affairs has an important role in shaping coherence across and between the Government of Canada's international and domestic agendas. With so many domestic government departments now playing an active role, the job of ensuring whole-of-government coherence in international affairs will be a growing focus for Foreign Affairs Canada, bringing to the interdepartmental table our appreciation for the wider international context and the linkages between issues.

We must also mainstream our public diplomacy efforts. As a department we have long engaged in public diplomacy, but rarely in a sustained and strategic way. If ideas are the currency of influence, then public diplomacy is the means by which we put those ideas into circulation.

● (1550)

[Translation]

Let me now turn to some of the highlights of the department's Report on Plans and Priorities for 2004/05. As you will see, our overall budget falls more than \$13 million, to \$1.728 billion. The decline reflects the transfer of funds to the new International Trade Canada, countered by increased spending in other areas, including almost \$54 million for the G8 Global Partnership against Weapons of Mass Destruction and almost \$50 million to enhance the representation in Kabul, Baghdad, Maputo, in Mozambique, and the United States.

Since we are here to talk about the estimates, let me throw some numbers at you. Looking at the department's six business lines, I would draw your attention to the following highlights.

Seven hundred and twenty-four million dollars will go towards promoting a peaceful, law-based international system reflecting Canadian values and our interest in international peace and security. This figure includes almost \$350 million in assessments to international organizations including the UN Peacekeeping missions and NATO, among many others.

Sixty-four million dollars will be devoted to ensuring effective delivery of consular assistance to Canadians travelling or living abroad. Our public diplomacy efforts, designed to promote an international environment that is favourable to Canada's political and economic interests and values, will receive \$112 million.

To support these activities, Corporate Services will receive \$278 million for the delivery of cost-effective support and shared services to Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada.

Five hundred and fifty million dollars will be spent on support for the international activities of partner departments. There are now 15 government departments, six agencies and three provinces with representation abroad. In fact, more than three-quarters of Canadian program staff abroad work for departments other than Foreign Affairs. We will also continue to furnish Canadians travelling abroad with internationally respected passports and travel documents.

Let me conclude by saying that Canadians are deeply engaged in, and vulnerable to, the world outside our borders. The Department of Foreign Affairs will continue to work hard to ensure that Canadian values, priorities and objectives are promoted in the international domain, to the benefit of all Canadians.

Thank you for your attention.

● (1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

[English]

I just want to tell my colleagues that it's a ten-minute question and answer period. I will accept if anyone wants to share his time with another colleague.

We'll start with Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies (MacLeod, CPC): That will probably be dependent on how long-winded the minister is with his answers.

This is most appropriate, Mr. Minister. Thank you for coming and providing us with your enthusiastic outlook on where the world will be, and how Canada can play that role. In your past life you were part of what was the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. That's why I think you'll be able to shed some interesting light on this.

I have some concern that we've put the cart before the horse. We split these two departments up. Now we're doing the review. Should we not have done the review first, and then decided whether this was a good thing or not?

I've been in a couple of embassies and consulates in the last few months and I've sensed great frustration in these good people, strong individuals, who don't know who they're working for, don't know where their future is, and don't know how they can contribute—not only in consulates, missions, and embassies, but also in the Pearson Building. I have talked to some people who are very concerned about what their future will be.

These are people who have contributed a lot to both of these departments, and in one big picture. I look at some of these individuals in the embassies, who obviously were doing dual duty before. Do we now have to put these people into one little pigeon hole and then send someone else to work for the other department?

That's question one.

On costs and benefits, I hope we've done that. Is that going to come out in the IPR? Once again, we should have done that before we decided to split the department.

My second question has to do with CIDA, the Canada Corps. We've had this announced in two speeches from the throne. I still don't see it in the budget. Is that under your department overall? Does it specifically come from CIDA? Where is the funding for it?

The fundamental question is, what is it going to do that's any different from what CIDA's doing right now?

• (1600)

The Chair: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Can I ask you, Mr. Menzies, in your first question on individuals who are concerned about the split in the department, are you being sensitive to whether they come more from trade or from foreign policy? Are those who have expressed more concern from both sides equally?

Mr. Ted Menzies: Do we have whistle-blower legislation in place yet?

The Chair: Mr. Minister, you should answer the question, not ask questions.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I will answer the question gladly, but I was just preoccupied, because having been trade minister for almost five years, I find where the questions come from is interesting. Mr. Menzies is referring to conversations he has had in posts, missions, and at the Pearson Building. I was wondering where the insecurities or preoccupation with the future came from, because the answer will depend somehow on the angle that is raised.

I'm not trying to cop out here. I'm trying really to understand.

Mr. Ted Menzies: I couldn't give you a definitive answer whether there were more from the Department of Foreign Affairs or from international trade, but the overall sense was that they're concerned about how they can contribute.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Thank you very much.

I've noticed the same interest in and same commitment to our country and our government. You're right that the dedication of our foreign service officers, whether on the trade front or the political front, is very important. Now, the split in the department is being conducted in a very pragmatic and respectful way in the sense that we certainly want to continue to work closely together, of course, long into the future. I think the law we will table shortly to create the Department of Foreign Affairs, to give it a mandate independent of International Trade, as we've been doing since 1981-82, will reflect the will to continue to work closely with International Trade.

The idea is that International Trade is receiving new responsibilities on the investment front, and is one of the international players, among a number of other ministries, that has responsibility internationally. Foreign Affairs will be able to concentrate, in my view, on the coordination role for the whole foreign policy. Now, there are 15 ministries, 15 departments, that are present in our mission. I think the intention here is to put greater value, and create a greater profile, into having International Trade as a stand-alone department, receiving responsibilities on investment and international investments, and all that. However, clearly we will want to make sure that officers working in the departments find their way into it.

We will not be very ideological about the way we're doing it. The deputy minister is managing this with the Deputy Minister of International Trade. In my view, we will get into a situation where we will be able to do that in a respectful manner for individuals, in a respectful manner for the different mandates. But I don't think it will create any split or any real space between us. On the contrary; we will be able to continue to work in a very integrated way, but with the other partners as well.

As for policy review, the trade minister is one of the four IPR ministers. I'm the minister responsible, the lead minister on it, but my colleagues, the defence minister, the trade minister, and the development minister, are all involved in that exercise.

My view is that it is a matter of profile; trade is so important in Canada, the Prime Minister wanted to give it a stand-alone department. For instance, when we appoint ambassadors, when we appoint people to different posts around the world, it is absolutely evident that while Foreign Affairs has the responsibility for doing these things, there will continue to be trade people in the portfolios where it is most relevant. This kind of coordination will continue to take place.

As to Canada Corps, it will be in the budget for CIDA. It is the department that has the lead. It has \$5 million this fiscal year and \$10 million next fiscal year. The objective is to mobilize Canadians and youth to build capacities abroad in the area of governance. We are doing a great deal, but this is to mobilize beyond those who are already mobilized, actually. It is in the process of completing stakeholder consultations by department. We'll be very involved, but CIDA is the lead department. Of course, when you have the opportunity to meet with the Minister of International Cooperation, she will be able to give you more on it.

• (1605)

The Chair: You have one minute and 30 seconds, Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: A quick comment. We had a free trade agreement signed this morning with ASEAN. What relevance is that going to have for some of our free trade agreements?

As well, I realize this concerns trade, but we heard at APEC that there's a move afoot to try to put forward a free trade area of Asia-Pacific. Is that going to impact us?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: You are giving me the temptation to go back to my previous department, International Trade, and I don't think my colleague Mr. Peterson would very much appreciate my going too deep into his responsibilities.

What I can tell you is that certainly we will continue to support the trade liberalization agenda. The trade facilitation that went on at APEC was widely supported by Canada. As you know, it was the World Bank study that was sponsored by Canada that led to the whole trade facilitation agenda. We can reap huge benefits by eliminating a lot of...and when we go further than trade facilitation, into trade agreements, I know that my colleague will have some choices to make in terms of the geography, or where he chooses to invest more. Clearly, though, our government will continue to be oriented in that direction.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We will now move on to Ms. Lalonde.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you.

I would like to welcome you, Minister, in your new role.

You did not answer the question as to why there was no consultation on the split between International Trade and Foreign Affairs. You seem to be saying that it is not very important and that it is purely a question of visibility. However, an analysis of the situation and a reading of the material dealing with this subject, the events of 1982-83, reveals that this causes significant movement of staff. The same could happen now, but in the opposite direction. Yet people had learned to work together.

The fact that various ministers set different priorities can make the Department of Foreign Affairs' work extremely complicated. The department will fall under two ministers. Who will set the priorities? In fact, isn't that the best way of ensuring that no one has control over the departments?

These two factors alone seem to indicate that this decision was made hastily. I would first like to know why this was not part of a

more general study of the direction of our foreign policy. I hope that I will be able to come back with other points.

I will conclude by asking you when you expect to make these highly anticipated results known and by saying that I hope that you will take the necessary time to consult the public.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: To answer your first question, I will say that there are always consultations. The government has always maintained its communications with large exporter associations and other stakeholders from the economic sectors. The 1982 decision was reviewed by several other governments. This is not the first time that the government has questioned this way of proceeding. And so I do not expect that it will be cause for much surprise. Other prime ministers have revisited this issue and have ended up keeping the 1982 status quo, that is one department.

This time, after having discussed the issue with various people, the Prime Minister made a different decision. I can, however, tell you that in the current context, this approach is meant to preserve proximity and consistency between both entities. Nonetheless, the Department of International Trade has always had its own mandate. When the department also included International Trade, it had its own mandate from cabinet, for example when it was participating in the World Trade Organization negotiation in Doha.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Do you think that this division will also bring about a split in the committee? Do you think that there should be two committees?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Madam, you are doing me a great honour in consulting me on parliamentary affairs.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: For our part, we hope to be consulted on the overall situation, but that is not often the case. However, because you seem to be in agreement...

• (1610)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: No.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: This joint work is very important to us. It means that in terms of important issues, such as human rights, we can impose rules when there are EDC consultations.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: It goes without saying that the committee is free to see to it that things run smoothly. I would certainly encourage it to keep working, in a complementary way, with both departments.

The government shares the same desire. Although the department has independent status—and the future Foreign Affairs Act will have something to say on this—it is up to the Department of Foreign Affairs to coordinate all 15 departments. The officers of international missions are employed by 15 different departments. Far more of them report to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration than to any other department. That's why some people have sometimes felt that this department should be part of Foreign Affairs, but that was not the case.

The structure may reflect a certain reality, but I can assure you that we will see to it the coordination and consistency between both parties will continue to promote Canadian interests and values.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'd like to come back to Haiti. You mentioned a number of related matters at the beginning of your presentation.

I attended the Ouagadougou Summit. I know that this has already been discussed, but it is referred to as if everything was settled. But that is far from true. Again today, dispatches tell us that there were demonstrations by supporters of President Aristide. More importantly, they indicate that there is a huge problem with the delivery of supplies: they're still sitting on ships or in warehouses and haven't reached Gonaïves. I know that even in Montreal, a large number of containers full of food and dry goods have been collected and could be totally spoiled because of the cold.

There's still work to be done, and it hasn't been done. It takes resources. I haven't even mentioned security yet; but that's what complicates delivery, and what makes it hard for international workers to get through.

• (1615)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: As you know, I went to Gonaïves myself. Clearly, the Haitian government has taken major steps to make delivery. Think of the committee of General Abraham, the Minister of the Interior.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes, but it hasn't happened.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: What I'm saying is that major delivery efforts have been made. MINUSTAH, under Brazil's direction, has done an outstanding job of ensuring convoy safety. There are problems and the situation is not an easy one, but both the MINUSTAH UN military mission under Brazilian direction and the government itself have made significant efforts. It's fair to say that in Gonaïves, delivery poses huge challenges. It is harder to get into certain areas to deliver goods.

As for the delivery of cold-sensitive perishable goods—even if they are dry goods—I will monitor the situation closely. We have already sent a number of planes. The government's contribution in response to those events was very significant and I think that it was highly appreciated. If it becomes apparent that that contribution should be even greater, we will be open to that possibility.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: You didn't give me an answer on the date.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I don't have a mandate from cabinet yet to give you the date. But I'm still working on it with my four colleagues responsible for this matter. I hope to be in a position to give you that information in the upcoming weeks.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Will it be before Christmas?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I certainly hope so.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lalonde. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Phinney.

[English]

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you.

I just have a short question. It comes from my work on the public accounts committee.

In 2003 the government moved from activity-based management to results-based management. They did this right across the whole government in all the departments. I'm just wondering what the results were, how this affected the department, and if the splitting of the department has seen any results from this—if it's been affected by this at all. In general, has it helped your department to be doing results-based management?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Thank you very much for your question.

On this one, if you don't mind, I would like to turn to our expert on the matter, Madame Kathryn McCallion. She takes the tough questions.

Ms. Kathryn McCallion (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Passport, and Consular Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs): Thank you, Minister.

I don't know that I'm an expert, but it has been government-wide. The government has articulated various outlines under what's called "modern controllership". You'll see, I think, in the RPP and the DPR for this year and subsequent years an effort to explain, on a much more goal-oriented, results-based basis, how departments work and what they do, and then we do our accounting so that the people, the money, and the outcomes are all on the same line.

The department put together a strategic planning outline two years ago. We still use it to establish our priorities, to ask all managers in the department to articulate their programs and the results expected, before they get started at the beginning of the year, before we align the money to them. It makes it easier to report along those lines at the end, against the results that we thought we'd get, how successful we'd been.

It is a work in progress. It takes more than two years to change a government culture, but we're halfway there and we're comfortable with getting there in the next year or so.

Thank you.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Can you tell, so far, how successful it has been? Is it just too early to tell?

Ms. Kathryn McCallion: It's probably too early to tell, but it has been partially successful. Managers now understand that what we're trying to do is align resources, both people and money, to outcomes that we have pre-decided, as opposed to just continually being activity-based. So yes, I'd say we're partially successful and moving along that path.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I think Mr. Wright would like to answer.

The Chair: Mr. Wright.

Mr. James R. Wright (Assistant Deputy Minister, Global and Security Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs): Just to complement what Kathryn has said, as a practical example of how we use results-based management in running some of the different funds that are managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs—I'm thinking of the human security fund or the global partnership program—results-based management has been extremely important in helping us define in advance the projects the department wishes to support.

We look at each project on its individual merits, we have a peer review process in place, and we try to anticipate what we think the actual results of the funding for a particular initiative might be. Whether it is support for the International Criminal Court, support for the Kimberley process on conflict diamonds, or the efforts under way to go ahead and deal with decommissioned Russian nuclear submarines in the far north, results-based management has been hugely important in terms of guiding us to ensure that we not only seek value for money, but we actually achieve value for money for the taxpayer's dollar.

• (1620)

Ms. Beth Phinney: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McTeague.

[Translation]

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, thank you for appearing today. We are happy to have you here. Several matters have clearly kept you very busy for the past four months.

I was expecting to hear your opinion on the current situation in the Ukraine. I know that we took steps in the House of Commons last week and that all members voted unanimously. I would like to hear your opinion on the current situation. The situation is clearly evolving minute by minute, so I am not asking you what is happening at this time. It is already 11 p.m. over there, I think. I would like to hear your opinion and the opinion of your department on the current situation. That will help us somewhat.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Thank you very much. This is indeed a situation that is of enormous concern to Canadians. Last week, I greatly appreciated Parliament's very clear statement that, for Canada, the results of the election had to be rejected and therefore, that we absolutely need it to work towards a truly democratic election.

I asked our diplomats at the Canadian embassy in Kiev to attend the meetings on this topic at the Supreme Court. For now, we must clearly encourage development in a stable and violence-free environment. I must congratulate the Ukrainians for having succeeded in maintaining a climate of security and physical stability despite the enormous tension.

I have had several conversations. I spoke with Javier Solana, the representative of the head of the European Union, who went to the Ukraine with the president of Poland. I am also in contact with Joschka Fischer, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, who

knows just how important the situation is for us, given that we have a million Canadian citizens who are of Ukrainian origin.

Today, I was very happy to hear the Prime Minister forcefully and clearly state Canada's point of view, that we must respect a democratic process in the Ukraine and that all neighbouring countries should encourage the Ukraine to hold an election using a fully transparent democratic process.

In my opinion, we must realize that, for Canada, relations with the Ukraine will depend on the actions of the Ukrainian government. In other words, the government cannot simply do whatever it wants without that affecting its relationship with Canada in one way or another. It will go as far as that. Tomorrow, the Prime Minister will undoubtedly have an opportunity to raise the matter with President Bush, and I too will have an opportunity to discuss it with Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The situation is tense, but we are encouraged by the news that it is slowly moving in the direction we wanted. Parliament addressed the rejection of this election, and the Supreme Court is doing its job as we speak. From what I am hearing about the Supreme Court, the judicial process is serious and well done. So we must hope that things will be done in a way that respects democracy.

• (1625)

[English]

Hon. Dan McTeague: Minister, thank you for that. I think your comments are very timely. I had heard some members talk about some of the members of our foreign service in the departments they've seen abroad.

It goes without saying that our consular officials around the world are certainly first among equals. They served 185,000 cases last year for Canadians, and I think it's fair to say that Canadians earn, and certainly the department is getting, good service for its money.

In my capacity, I know it goes without saying that the work is done. I've received very few complaints. We hope the momentum continues in that area as it takes part in your international policy review.

However, I want to focus on something that I'm sure will be an issue for the next few months and over the Christmas period. We'll no doubt be talking about what's happening in Iraq and in Palestine. There are two opportunities there for Canada. Might you be able to give an idea of where you see Canada with respect to those two very critical files, at a very important time in world history, particularly with respect to the Palestinian election and the future stabilization of Iraq?

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Minister, Mr. McTeague's time is up. Please simply think about the question and you will have an opportunity to answer it during the second round.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: May I at least say that—

The Chair: You'll have an opportunity to answer him later. I must now give the floor to Ms. McDonough.

[English]

We'll come back to Mr. McTeague's answer later.

Ms. McDonough, please.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to agree with the minister's statement about the incredible professionalism of our embassy personnel. I think it is something that remains a real source of pride for Canada and a source of respect around the world.

I want to follow that with a specific question about Canada Corps. I believe I understood the minister to say there was \$5 million budgeted in year one and \$10 million in year two. Without taking up a lot of time, I'll just mention this question, then come to my others, and then turn it back to the minister.

I wonder if the minister could give some indication whether it is the intention to deliver Canada Corps largely through the international partners—the NGOs that are now out there, that have the infrastructure and know-how, that have already the respect built up—rather than see a lot of those dollars sucked up in creating a bureaucracy that may not add any new value.

Second, I'm looking to see where I can find the allocation of funding for the Arar public inquiry. I'm wondering if you could indicate where that is located, how many dollars are allocated, what the allocation of funds is for in terms of number of personnel. I have to say that the longer the Arar inquiry remains behind closed doors, the more my concern grows—and I think that of many Canadians—that more effort is going to go into concealing the truth than fully divulging the truth. I'd like to hear the minister's comments on that.

Third, there's a lot of talk about the importance of multilateralism. We heard before this committee, from previous witnesses, the incredible importance of strengthening our architecture for peace and disarmament. I specifically wanted to ask about the extent of support for the non-proliferation treaty 2005 review process, and second, how any possibility of Canada plunging into a partnership or participation in missile defence would serve that purpose, when so many people have pleaded with Canada to recognize that its true multilateralism we need to be aligning ourselves with, and that means not being associated with what clearly is on track towards the weaponization of space. There is no way to ignore all of the evidence to that effect.

I'm wondering as well about the pet project, it seems to be, of the Prime Minister concerning an L-20 being an important route for a new multilateralism, when it strikes many of us that this could, perhaps unwittingly and perhaps inadvertently, undermine our real participation in UN multilateralism.

Finally, if I have time for one more brief question—

• (1630)

The Chair: You can make all the comments you want, but it's up to the minister to be answering the question.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Well, I'm going to stop there, then, and on the second round I may have a chance.

The Chair: Good. Thank you.

Mr. Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Thank you very much.

On the Canada Corps, you understood right the numbers I had given. The clear intention of the government is to bring new focus and energy to a range of government and civil society activities. Our intent is not to duplicate what already exists. It will be to work with the partners to bring some mobilization and energy into the process. You will want to discuss this further with Ms. Carroll, who is the lead minister on this, but that is clearly the intention.

I will leave the question on the Arar budget to my deputy minister, if you don't mind. If you don't mind, I will begin with multilateralism.

We are committed, clearly, to an architecture of multilateralism. We will be very much dedicated to the non-proliferation treaty's renewal. We are there; we're putting energy and resources into supporting and promoting it in a very solid way. It is our intention to support it very strongly. We have adopted a strong line on Iran; we are adopting a strong line on North Korea. We believe it is important to maintain that line.

On the L-20, the Prime Minister is very clear he wants this to be supportive of the multilateral system, and there is a reference from the high-level panel to the L-20, the leaders of the 20. The high-level panel itself is paying a lot of attention to the fact that such leaders of the G-20, if you want, or a "G-20 of leaders", could eventually help them. This is something that at the United Nations high level panel they are considering as a tool supporting multilateralism. Our intention is really to make multilateralism more effective on a certain number of topics and subjects—pandemics, for instance, or terrorism—where we believe it could support efforts of multilateralism.

Now, on the budgetary line, Madam McDonough fails to see where it is in our....

The Chair: Mr. Harder.

Mr. Peter Harder (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs): Thank you very much.

The Arar inquiry would be an in-year expense. It's being funded out of the reserve. We anticipate it could cost up to \$4 million for our department only. If my memory is correct, we've already spent just over half of that. It is a significant adjustment we've had to go through to be able to contribute, for our department's purposes, to the Arar inquiry.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I wonder if it would be a reasonable request to ask you to table with the committee the breakdown of what that actually consists of. Is it mainly lawyers? Is it mainly communications people? Could we have the numbers and so on?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: There are lots of lawyers.

Mr. Peter Harder: Yes. Sure, we could do that, if the chair would agree.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Yes, we could tell where they used it.

The Chair: Ms. McDonough, you still have time.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Do you mean time left over?

There was no response to my question about NMD, which I really raised in the context of multilateralism, and particularly because those who are working very hard on the disarmament infrastructure out there are extremely concerned about what this will do to our multilateralism commitments.

Finally, I have a very specific question about DART. I wonder if you could give some explanation to the committee about the decision not to send a disaster assistance relief team into Haiti in the terrific crisis they're experiencing, when they've so proven their competence and their effectiveness. I think it was very disappointing that it wasn't done. It seems it would be consistent with the kinds of priorities you've outlined.

The Chair: Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Speaking to the BMD question, I regret I didn't cover it. We've been part of NORAD for 50 years. That has never stopped us from being multilateral. Clearly, any defence system you would look for in North America may have a bilateral partnership that will not necessarily cover all countries. I think there are certain things that have to be addressed by the North American partners and not necessarily be part of the whole multilateral system, but it will respect the rules of multilateralism. It has to respect, certainly, the fact that we don't want it to lead to an arms race.

• (1635)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: But that is what is happening as a result of it. It's declared to be in response to what's ramping up in the U.S.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: The United States has adopted it for their own sake at this time. So the question is not whether there will be or will not be a ballistic missile shield. There will be one. The United States has adopted it. The question is whether we will participate in it and what sort of participation we want. This is a question Parliament will have its input into, and we will look into it. I think it is a very important decision that we'll have to make.

Concerning the DART, first of all we have to be careful when we look into Haiti, where you already have United Nations soldiers, blue berets who are there led by Brazil, where there are Chileans, Argentinians, Jordanians. We have to be careful. No one has asked us to use the DART. No one has asked us to use this as a particular tool of diplomacy. You have to be careful, in a country where you already have the United Nations mandates that have been given to particular soldiers, not to confuse lines by using certain resources that are, I admit, extremely competent.

There is also a matter of cost. Every time you use the DART... You have to realize that for certain of the things we've been doing—sending airplanes that have delivered a lot of goods to the actual citizens—sometimes it is not necessarily the most cost-effective way of doing it.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

[English]

It's Liberal time. Can you give an answer to Mr. McTeague's question concerning Iraq and the Middle East, please?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I very much appreciate this opportunity, because my first words will be to thank Dan McTeague for the excellent work he's been doing on consular affairs for some years now. I want to tell him how much I as the minister and the department appreciate Monsieur McTeague's contribution to consular affairs.

It is a very difficult reality. We have a lot of citizens with dual citizenship. That creates challenges for us, because international law is not always at the appropriate level in terms of dual citizenship.

I appreciate your own contribution. I appreciate the nice words you said about our consular affairs services. They certainly deserve it, because I believe our consular officers around the world are very solid officers.

[Translation]

The Chair: I am sure that he appreciates your answer, but let's focus on Iraq and the Middle East, please.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: He does such a good job that I had to say so.

With respect to Iraq and Palestine, Prime Minister Martin has already told the Palestinian authorities very clearly that Canada would provide its services to organize the elections and to help out in the post-Arafat transition process. I will be confirming this support during a telephone conversation with Nabeel Shaath, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The call has been postponed several times. We were supposed to speak this morning, but it has been postponed once again.

I met with the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs last week in Egypt, in Charm el-Cheikh.

I can assure you that Canada is prepared to intervene in some way or another in Palestine and Iraq. I do not want to tell you today exactly how we are going to do that, but Canada will definitely want to make a contribution in one way or another.

Obviously, in the case of Iraq, we must ensure the safety of Canadian workers.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

• (1640)

[English]

Now, there are five minutes for questions and answers. I'll go to Mrs. Stronach, and then Mr. Paquette and Mr. Moore.

Mrs. Stronach.

Ms. Belinda Stronach (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Minister and colleagues, for coming before the committee today. I'd also like to add my congratulations to the Canadian diplomatic service for the good work they've been doing, given the limited resources available.

My principal concern has been with the manner in which your government has managed this critical relationship with the United States. I don't have to make the statistical case for you why this relationship is so important, but 42% of this country's wealth comes from trade, and 80% of that is with the United States.

To my recollection, Minister, you have only been to the United States on a bilateral visit once since becoming the minister, to meet with Colin Powell right after the election. Some of your cabinet colleagues, with key responsibilities for parts of the relationship with the United States, seem never to have been on working visits since the border closed to Canadian livestock, dairy, and other ruminants.

There is no sign of any systematic political engagement by us within the United States outside of a handful of trips to Washington, and yet Canadian cattlemen, dairy farmers, pork producers, softwood lumber producers, truckers and their families have been suffering enormously for the past years—and certainly in this time since you were named minister.

Why, Minister, has your government decided to treat the relationship with the United States in a negligent way, flying in the face of the interests of all those Canadians who make a living based on trade with the U.S.? In my opinion, one short, pro forma visit is not good enough. Why are you not in the United States on a regular basis, and why does this not seem to be a priority for you to engage in the United States and fight for this country's national interests and build a more sophisticated relationship with the United States and Americans?

The Chair: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Of course I absolutely do not agree with your evaluation. I've been the foreign affairs minister for four months, and my very first visit was to Washington. It was not a pro forma visit; it was almost a six-hour visit to Colin Powell at the State Department.

One of the reasons we don't have to go to the United States all of the time is that I have met Colin Powell in Santiago; I have met with him in Sharm el Sheikh; I meet with Colin Powell in numerous summits where foreign affairs ministers meet; I've met him in New York. I meet Colin Powell very regularly to promote Canada's interests.

The Chair: Will you meet him tomorrow?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: And we will be meeting with him tomorrow. Yes, of course, I'm meeting him tomorrow, all day tomorrow.

In every one of those cities, we've had meals together. I can tell you that the dialogue and the channels are very open. There's a wonderful invention, as well, called the telephone. We have been on the phone, Colin Powell and I. Once, Colin Powell called me on a Friday afternoon to tell me how impressed he'd been with the political director of our department, Mr. Wright, who had been doing a great job that day in Washington, where he was representing me because I had some duties and responsibilities here.

We have opened six new consulates in the United States in the last year, precisely to promote trade and the rest of our relationships. It's a long time since the government last opened six consulates in the United States. We have the secretariat in Washington, where not only the Government of Canada, but also the provinces and parliamentarians are invited to collaborate more and involve themselves in the relationship with the United States, which goes go well beyond the administration.

Today again, in my scrum, I said how important it is for every minister to establish a working relationship with the ministers. I, for one, have worked very well with Bob Zoellick, the United States trade representative; everyone knows we've become very good personal friends. We're even BlackBerrying one another regularly. I also work very closely with Tommy Thompson, the minister of health, and with Don Evans, as well.

Saying that we've been negligent about BSE or softwood, this is just not the case. The government has adopted a very, very strong strategy on softwood lumber; I've led that strategy. For many years we've had the Americans deciding and determining all kinds of things on Canadian softwood. We've decided this time that we would go to the courts. We maintain the channel of negotiation open, but even the industry, all of the industry, from British Columbia to Quebec, have been asking us not to negotiate a deal that would go against their interests. We have received no pressure whatsoever from industry to change our strategy; industry is solidly behind us. We have been winning panel after panel, whether at NAFTA or the WTO. I believe it is very important that we receive these decisions.

Now, you ask, what is it doing? Well, this is the judicial system. They have rights of appeal, and the Americans have decided to appeal these decisions. And I hope that eventually they will stop having appeals, and we will be able to proceed.

● (1645)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We will now go to Mr. Paquette.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): I would like to start by welcoming the minister and telling him that his last comment shows the very close ties that exist between foreign affairs and international trade.

I will ask all my questions together, and then give you an opportunity to answer them.

In reading the report on plans and priorities, I was surprised to see that there was no reference to the Millennium objectives which, I believe, Canada supported. That is quite surprising. I would like you to tell me a little bit about what Canada plans to do with respect to these objectives.

My second question is quite specific. Apparently, Iran was not very receptive to the idea that our new ambassador in Tehran could carry out an investigation regarding the murder of Ms. Zahra Kazemi. I would like to know how you intend to react to that.

If we have some time left at the end, I would like you to tell me why, under services to partner departments, we have almost doubled the amount—from \$279 million to \$550 million.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: What are you referring to?

Mr. Pierre Paquette: On page 27 of the report, there is a line item entitled "Services to Partner Departments" for which there has been a rather significant increase. What does this cover?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Thank you very much.

We talk about the Millennium objectives under the reform of the United Nations, but they have to do mainly with development. In the documents that reflect...

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We do not have enough money.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: That is where the money is, in development.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: No. There is not enough to achieve the objectives.

The Chair: Please, Ms. Lalonde.

You have the floor, Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: You are a good chairman.

I can assure you that as a government, we are committed to development. Of course, this will not necessarily be reflected in all departments every time.

I really do not care to react to comments made on the weekend by a spokesperson from the Iranian Department of Foreign Affairs. We think it is important to have an ambassador on site to continue to promote Canadian interests. There was a murder in Iran. We are demanding that light be shed on this matter. One of the responsibilities of the Canadian embassy will be to try to get information and clarification about this matter. However, I do not care to comment on what a departmental spokesperson said.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: I understand. But do you have a game plan on this particular matter?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We will wait until our ambassador, who has just come back, examines the issue. As you know, we have talked on a regular basis to Ms. Ebadi, who visited Montreal. She would like to appeal the decision. We will be supporting her action. We will continue to exert pressure.

One of these pressures was our resolution at the UN last week. As you know, last week, at the UN, Canada presented a new resolution on human rights abuses in Iran. We were very pleased to have, this time around, 34 or 35 countries that co-sponsored the resolution. This is an increase from last year, with results similar to those obtained last year. This is part of the pressures that we are exerting with respect to this case.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Could you say something about the amounts?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds, Mr. Harder.

Mr. Peter Harder: It is an increase in the global partnership program.

[English]

Mr. James R. Wright: The global partnership program has four priorities: protection of fissile materials; destruction of chemical weapons, the 42,000 tonnes of chemical weapons in Russia; dismantlement of Russian nuclear submarines, of which there are over 100; and retraining of former weapons scientists to peaceful research. One hundred million dollars a year had been set aside for 10 years, for a total commitment of \$1 billion Canadian to a \$20 billion fund committed to by G-8 countries. This year we have committed close to \$25 million for the dismantling of three nuclear-powered submarines, and \$18 million to the International Science and Technology Center in Moscow to retrain scientists to peaceful research. We have also set aside \$4 million to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, and \$65 million for the multilateral plutonium disposition program, which we are working on very hard with G-8 partners.

Next year we expect to see come on stream a chemical weapon destruction program. We are working with our British partners on this and with Russia; that will not happen this year. It's a very active

program. We probably will be spending something in the order of \$50 million to \$60 million this fiscal year. We will be seeking a rollover of the funds not spent, so that these funds will be rededicated to the program next year. We hope to be ramping up next fiscal year to \$100 million a year.

● (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wright.

If you have anything to complement your answer, Mr. Harder, could you provide it to the clerk of the committee, please?

Mr. Peter Harder: I can actually give you the answer.

The Chair: Yes, but in 30 seconds maximum.

Mr. Peter Harder: The increase of \$271 million reflects the split with the departments, so that part of what we were providing, within the structure, to International Trade is now under the line of support to a partner department, as opposed to ourselves. It moves from one line in the department to support for a partner department.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Moore.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Thank you.

I have very limited time, so I want to try to keep my questions concise and I hope that the answers will be just as concise.

Ukraine's outgoing president says there might have to be new elections in Ukraine in order to have legitimacy there. There seems to be growing momentum in this regard. The government so far has made all the right noises; there's been unanimous consent in the House for the government's language so far.

But with the new revelations, what specifically is the Canadian government prepared to do with regard to new elections in Ukraine? Are we prepared to send people there to actually administer the election? What precisely is Canada offering to do?

The Chair: Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We will wait to see if there will be an election or not. If the scenario developing there, chosen by the authorities, is for another election, it will be a decision we will make at that time. As you know, at the last election we had 40 Canadian observers, which is about ten times more than the average number of observers we send to elections abroad. Our commitment in the past would be a demonstration of the sort of commitment we would have in the future, but I will not commit today my colleague, the Minister of International Development, to the number of observers we will send. You can count on Canada to assume its responsibility as a country that has a great interest in a clean and democratic process in Ukraine.

Mr. James Moore: That's fair.

On a parallel point, in your statement you're quite vague—"There is a clear commitment from the regional and international communities to support Iraq's political process." Again, there were rumours in press reports just in the past week and a half regarding Canada's role in that. They were suggesting—perhaps it was rumour-milling—that the Canadian government may in fact be in charge over on the front lines of administering the actual elections and the balloting in the new elections in January in Iraq.

Is that true or false? Will Canada be involved in the actual process of the elections in Iraq? Yes or no?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: It is still under discussion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. James Moore: Then Canadians may in fact be on the ground in Iraq administering the elections.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: There is no commitment at this time.

Mr. James Moore: You are not ruling it in or out is the point.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. James Moore: Sorry, my understanding was he had his own separate five minutes. I still have my time.

The Chair: You have about one minute left, Mr. Moore.

Mr. James Moore: I have one minute left, okay. I had actually some questions on the estimates, which is, I know, the pretense of why we're here. But that aside, obviously in foreign affairs this is an interesting time to be minister. It's quite a responsibility you shoulder.

A spokesman for the Government of Iran, Hamid Reza Asefi, has essentially threatened Canada that if we raise the issue of Zahra Kazemi there will be some sort of retribution. There seems to be some sabre-rattling going on here. The government has responded quite unequivocally that if it chooses to raise this issue it will raise this issue. We don't need consent from the Iranian government.

I wonder if you could speak more broadly about the issue of Ms. Kazemi, the murdered Iranian-Canadian photographer. What is the Canadian government prepared to do, and to what extent do you plan on raising this with the Iranian government? What is your response to their threats?

• (1655)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We will not accept any kinds of threats, no matter what form. This was a Canadian citizen who was murdered in a prison in Iran. We will continue to raise it independently of what they think or what any spokesperson says. We will continue to work with Madam Ebadi, the family lawyer. We will continue to go to the United Nations, as we did last week, with our resolution, which was widely supported. We had more co-sponsors than last year, 34 or 35 co-sponsors.

Our view is that we will not stop raising it with them until we have the appropriate answers.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Almost every hour we have something new coming out of the Ukraine. You have already responded to what we may do with elections, or what we may not do, but one of the interesting happenings today that has come out is that Mr. Putin has said that he recognizes the results of the Ukraine election.

One of my questions to you is, what response do we have to Russia and to Mr. Putin, who says he's quite ready to recognize the elections of the Ukraine?

Secondly, many experts claim that CSIS is limited by law from taking an offensive stance as far as gathering intelligence overseas. We would rather rely on other countries to provide intelligence through their spy agencies that would then be passed on to our country. We have a federal study that concludes that Canada needs overseas units in order to help obstruct some of the organized crime, and perhaps even terrorism. My question, very quickly, is do you agree with that?

I ask this question of you and not of the public safety and emergency preparedness minister because our former foreign affairs minister, John Manley, once stated that rather than expanding the foreign intelligence capabilities of CSIS, he would prefer a separate agency be established within foreign affairs, much like the United States has with the Central Intelligence Agency. I would then ask you, would agree with Mr. Manley's assessment of our ability to gather foreign intelligence?

The Chair: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I will ask for your indulgence. I'll give you an answer when I have had more time to think about it. Let me assume my responsibilities for a bit more time and I'll be able to tell you how I see this development.

On President Putin, I think the Prime Minister was quite clear today. Putin recognized the results; Canada does not. The European Union does not. Germany has been quite clear. Many countries—the United States is another—do not recognize that result. So in my view, we have the responsibility—and Mr. Putin has this responsibility, Russia has this responsibility as well—to make sure that the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people be reflected in the governance that they have.

I would invite everyone at this time to be calm. The Ukrainian people command our respect, because everything has been going on in a very calm way. I think it is very important that neighbours, the international community, continue to make sure that we support a transparent democratic process so that the democratic will of the people can express itself. And Russia has this responsibility as an important member of the international community.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: But as the Minister of Foreign Affairs you're saying there is no response to what Russia has stated. Russia says that it will recognize what is really an illegitimate election that is certainly flawed. Won't Canada respond to that?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We are saying that we do not recognize the result of the election. We are monitoring developments very closely. Canada invites all countries to respect the democratic process and the democratic will of the Ukrainian people. We're inviting all members to assume their responsibility. First of all, the Parliament of the Ukraine has expressed itself now. The Supreme Court is now doing its work, and I hope very much that Russia, like everyone else, will continue to listen to what Ukrainians are saying and expressing themselves.

Canada for one is quite determined to make sure that the democratic will of the people will be reflected in the governance they end up with.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: But the Prime Minister stated that he is willing to do whatever it takes as far as the response with Russia, but you haven't said there's anything...all you've stated is that we have to be calm and let—

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Do you have any suggestions?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Is it ever the place of our country to show that it's frustrated with Mr. Putin coming out and recognizing this government?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I may have failed to understand your question then. I thought I had answered it. Maybe if you told me what it is you expect the Government of Canada to do, I could react.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Well, would there ever be a place for the Government of Canada to respond to Russia—

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I think the Prime Minister did it very well in the House today.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Minister, before concluding,—

[English]

I have a question and maybe a request from the department.

You mentioned that the legislation creating a separate Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will shortly be introduced in the House of Commons and referred to this committee. In light of the question that was posed today regarding this division, will the government be able to provide the committee with further details of the effects of the departmental separation—I mean the costs, operational impacts, and expected benefits? Could we have this at the time the bill will be received by the committee?

[Translation]

To summarize, when the bill is referred to the committee, it will be a legal bill. We would really like to have the—

[English]

pros and cons of this before or at the same time, please.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I hear your request and I will ask my department to try to be supportive of your reflections and work, Mr. Chairman.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. It is always a pleasure to hear from the Minister of Foreign Affairs—

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

We were five minutes late starting, and I'm wondering if, with the minister's indulgence, we could take another five minutes around some of the issues of real urgency.

The Chair: Madam McDonough, I will ask the minister to do it. If he agrees, then you could ask your question.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I agree with great pleasure on one condition: that the record shows that the minister was on time.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. McDonough. Your question, please.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I want to return to the question of national missile defence. I have a couple of quick questions.

There is a real sense of urgency, not only because the U.S. President is coming to Canada tomorrow, but because I think there is a lot of concern about any possibility that Canada would go ahead with a decision to participate without there having been an opportunity for Canadians to really have their say in pan-Canadian hearings, and without there having been the full policy review from which should flow such a decision, not a decision made prior to the full policy review.

I'm sure the minister is aware that we've had repeated pleadings before this committee, as well as before the parliamentary network, against nuclear arms. We've had the Parliamentarians for Global Action pleading the case for this government to understand that non-proliferation obligations of Canada preclude our participating in NMD.

In fact, I'm going to quote very briefly:

...the very pursuit of BMD undermines non-proliferation efforts, thus helping to create conditions under which BMD cannot be successful – it's the classic lose-lose scenario.

That's from Ernie Regehr, of Project Ploughshares.

Finally, the Union of Concerned Scientists, who have spoken out with increasing distress, have said very clearly:

By displaying such an addiction to nuclear weapons while possessing the world's most powerful conventional forces, the administration is constructing the strongest possible rationale for other countries to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Chair: Mrs. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: My question is—

The Chair: What's your question?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: My question is this. Why is there a decision on Canada's participation before Canadians have been consulted, before all this evidence has been fully considered, and before the foreign policy review has been completed?

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Minister, a quick response.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: First of all, there's no decision that has been made, so I don't know if the foreign policy review will have taken place before. No decision has been made. There will be opportunities to discuss it in Parliament.

I have to say that I don't necessarily agree with the preamble of the question, because I don't think it has been demonstrated that our non-proliferation obligations would prevent any participation in the BMD. I think it depends on the way we turn.

I would like to turn to Mr. Jim Wright, who is an expert in our department on this subject.

• (1705)

The Chair: Mr. Wright, rapidly, please.

Mr. James R. Wright: Yes.

Paul Meyer, our ambassador at the conference on disarmament, will be appearing before the committee, I think, on Wednesday. There will be an opportunity for a full and frank discussion on Canada's commitment to the non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament agenda.

The work that we are doing at the conference on disarmament in Geneva on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and on the question of non-weaponization of outer space, the important work that we've done on global partnership, the preparations the minister referred to for the non-proliferation treaty review conference, which takes place next year, and the very good work that we are doing with our American partners and others on the proliferation security initiative are all initiatives that have progressed at the same time as preliminary discussions with the United States on possible cooperation in the area of missile defence.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Minister, for appearing here today.

[English]

Thank you, Mr. Harder, Mr. Wright, and Madam McCallion.

[Translation]

I would simply like to add that we are very grateful for the cooperation that the department has given to the members.

[English]

I will ask the members to remain seated. I have two motions to be passed, please. It will take about two or three minutes.

[Translation]

Thank you again, Minister.

• 1707

(Pause)

• 1709

[English]

The Chair: Order, please.

Chers collègues, I have committee business. We have a notice of motion from Mr. Stockwell Day, which reads as follows:

That, notwithstanding the Committee Order of October 14, 2004 by which the Committee established a Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development, the Subcommittee be authorized to sit at 3:30 p.m. December 1, 2004, in order to examine the human rights situation in Burma, pursuant to the Committee's reference to the Subcommittee on November 15, 2004 of a request from Rights and Democracy to have appear the Prime Minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

Note: The Order of October 14, 2003 stipulates that the Subcommittee may not sit at the same time as the main Committee.

Are you all in agreement? Are there any questions?

Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chair, I'm fully supportive of the motion. Has there been some consultation with the subcommittee as to whether they're in a position to hold that meeting?

The Chair: Yes, the subcommittee wants to hold that meeting—

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Good.

The Chair: —but because we're sitting at the same time and our rules say they cannot sit at the same time as us, we're asking permission for the subcommittee to meet at the same time.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: My question is different. I just received this before I came here. Since this is Monday, I have not been able to consult the individual representing us on this subcommittee.

I thought that my question was the one asked by Ms. McDonough. Has the subcommittee found out whether or not the individuals sitting on this subcommittee are free on Wednesday?

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, go ahead.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Stephen Knowles):

Mr. Chairman, I consulted the subcommittee clerk. According to him, the members of the subcommittee are available. In fact, they have no choice, because the Prime Minister is only available on Wednesday afternoon. He will be leaving Thursday morning. Consequently, he came to see me after the subcommittee meeting.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Below this I see the budget of the subcommittee. Is that the next item?

The Chair: Yes, it is the next item.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Okay. I was concerned that the cost of this was coming out of our minuscule budget.

The Chair: No, not at all.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Yes, and emphasis on the word “minuscule”.

[Translation]

The Chair: The following item is an operational budget request [English]

from the Subcommittee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. They request that we approve an expense of \$9,400 and that I represent them in front of the liaison committee just to be sure we get that money.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Just as a comment, we have no budget at this point. I do recognize the fact that we're not calling special sessions for this. We're meeting when the House is sitting.

Regardless of that, we would like to see a budget that would allow us to bring in some expert witnesses. I've been on the other side of the table, where I've had to pay my own ticket to come as a witness before a committee, so I'd like to see the approval of this.

The Chair: Do you move it, Mr. Menzies?

Mr. Ted Menzies: I so move.

The Chair: You so move.

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Ms. Stronach.

Ms. Belinda Stronach: I'm just agreeing.

The Chair: Okay.

Is there anything else, Mr. Clerk?

Okay, that's it.

Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It was my understanding when we discussed earlier the work plan for our committee that the staff were going to come back with a proposal that would include a budget for some travel in regard to consulting Canadians on missile defence.

The Chair: No.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: There was a question raised, I believe by you, Mr. Chairman, as to whether there was a problem with the possibility of travelling and that we should consult our whips and House leaders in that regard. I've done so, and I've been assured that the House leaders are ready to receive proposals for such committee-related travel, just as they have here, and they've received no such proposal because it hasn't come back through us. So could I inquire about the status of this?

The Chair: I cannot say in regard to my leader, but I discussed it with my whip previously and she has not agreed that we travel. We will probably have two bills come before our committee, and we'll need to look at them first.

You had asked Mr. Harder and the minister questions today regarding the review and when we'll do the review. We'll probably travel all across the country, and we can discuss this matter at that time.

I see it much more that when we discuss something, we'll be travelling the country to discuss the international foreign affairs review, including defence, international trade, and development. I think it should be done during that period of time, because we're not going to have any other time available for that.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: What time are you referring to?

The Chair: February or March.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Not in January.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chair, do we have any further indication of when the foreign policy paper is expected to be released?

The Chair: That question was asked today to the minister. We hope to have it before the House recesses in December. That's the answer.

I cannot tell you. He doesn't know more. I follow up with the department on a weekly basis, but I cannot tell you.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, I'm not trying to delay the discussion, but if it is genuinely our view that the input from Canadians around any Canadian participation in NMD belongs in the context of the foreign policy review, is it not completely consistent with that and very much consistent with the role of this committee for us to put forward a recommendation—and I realize I need to give notice of motion on this, or someone else could—that we request that no decision about Canadian participation in NMD precede the foreign policy review process and the consultation with Canadians, in which NMD would be launched as one of the questions?

Is that not consistent with both the traditions of the committee and what points of view have been expressed on this around this table?

The Chair: Ms. McDonough, I don't think so, for one reason. You could have a motion in the House of Commons coming from any of the opposition. You could have the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois, and your party. At that time, if we pass such a resolution in front of the committee, it's going to bind the other parties. We cannot do this.

Once a month you have an opposition day. You could come and ask for a vote on this. It's up to your party. But as far as I'm concerned, we cannot ask the government and this committee to postpone the decision of the government.

I just don't understand.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, that's what this committee frequently does: it gives advice to the government. It makes requests to the government to consider the point of view of the committee. In fact, there was a time when the committee actually was taken quite seriously by the House of Commons when it did make recommendations. But if we don't even make recommendations, it's very hard to be taken seriously.

The Chair: Ms. McDonough, the only thing I can tell you is that you can make a motion regarding this. Do the motion, present the motion to the committee, and we'll have the committee vote on it in the next meeting, in the following week. I think that's all I can tell you about this for the moment.

Do your motion, and you'll see if the committee agrees with your opinion or not. Is that fine?

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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