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Mr. Bernard Patry

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•(0910)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): We'll start the meeting.

[English]

This is meeting 48 of the committee. The order of the day is Canada's relationship with Taiwan.

As witnesses this morning we have the pleasure to have, from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. David Mulroney, assistant deputy minister for bilateral relations, and Mr. Ted Lipman, director general, North Asia and Pacific Bureau. Welcome, both of you.

I understand, Mr. Mulroney, that you have some introductory remarks. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Mr. David Mulroney (Assistant Deputy Minister, Bilateral Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very pleased to be here with Ted.

[English]

To begin, Ted and I have some experience of Taiwan. I was executive director of the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei from 1998 to 2001 and Ted was a director from 2001 to 2004, so we spent a total of six years in Taiwan. We both worked extensively on Taiwan issues, and have worked to build the relationship between Canada and Taiwan.

[Translation]

Today I'd like to talk specifically about our policy on visas and high-level visits between Taiwan and Canada.

[English]

I wanted to address specifically questions that were raised in previous testimony about our visits policy and how that works. I want first to say that over the years that we have had offices in Taiwan and in Ottawa—and in fact representatives of Taiwan's office are with us this morning—we succeeded in building a wide variety of exchanges and programs to the mutual benefit of Canada and Taiwan. In fact, we probably have more high-level visitors coming from Taiwan to Canada than we do from other parts of the region. Korea, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Singapore come to mind. So we have a steady progression of senior visitors from Taiwan who come to Canada at the level of minister and deputy minister on a regular basis.

Canada has a policy concerning transit visas. I would like to be very specific about that. A transit visa is offered in those instances when someone is changing planes in Vancouver. It doesn't happen very often because it depends on where people are travelling. We have never refused a transit visa to a senior Taiwanese visitor travelling who wishes to pass through Vancouver airport and travel elsewhere. In fact, a request was made for us to provide this kind of facilitation to Foreign Minister Mark Chen on a recent trip that he wanted to make through the region. We agreed and were working out the details of that when he in fact changed his plans.

We've also had requests for things that our friends from Taiwan have referred to as transit visas, but when we've asked what they really mean by that, what is meant is down time in Canada itself, in Vancouver, a day or two days, with a program. What we've explained to them is that in our terminology that's a visit. That means engaging Canadians.

When we look at our policy concerning Taiwan and what we can do, I'd say that across the spectrum we can do about 95% of the things that Taiwan would like us to do. But I have to be very honest, there is a small number of things that we believe, according to our policy, we can't do. We've spent a lot of time over the years thinking carefully about terminology and nomenclature, about how Canada does things and how we manage the relationship. Our objective is to manage the relationship so that we can have the maximum positive relationship with Taiwan and the maximum positive relationship with China.

I do have to admit there is at one end of the spectrum some things we can't do. In our judgment, having a foreign minister from Taiwan visit Canada is one of those things. It's not just because of questions of perception but because of questions of what actually might happen during the course of that visit. At the end of the day, we have a policy that says we will have diplomatic relations with China and unofficial relations with Taiwan. We have also said right up to the recent past that we will do nothing to destabilize relations between Taiwan and China, and that it is up to the people on both sides of the straits to work out their future. What that means is that it requires on our part creativity in terms of how we can build that 95% of the relationship.

I can commit to you that we work very hard on this. We work very hard with sympathy and understanding to do everything that we can do. But it also means that we have to be careful about the other 5% and we have to manage it.

I would add that our careful management of that over time has meant that we have been able to build an important relationship with both places, and that we've been able to retain a degree of influence over China's peaceful rise that is important too.

That's just a brief overview. I'd be happy to discuss aspects of our visit policy, or any other aspect of our policy vis-à-vis Taiwan.

Merci.

The Chair: Merci, Monsieur Mulroney.

Now we'll start with questions and answers. We have 45 minutes, which means 10 minutes per group. If you want to share your time, just let me know.

Mr. Day.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Thank you.

The fact of the matter is this is a political situation, and we appreciate the fact that we have good officials who try to administer to the best of their abilities. Our Liberal friends have suggested that really there isn't a problem, and there haven't been denials of visits.

I'll just do a quick chronology.

In July 2001 Canada denied a visa to Dr. Ming-liang Lee, Minister of Health of Taiwan, for a trip to Edmonton to meet health officials. That has to be, in my view and in the view of many Canadians, simply ridiculous, especially given SARS, especially given Taiwan's capabilities on health issues.

In August 2002 Canada denied a visa to the Taiwanese Prime Minister Yu Shyi-kun for a stopover to rest and to take the opportunity to meet Canadian business executives in private in Vancouver on his way to Central America.

In September 2002 Canada denied a visit to Taiwan's foreign minister Eugene Chien for his planned private visit. In 2003 Canada denied a visa again to Taiwan's foreign minister Eugene Chien for a private visit to Vancouver.

In August 2004 Canada denied the democratically elected President Chen Shui-bian an overnight stop for rest in Vancouver on his way to Panama.

In September and November 2004 Taiwan's Prime Minister Chang-ting Hsieh was rejected twice on planned private visits to Toronto and Vancouver, which did not include meetings with any officials.

This is ridiculous in this day and age. Again, I'm not blaming officials here. This is a matter of government will, and there is a government will to meet with, as we should, communist leaders from communist, undemocratic, oppressive, tyrannical regimes. I met with one such leader yesterday, and we had a great meeting. We should meet with these people. But to not allow this type of unofficial visit by democratically elected individuals—and we understand the history of Taiwan, where some have paid a very high price for democracy in Taiwan, spending time in jail and in incredible deprivation, and we say no to them.... A former prime minister, when we denied entrance on one of these occasions to Taiwan's foreign minister, the very next day met with the Chinese communist official

who in fact was in charge of the massacre at Tiananmen Square, the minister of defence.

So I'm telling the members of the government of Canada to give their heads a shake. We support a one-China policy, absolutely we do. We do not want to intervene in unnecessary ways with what's happening in Taiwan and the mainland. We support that one-China policy. We also recognize democracy, and when there's an opportunity to stand up in a friendly way—a friendly, unofficial way—for democratically elected officials, let's do it.

I really don't have a question. I don't want to reflect on officials. I want this to be directed at the political level.

Can I ask either Mr. Mulroney or Mr. Lipman what kinds of direct instructions you receive, if any, in cases like this or similar ones? What do you receive from the political level?

• (0915)

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: We provide policy advice to the political level and have a chance to discuss it with the minister. I understand, Mr. Day, exactly the point you're making, and this is one of the toughest parts of the job in terms of formulating our policy advice.

What it comes down to is Canada is perceived as a country of influence, of stature, throughout the world but particularly in east Asia, and what Canada says and does is important. Our China policy means something, and it means, at the end of the day, that we have established diplomatic recognition of Beijing and that we will leave it to people on both sides of the straits to work out their own futures.

We have acknowledged—and I have to acknowledge, as someone who has spent a lot of time in Taiwan—that Taiwan carries out a foreign policy that's based on visits. Taiwan uses visits to move forward in terms of their campaign for wider political recognition. What we have tried to do in the advice we provide to the minister is to think carefully about each and every visit that comes forward, to determine whether or not it's really advancing our bilateral interests or whether or not there is scope for it to be used for the cross-straits argument taking place in Canada.

We've tried to avoid those few instances where a visit would constitute a change in our policy position, be perceived by China and Taiwan as representing a change in our policy position, because once you begin to engage.... And most private visits have a public function; most private visits end up with statements, with events that begin to change the perception of where we stand.

So it does involve careful management. The number of those visits where we've had to say we think they run against our policy are in the minority, but it's based on that assessment of Canada maintaining a degree of clarity in terms of where it stands vis-à-vis the cross-straits situation.

• (0920)

Mr. Stockwell Day: Thank you.

What would be the rationale when the health minister from Taiwan...? And as you know, we have clear direction from the Parliament of Canada related to Taiwan's status, requesting just observer status at the WHA—not the WHO, the WHA—and I know those who are hypersensitive about being seen as supporting a democratic jurisdiction as opposed to a non-democratic one would of course see this as a great conspiratorial effort on the part of Taiwan to advance their recognition.

And I say any time a democratic jurisdiction wants to emphasize the fact that they have overcome oppression at great cost and have formulated a vibrant and robust democracy, that should be encouraged. I think that can be encouraged and we can still maintain the one-China policy and, as you say, let them work out their differences.

But here we have, with everything going on, the SARS crisis.... You have very advanced medical and health technology in Taiwan. At the same time, they're threatened, of course, where they're geopolitically situated, with the SARS situation, and the health minister not being allowed to meet with health officials in Edmonton.

So setting aside this horrendous suspicion that they might be trying to advance the cause of their own democratic state, how could a visit like that be denied, in all good conscience? I'm not on an accusatory mission here, but would that be your advice, or are the options put before the minister and then the minister decides?

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: I'm going to ask Ted to speak to the specifics of that particular case and to the nature of our health cooperation with Taiwan, but in each and every case the advice comes up from us based on our assessment of the content of the visit. Is it a political visit? We have worked very hard with the Taiwanese to really advance meaningful dialogue and cooperation in the area of health care, but I'll ask Ted to speak to that.

Mr. Ted Lipman (Director General, North Asia and Pacific Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs): Thank you, David.

As I recall, that was Minister Lee, and it would have been, I guess, in 2001; I don't recall the exact date. I believe for that specific visit there were some political objectives that had been identified for the minister at that point in time. I must say that prior to that visit his predecessor, Minister Chang Po-Ya, when she was the Minister of Health, visited Canada, I believe, twice. I know that she was here at least once, probably twice. In fact, Minister Lee continued to have a very close relationship with us during the SARS crisis, because while I was there we actually had an active case of SARS in our office and were very closely engaged with him.

So there would be no reason per se why a Minister of Health would not be allowed to visit Canada. In fact, the precedent has been set and there have been visits by Ministers of Health in the past.

The focus in the past has actually been to look at our health system, which has been largely adopted by Taiwan in developing their own public health system. We continue to have pretty direct relations with the Ministry of Health both through our public health authorities and directly with their CDC with a view to having some

long-term institutional linkages that will allow us to deal with SARS and other public health issues.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lipman.

Now we'll go to Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you for being here this morning, gentlemen. This is a good occasion to discuss these relations, which can be characterized as delicate, with China on the one hand and Taiwan on the other.

I don't want to repeat what Stockwell Day has said on the subject, but, like him, I'm monitoring developments in Taiwan, and I believe the very fortunate democratic transformation in that part of the world is extremely important for all those who seek democratization and respect for human rights.

On the one hand, we have Taiwan, which I believe is making major efforts in this direction. Its leaders have an interest in this, as does the world. China, on the other hand, has become such a trading giant that one wonders, in certain respects, how we can maintain productive economic relations. China obstructs those who want to practise Falun Gong and, to put it in diplomatic terms, is also causing problems for the Tibetan people, not to mention numerous human rights problems.

So it seems to me that Canada is nevertheless sending a clear signal of support for Taiwan's democratic presence in the region. Under the heading "Visits Policy" in the brief you've given me, you state:

Requests treated equally with those from diplomatic partners, i.e. evaluated on individual merit, ability to positively affect our interests.

I'd like you to explain that to us. Then I'll have a sub-question to ask you.

• (0925)

Mr. David Mulroney: Thank you, Ms. Lalonde. As you said, Taiwan has undergone profound change, and our commitment to Taiwan has changed along with that transformation. We thus now have exchanges in the field of human rights, Aboriginal affairs and many other areas of Taiwanese life which we didn't have before this transformation process took place.

Visits are also an issue that concerns Canada's interests. In a bilateral relationship, we have to determine whether the relationship helps achieve Canadian goals and objectives, as well as those of our partner. That's a question that must be considered. A visit that causes confusion about our policy in the region does not help serve our interests or achieve our goals. As I said, this accounts for less than three of five percent of visits in our exchanges with Taiwan.

You also mentioned the difficult issues concerning China. Our policy gives us a voice in China. It enables us to exercise influence, which is very important for us.

[*English*]

In terms of our relations, we have transformed our relationship with Taiwan. We are able to do many more things than we did in the past. We have exciting relationships.

I mentioned a program in terms of aboriginal affairs. Taiwan's rediscovery of its aboriginal people is one of the most exciting things in the last 10 or 15 years—people who have lived in Taiwan for 15,000 years, but who had been marginalized. Working with Canadian aboriginal leaders, we've developed a really exciting program of cooperation. That kind of programming exists in education, in culture, and in areas of governance related to urban affairs. We've transformed our programming and our policy, along with Taiwan's transformation.

But at the end of things, we also want to be sure that we maintain an eye on Canadian interests and a degree of influence on both sides of the straits.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mulroney.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you for your remarks.

Here's my subquestion. Don't you think that, for our Taiwanese partners, the possibility of being denied visas, including transit visas — which has happened — is an extremely difficult thing compared to the recognition, among their own fellow citizens, of the role and importance they're given in Canada? Do you think that granting them visas would jeopardize your relations with China? Are matters at that point? It seems to me this is a bit surprising.

Mr. David Mulroney: We've never denied genuine transit visas that afford Taiwanese partners the opportunity to stop in Vancouver. Furthermore, with regard to real visits, the point for us is to clarify whether they may cause confusion over our policy. As I said, Taiwan has a policy of diplomacy through visits. The Taiwanese use visits to further their diplomatic interests. We, Canada, have said that wasn't possible for us because we have to be clear with them and with the Chinese. As I said earlier, this involves only a minority of our exchanges with the Taiwanese, and the idea is always to make our position known in a polite and diplomatic manner, which is very hard to do.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lalonde.

Mr. Clavet.

• (0930)

Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ): You restate the assertion that you have never denied a transit visa request from Taiwan officials. That wasn't my impression. We even talked about that with Taiwanese sources, who expressly claimed the contrary. Is someone playing with words? Among other things, I remember a visit to Vancouver, where a request was made for an authority — I don't remember whether this was at the ministerial level — to stop over in Vancouver. However, the request was denied.

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: If it's to stop in Vancouver, it's a transit visa. That's not a problem for us. As I said, we agreed to Mr. Chen's proposal when he asked the question. However, if it's a one- or two-day visit to Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal or wherever, that's different because it starts with a luncheon and a press conference. Even private visits, in our experience and that of our partners in Australia, with whom we are in frequent contact, are a slightly different situation. They become official visits in virtually all cases.

The Chair: Mr. Clavet.

Mr. Roger Clavet: That's kind of playing with words. Ultimately, one could very well imagine that a head of state or head of government could set foot in Canada, but in a very symbolic manner, and leave.

Wouldn't traditional Canadian generosity go so far as to consider the possibility, in the case of Mr. Chen Shui-bian or other Taiwanese dignitaries, of not zealously enforcing international regulations? Perhaps letting him spend a day or two wouldn't cause a major diplomatic incident? Although there would be repercussions, you have to agree. Couldn't we head in the direction of a broader interpretation, since a day doesn't mean the end of acceptance by a constitutional state? Isn't Canada being overzealous in this kind of matter?

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: In Asia, one's choice of words, gestures and actions has major significance. In some instances, it's enormously important. That's why we've put a great deal of care into managing our relations.

A visit by a minister such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister or the president may be an opportunity to make it known that relations have changed. This is something that Taiwanese leaders have done in a number of countries, in Australia, for example. Canada must be clear in this regard. We can do a lot of things, but we don't want to make our policy ambiguous.

[*English*]

I'm aware that this aspect of the management of the policy does sound difficult to explain. Sometimes words and choice of language and what we allow to happen in Canada has a significance that goes beyond our borders. To have a senior Taiwanese official come to Canada and to create the impression, as they almost uniformly do when they do things like that, that the relationship has changed or advanced introduces ambiguity at the heart of the relationship that becomes very difficult to manage.

What we find is that this is where we spend a lot of our time. The 95%, the areas where we have transformed and built an entirely new relationship with Taiwan, that's where we'd rather be spending our time.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Lipman, thank you very much for being before the committee. I must say I'm glad you're here. I recommended this several weeks ago, after it was apparent that some of the members on our committee were very concerned about the issue of transit visas.

My contention, and it is your contention, and the correct contention, is that no transit visa has ever been refused, unless of course the reasons for the entry to Canada had changed substantially.

I have two questions I'd like you to elaborate on. First of all, Mr. Mulroney, could you give us an idea of what happens in the circumstance where the determination or the basis on which a visa is accepted, such as in the experience of high-level officials from Taiwan who visited Australia not too long ago, and the significance of how that was played out back in Taiwan? What would that kind of situation mean for Canada's one-China policy, let alone our credibility on treaty-making, which has survived, incidentally, Conservative and Liberal governments over the past 35 years or so?

My other question is to you, Mr. Lipman. Perhaps this may be a little beyond the issue of transit visas, but there has been substantial discussion—dare I say, misinformation—about Taiwan's request for observer status at the WHO. I would like to find out the facts if it's possible. The suggestion was that somehow Canada did not vote with or voted against. I know that to be patently false. Nevertheless, I'd like you to perhaps give us a greater explanation as to what Canada's position was. In fact, it was not in effect to reject or to vote against Taiwan's accession to that organization.

Gentlemen.

• (0935)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Mulroney first.

Mr. David Mulroney: The incident in question was a visit by a senior Taiwanese leader to Australia for a holiday, a private visit, and the Australians—this goes back about five years—relented and said they accept the fact that people want to take holidays; they're entirely private. What happened was a series of meetings with very senior political officials in Australia, and a press conference and a statement by the Taiwanese that their relationship with Australia had changed because Australia had allowed this visit. It was a significant problem for the Australians to manage.

In my own experience, I can recall getting a call from a very senior Taiwanese politician. We have access; we communicate. He said, "I'd like to go to Canada for a private visit. I just wanted to be sure I wasn't going to run into any problems. It's a private visit." I said, "A private visit from someone at your level should not be a problem." He said, "It's totally private. I'm just going to visit the Rocky Mountains." I said, "That's a great idea. We want people to visit the Rocky Mountains." Then I found out that in the private visit he ended up going with a camera crew, 14 attendants, and had a dinner in Vancouver for several hundred people.

On another occasion, in my first week in Taiwan I was asked to intervene in a case where a senior official was going to a conference in Edmonton and there had been concerns that the conference would be politicized. I took a number of calls and said we want to be as creative as possible; let's let this go forward. And I overruled the people in Ottawa, who had been showing concerns. The person stood up in the conference, unveiled a banner, and made a speech about cross-strait issues, which ran against the intent of the conference itself.

I raise those examples only to say that part of our job is to be aware of what's happening, to be vigilant, and to really think hard and provide honest advice about where we think exchanges are going and how we think we can best manage what is a difficult

relationship. I come back that we do try to err on the side of being creative and being sympathetic, but at the end of the day, we're dealing with some serious issues.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lipman, please.

Mr. Ted Lipman: Yes, on the WHO.

First of all, I should be very clear and say that Canada has never voted against Taiwan's entry into the WHO. In fact, if I can be even more clear, we would support Taiwan's participation in the WHO.

Let me give you a bit of background. We're generally supportive of Taiwan's representation in international multilateral organizations. Some good examples would be within the Kimberley Process and the recent St. John's fisheries conference. Of course we were a strong supporter of Taiwan's entry into the WTO, and within APEC we've been quite supportive of Taiwan.

The process of the WHA—the World Health Assembly—at their annual plenary in Geneva is that a committee sets the agenda for discussion in the assembly. Canada did not participate in the committee, either this year or last year. That committee came to an agenda that did not include the discussion of Taiwan.

Canada voted to accept the agenda. We were not in the discussion of setting the agenda, but as would normally be the case in UN organizations, we do support the consensus and the consensus agenda was something we supported.

However, I should point out that last year, when I was serving as head of mission in Taipei, in supporting the agenda, we also provided a rather detailed explanation of vote. I can certainly leave a copy with the committee for your information.

In the explanation of vote—I won't read it verbatim—basically the message was that we support Taiwan's access to WHO programs and we support their participation in a manner that is acceptable to the WTO rules and has achieved some consensus.

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Taiwan approached me personally and thanked Canada for that explanation of vote, so there was some appreciation on the side of the Taiwanese.

I should also say that we very strongly believe, and no one believes this more than I—because as I'd mentioned earlier, I was in Taiwan during the SARS crisis, and in fact had an active case of SARS within my office—in the necessity of engaging Taiwan on this issue. What we cannot do immediately, multilaterally, we can certainly pursue bilaterally, and we are doing so quite aggressively in the direct relationships between our public health officials and their CDC.

I should also say that in terms of the WHO, we are trying to seek a solution. Our minister, Minister Pettigrew, actually met last fall here in Ottawa with the director general of the WHO, Director General Lee Jong-wook, and discussed with him ways in which we can have Taiwan participate directly in the WHO.

You've got to speak to a lot of people. This is a very complex process, as I'm sure you can appreciate, and when Minister Dosanjh was in China recently, he engaged his Chinese counterpart to see how we can develop a consensus, so the fact of the matter is we are working hard to develop a consensus. We have not voted against Taiwan in the WHA. We are trying to seek ways of dealing bilaterally with Taiwan on health issues; over the longer term, we see Taiwan's participation in the WHO as being in everybody's interests, including our own and, of course, Taiwan's as well.

• (0940)

Hon. Dan McTeague: Thank you.

Can I go?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Mr. Lipman, thank you very much for that. It's too bad we didn't have you before the vote in the House of Commons. I think there was clearly a misapprehension among a good number of members of Parliament about what that really meant.

Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Lipman, the final question I have deals with the practical implications of a deviation from the one-China policy. It appears to me that what is being advocated by some in this country would be tantamount to doing far more, and more radically so, than what is even being proposed in Taiwan itself.

Could you give us an illustration of the implications of accepting, *holus-bolus*, visits-cum-recognition of foreign officials from Taiwan, and the implications to the one-China policy? Also, where would Canada rank with the rest of the world in terms of interaction? We do a lot of interaction well above this very contentious and very narrow issue. There are a lot more that we admittedly could work with and cooperate with and collaborate with. What would be the great implications for Canada to go down the road of *de jure* recognition of Taiwan?

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: I think what would happen is we would effectively be out of China for a generation in terms of our influence, in terms of our ability to engage the Chinese leadership. That is because there is no issue that is more sensitive to the Chinese than the issue of Taiwan. It relates to the unfinished business of the Chinese civil war; it relates to their perceptions of mistreatment.

We have managed in our dialogue with the Chinese to be very forthright on a range of issues, including Taiwan. You'll find that the statement the Prime Minister made on his most recent visit to China makes it very clear that Canada would in no way support any efforts to change the status quo in the Taiwan straits. But we can speak like that with the Chinese. The Prime Minister's discussions in Beijing this time around were the longest and most extensive on a range of issues that I have ever heard: very frank discussions on human rights, very frank discussions on what we expect of China as it emerges. So our ability to speak to the Chinese about these issues and our ability to participate in the economic growth of China would effectively be ended for a considerable period of time if they felt that what we were doing ran so counter to their direct interest.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mulroney.

Now we'll go to Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the departmental officials who have appeared with us today.

Before I proceed, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to go back to the meeting at which we made the decision that we wanted to try to get to the heart of what was clearly, at the very least, a dispute of the facts, but also clearly was on issues around interpretation of policy. I'm referring to the minutes of May 5. At that meeting the committee made the decision to look further at this matter.

I want to refer specifically to two things. It was recognized that we were talking about a dispute of facts here, and it was my understanding that we had agreed that, for the benefit of the committee, we would invite the Taiwanese officials to set forth, in a letter or some communication, the concerns that had brought these matters to light, and therefore the reason that we wanted to pursue clarification.

Second, Mr. Chairman, you also had indicated quite specifically that you would be sending a letter on behalf of the committee to the department, and I quote directly from the minutes of the meeting, "to provide us with some information before they appear in front of the committee, because it will be good for us to read some material before."

I have to say I'm feeling extremely frustrated, because in the absence of that documentation, we still seem to be disputing the facts. I would ask that we still request that documentation, as agreed at the committee on May 5.

The Chair: I agree.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that agreement.

I want to refer to an exchange of correspondence that took place between the three opposition House leaders and the foreign affairs minister, raising concerns at the time specifically about the denial of a transit visa to Taiwanese President Chen, a request that had been made for September.

I want to go back to what I understood you to say in your opening comments. I believe you said that no such denial of that transit visa ever took place, yet I also have in front of me a letter from the foreign affairs minister in which the minister says Canada has always been straightforward and clear when it comes to high-level visits from Taiwan. Our policy, well understood by the Taiwanese authorities, does not allow us to approve visits which by their nature suggest official status. It really goes on to make the case for... In fact, he says the Taiwanese government has been informed that in keeping with this practice, Canada cannot respond favourably to a request for a transit stop in Canada for their president.

I have two questions. One, did that denial take place, or did it not? It's fair to say that was a real concern of this committee. It's one of the reasons we asked to get to the bottom of the facts.

Second, and perhaps more important, is the question of what kinds of signals we are giving with what seems less than a clear and consistent policy. The Chinese general who was actually the operational commander who directed the massacres of primarily Chinese youths in Tiananmen Square was given the red carpet treatment when he came to Canada—literally, a red carpet rolled out and welcomed him to 24 Sussex Drive—while we have a Taiwanese president denied a transit visa.

• (0950)

We know that China is a horrendous abuser of human rights. You say China is sensitive to the status of Taiwan; well, I would suggest that Canadians are extremely sensitive to human rights abuses taking place in China today, and are extremely favourably disposed to Taiwan or any other administration that is very much a champion of human rights, a practitioner of the rule of law, a respecter of human rights protections, and so on. What kind of signal does it send out? It's partly a question to the officials who give the advice about the denial of such visas; it's partly a question that we're raising about government policy in regard to this whole matter.

The Chair: Next is Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. David Mulroney: On the question of the visit by President Chen, it was a visit not to refuel or to transit Vancouver Airport, but to spend some time in Canada en route to somewhere else. What we've said to the Taiwanese—and to the Chinese—is that we will be straightforward and predictable in terms of what we do. We won't do one thing and call it something else. So to have the President of Taiwan visit Canada, even for a short time, is a significant step forward in a direction we don't feel we can go.

There are a number of considerations. One, it does undermine what we said to the Chinese and to the Taiwanese—that this is how we'll govern things, and we will not do anything to destabilize relations between China and Taiwan.

Two, this is an area, in terms of what I do and what Ted does, in which the implications of a misstep are perhaps more serious. They are more serious in terms of our relationships with China and with Taiwan—but also, when a country like Canada begins to send mixed signals, begins to confuse things in terms of where it stands, China, among others, begins to think that the situation is becoming unstable and unpredictable. That is not a step that contributes to what, I have to admit, will be a long, slow process of reconciliation.

Many people wish that process could be expedited and that we could achieve a more lasting settlement sooner, but it's going to take a long time, given the depth of feelings on both sides. We don't defend the feelings on the Chinese side, but as professionals we have to acknowledge them.

That visit included downtime in Canada, and included a role for Chen Shui-bian in Canada. Again, it fell into that question of more than passing through the airport, more than refueling; it was something substantial.

In terms of China and Canada, we took a range of measures post-Tiananmen. When we discuss things with the Chinese—and Ted and I have, over the years, sat in on many such discussions—the number of things we talk about and the frankness with which we engage the Chinese are quite remarkable. Have we succeeded in transforming

China? Absolutely not. Many things that go on in China are of concern to us, but we have more options for addressing them, and for addressing them at the grassroots level. I acknowledge that China's emergence into the world as a world power is not inevitably problem-free, but our current policy gives us an ability to speak frankly to China and to be listened to. We think it's important to maintain that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: With all due respect, Mr. Mulroney, it has the aura of a few Canadian diplomats whispering in the ear of China, while our clear signal, our clear message, is that we will tolerate incredible human rights abuses, but we'll be very concerned about the slightest amount of pressure we might bring to China. It seems as though we're much more concerned about China's feelings than we are about their actions. I don't think this serves Canada well in the world.

I don't want to be reckless about it and I don't want to be cavalier about it, but I think we have to respect the democratic process of Taiwan. We have to respect, and do everything we can to reinforce, the fact that a democratically elected administration in Taiwan has said they commit to the One China policy, but they want all kinds of abuses that are taking place to be brought to an end—the threats they feel they're under, the incredible atrocities being carried out by China. It seems to me that when it comes to Canada trying to play a responsible role—maybe this is unfair—we're far more concerned about our own immediate commercial interest as it relates to China than we are about supporting the advancing of democracy in one China.

• (0955)

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney, you may give a quick answer, because that's not a question; it's a bit of a comment. Go ahead.

Mr. David Mulroney: The communication isn't by whisper. It's in dialogue, and the people who are carrying out the dialogue are people like Minister Pettigrew and the Prime Minister—clearly and directly, in ways that we haven't been able to do before. We have a much better ability to communicate directly to the Chinese about where we stand in the world than we've ever had before. I think things are changing on that front, too.

Our programming in Taiwan covers a wide range of areas. This supports the emergence of a new Taiwan. It's a very exciting time to see and be in Taiwan, but at the end of the day we also have to accept the fact that the relationship across the straits is as yet unsettled. We can contribute positively by maintaining a dialogue with both sides, by thinking carefully about how we do things and what we say, and by working creatively to expand our links to a whole range of actors in Taiwanese society—and we're doing that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I'll take one very short question from Mr. Sorenson. Then we'll close.

Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): I have a couple of very quick questions. First of all—

The Chair: Just one.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Well, yes. We've got a few more minutes here. We're all right.

First of all, I feel the same frustration that Ms. McDonough has made reference to in that we had hoped we would be receiving a letter from the Taiwan people more or less expressing the frustrations they have with the way certain processes are done here in this country. Instead we have a deputy minister who is very good at defending the government, to be quite honest—defending the minister and the Prime Minister.

My question to you, Mr. Mulroney, is are you the same Mr. Mulroney who is going to be seeking the Liberal nomination in Victoria?

The Chair: Oh, that's not a question.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: No? No? Is that a different Mr. Mulroney? It is a different Mr. Mulroney who has been in print?

The Chair: Mr. Sorenson, that's not a question to ask. The answer—

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I want to.... There is a David Mulroney who has been mentioned—

The Chair: No, that's okay. The answer is no. The answer is no.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: The answer is no?

Mr. David Mulroney: I've never met that Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: All right. Thank you. Good. That's good. That gives us a little bit more feeling of—

Mr. David Mulroney: I've never met the other Mr. Mulroney, either.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Well, that's good, because we want to set out who we have here in front of us.

Taiwan has, for all practical purposes, been independent for 50 years, but mainland China still basically looks at Taiwan as an orphaned child who needs to be reunited with the mother China. Legally most nations, including the United Nations, accept that Taiwan is a province of China, albeit a renegade province; thus, Taiwan has diplomatic relations with only approximately 25 countries and has no formal ties—has no seat at the UN, or anything like that. Taiwan is a huge trader worldwide and is a competitor of mainland China.

What types of pressure do we receive from mainland China? What types of pressure could our country receive from that to distance itself from Taiwan?

The Chair: Mr. Mulroney, you have a minute.

Mr. David Mulroney: We're aware of China's view of the cross-strait situation. China often complains when we have visits from Taiwanese officials. What we've said is—and again it comes back to this message of clarity and credibility—that there is a whole range of things we can do with Taiwan and will continue to do with Taiwan that are well within our policy. We listen, but we proceed with what's in Canada's interests and in accordance with our policy.

The Chair: Thank you.

I must say thank you to Mr. Lipman and thank you to Mr. Mulroney for appearing this morning.

Now we'll recess for five minutes for our next witnesses. Merci.

● (0959)

_____ (Pause) _____

● (1005)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: With your permission, we'll resume our proceedings.

[*English*]

The next item of this morning's agenda is the situation in Haiti. Appearing is the Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mr. Jamal Khokhar, director general, Latin American and Caribbean Bureau.

[*Translation*]

We also have Mr. Christian Lapointe, Director of the Caribbean and Central America Division at the Department of Foreign Affairs and, appearing as an individual, the Honourable Denis Coderre, Special Advisor for Haiti.

Welcome, gentlemen.

Mr. Pettigrew, you have some remarks to make to start off with. The floor is yours.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs): I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman.

I would first like to thank the members of the Committee for inviting me to discuss the situation in Haiti. Haiti is a priority of the Canadian government. Canada continues to play a key role in international efforts to stabilize and rebuild the country and uses every forum to reiterate its commitment to long-term involvement.

To encourage Haiti's interim government in its efforts, the Canadian International Development Agency is contributing more than C\$180 million over two years. One key component of Canada's contribution is the 100 civilian police officers deployed to the UN mission in Haiti, including the Police Commissioner for this mission.

The Cayenne Conference on Haiti, organized by France and held on March 18, had a twofold objective: to take stock of the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) eight months after its adoption and the funding pledges made at the Washington Conference in July 2005; to provide an update on certain sensitive issues and policies such as the elections, disarmament and human rights.

This was a conference involving participation by five foreign affairs ministers including myself. They represented France, Chile, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The other countries were represented by heads of delegations of various levels. Twelve countries were represented, including five from Latin America. Five international organizations also took part in this Conference.

The Cayenne Conference achieved significant results. It refocused on and strengthened interest in Haiti, while other global crises such as the tsunami in Asia, Darfur and Afghanistan took centre stage in terms of concern and international assistance.

The Conference also provided an opportunity to explore certain sensitive “policies,” generating open discussion of issues such as the feasibility of aid and budget for the elections, the disarmament program and human rights, including the case of Prime Minister Neptune’s prolonged detention.

And above all, the Conference provided a means for renewing the commitment to the Interim Cooperation Framework and recognizing the importance of rapidly implementing projects that have a visible and concrete impact in an effort to meet the expectations of Haitians.

The international community has put considerable effort into assisting Haiti, but cannot carry out these commitments without the will of the people to commit to national reconciliation. However, such reconciliation is difficult if Haitians do not see any concrete progress — no improvement in their daily lives.

In this sense, I think the most significant result of the Cayenne Conference has been the creation of a detailed inventory of 380 projects in Haiti, projects in progress and in the planning stage, to encourage donor countries to accelerate their activities and disbursements.

This indicator has demonstrated that Canada has managed to respond to the ICF crisis — beyond its promises, with close to \$100 million paid out in 2004-2005, compared with the \$90 million projected.

[English]

Today the situation in Haiti remains fragile, particularly in Port-au-Prince. But despite the situation in the capital, tangible progress has been made in the country thanks to the MINUSTAH. Although the preparations for the elections are nearly two months behind the original schedule, we believe elections can still take place as scheduled in the fall.

Let me raise also another issue related to disbursements by donor countries. The slow pace at which the international community is disbursing its pledges made for the future of Haiti in Washington a year ago sometimes threatens the crucial process of democracy. Red tape is unjustified. These people cannot wait. I can assure my colleagues of the House that I will continue to urge all of my colleague ministers to get involved directly in reducing the bottlenecks associated with lengthy bureaucratic procedures in order to get the money to Haiti as soon as possible.

[Translation]

The bureaucracy must not slow down spending on aid that Haitians need now or tangible progress in helping Haitians at this difficult time in their history.

• (1010)

[English]

It is in this context that in two days, on June 16 and June 17, Canada will be hosting the Montreal International Conference on Haiti, in order to put forward the achievements obtained and

difficulties encountered one year after the creation of the UN mission of stabilization in Haiti, and eleven months after the financial contribution commitments made by donors in Washington to the interim cooperation framework.

This conference, which I will inaugurate, will be held at the senior-official level and will also provide the opportunity to examine the implementation of the upcoming UN Security Council resolution and the necessary measures to take in order to improve security and justice; to discuss the electoral process, including electoral observation; and to consult on the timely application of the international cooperation framework.

This is just one more example of Canada’s commitment to maintaining a leadership role in the reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

[Translation]

Today, Haiti is once again at a crossroads. This is an opportunity for a fresh start, for reconstruction based on the rule of law, democracy, security and access to decent living conditions for all Haitians.

Canada intends to stand with the people of Haiti and help them to meet this new challenge under the transitional government, and subsequently, the government chosen through the upcoming elections.

[English]

The international community has the obligation to stop the recurring 15-year cycle of crisis in Haiti. Canada understands that the task is formidable and costly, but there can be no failure this time in the efforts of the international community. Canada wants to help in building a stable, democratic, and—over time—prosperous society in Haiti. Canada stands ready to continue to work with the United Nations towards that objective. ,

[Translation]

I will be happy to keep you abreast of developments with regard to Haiti over the next few months.

[English]

This concludes my statement, and I am quite ready to engage in your questions and dialogue.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Coderre, you’ve just come back from a brief stay in Haiti as the Prime Minister’s special envoy.

Do you want to add any information now or answer questions?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Special Adviser for Haiti): I’m mainly going to answer questions, Mr. Chairman, but first allow me to say a few words.

First, I believe we are at a crossroads. The Montreal International Conference on Haiti is an important step. We won’t be there just to make a progress report; we’ll be there to show that there are common views in the international community and that we’re all part of the solution. It’s essential and important to show — this is what Canada’s doing — that we’re really there to assist the Haitian people.

The current situation in Haiti can be very fragile and very definitely tense. I think we have to send out the message that these orchestrated acts of destabilization, either by certain political movements or by armed bands, criminals or drug traffickers, are clearly targeted. As the minister said, the situation is relatively calm in the provinces. There's really been progress. The problem is focused in certain Port-au-Prince neighbourhoods, including Cité Soleil, where there are larger shanty towns.

Obviously, we must not be at the mercy of the propaganda of certain elements that don't want elections and want stabilization. I believe the Montreal International Conference on Haiti will be an opportunity to show that the international community is shouldering its responsibilities and that it can do more in certain areas. Canada is definitely leading by example.

This meeting may enable us to take stock of security, of the fact that we want to stay the course on the municipal elections that, as you know, will be held on October 9 and on the legislative and presidential elections, the first round of which will be held on November 13, and the second round on November 18.

I believe the situation has to be stabilized. There's a coordination and cohesion problem within MINUSTAH. Things must be taken in hand. There have to be better relations and better communication between the national police and CivPol, between the interim government, MINUSTAH and the international community.

In light of my trip, we've sent a very clear message to the effect that concrete action must be taken before the Montreal Conference on Haiti. In that way, at the conference, we'll be able to show that action has been taken, that the international community has a very specific action plan and that we're staying the course in order to restore dignity to the Haitian people.

• (1015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

We'll now move on to

[*English*]

questions and answers. Each is ten minutes; if you want to share your time, let me know.

Mr. Goldring, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your presentation, Mr. Minister.

The first area I'd like to talk about is the fact that report after report from Haiti suggests there are ongoing problems. I'm looking at a report here that in spite of the involvement in Haiti over the last eight months, according to these reports there has been little or no improvement. As of today, we see yet again that another person has been kidnapped, one of some ten who have been kidnapped recently. The reports are stating that the police are unable to cope with these—that they're outgunned by the criminals in the area, which would suggest our Canadian police involved there are probably under-equipped as well. How can you say we're at a crossroads in Haiti when report after report is suggesting that rather than being at a crossroads, we haven't nearly met that intersection yet? As a matter of fact, all the efforts today would appear to have had very little

impact on the lawlessness existing in Haiti. How can you say we're at a crossroads when we're not seeing any information whatsoever coming from Haiti to suggest that?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Minister Pettigrew, please go ahead.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We have always expected that as we progressed towards the election and got nearer to the election season, tensions would go up. There are people who do not want these elections to be held, and we expected increased tension in the months leading to the election. We support the strengthening of the MINUSTAH mandate, which is up for review at the UN Security Council on June 24, and we believe very much that the MINUSTAH, and the police component, need to be strengthened in order to meet the increased tension and insecurity that exist there. We do believe that across the territory there has been significant progress. There are—and I will ask Mr. Coderre to continue, as he was there a few days ago—in certain parts of Port-au-Prince serious tensions—but we believe in the strengthening of the MINUSTAH mandate, and its police contribution of that force as well.

I'll turn to Mr. Coderre, who has just returned from there.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Coderre, do you want to provide an additional answer?

[*English*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Yes.

I think we have to be very careful not to listen to the propaganda and to differentiate between propaganda—because there are a lot of so-called reports—and the actual situation. There is a situation; clearly, there is some tension, but it's clearly aimed at certain specific areas.

I just mentioned that we need more cohesion with MINUSTAH and the national police. You know, there's a great example, also, of concrete success. In February, in Belair, in another area of Port-au-Prince, they carried out an operation and it worked very well. Of course, you have some people who, right now, are trying to work an urban strategy to destabilize the situation. Last Thursday Juan Gabriel Valdez, who is the representative of MINUSTAH, made some announcements and made some adjustments to have a better cohesion with the situation. Also, the prime minister, Gérard Latortue, said clearly that we need to make some adjustments. You don't have to throw out the baby with the bathwater; we have to be very careful of the situation. We are committed to succeed, and when I said—and I'll finish with that—that we're at the crossroads, it means the main target is the election, and we have to do everything necessary to make things happen.

• (1020)

Mr. Peter Goldring: Exactly. Would it be propaganda that the Americans are considering bringing back troops for extra security? Is it propaganda that the troops who are patrolling certain areas of the country are patrolling in armoured military vehicles? Is it propaganda that somebody has been kidnapped or killed on a regular basis? In other words, report after report is stating Haiti is verging on the ungovernable.

My concern is that last summer we had Canadian troops in there, and they were withdrawn. The Americans today are considering bringing in more troops. The reports we're hearing are obviously cries for extra forms of security. I believe it might even be disastrous to go into an election with this turmoil existing within the country, because it certainly isn't going to be any better by the time the election comes.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Mr. Goldring, you are falling exactly into the trap that the people who do not want an election are setting up for us. You are repeating exactly what they're saying, and I—

Mr. Peter Goldring: No, excuse me, Mr.—

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: No, Mr. Goldring, let me answer.

You are saying the Americans are considering, the Americans... I had a very productive meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice last weekend on the margin of the meeting of the Organization of American States. I sat down with Condoleezza Rice; her people responsible for the dossier of Haiti; Mr. Noriega, who was with Mr. Coderre; and a number of our special envoys in the region. She was quite clear that the United States is not considering sending other troops. We did discuss the renewal and the reinforcement—the strengthening, if you want—of the present MINUSTAH, because its mandate is due for review by the UN Security Council on June 24.

Be very careful not to participate in the climate that the people who oppose democracy want to create at this time. The situation is fragile; it is a delicate situation, but I do believe that what we need to do at this time is very serious, rigorous work to help Haiti at this time.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

How would you characterize, then, the report that the United States is considering lifting a gun embargo to Haiti to help the police settle these issues? That would rather indicate, if it's true, that ongoing problems there require extra support. Are we considering, as a report came from Haiti today, giving our police in the area upgraded arms, extra tools, to be able to be equipped? I would think it would be hazardous for them to be in some of those poorly controlled areas with regular civilian sidearms. Are there considerations for this report, or is it an actual fact that the United States is considering lifting the gun embargo? Are there considerations by Canada to be able to properly equip, or better equip, our policing forces there, to be able to...?

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Goldring, you mix a lot of things here.

First of all, of course there is some adjustment and some ongoing discussion between the United States and Haiti, but the fact is clear that we don't want to have some parallel organization beside MINUSTAH. We are totally supportive of MINUSTAH. In the renewal of the mandate, they're even looking to increase the number of troops. The situation, though, is that we have to be thankful for our hundred police, who are doing a tremendous job. Actually, we have some concrete examples of that.

If you take a look at what happened since last fall, I want you to remember that they had their full troop numbers only in December, so there was a situation out there. Second, it's not easy; as I said at the beginning, and the minister said, we had some cohesion

problems. Of course, when we're talking about MINUSTAH, we're talking also about chain of command and the way people orchestrate their operation, but as General Heleno said, "We are not an army of repression". They are an army of protection. They also have to have some specific operational plans in some specific cases.

Now, as I said, they have already carried out some operations. They started last Friday. There are some immediate situations that they have to take care of in certain areas. As a matter of fact, just a few minutes ago the police force announced they will have a special anti-kidnapper cell. This is another improvement. Of course, we're not saying that

[*Translation*]

with rose-coloured glasses, everything's just fine, thank you very much.

[*English*]

What we're saying here is that there is a situation, and there is an adjustment to be made. This is why Mr. Noriega from the United States, Mr. Parfait from France, the special envoy from Brazil, and I went, a few days ago, to send a message of solidarity with Mr. Latortue and with MINUSTAH. But being supportive and in solidarity doesn't mean we shouldn't make some adjustments to situations. That's exactly what they'll do, and they'll provide a report at the Montreal conference.

• (1025)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

I will go to Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you for being here.

I'll be interested in attending the meeting on June 16 and 17. It's fortunate that it's being held; let's hope it produces results. I'm being kept informed of what's going on there by people who are there. I also saw the summary that you provided us and the recommendations of the ICG group. That's very good. I read the report, and I'm pleased you brought it here.

I'd like you both to tell me what you're going to propose, what you're going to focus on. The first question, the most important one, is disarmament, security. That's a prerequisite for everything else. As you remember, some of us met here immediately after Aristide's departure and emphasized that disarmament was essential. In 1994, there was no disarmament, and the situation subsequently got worse. It must be understood that this is a crisis, but a crisis that's been going on for more than 20 years, resulting in deteriorating economic and security conditions. There have also been two attempts at populist government: the first fascist, the second Catholic. In both cases, the situation worsened.

As regards security, it has to be understood that there's not much in the way of forces there. There are 7,400 MINUSTAH troops and 4,000 poorly armed police officers for eight million inhabitants, including two million in Port-au-Prince. One of the problems with the U.S. embargo is that there are weapons in Haiti, sophisticated weapons, but they're in the hands of the Lavallas, the rebels and the drug dealers. The police are poorly armed. Something concrete has to be done in that regard.

That immediately involves the question of money. That's fine, Canada said it was committing \$180 million over two years. That seems a lot, but it's peanuts when it comes to solving this problem. Canada isn't alone, of course, but we have a special responsibility. Other countries aren't spending a lot, but the needs are enormous, immense. Everyone's waiting, and the money that gets there ultimately comes from the diaspora and from what little savings there are there. Pardon the expression, but it's not surprising that that's all going to the devil. So money is needed. We also have to ensure, of course, that the money isn't diverted down all kinds of side roads, but it seems to me there has to be a way to do that without it taking time and more time. All the red lights are on. So money has to be paid out.

Shouldn't MINUSTAH's mandate be reinforced as well? We thus have a minor problem that takes us back to the previous issue, since China prevented this from being extended for a year because the president of Haiti is planning to visit Taiwan. I note that because all problems are ultimately related.

Yes, the *Washington Post* reported last Sunday that there was a failure and that the United States should consider calling in the marines. And, in Haiti, there are people who want to see the marines as soon as possible because there's a lack of security and they're fed up. In everything I read, I see one thing: Haitians are, in a way, used to misery, but now they can't get their bearings anymore. There's a level of violence previously unknown to them, because they're not a violent people.

What are you going to do? How are you going to take advantage of June 16 and 17 to restore a little hope? I read the texts of people who are used to misery, who say they'd like to hang on to hope, but that they no longer see any reason to do so.

• (1030)

The Chair: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Ms. Lalonde, you've raised a number of points that are central to our concerns. Disarmament, which is central to security, is obviously a responsibility that MINUSTAH has to discharge vigilantly and effectively. You raised the fact that MINUSTAH doesn't have a large number of troops. I believe we can hope that, when the mandate is reviewed on June 24, a larger number of soldiers will be approved. Not so long ago, there was talk of 1,000 more soldiers; they're now talking about more than 1,000 additional soldiers, which is entirely consistent with your observation.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: French-speaking soldiers perhaps?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Obviously, it always helps when soldiers can speak French. However, we have to accept the generosity of the international community and of countries like Brazil and Chile, which are making a considerable effort. Of course, knowledge of French is an asset.

As for money, you're also right. As I said in my presentation, we've gone beyond our commitment in terms of financial contributions. However, it has to be admitted that many countries are behind in their contributions relative to their commitments at the Washington Conference. At least we can say we're ahead. We've even gone beyond what we were to do in the first year. Ninety million dollars of the \$180 million was committed for the

first year. We're now at approximately \$100 million. However, as I said in my introductory remarks, a number of donor countries are behind.

Have we already given committee members the 380 projects of...?

The Chair: It would be good to send that information to the Clerk.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: We're going to give it to you. I asked that the 380 specific projects to which we committed between the Washington Conference and the Cayenne Conference be submitted to the committee. You'll be able to see what the projects are and the status of those projects, based on the countries that committed to carrying them out. Obviously money is needed. Haitians have to see an improvement in their quality of life. That may mean building a road to alleviate traffic in southern Port-au-Prince, or building a football field so teenagers have a place to play, something that, in many cases, is non-existent. There are all kinds of ways of doing it.

Before asking Mr. Coderre to add to my answer, I want to say that the president's visit to Taiwan has not yet been confirmed.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I'd like to add to what the minister said. Security doesn't just mean disarmament, but it's an essential condition; we agree on that. Last weekend, the Americans provided the national police with additional equipment, in particular all-terrain vehicles. So action has been taken in that regard.

The people of Port-au-Prince do feel this distress in certain areas. As much as we're used to seeing them smile... I hope they haven't become used to misery. I don't want to correct you, Ms. Lalonde, but it's definitely clear that one does sense an insecurity. People are afraid.

Concrete action must be taken, and I think the Montreal Conference should be a concrete action. Not only were wishes expressed, promises and commitments were also made during our last trip, by both the Haitian government and MINUSTAH. It should also be said that we have to be inclusive. Civil society has a prominent role to play, as does the private sector, especially. The private sector is part of the picture. As we speak, the political parties, except for the armed band and the radical Lavallas — there are a number of factions, as you know — have signed a non-aggression pact, a code of conduct and ethics for the duration of the election campaign and afterward in order to assume full responsibility for this transition. So these are promising and positive actions.

In fact, not only must ad hoc action be taken on the security issue, but the Haitian government will also be asking us to take action for the Montreal Conference. I'll name three actions. The first is electrification. Obviously, a lot of things can be done in the dark. Once people have light, they'll feel safer. We can also target certain operations.

Second, we have to prepare for children to go back to school. Young people, who are the leaders of tomorrow, need to see alternatives and other things that will give them hope and dignity.

Third, I believe it would be a good idea — and the French and Americans agree with us on this — to have an ad hoc urban strategy, particularly for Cité Soleil. Action must be taken and things must be done in an inclusive manner with the other players, and particularly, of course, the interim government, the private sector and the political parties, to really show that the situation is evolving.

• (1035)

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Now we'll go to Mr. McTeague, please.

[Translation]

Hon. Dan McTeague: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Thank you for being here, Mr. Coderre. I think it's very important, especially in view of the possibility of making potential changes.

Mr. Minister, I'm pleased to hear you talk about donations countries committed to making last year in Washington. There are bureaucratic deficiencies or difficulties. I'm very pleased to hear you say you're here to ensure those matters are set aside.

Of course, there are the problems you addressed yesterday, and I'm also pleased to raise the issue of problems at the consular level. We always keep abreast of the situation and inform Canadians of it. We mustn't simply stay there for reasons other than for participating further. We really have to know the reasons for our objections and inform the people there of them so that they are aware of the difficult security situation.

In your view, is the lack of security a situation that can only be seen in Port-au-Prince, or can it be seen elsewhere in the country?

The Chair: Mr. Pettigrew.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: You have to be vigilant across the country. Obviously, the country as a whole is in a delicate situation, but the real problems, the most serious dangers, are essentially in Port-au-Prince, in certain quite easily identifiable neighbourhoods. It's quite circumscribed. In that regard, this enables us to take action that could be more effective in the context of the renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate. The disturbances are essentially around Cité Soleil and the airport. That's where the major security challenges really are. You have to be vigilant across the country.

Hon. Dan McTeague: According to the United Nations, at least 130 hostages have been taken in Haiti. So I should draw the committee's attention to the fact that you were in a very difficult place.

Earlier Mr. Coderre listed three concrete actions he wanted to see taken before the conference, if I understood correctly.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: At the conference.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Do you consider Mr. Neptune's release one of those actions?

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you for that question.

In fact, I visited Mr. Neptune twice during my trip last week. I think two things should be mentioned. The Canadian vision is very clear. First, as regards impunity, it's zero tolerance. If people have committed crimes, they must bear the consequences; that's

undeniable. However, we also have to ensure there is a balance. Human rights must be respected. That means that, if there are shameful periods of incarceration without charges being laid, that's a problem. We've asked the Haitian government to act and react.

Incidentally, Mr. Neptune was charged. He's already appeared before a judge in Saint-Marc, near Gonaïves. He was accused of carrying out the Scierie massacre. But there are other cases. I don't think it's strictly based on Mr. Neptune.

If there are 1,037 prisoners at the national prison in Port-au-Prince and only some 20 of them have had access to legal process, we think that's unacceptable and intolerable. We told them that the impunity question must be settled; the Haitian people have already suffered too much. We often tend to forget the horrible things that took place under the Aristide regime.

Do you remember that Mr. Paquiot, who was the rector of the Université de Port-au-Prince, had both his legs broken in late December. But both sides have also had blood on their hands. A distinction must be drawn between people who have taken political action and those who have committed criminal acts. I shouldn't generalize, but I think action can now be taken in that regard.

We as a government expect concrete action to be taken in anticipation of the Montreal Conference on issues of justice, criminal procedure and security in the police forces. We expect the national police to regain control of itself and for there to be better coordination and cohesion between MINUSTAH and CivPol.

• (1040)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague: According to information passed on to us, one of the recommendations made here is that the number of HNP officers be increased by training new cadets outside Haiti. Do you expect this matter will be raised at the conference? We had success with that in 1994 and 1995.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: What do you mean by HNP?

Hon. Dan McTeague: This is a recommendation made by the International Crisis Group. We've received the summary of the report's recommendations.

The Chair: It's a document that was prepared by our researchers.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Is it the May 31 report?

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Dan McTeague: We can send you a copy. Do you think it will be discussed at the conference?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Security and needs are always raised. Since it will be just before MINUSTAH's mandate is renewed, on June 24, those questions will definitely be raised. We can take a closer look at that and get back to you. We're taking part in training the national police. There are training aspects and complementary aspects in civil police work.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I would add that you have to distinguish between two important aspects. We were talking about disarmament earlier. Crime has to be fought. Action has to be taken to prepare the way. There's also a pre-election context, all matters pertaining to the registration campaign and the proper operation of the electoral process. We're working entirely in that direction in the context of the renewal of MINUSTAH, but Canada already has programs.

Remember that we did training in 1994 and 1998. Training should definitely be considered. However, allow me to add one point. Intelligence is also very important. So a structure is necessary for gathering information on the situation in the field. This isn't a question of numbers; it's often a question of action and success of the operation. For the operation to succeed, you need an intelligence service, information that will really enable us to anticipate problems and establish our objectives.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McTeague.

We'll now move on to Ms. McDonough.

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Minister and ministers and officials, for appearing today to address this incredibly complex situation. Also, thank you for supplying the comprehensive view of what Canada is now doing in the way of projects.

I want to go directly to the recurrent concerns that have not just been raised but have been documented about the massive violence taking place.

I just quote briefly from the executive summary recommendations that were actually circulated to us today from the International Crisis Group. I understand it's a highly reputable organization in Brussels that has highlighted the many concerns about the amount of violence—the rapings, the executions, the arbitrary imprisonments, and so on.

I'm a bit distressed at the suggestion that raising the security concerns in the context of an upcoming election is somehow to play into the hands of the destabilizers. I guess I'd like to pursue this a little bit further, because I think we're all desperate to see a proper, democratic, safe electoral process take place. But there seems to be more and more concern about how such an election can take place in that violent context if there isn't some minimum of security assured.

I want to ask if you're in a position to comment on the International Crisis Group's executive summary and recommendations. If it's not an unreasonable request—obviously we won't have time to talk in detail about that in this brief meeting—perhaps we could have a report back or a further meeting to talk in more detail about that.

Minister Pettigrew may or may not recall this. After meeting with several groups that share many of these concerns and have experienced first-hand many of these problems, and after making the plea for a very big push on demobilization and disarmament, I had written to Minister Pettigrew to ask about what Canada is doing to fully investigate the extent to which even our involvement may unwittingly or inadvertently play into some of the problems that are there.

I think we have a responsibility to assure ourselves that's not happening. Our 100-strong police force and \$180 million are welcome, but if we are part of that situation without a broader reform of the security situation taking place under MINUSTAH, and with really firm guidelines, then we may actually become part of the problem without intending to be.

I wonder if you could address, in a very brief way, that executive summary, and respond with regard to what Canada is doing to get to the bottom of these human rights abuses and atrocities that we're either a part of or we're trying to help solve.

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Pettigrew.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: First of all, we have to be careful here. Monsieur Coderre will address this report, the executive summary you're referring to.

We are very vigilant. I have heard the allegations about Canadian police being involved in certain activities. You seem to be talking about that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: No, sorry. Perhaps I'll just clarify. I'm not suggesting that Canadian police are. I'm saying that Canadian police, because of the widespread violence and corruption that surrounds them, can become part of that unwittingly, and I'm asking what we are doing to make sure that's not the case.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I have had a number of conversations with David Beer, who is the head of the one hundred RCMP people we have there. They are very vigilant. They are working in extremely difficult circumstances, but they are very vigilant about not being co-opted as part of this by the simple reality of the environment they are in.

I raise the security concerns in Haiti every day. When we had the kidnapping of the Canadian women, the Montreal women, two days ago, I was the first to say there were security concerns, so I'm not saying that raising them.... I'm talking about absolutism. I'm saying that taking only that part of the picture and focusing on it plays into the extreme elements of the Lavalas, who just don't want the rest of the picture. That is what I was referring to earlier, and certainly I think it's our duty as members of Parliament, and for us as the government, to make Canadians well aware of the situation, so that they don't set their foot into a reality they're not aware of.

On the executive summary, I'll turn to Monsieur Coderre.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Coderre.

[*English*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Briefly, I would say this. First of all, Canada and Haiti have had a tremendous relationship for years, decades.

There are some propaganda reports, which are just not telling the truth. If you talk about the report from the University of Miami, it's disgusting. You can show some pictures, but the way they've been treating it.... And you had some people who came to Ottawa, came to Montreal to talk about repression of our own police force. That's baloney; that's not true.

You know what? I've been there eight times in 14 months. Our own Prime Minister has been there. Our minister went there two times. As a matter of fact, government representatives plus ministers have been there quite often. So we truly know what's going on in the field.

I would say a lot of the report by International Crisis Group is good. There are a lot of good things about it. So we should accord some credibility to that report. As a matter of fact, we spoke about DDR—the disarmament, demobilization, and reconstruction—so we are totally focused on that. When I'm talking about the justice process, the judicial process, the due process, this is one of the key recommendations. When we're talking about needing to improve cohesion and coordination between all the stakeholders, this is also something. It's *gross bon sens*. We know exactly how we should manage it. That's why when Noriega, Parfait, our friend from Brazil, and I went there, when we spoke about solidarity, we were not just going in there and pointing in a paternalistic way to the Haitian government and saying this is what you have to do.

The international community has to commit in a better way at certain levels. Giving resources doesn't mean just giving money; it also means providing a way to implement the technical aids that you can provide. It has to do with the way you work with the diaspora to make sure that you put aside the propaganda and talk about the real facts. But when there is a will, there is a way.

There is clearly some orchestration right now at the political level to use violence, because they have the nostalgia of the past. And even now you have division among Lavalas. Leslie Voltaire, who used to be Aristide's minister of the diaspora, said clearly that there are political prisoners, but he's saying that we should take care of those who haven't been charged. Well, Neptune had charges. So you see what I'm saying? We have to be very careful in the way....

They're talking about the gender issue. International Crisis Group said maybe we should have more policewomen. I think that's a great idea, because the way you represent women in Haiti I think is a key factor in the solution. But again, everybody is part of the solution.

There should be disarmament, yes, but we also have to provide hope, and provide the tools so they can develop themselves. You don't just provide them with fish; they have to learn how to fish too. So this is the kind of thing that Montreal should be, not just

[Translation]

a lot of fun or a progress report. A specific action plan should be established, and, based on things that have been done, it should be determined where we stand and what we're going to do in the coming weeks.

[English]

We're talking about days; we're talking about weeks; and we have to fulfil everything for August.

• (1050)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We'll now move on to Ms. Phinney.

[English]

We're finishing in about ten minutes. Go ahead. You've got five minutes.

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

Thank you for being here today.

You mentioned on the bottom of page 2 that you cannot carry out the commitments that different organizations have made without the will of the people to commit to national reconciliation. You can't do it with guns or money, but how do you bring about the will of the people? How can you change the will of the people to want to be able to govern themselves?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: You see, the people in Haiti are like people everywhere else. They want to have families, raise their kids, send them to school, earn their living, and have security when they go and visit their friends at night. We have to be careful not to confuse the will of the people with the will of the political parties.

You have some political parties that are not behaving appropriately, that do not want Haiti to become a democratic country with the rule of law applying to them as well because they want to enact their own justice. They want to have their own control of societies. So what we have to do is strengthen the will of people, who are the same there as everywhere else, by improving their quality of life—hence the 380 projects to improve their quality of life—so that they feel in a tangible way that this government in transition, with the assistance of the international community, is actually improving their daily lives.

We have to work, and I want to thank my colleague, the member for Bourassa, Denis Coderre, who has spent a lot of time talking to the political parties and to the political leadership in Haiti.

I myself have met with the political leadership in Haiti twice in the last few months and have talked to them. They have to offer viable political options. There have been some improvements. From 184 a year and a half ago, they've boiled it down now to about 70 groups. So it's already a bit more orderly somehow.

Denis has been engaging the political leadership of the different factions there in a very strong way, and that's given Canada's role in the country a particular colour, if I compare it with that of the United States and France and the other players.

• (1055)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Coderre.

[English]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Election is not the panacea or the end of everything, but it is the best step to provide hope to really build that governance, build that country and bring back a place in the sun for those people who have suffered so much.

The more they talk, the less they shoot at each other. Frankly, when you have a country where you have had 34 *coups d'états* in 200 years, when all kids have as options for values in *bidonvilles* are gang lords, it's our responsibility to accompany the people. We are not there to create a protectorate. We are clearly not there to dictate to them. We are there to help them to have a better future, but we have to be there to take our responsibility and provide them not only hope but alternatives, and bring them back to what their reality in the field should be.

Frankly, over the last 14 months, I know it has not been easy. I know their situation. It's fragile. Some people will say it's an eternal rehearsal. There is some international fatigue, and there are some people who will try to put that forward, but the reason we were there a few days ago was to promote not only that we are totally behind Mr. Latortue, but that we are behind the Haitian people.

We are focused on that very important electoral process. Canada will be there for the long term, but we need not to play with those propagandists and those people who don't want to make things happen. Frankly, Haiti is very important because it has an impact on the Caribbean.

Mr. Goldring is taking care of the Caribbean in his own party. He knows exactly the importance of the geopolitics of it now. It's a matter of the hemisphere. It's our own policy for the future of the Americas, and for the first time, not only Brazil—it's the first time they're there as peacekeepers—but South America and Central America are getting involved in the process. OAS has a new leadership, and we are committed to succeed. That is why we have to be very careful not to fall into the kind of trap like that of the propagandists, as the minister mentioned. We are committed to succeed because it's in our own interests as citizens of the world.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Sorenson.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I appreciate, Mr. Coderre, that you said democratic elections will not solve everything. They aren't the panacea for everything. We have Aristide, who was taken out of office—he was elected, but he was replaced by someone who wasn't elected. Cultural warfare is going on. People are being criminalized. The wealthy control the economy, and now they basically want to control government. People who are trying to work—as was pointed out last fall, when we had discussions on Haiti, or maybe earlier this spring—while going to work are getting criminalized, getting robbed, getting murdered, getting shot. How can you have an economy when that type of thing is going on, human rights abuses and atrocities? Mr. Coderre, you met with Mr. Neptune, who, as even you suggested, is under investigation—being charged—with a massacre, with murder. Where do you start?

But we can learn some lessons from what's happening in other places. Right now in Iraq, for example, we know that elections didn't solve all the problems. But Haiti is going to need, as you've already suggested, long-term commitment from Canada and from the whole international community. They're going to need an independent judiciary. They're going to need a country where the rule of law is

supreme. They're going to need a strong justice system. They're going to need a parliament that elected officials can sit down in to rebuild a country that is fragmented. They're going to need a depoliticized military and a depoliticized police force.

This brings me to my question. Minister Pettigrew said Canada has already taken a major role in training the national police force. Just this past week the United States has said they're going to lift the embargo on guns to Haiti, because the police force is being outgunned, outsourced. One man's propaganda is another country's facts.

My main question is, in the long term, if Canada were going to choose one or two places where they are going to make a real difference—we're working now to train the police force—where can Canada take a lead? In the IPS we recognized we can't be everything to every country around the world, but Haiti is one where we should be able to make a difference. What is the main thing Canada can do in the long term?

• (1100)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Pettigrew.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I absolutely agree that Haiti is the place where Canada should be involved. It is in our hemisphere. It is the poorest nation in our own hemisphere, so I think we have to pay a great deal of attention. It also speaks one of our national languages, and there's an important community here. So my view is it is imperative that we be there.

I believe that on the governance front we can make a substantial contribution because of the credibility we have there—governance in terms of the institutions, the judicial process. We've been investing—CIDA has been doing great work. The European Union has followed up in the rebuilding, the reconstruction, and the organization of tribunals there, because justice needs to have some kind of appearance to be credible to the population. You should have seen the state of some of the tribunals there. It does not inspire people to respect justice very much. This is the kind of thing we have been doing.

Before I turn to my colleague, Monsieur Coderre, I just want to tell you that it is not because someone has been elected that he respects democracy and the rule of law. Clearly, elections are a must for the progress of the people. It is an important element of the reconstruction of that country, and one we cannot miss. But we have to be very careful here in saying that Aristide had been elected. He had been elected, but you have to respect the rule of law; you have to respect your citizens. This is something in which our country, with, as you know, the responsibility to protect, wants to play a certain role with the United Nations reform—which we will probably have as a committee the opportunity to discuss, I would think, with the United Nations General Assembly.

Monsieur Coderre.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I have one little thing. There is a rumour that Mr. Aristide may even be running for this election. There are some who are saying that they only want Aristide.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: No, he's not.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Is that for certain?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: He's not running.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Coderre.

[English]

Hon. Denis Coderre: First of all, Mr. Sorenson, don't ever again mix up Iraq and Haiti. It's not the same situation. Please don't do that.

Secondly, if you remember, as an organization, OAS condemned the way Aristide had been elected at the time. After all, on the atrocity in Haiti, of course, there's blood on both hands. It's not as if it was only the fault of Aristide, but for the time that Aristide was there, the second time, we have tons of examples of what he should have done and what he didn't realize.

Coming back to what Canada should do, and what Canada is already doing through La Francophonie, OAS, and the United Nations, of course, in a bilateral way, CIDA is doing a tremendous job on that. We're already getting involved in governance. We're already working on the judicial process. I recall that Judge Louise Otis is already working on a specific plan on the judicial process, with courts and stuff like that. We are really involved.

Of course, Canada cannot do everything, but we have tremendous expertise on governance education. The credibility of Canada, as you know, and the specific and very special relationship between Canada and Haiti are also an added value to resolve the situation.

We don't have what we call *un contentieux historique*. We're not colonialist. We're not imperialistic. Because of that, when we look at them, we can look them straight in the eyes and we can make a lot of difference. It's a learning process. That's why democracy is something that you have to entertain all the time. It's not as if we have an election and that's it. But clearly, with our credibility, we help them to understand.

We have that kind of sensitivity to the Asian people because one of the greatest diasporas in our country is the Asian diaspora. I think it's important to mention that for the first time we had a conference with Minister Pettigrew and Minister Carroll on the diaspora. They are clearly part of the solution to make that kind of difference.

It's not only a matter of the institution. It's also a matter that the people will have to take their own responsibility.

• (1105)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

Before closing, I have two questions to ask you. MINUSTAH's current mandate will expire on June 24, as you mentioned, Mr. Minister, and it will no doubt be redefined.

Here's my first question. It appears from listening to you that the current mandate is inadequate and should be expanded. Is Canada currently taking part in developing an expanded MINUSTAH? If so, how?

You also mentioned that a registration campaign, a census as such, is currently under way for the municipal election on October 9 of this year and the presidential election on November 13 and 18. My second question is this: what role is Canada playing in that census of the citizens of Haiti?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: I'll answer your first question by telling you that the UN Security Council is renewing MINUSTAH's mandate. Its meeting will be held on June 24. Canada has informed the Security Council and a number of its members that it is in favour of a reinforced mandate. We're in favour of increasing the number of people who are part of it and of providing an incentive for playing an active role across the country, particularly in Port-au-Prince.

Jean-Pierre Kingsley is very much involved in the elections. A Canadian woman is also directing the team from the Organization of American States that is in the country. I can therefore assure you that we are on the spot.

Mr. Coderre can give you a progress report. There's some delay, but progress has been made in recent days.

Hon. Denis Coderre: A week ago, there were only 27 to 33 registration offices, and slightly less than 125,000 persons were registered. Next Thursday, it will be announced — this has been promised by the CEP, the Organization of American States and the United Nations — that half of the 464 registration offices planned will be ready. We estimate there will be more than 350 offices by the end of June.

Circumstances now are conducive to the registration of political parties. Lavallas has also announced that he wants to work to ensure registration is done. I would emphasize that this registration won't be solely for election purposes: this national identity card will have an impact on civil governance. Things are being done in this area. There will be observers.

Canada, the European Union and the United States have invested the necessary money in the electoral process; Canada, in particular, has invested more than US\$50 million. With Mr. Kingsley and the observation procedure, we're convinced that everything that must be done in technical terms will be done. We're also relying on Canadians to play a prominent role, particularly in observation. CARICOM has sent a special group of experts from Jamaica.

All the players really want elections and are working toward them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pettigrew, Messrs. Coderre, Khokhar and Lapointe, for appearing before the committee this morning.

The meeting is adjourned.

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