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Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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● (0905)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Good morning. Welcome to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. We're continuing our study of the International Policy Statement.

Our first witness this morning is, from the Africa Canada Forum, Mr. Denis Tougas, Coordinator of the Table de concertation sur la région des Grands Lacs africains. Welcome, Mr. Tougas. We'll listen to your presentation.

Mr. Denis Tougas (Coordinator, Table de concertation sur la région des Grands Lacs africains, Africa Canada Forum): Thank you, Mr. Patry.

I represent the Africa Canada Forum, but I come more specifically from a group called Entraide missionnaire, which has been in existence for roughly 40 years and which represents 90 Francophone Catholic missionary communities or sections of those communities in Canada. For more than 15 years now, Entraide missionnaire has hosted an issue table on the African Great Lakes region, which includes Rwanda, Burundi and, especially, the Congo. The Africa Canada Forum represents some 40 organizations from across Canada that work in one way or another, directly or jointly, with Africa.

In reading the International Policy Statement, we tried to find Africa's place in it. What place will the African continent occupy when this statement is implemented? With your permission, we'll share with you some of our concerns. Ms. Lina Holguin, who is here with me, is co-president of the Africa Canada Forum.

The IPS now defines three priorities for Canada: the security of Canadians, prosperity for the country and the responsibility of states toward citizens and other countries. In our view, these priorities should give rise to an articulated, integrated and comprehensive policy on Africa, slightly different from what emerges from a reading of the five documents. We noticed that Africa does not have an important place in the development component, or elsewhere. In our view, that's a deficiency. We believe it's due in large part to a restrictive definition of security, but also to Canadian government policy decisions concerning Africa that date back to the early 1990s.

As a priority, security is defined in terms of responses to a threat against Canada, at the expense of its international obligations on the promotion and defence of human rights and the fight against poverty. We think this risks masking the problems we encounter in the field, in Africa. And yet the security issue — which is very important for Canada and a priority for the Canadian government — shouldn't mask a flagrant situation.

I'll give you a few figures, but I won't assail you with statistics on Africa. You're no doubt aware of them, and I will only cite the most recent statistics. Africa differs from the other continents in the number of conflicts taking place there, especially by the number of victims resulting from those conflicts. According to the last Human Security Report, published three weeks ago, at the start of the new millennium, the number of victims on the battlefields of sub-Saharan Africa was greater than that of all other regions of the world combined.

This should put Canada's interest in its security in the context of global security as a whole. Another stunning statistic is that Africa also has the highest rate of forced displacement in the world: 13 million people are displaced in their own countries, and there are 3.5 million refugees on the continent. That directly affects the other priorities previously stated by Canada: the responsibility to protect and human security. I believe the African continent should be of primary interest to the Canadian government in this regard.

As stated in the document, the emphasis placed on failed and fragile states in the African context is entirely welcome. However, the IPS does not go far enough in analyzing the deeper causes of the fragility of states. Instead it offers a reading of that fragility from the standpoint of the threat and risks it entails for Canada's security and deflects attention away from the international community's responsibility for human rights and social justice for all.

It also diverts attention from other important factors that exacerbate the fragility of states, such as the exploitation of natural resources which fuels conflict, the proliferation of small arms, irresponsible investment that no one realizes and restrictions placed on humanitarian assistance.

To show its commitment, the Canadian government has undertaken to create two mechanisms in order to contribute to efforts made on the issue of failed and fragile states. You're familiar with them. They are the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force and the Global Peace and Security Fund.

We feel these mechanisms are a step in the right direction as regards the coordination of resources for Canadian intervention in conflict situations. They are consistent with the international trend, as Great Britain and the United States have done the same. We view this as a major step forward.

This so-called 3D Approach, with which you're entirely familiar, raises two concerns for us. The first is reinforced ties between humanitarian aid and military actions. Some of our members are humanitarian aid organizations that see some danger in this. In Africa, in the Congo, we've seen examples in which humanitarians were mistaken for targets because they were surrounded by military personnel who had to protect them. We still believe that a separation should be established between military operations and humanitarian aid operations. There should be much greater emphasis on that.

Another concern stems, I repeat, from the emphasis placed on the statement of the threat that failed and fragile states represent first of all for Canada. This was the justification for establishing the Global Peace and Security Fund and the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force. As a result of these two programs, our own security interests will take precedence over the needs of other people.

I would like to draw your attention to the situation that has now prevailed for more than 15 years. Canadian troops no longer intervene in Africa, or virtually so, with few exceptions. General Dallaire no doubt told you that once or twice, even a number of times. I want to emphasize it. Since the collapse of Somalia, Canadian troops have rarely been seen on the African continent. If my memory serves me, the only other intervention was Operation Artemis, in Ituri, Congo, where Canada provided some 60 military personnel.

Canada now prefers to fund operations headed by the African Union and its stabilization forces. The African Union itself anticipates that its stabilization forces will be operational and effective in 2010. We think it's a good idea to support it, but there will be limits to that support and to what those forces can do. You no doubt know better than I that the Sudan will assume the presidency of the African Union next year. We feel that will create a certain problem.

In the early 1990s, Canadian troops preferred to intervene elsewhere in the world. Will this new International Policy statement confirm Canada's — I won't say abandonment — but at least loss of interest in Africa? In our view, there are two very important tests for determining the effectiveness or validity of the principles that will guide that task force. The first will be the intervention in the Sudan, and the second that in the Congo.

Two days ago, I spoke to the Deputy Director at Foreign Affairs, Mr. Denis Chouinard, about Central Africa. I asked him how these two instruments would intervene in the African Great Lakes region. He answered that he himself was working actively toward having the African Great Lakes and the Congo included. He was unable to tell us whether his efforts had been successful or what criteria will be adopted to determine where to intervene.

● (0910)

The Report of the Commission for Africa, which was drafted by the team from Great Britain before the last G8 meeting, strongly emphasized this fact. In addition, the policy statement is silent on the extent of unexploited resources in Africa, which, for Canada, will represent opportunities for prosperity for decades to come. I'm telling you nothing new here. A great many Canadian businesses, particularly prospectors, will not be reluctant to set up in failed or fragile states, where high risks are also synonymous with bigger profits. Here we're talking about businesses seeking rapid growth, better known as juniors. Canada is a champion when it comes to this type of business. That's how, in recent decades, we've seen small and medium-size Canadian businesses involved in bloody conflicts. As you know, Angola, the Sudan, Congo, Sierra Leone and others that I've no doubt forgotten.

Now I'll quote a passage from an OECD document that was published last week. It states:

> The high risks encountered in these areas (as a result of corruption and human rights abuses) create a need for greater care to ensure that the business complies with the law and international instruments in effect.

We think these are significant facts to which the statement should attach greater importance. In its report on mining and developing countries and corporate social responsibility, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade clearly outlined the problems involved. You are part of the committee; so you all supported and signed that report. I won't dwell on the fact. I want you to know, however, that the Africa Canada Forum supports that report and the recommendations it contains.

We think that Canada has an obligation to set out guidelines for actions by Canadian corporations to ensure that those activities do not help cause, maintain or prolong conflict. The government thus should grant its political and financial support only to businesses that have proven to be socially responsible and have complied with international human rights standards.

We noted that, in its response to your report, the government hid behind the argument that there's a lack of international consensus on legislation. We'll be there when round tables are organized to discuss that report. We think this is a red herring. Despite this lack of international legislation, other countries have not hesitated to take certain initiatives. Canada should adhere to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, which have been adopted by the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, the Netherlands and Norway have also given them their support. There's also Great Britain's Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the "Publish what you pay" campaign, which we think is producing tangible results, at least in Angola. Thank you.

● (0915)

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

Mr. Sorenson.

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Did you want to add to that, Lina?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lina Holguin (Co-President, Africa Canada Forum): I simply want to make three points. We think it's very important that Canada sign an international treaty on control of the small arms trade. There will be a UN conference on this in June 2006. It would be very important for Canada to be able to announce at that conference that it will sign that international treaty on arms control.

My second point concerns Canada's public development assistance. We think it should be allocated solely for the elimination of poverty. We would like legislation to be passed for that purpose. My third point concerns the 0.7 percent. We hope the Canadian government will meet that commitment to fighting poverty.

Thank you.

● (0920)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Welcome to the foreign affairs and international trade committee in Montreal.

As you've already stated, we have spent some time discussing this international policy review. We have spoken with many different groups and many different agencies whose focus is on countries around the world and many who are looking at it from just a Canadian perspective.

I have about three or four questions, and I may wait for a second round on some of them. But on one of your last statements, Professor, you said that the IPS says very little about resources, and what you wanted to see in the IPS was something that would show that we're giving political and financial support to groups that have shown themselves responsible.

As you know, one of the directions the IPS points us in is that we're going to focus on basically 25 countries. A lot of the NGOs that were doing very good work in Africa and in other parts of the country perhaps won't be funded to the degree that they have been in the past. Maybe you can comment a little bit about that and expand on it.

The other thing is, when we talk about poverty, whether it's individually or even in Canada, or corporations or countries, some countries are impoverished for very good reasons, and some countries prosper for very good reasons. I fully endorse your view that we need to support countries that need help and we need to do everything we can to end corruption, to attain good governance. But then on the other hand, when people are starving to death, we need to feed them. How do we form a policy that has this type of balance?

I'm not one to believe that if we just throw money at problems they disappear. In fact, we've thrown money at some countries where there has been poor governance and corruption, and it's never got to the people who really needed it.

So it's a dilemma. How do you not reward poor governance, poor practice, poor treatment of the people by the people in power? How do you attain maximum results from the efforts that we put forward into some of these countries, especially some of the countries in Africa?

And I'll tell you, I really respect groups like yours that are looking beyond our own boundaries to a continent that needs help. I had a delegation of people come from the Congo this last week and explain some of the things that are happening there, with Uganda and some of the concerns the Congo has. We haven't even talked about AIDS today—South Africa, countries that could lose 25% of their population over the next few years. How can we ever expect that an economy is going to flourish and prosper when we have a plague like AIDS that's like wildfire going through their country? Should some of our dollars, our money, be much more focused to the problem of AIDS, to the problem of poverty? It's all so intertwined.

Maybe you could comment on some of my reflections there.

The Chair: Mr. Tougas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: Thank you.

Lina Holguin can help me answer these many questions.

I think people will applaud the decision to focus assistance on 14 countries. Assistance has to be more effective. I believe we all agree on that point.

I didn't want to talk about development assistance because I wanted to focus on peace and security. However, you've raised the question and you're right. It's a very important point that concerns Africa in Canada's International Policy Statement.

You talk about balancing aid. What side should we focus on and how should we proceed so that the money gets to recipients and is used for development and progress?

One look at Canada's development aid policy shows that it is completely and directly consistent with the international consensuses of the major agencies, which have often resulted in failure. We nevertheless continue to impose these conditions, which often come under the heading of “good governance”.

The countries I know the best are the three countries of Central Africa. Those countries have now drafted their strategic poverty reduction frameworks. They're similar. They've now determined how they're going to develop, and we see very clearly that they're headed in the same direction.

They're going to “undergo” — I believe that's the right term — the same international policies on open markets and privatization of their social services. It's identical for the three of them, with specific differences for each country.

That means that, over time, we've imposed a single development model on Africa.

Canada would never have accepted that. Canada would never have developed if it hadn't determined its own development model.

I think that, even if we choose 14 out of the 25 countries, we at least have to keep some openness. We have to give the states, the countries some flexibility so that they can develop on their own, instead of promoting the setting of conditions.

Lina, would you like to add something?

● (0925)

[*English*]

Ms. Lina Holguin: You have mentioned the issue of AIDS, whether we should be concentrating on AIDS, and how this is a huge problem for the economy. It is, but I also think an enormous problem is unfair trade between Africa and the rest of the world, especially the rich countries. Unfair trade is also keeping African countries in poverty, or impoverishing them.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: When you talk about unfair trade, are you making reference to what's happening at the World Trade Organization now with the subsidies, to ways in which perhaps Africa hasn't been encouraged to develop its agricultural industry to the degree...?

Ms. Lina Holguin: I will make specific reference to the current negotiations of the World Trade Organization. There is a problem. In less than a month decisions are going to be taken. What is on the table could be a very bad deal for African countries, especially because the U.S., the European Union, and Canada are pushing these African countries to open their markets and lower their tariffs. Colleagues from Africa told us very recently in our symposium of the Africa-Canada forum that they use these tariffs to finance their limited services of education and health. Canada is currently pushing for this.

The second thing is the issue of dumping. Canada is supporting the end of dumping but is not being as loud as it should be on this issue.

Then there is the issue of services. Currently what is on the table is something that is going to oblige countries to privatize their services more and more. Canada is also pushing for that.

What is on the table right now is going to make things worse for Africa if the deal is signed. So we hope Canada will be more on the side of developing countries, because we are playing a double game here. We want to protect our supply management system, but at the same time we want other countries to open their markets. This is something to prevent.

● (0930)

When we're talking about concentration of aid, I mentioned that we need legislation in Canada to ensure that development aid from Canada goes specifically for poverty and is not going to be diverted to security. I think Denis talked a little bit about that. But if there is legislation, I think we can ensure that the funds from Canadian citizens will be well spent. There is not going to be an opportunity to say no, maybe we can also finance this, and maybe we can do things like we've been doing in Afghanistan.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I would probably disagree with you a little on the direction we need to go at the WTO. I'd like to see more market access, I'll be honest with you. I think it's in Canada's best interest, and it's in our agricultural best interest. I was more or less just concerned about how you thought that would play out, so I appreciate your being honest with me.

Let's go to the United Nations. The United Nations needs reform; we've talked about that. Our Prime Minister was very disappointed with the round in September dealing with reforms in the United Nations. I'm wondering if this whole United Nations being up in the air and in turmoil.... There are bills before the United States Congress right now to say that without certain reforms the United States should pull some of its funding.

When you talk about the 191 countries in the United Nations, the U.S. foots the bill for the United Nations to the tune of about 23%. Japan is second with 19%. That makes pretty close to 42%. That's a big chunk of how the United Nations is funded.

I think all of Canada, certainly the government and the opposition, was disappointed that all three areas—development, security, and other relief efforts—broke down. I'm wondering if you can expand a little bit on what's going on at the United Nations and how that affects Africa.

It's not a very big subject—the United Nations. You have the next 30 seconds.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Sorenson:You can have as much time as you want.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: What I know about UN intervention in the region I know best, Central Africa, is that MONUC, the United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is now the biggest mission in the world, with 18,000 soldiers. I repeat, according to the qualified research centres, the war in the Congo has had between 3.5 and 3.8 million victims. That's a lot. During that time, for the reasons you mentioned — funding, donor agencies and so on — the United Nations has discussed the matter at length to determine whether or not to increase its force. Two weeks ago, MONUC's strength was increased by only 300 military personnel, whereas the Secretary General asked that it be doubled to at least 25,000 personnel.

At the same time the crisis was taking place in the Congo, there were problems in Kosovo, where there were 77,000 foreign troops. In our view, there was something hateful on the part of the United Nations and the international community. General Dallaire said it was racism. I think it still characterizes the United Nations.

● (0935)

[*English*]

Ms. Lina Holguin: I will just add two things.

One is that the summit in September, yes, was a failure. The only thing that we think was a big achievement was on the issue of the responsibility to protect. That was a big achievement. We need now for countries that have engaged to continue to move on this issue, because it is the only achievement that we saw, the only positive thing that came out of the summit. The rest, on the MDGs—these issues that we wanted to see—was not there.

On the UN, in relation to the humanitarian system, at the summit again there was a hint, an engagement, of our need to reform this humanitarian system. It is not working, and there is talk of reforming the central emergency revolving fund. We hope Canada will contribute to this new fund, as proposed.

It's now going to be named the central emergency response fund. The UN is proposing that it be a fund of $500 million. Oxfam specifically thinks that the fund should be of $1 billion, because every year there is a shortfall of $1 billion or $1.2 billion or $1.5 billion. In the last four years we have been seeing this trend, and we need this fund there, available, to be able to respond efficiently. The UN has been doing what it can with the engagement of the members, but if we talk specifically of humanitarian response, the money hasn't been there.

We need this fund there. We need the humanitarian system to be reformed, and we need Canada to contribute to that fund. If Canada contributes to it, we have calculated it should be contributing $37 million to that fund. We hope we're going to hear that announcement on November 14 in the next General Assembly.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I have one quick question and then I'll go to my colleague across the way.

This morning in the news we see problems in Ethiopia and Eritrea again. A little article in *The Globe and Mail*—I think this morning—says there are 70,000 troops on the borders to Ethiopia and Eritrea. We have some UN people there now, trying to maintain a buffer zone, but it's looking like a conflict again is imminent. Do you have any comments on the whole problem?

We've had a motion—in fact, I don't know if it was one of our colleagues here who brought the motion to our committee—on Eritrea, encouraging Ethiopia to recognize the conflict a little more, perhaps. I'm not certain if our motion actually dealt with extra help or funding. I don't think it did.

Could you comment on the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: Before answering your question on Ethiopia, I'd like to add another comment on one of Canada's responsibilities within the United Nations and in Africa. Canada was a major promoter of the responsibility to protect. The African Union adopted it in its constitution. In the coming months, it will be included in a declaration of the principle of peace in the Great Lakes region following the International Conference on the Great Lakes region, which Canada strongly supports.

However, this responsibility to protect is still at the concept stage. Canada — and it can do this at little cost — should consider what the actual obligations related to that are, since, from what I know about the Great Lakes region of Africa, they're getting ready to include this in a treaty, and it will mean nothing. There are no obligations, and it's no better defined than that.

I think Canada could take on this mission, this important work in Africa with regard to Ethiopia and to...

● (0940)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Let me interrupt you there.

I think we're all very proud of the fact that the right to protect was a Canadian initiative. Without that in September, it would have been a complete waste. That was the one little gem that came out when we travelled to the UN. It was a Canadian initiative, and I'm sure we do need to follow it up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: We acknowledge it and we're very proud of it.

As regards Ethiopia and its neighbour, perhaps you saw the start of that war. It was meaningless. How was it possible? When the war started, the response of the African Union, which had not yet really been established, and of the international community was very minor. Those who had, and still have some influence on those two countries disregarded it, in my view. They left that UN mission, whose name I forget, in the field without it having effect — this is my analysis — on the behaviour and objectives of the two countries, which are not really democratic, from what I know about them.

I would remind you that, at the same time, there were demonstrations in the Ethiopian capital, following the election, to show that the election of the current president, who is on his third consecutive five-year mandate, made no sense and could not continue. The act of waging this war, as we've seen in the past, is also a way of mobilizing the population or the troops. That's all.

Do you have anything to add Lina?

Ms. Lina Holguin: No, I have nothing to add on the Ethiopia-Eritrea issue.

However, I'd like to make a brief comment on another conflict that's worsening, the one in Darfur.

[*English*]

Darfur is where Oxfam has its biggest program. We are working with 700,000 people. It's huge. The security is getting worse. The humanitarian work is getting very difficult to do.

Then, I have heard that Canada has contributed to the African Union. We contribute with helicopters. We contribute with other materiel for the African Union. Some of this materiel is stuck in Dakar. We have 105 armoured personal carriers supplied by Canada that are in Dakar. I see only 25 have been granted permits to enter Sudan.

When you hear this, you say we have contributed. We feel very proud when we hear the announcement of Prime Minister Martin about $170 million being given to the African Union. Then you hear that some of these vehicles and some of the things we have sent are not getting to the ground, and you hear about the....

I don't know if you followed the reporting that was done this past week by Sylvain Desjardins of Radio-Canada. He talked a lot—and this is all on the website—with the African Union and about the huge problem the African Union is having in terms of logistics, because they don't have the equipment; the equipment is stacked in Dakar. He also mentioned in this report that there are Canadian helicopters with beautiful Canadian flags that are not being used because they haven't been granted permits. We don't hear the strong voice of the Canadian government about this, either.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: What reasons do they give for not using the —

Ms. Lina Holguin: It's because the Sudanese government is blocking it. It's a bureaucratic issue.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: We don't have the safest helicopters in the world, but you'd think they would still take them.

Ms. Lina Holguin: I think this is an issue to follow, and this is the short information I have. Last week there was a lot of reporting done by Sylvain Desjardins of Radio-Canada on this issue. He has a lot of information; he just came back last week.

● (0945)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Tougas, I'd like to ask you a few brief questions.

You said that, in Africa right now, there were no peacekeeping troops from the northern countries — whites, you could say, as opposed to blacks — mainly at the request of the African Union. You know perfectly well that the African Union doesn't want to see people from the north trying to solve their problems. All the operational forces want — you mentioned that as well — is some logistical help. They want Canada and other northern countries to help them with operations so they can manage to operate and see how we can better help them.

You also said that we wanted to impose a single development model on the three central African countries. Lastly, you referred to the major agencies. Did you mean the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?

Mr. Denis Tougas: Precisely.

The Chair: I'd like you to elaborate a little on that point. You are familiar with Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. One witness who was here earlier told us about Burundi. In his view, if the international community does nothing in the next five years, we'll witness the same situation as we had in Rwanda. We'll have genocide in Burundi, probably involving the same players, if I may use that term.

I'd like to have your opinion on Burundi. If that testimony proves to be true, it's possible that the responsibility to protect doesn't simply mean that we must take military action, but that we must also engage in prevention, something we all want. I'd like to have your opinion on the subject.

In the same line of thinking, you said that the African Union was a good thing and that this was in the constitution, but that it was simply a concept. How can things develop so that's it more than a concept? As my colleague mentioned, we know that it's probably the only very positive thing that came out of the UN Millennium +5 Summit. It's nevertheless a major breakthrough, because three or four years ago, we never would have thought we could intervene in sovereign states. Now it's much further advanced. The Security Council will also be considering it, which will be a first.

How do you think an improvement can be made so that, based on the concept, real preventive action can be taken?

Mr. Denis Tougas: Thank you.

I should clarify certain points about the African Union's demands. The actions of the African Union, maintaining the stabilization forces, were carried out in two places, in Burundi and in Darfur. That's all. Its capabilities are limited to that. In Burundi, we saw its limits very soon. It was unable to leave the capital and it very quickly sought the support of the United Nations, which sent an observation mission from Burundi. We have to applaud and support the African Union, which wants to ensure its own security, but does it have the means to do so? Absolutely not.

There was some question of sending African Union troops to dislodge armies they call the Interhamwe. These were Rwandan militia that are still in eastern Congo and are causing casualties. The African Union has been on the spot for a month in an attempt to assess the strength they'll need. For the moment, it estimates the number of people it will need at 45,000. That's impossible; it makes no sense.

No whites — to use your term — have intervened since the Unites States withdrew following its disastrous defeat in Somalia and since that of Belgium after 11 Belgian troops were killed in Kigali. Since then, all the missions of the UN, not of the African Union, have consisted of military personnel from emerging countries: Pakistanis, Nepalese, Indians and Guatemalans, with the results that we've seen. The toughest intervention by whites came in Sierra Leone, when Great Britain went to rescue that mission, which was surrounded. They sent in 5,000 troops, and the matter was resolved in no time because they had the necessary infrastructure, but especially because they had the desire to do something.

The same thing happened in Ituri, in the Congo, which I know well, where there were massacres between the Hema and the Lendu. MONUC, the UN observation mission, didn't get there. When I visited people there, the Guatemalans told me they had been ordered by headquarters not to intervene if it was dangerous. Running the risk of being killed was out of the question. In view of these massacres and what was called genocide. France took control of establishing Operation Artemis, and Canada intervened. The situation in Ituri was completely changed in three months in the summer of 2003. Those troops went in and intervened where there had been massacres and fights. It completely changed the situation. I know it's false to say that the African Union doesn't want any white military personnel in the field. But I think it's more that countries like Canada aren't offering any.

I don't share the opinion of the last speaker on Burundi. There's currently a danger. For those who are monitoring the Great Lakes question, Burundi now gives the impression that a transition is going on and seems to be continuing. The country has been at war since 1993, and people are exhausted; they really can't go on. There's been a will and a concerted effort by people despite the threats of the various rebel groups that didn't want elections, with the results that entailed.

The danger now stems from the fact that the international community has promised aid of $1 to $1.5 billion, and that aid isn't coming. There's no economy in Burundi. You can't talk about gross domestic product or things like that; those statistics don't exist. It's a completely destroyed country.

There was a teachers' strike last summer. They haven't had any increases and they haven't been paid for months. In view of the threat that entails for the next election, Belgium immediately went in and paid those officials. The state can't afford to do so: there is no economy. That $1.5 billion that had been promised isn't coming, and that's why the situation is urgent.

I'll draw your attention to what your interlocutor no doubt tried to tell you, that in the area of development aid, Canada systematically refuses to set foot in Burundi. We have an energetic countrywoman on site, Ms. Carolyn McAskie. She is the head of the UN observation mission and has played an important role there in recent years. She doesn't hesitate to travel. Every time she comes to Canada, she goes around to the departments and asks why our government is not offering its support in Burundi. The answer is always the same: that Canada has chosen 14 countries and Burundi isn't one of them. She has used all the arguments possible, but Canada has developed a regional policy on the Great Lakes region, including Burundi.

● (0950)

We have to keep the peace. Rising tensions in one of the three countries could prolong the conflict or keep certain regions unstable. That's a situation that opens the way to all kinds of rackets since there are a lot of natural resources in the Congo. If there is one thing that we can do here today it's to urge Canada to continue giving its support to this political transition which, thus far, is giving these three countries a lot of hope.

As for discharging this responsibility to protect, much work remains to be done. Once again, we have to ask ourselves how it is possible to actually apply this concept from country to country. My experience tells me that the Great Lakes countries won't apply it. In view of the animosity among them and the prevailing intolerance of this national sovereignty, I think the populations should redevelop these concepts, which, in the medium term, will make it possible to carry out this responsibility to protect.

Linda, would you like to add something?

● (0955)

Ms. Lina Holguin: No.

[*English*]

The Chair: -Do you have any questions, Ms. Phinney?

Ms. Beth Phinney: Yes, I have a couple of questions to follow up on what was said near the beginning.

You talked about the importance of having some kind of guidelines for businesses going into African countries to perhaps exploit their resources, companies that want to get the natural resources, and that there should be some kind of international law. Was your next sentence that we should give financial assistance to companies that do follow, that do comply and are transparent in their businesses? It's a good idea. Was that your next sentence?

I'd like to know if you know of any countries that do this and how they would do this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: That's not what I meant, madam. I said that all the Canadian corporate support mechanisms should apply solely to those corporations that clearly show they take their social responsibilities seriously. However, you have to be able to assess that. My proposal tends in that direction. A number of businesses don't request support when they go into this kind of country: they don't want to be bothered by anybody. But this situation should stop.

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Phinney: I was just agreeing with the idea. I like the idea of incentives rather than punishment, so I thought maybe you were suggesting that there is a way we could give incentives to companies to do this.

I've been to Colombia, as I'd mentioned to Lina, and I've seen some and certainly heard about some of the damage that is done by companies that go into a country like Colombia or the African countries. If there were some way we could give them incentive to follow the rules and to follow human rights and so on, it would be good.

Lina, you were talking about development assistance. You said we should have legislation to decide the countries that Canada is going to support. Later on, you changed that slightly and said we should have legislation saying this money is only going to go towards poverty, not towards something else.

I was concerned when you said legislation to support the countries we pick. If we had legislation for that, then it would be hard to change the countries, because this year we might feel that this country needs support, and next year another country might need support. We wouldn't be able to change that very well if that were legislated in.

So what you really meant was that we should make sure the money goes for poverty and not for defence or something else, the military?

Ms. Lina Holguin: Yes, exactly. I didn't mention that we should have legislation to fix which country we were going to go to; it's legislation to make sure our development assistance is destined to the eradication of poverty.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Okay. Related to that, CIDA has recently decided that they would be helping only 25 countries. They've narrowed it down from whatever they were doing before to 25 countries. Do you see any problem with that? They have picked the 25 countries they're going to support.

Have you any comment about that?

Ms. Lina Holguin: On the concentration of aid, I think that to be scattered and trying to deliver all over the place is not a positive thing either. So the concentration is good. I'm not sure about whether the countries that were picked are the countries Canada should be supporting, if that's the right list of countries. Concentration is the issue, yes, but also to be able to do better what we know how to do.

When you look at the sectors, it's education, health...and I can't remember all of the sectors that are in the IPS. But one of the sectors that are lacking there is agriculture. There is not a specific reference to agriculture, or if there is, it's very limited. Agriculture is key in this case for African countries, where most of the population depends on agriculture as an activity.

I don't know if you have anything to add on this.

● (1000)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: I'd like once again to discuss your concern about Canadian aid and the fact that it should be allocated to poverty reduction. I think there's a danger here. As you no doubt know better than I, two years ago, an OECD committee wanted to develop a policy for expanding the kinds of expenditures that can be included in public development aid. Consideration was given at the time to all matters pertaining to police training and support for the security services that certain countries would need. Here's where the line becomes very thin. Police training and the restructuring of security services, for example, represent enormous amounts that can drain a large part of public development aid. As a result of the outcry from various countries and groups, the committee has slowed down its proceedings and postponed its report until next year, or even the following year.

I think that Lina's proposal, that Canada pass legislation so that its public development assistance is allocated solely to poverty reduction, is entirely appropriate. That would avoid us having to debate so that those public funds aren't allocated to security system restructurings. Very often, that kind of expenditure has no influence on poverty reduction.

The Chair: I'd simply like to tell you, before concluding...

[*English*]

I'm sorry, did you want a question too?

Ms. Beth Phinney: I just wanted to know what your comment was on the foreign affairs department, where trade was closely connected before. Now it seems to be separated from Foreign Affairs—Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Do you have any comment about that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: Not really.

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Phinney: Okay.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I was going through the paper here, and it lists where in the world Canadian energy companies are. We have 31 energy companies in Libya, 19 in Nigeria, 16 in Algeria, six in equatorial Guinea. In South Africa we have six, and in Chad, Sudan, Ghana, there are five and six in each one. Kenya has three, and Bangladesh.... Canadian companies are all throughout Africa, which I guess is good.

Part of what we want to do here in Canada is build legislation where Canadians can prosper both at home and abroad, but I'm wondering if there are problems that you see with any of these Canadian companies in some of these countries. We've had one Canadian company in the past over whose involvement in Sudan there was a great deal of protest; it's not there now.

Are any of these Canadian companies of concern that you know of?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: No. My concern isn't about the presence of Canadian businesses, in any field or developing country whatever. We can now quantify the problem. It's stated in the International Policy Statement that foreign investment, by Canada and the United States, among others, is a measure that makes it possible to improve Canadian cooperation. In the World Bank's view, international investment is a development driver for developing countries. But it turns out this argument is entirely false in many situations.

The most concrete examples I know of are those of Ghana and Tanzania. Significant Canadian investment has been made in the mining sector. But one study of the situation has shown, several years later, that neither the local communities nor the government benefited from those development investments. Canadian businesses, on the other hand, increased their revenues and developed.

That's the case of a small Canadian company established in the Congo called Anvil Mining. Entirely modest at first, it is now in the growth phase. In Canada, we can be happy when a Canadian company grows. However, when you're there and you see the situation and the country, you conclude that situation makes no sense. No visible result is coming from the development of that company. We wouldn't tolerate that kind of thing here.

● (1005)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Does it not give employment? Is that the diamond mine?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Tougas: Whether it's cobalt or other products, all companies offer jobs. However, I think that, having studied the World Bank review of the extractive industry, you saw that all the openings claimed that had been approved by all the African countries, at least those I know, made it considerably easier for the corporations to repatriate their profits. It also enabled them to keep jobs occupied by foreigners rather than people from the region. Ultimately, the profits are often insignificant. That's what we see in countries where the situation has been documented. So it hasn't had any positive effects.

This is a moral problem, not an economic problem related to Canada's prosperity.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Our next witness is going to be a specialist on mining activities in Africa.

[*Translation*]

I simply want to tell you that, in terms of development aid, Burundi isn't included in the 14 African countries in question; nevertheless, under bilateral agreements, one-third of the amounts could be available.

If Carolyn McAskie returns to Canada — and this applies to all UN people — we'd be very pleased to welcome her to this committee or to the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development.

Thank you very much for coming here this morning, Ms. Holguin and Mr. Tougas.

We'll now take a five-minute break.

● (1020)

The Chair: We'll resume our study of Canada's International Policy Statement. We welcome Ms. Bonnie Campbell, Director of the Groupe de recherche sur les activités minières en Afrique, as well as a professor and researcher from the Université du Québec à Montréal, Mr. Pierre Pahlavi, from the Institut des études internationales de Montréal, and Canada Research Chair in Canada Foreign and Defence Policies. Welcome.

We'll start with Ms. Campbell.

● (1025)

Ms. Bonnie Campbell (Director, Groupe de recherche sur les activités minières en Afrique): Thank you for this opportunity to present our brief.

I'm a professor of political economy, and I'll be basing my remarks on the interest in international development, particularly in Africa.

There is a widespread assumption that foreign investment in poor countries leads directly to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. That equation has inspired various Canadian initiatives designed in particular to support Africa. It forms the backdrop to the International Policy Statement we're discussing this morning.

As regards that assumption, it may be the case, but this equation is far from simple. In cases we've studied, and in certain circumstances, investment in natural-resource-rich countries can in fact fuel violent conflict and raise a barrier to economic and social development.

Considering the importance of Canadian mining companies in Africa, in late 2003, companies of all sizes listed on the stock exchange held interests in nearly 550 mining properties in 36 African countries. That number is constantly rising. Canada has the largest number of exploration companies in Africa in the world, ahead of the United States, Australia and Europe.

Considering as well our country's widely recognized global leadership in the mining industry and our government's commitments to taking part in sustainable development and poverty reduction in Africa, Canada, through its foreign policy, retains a unique responsibility to take part in overall governance in the exploitation of mining resources in Africa and elsewhere.

Acknowledgment of that responsibility was eloquently reflected in the fourteenth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in June 2005, which concerns mining in developing countries.

The government's response in October takes us several steps backward and can only be described as a withdrawal. That response is very disappointing.

The only explanation for this discrepancy between the serious recommendations and all the work that represented, and the lack of haste, the very short-term vision and touchiness of the government response would be a lack of genuine political commitment on the government's part in this crucial area, which is infinitely more important than all our aid budgets as regards human, economic and environmental impact and in terms of our international reputation.

To illustrate this lack of responsibility on the part of our government, I'll briefly mention three key issues in the government's response to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The first is the statement that primary responsibility for ensuring that companies act in compliance with domestic law falls, as the government responds, to host countries. Theoretically, it would be hard to disagree with that. It seems utterly reasonable and, ultimately, it should of course be the case.

However, we find the government's response utterly inadequate in light of the situation in the field, the findings of our research and, especially, of reports prepared and widely distributed by the multilateral financial institutions.

After some 20 years of structural arrangements, one of the key objectives of which was the withdrawal of government, cuts to government budgets and intervention, the World Bank itself now writes, in some of its reports on the mining industry in particular, that, after several years of budget cuts, government institutions... It was referring to Madagascar, but the same could be said of Guinea, Ghana, Mali and others. We've studied those countries. In fact, the World Bank acknowledges that, after those years of budget cuts, government institutions do not have the human and financial resources to comply with the law. The World Bank wrote that. It's hard to see how, in the circumstances, our government can say that responsibility falls to the host country.

As one may guess, as a result of this situation, responsibility for and monitoring of what goes on as well as compliance with standards are a sign to private operators, because local governments are unable to question those practices. In the long term, that responsibility should obviously fall to the local governments and communities concerned.

● (1030)

In that sense, we recommend that the government be much more careful in designing mining legislation reform. The current incentives, which are designed to stimulate private investment, are so generous that they may prove incompatible with economic and social development and environmental protection.

In Sweden, we published a series of studies that were cited last month by UNCTAD in documenting its work on the need to rethink the role of foreign investment. So there are a host of studies on the subject, and we must be careful in designing mining legislation reforms.

Second, we think it is imperative that the government acknowledge the long-term benefits associated with reinforcing the legitimacy and capability of African governments to enforce their own regulations and monitor compliance therewith. Canada should cooperate with local governments and the various players — private businesses, financial institutions and the NGOs — to mobilize the technical and financial resources the governments need to ensure the security of their own populations and development of their countries.

In this context in which states are becoming more fragile, the question of corporate responsibility and the OECD Guidelines arises. Let it be clearly stated: voluntary codes of conduct are not enough. As regards the OECD Guidelines, other countries, such as the Scandinavian countries — you talked about that earlier this morning — have proven to be much more dynamic in this respect than Canada, by calling, for example, for investigations in response to complaints received. Finland's National Contact Point was recently reinforced by the creation of an advisory committee consisting of representatives of business, unions and the NGOs. Sweden is much more active as well. The least that could be expected of Canada would be for it to commit to developing monitoring measures. Those measures should be effective and compelling, in the event of irresponsible social and environmental conduct or in the case of human rights violations. To do this, it would be appropriate to strengthen the role of the National Contact Point. That was Recommendation 3 of the standing committee's report.

Upon reviewing the International Policy Statement, we also recommend that the role and mandate of the National Contact Point be clarified, formalized and reinforced in order to guarantee its ability to act more effectively with respect to monitoring, evaluation and, if necessary, the introduction of corrective measures, in conflict areas.

The third issue I would like to raise concerns Canada's specific responsibility in conflict zones.

The issues concerning security and mining have been documented on numerous occasions, in particular in a very interesting reference in the December 2003 issue of the Extractive Industries Review. One of the recommendations is that the World Bank Group grant no support to businesses carrying on operations in conflict zones. The response by the Government of Canada in this area is highly disappointing. Canada suggests that social responsibility standards do not yet lend themselves — how long will we have to wait — "to the development of a complete set of international rules governing the activities of companies operating in conflict zones or weak states."

We're convinced that, as the Commission for Africa recommended for the OECD countries, Canada must shoulder its responsibilities in the development and implementation of clear and comprehensive directives for businesses operating in high-risk zones and that those directives should be incorporated in the OECD Guidelines.

In view of the major impact these issues will have on Canada's international reputation, we recommend that our National Contact Point submit a report to Parliament each year on complaints filed, investigations conducted and recommendations proposed. Our own parliamentary system must also operate in a transparent manner.

In addition, two-thirds of mining companies listed on the stock exchange are junior mining companies, and, according to Natural Resources Canada, their numbers are rising. Given the importance of those small companies, which are defined as having less than $4 million invested in exploration operations; given as well that those corporations are less subject to controls and less likely to provide public accounts than large companies; and given, lastly, that small corporations, almost by definition, tend to carry on their operations in high-risk zones, it is therefore necessary to put in place mechanisms to monitor Canadian businesses, particularly in conflict zones, and more particularly the operations of small mining companies.

● (1035)

This situation once again requires a clear commitment from the Canadian government to putting such mechanisms in place. To that end, we recommend that every business planning to invest to a country designated as a conflict zone should include in its risk assessment the potential impact of its presence, consequences for and impact on human rights and the humanitarian situation.

We now feel it is essential to have environmental impact. That took some time, but we have it.

As to the impact on the humanitarian situation and rights, I emphasize that these aspects form the subject of Recommendation 2 of the report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

In conclusion, contrary to what is suggested in the government's response to the standing committee's report, and I quote: "further developments in this area are necessary before the government could consider committing to the full implementation of this recommendation," we feel that Canada, as an active member of the international community and a member of the OECD, the World Bank and the IMF, must play a leadership role by shouldering the responsibilities that role imposes on it.

Considering the importance of the interests at stake, the point, contrary to what is suggested, is not just to promote the social responsibility of businesses operating outside Canada. Canada's international reputation today depends on our government's ability to express its willingness to monitor investments that it supports and encourages.

To that end, we ask that the well-thought-out and qualified recommendations of the report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be accepted as soon as possible. Lastly, we wish to emphasize that it is necessary that Canada's International Policy Statement clearly demonstrate and clarify Canada's commitment to this subject of prime importance.

If that had been the case, the type of response the government gave last month to the standing committee's report would have been out of the question. Corporate responsibility, regardless of how important it is, should not mask that of our own government.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Campbell.

Mr. Pahlavi.

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi (Researcher, Institut d'études internationales de Montréal, Canada Research Chair in Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy, Université du Québec à Montréal): Good morning and thank you.

I'm going to talk to you about public diplomacy. This is a branch of foreign policy that was dismantled, stored away and forgotten following the Cold War. It's now coming back to the forefront with an increasing number of decision-makers and people responsible for foreign policy who feel it has become an essential factor in the international context of the information revolution and economic interdependence.

It is particularly attractive to the small and middle powers because it holds out the promise of offsetting their relative weakness, compensating for their lack of raw power, acquiring an international influence and playing a role that they could not acquire relying solely on their resources as economic and military powers.

Among those powers, Canada is beginning to consider public diplomacy not only as a third pillar, which has long been done, and as a means of spreading its values outside Canada, but also as a way to serve its strategic objectives in the international arena. This, in particular, is what appears from a reading of Canada's International Policy Statement.

I would recall that public diplomacy, or mass diplomacy, is the branch of foreign policy that embraces all cultural, educational, information and telecommunications programs and that is designed to influence foreign public opinion in order to create a context conducive to achieving foreign policy objectives. In a way, public diplomacy is the alter ego of conventional diplomacy. To paraphrase Clausewitz, it could be said that public diplomacy is the extension of conventional diplomacy by other means, those means being satellites, the Internet, television and participation by foreign allies from the cultural sphere.

Why then do we have a greater need for Canadian public diplomacy than we did five or 10 years ago? Canadian mass diplomacy responds to our recognition of the fact that a new context has developed, to the development of information exchange and to means of communication, NICTs, new information and communications technologies.

We realize today that we're living in a hypermedia environment saturated by images and information. It's a context in which foreign policy increasingly depends on foreign perceptions and public opinion. In this context, Foreign Affairs feels that it is now fundamentally important, and I quote: “to pursue an active public diplomacy program that ensures Canada is better heard, seen and understood” in the world.

Thus far, all initiatives undertaken by Canada to defend its international image have proved beneficial and satisfactory. Canada today enjoys a positive image in the world, and the strategy of defending a cause in the media in the area of public opinion has proven to be productive. In particular, successes have been attributed to it, such as the prohibition against anti-personnel land mines, the assistance provided to put an end to the use of child soldiers and creation of the International Criminal Court.

Despite past results, we now realize that efforts in this area are not enough. In particular, according to Canada's International Policy Statement:

> To be successful, our foreign policy requires more than good intentions, creative ideas or reliance on a solid reputation [...] Our strategy is to develop a diplomacy that is adapted to the globalized world [...] a more robust and aggressive public diplomacy strategy, to ensure that Canada's voice and ideas are clearly heard and understood, enabling us to build the coalitions we need to achieve our goals.

What are the actual objectives assigned to public diplomacy? The first is to foster the North American partnership, that is to say simply to develop Canada's image to the American public, and to prevent a psychological gap from developing between the two nations.

In particular, Foreign Affairs has undertaken to reinforce Canada's public diplomacy capability, in particular by ensuring that the United States knows Canada better and by better representing Canadian ideas, culture and innovation. In concrete terms, the idea is to act on opinion-makers and key decision-makers, in addition to culture, educational and telecommunications programs, by targeting U.S. public opinion in general.

● (1040)

It appears from a reading of Canada's International Policy Statement that Foreign Affairs Canada is mainly emphasizing the utility of public diplomacy in the field of security. It would appear that public diplomacy is being considered as a more appropriate tool than conventional approaches, based on exclusive use of brute military and economic force to adequately address new challenges and new environmental, social and ideological threats.

In particular, it is now considered that public diplomacy can be useful in the prophylactic treatment of natural disasters and their consequences for human security. The idea is to provide the populations concerned with the necessary information to help them react at the appropriate time to these disasters in order to reduce their consequences.

Canada acts, in particular through intermediaries in the field like CIDA and the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, CFLI. Canada also acts together with NATO, through programs such as [*Inaudible - Editor*] which pools technological capabilities to assist in anticipating and better addressing environmental disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes and floods.

Similarly, it is now considered that public diplomacy may be useful in managing crises and humanitarian tragedies caused by failed and fragile states. Once again, the idea here is to take action on socio-cultural variables and determinants that heighten these crises, in order to provide assistance for the development of local governance and the establishment of the rule of law.

Public diplomacy is also considered as a tool in the fight against terror. Various programs, university exchanges, media initiatives and dialogues with civil societies are intended to inform populations that might be subject to fundamentalist influences. The idea is to take preventive action on psychological and ideological climates that foster the development of terrorist networks. At Foreign Affairs Canada, it is considered that this is the first line of defence against terrorist recruitment.

To a lesser degree, public diplomacy is also considered as a massive weapon of persuasion in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As the U.S. Department of State notes, the mass diplomacy mission in this field is to assist in promoting and reinforcing international standards and principles underlying the various non-proliferation regimes. Canada appears to have opted for a kind of multiform public diplomacy.

● (1045)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Excuse me, the interpretation is having a hard time keeping up to you, so perhaps you could slow down a little bit. It's very good, but we want to make sure we get it on the English side too.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Do you have a copy of it?

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: I have it, yes, but not here.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Oh, okay. Just slow down. I own an auction company, and you're going like some of my auctioneers—very fast.

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: That's my French.

[*Translation*]

Canada thus appears to have opted for flexible and multiform public diplomacy. It conducts this multilateral public diplomacy in international action forums such as the UN, UNESCO and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

This is what Italian specialists call a "bureaucratic-entrepreneurial" public diplomacy, that is to say a decentralized and delocalized public diplomacy that reduces Foreign Affairs Canada's leadership to a minimum level of coordination and that subcontracts program implementation as much as possible to private foreign mediators. This then is privatized public diplomacy.

Canada has previously acquired the habit of working with independent organizations. The idea is to act with these international players because foreign publics are increasingly skeptical about anything that can be considered as government programs. Consequently, Canada acts with independent players, such as the Canada Corps, CIDA, independent players like Rights and Democracy, the Parliamentary Centre, Elections Canada and the International Development Research Centre. Even more interesting is the fact that Canada has also begun to work with international stakeholders, by supporting free media and also helping internationally moderated political coalitions.

This privatization has its benefits, and Canada must move ahead in this direction. It offers benefits because it makes it possible to take advantage of the complementary nature of government structures and of the contributions of these foreign stakeholders. It also makes it possible to take advantage of the field experience of those foreign stakeholders, to take advantage of their expertise and, even more important, of their credibility. We know that British public diplomacy is carried out, in particular, with the aid of international stakeholders like Amnesty International and Oxfam. Canada must also get used to working with those international stakeholders, who enjoy credibility in international public opinion.

Now let's move on to recommendations. Canada is making enormous efforts in public diplomacy. However, that diplomacy is being carried out in the context of an underfunded structure inherited from the Cold War era. First of all, there is an urgent need to provide Canada's public diplomacy with the budget capability its operation requires. Canada's public diplomacy is called the third pillar, but it is still the poor cousin of Canadian foreign policy. It accounts for only eight percent of a total budget of $1.7 billion. By comparison, Australian invests 10 percent of its foreign policy budget in public diplomacy, Great Britain 27 percent, Germany 33 percent and France 37 percent. U.S. public diplomacy alone has a budget equivalent to Canada's entire foreign policy budget.

I will submit the document containing more specific recommendations, but there are four points that I must emphasize.

First is the development of decision-making leadership, that is to say a specialized public diplomacy agency, along the lines of the model...

● (1050)

[*English*]

Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy

[*Translation*]

that exists in the United States.

It's also important to develop a specialized independent program within Foreign Affairs Canada in the field of public diplomacy, specialized agencies in the educational and cultural field and specialized telecommunications agencies. The British act through the BBC, and Qatar has acquired extraordinary influence through Al-Jazeera. Canada still does not have a global communications agency.

It is also important to develop mechanisms for forging alliances with international partners and for involving telecommunications, marketing and public relations experts.

Lastly, it is also fundamentally important to put in place a public diplomacy evaluation program. Without an evaluation program, we will not know whether public diplomacy is an appropriate program. So we urgently need to put in place this measurement and estimation system.

In the coming years, the challenge will therefore be to incorporate a public diplomacy worthy of the name in the new Canadian foreign policy architecture. Together with the reconstruction of decision-making leadership and the structural reform of foreign affairs, the reinforcement of the third pillar...

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Slow down a bit so they can catch up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: Canadian public diplomacy is simply called the third pillar. It's an extrapolated, exaggerated name. Canadian public diplomacy virtually does not exist; it should be developed. In a world of images, in a world of hypermedia, in a world where what goes on in the hearts and minds of seven billion individuals increasingly counts, public diplomacy could become a major asset for Canada.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Your final remarks are very interesting. A few years ago, that was the subject of one of our recommendations in a committee report on Canada's relations with the Muslim world. We wanted Canada to be a greater presence through the CBC or another medium, because we had noted that its presence was highly inadequate. So we approve of that last recommendation.

[*English*]

Mr. Sorenson, it's yours now. Slowly.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I've found today very fascinating.

I'm not certain that you two agree on everything—not that you have to.

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: You're from the same building, same university, different—

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: Actually, we should have met before, but I'm newer.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I have two questions, then we'll have a couple of rounds, and maybe each of you would answer them differently; I am not certain—maybe two statements.

To Ms. Campbell, how much can we really expect our companies to make a social impact in these countries that were involved? It's great in principle. In principle, I think I would believe it as well.

We have 53 Canadian companies in China. And yes, on occasion our government speaks to China about human rights concerns. We talk about violations, but how can we expect those companies to really make an impact in China, for example, when we look at other little countries that we've talked about in Africa—and I know that is the area you are mainly making your references to—and we seem to think that Talisman should have been able to be a little more proactive. I have heard this before. Talisman is out of Sudan now, but how can we really have expected them to make a difference?

Many of the people who are in these countries are living there and working there with high security, in fear, living in compounds. We send CIDA money to many of those countries, but I guess it's one thing to talk about making the corporations or the companies responsible for the way political activity is carried out in that country, but I am not sure how realistic it is.

M. Pahlavi, Canada has had tremendous success in mining and in oil production, in the tar sands. In fact, I heard a statistic—but I am not certain if it is true—that if Alberta's exports alone were compared to other countries, Alberta would be the sixth largest exporter in the world. I am not certain if that is true, but I think it is pretty close. It may not be exporting; it might be the oil that's there, because we still have a lot of it in the tar sands.

But this success we have had in Canada over the last 20 to 25 years has really opened the door for Canadian companies abroad. We've seen many companies, junior companies, senior companies, that have prospered big time in oil and gas. That prosperity we applaud. The profits, we think, are a positive that grants every person the initiative to get out there and try to succeed.

As you correctly stated, our government's role should be to build an economic environment where there is prosperity, here and abroad.

We have consulates, we have ambassadors, but we also have trade commissioners in some countries. Do you view these trade commissioners, whose primary role is that of enhancing trade and networking between Canadian companies to certain countries, as the ones who could perhaps initiate the impact statements that Ms. Campbell talks about? Could those trade commissioners who are going to be active in those countries be the ones who say, listen, here are the human rights concerns we have, here are the environmental concerns? I think we have an opportunity in the Congo and an opportunity in Libya. You talk about diplomacy, but maybe some of these individuals are the ones who should be looking at some of the responsibilities that may go with development in those countries.

Perhaps you would have a few comments on that. And Ms. Campbell, do you have anything about the WTO that you would like to say?

● (1055)

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: I do.

The Chair: That is all for now.

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: I'll respond to your question by dividing it into three parts.

I think it's very important, first of all, as a preface to distinguish between the situations in countries like China and African countries, because the capacity to receive and benefit from foreign investment is quite different. My first response to your question is to raise the question, under what conditions can profit-making strategies contribute and reinforce strategies of development defined by the countries? There's a lot of thinking on this. These are not easy answers, but we know much more than it appears.

The strategies of investors must go in a sense that reinforces and fits into development strategies. These strategies must not be simply short term and determined by some initial or outside strategy, they must fit into a more long-term developmental strategy. This can be a starting point for a lot of thinking.

What I'm saying is that when we're talking about what contribution can be made, we are now talking about what development strategies are being either reinforced or not reinforced by the presence of foreign investment. I refer you to the recent UNCTAD study, September 2005, a very good study on rethinking foreign investment that comes up with a lot of very key questions and recommendations.

About the role of companies, please, I do not want to be misunderstood. Companies are not responsible for certain political activities of certain countries. In fact, as one recent interpreter said, corporate responsibility actually needs to be radically redefined. Companies are being asked to do all sorts of social things. Companies should not be providing all sorts of social infrastructure. It's for companies to get back to the business of doing business. States need to be responsible to build legitimacy, because they're able to give services and this is how they become accountable.

● (1100)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I agree with you there, except I've had people come to my office and sit down and talk about the atrocities that are happening, and rightfully so, in Sudan, in Darfur. We had an oil company there. They built this infrastructure so they could access their development there, and now these rotten guerillas are using that roadway that their company built, and indirectly they're involved in it. That's what we hear.

We come back here to this country and we hear this kind of stuff, and I think sometimes we expect too much from these people, from our corporations that are investing, providing jobs, doing everything they can in some of those countries. I don't think any of them want to see human rights violations, but then when I come back here I get lobbied in my office in Ottawa about a road that somebody built that's being used by the wrong people in their country.

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: I agree with you. What we have to try to clarify are the ground rules, and this is the reason for the concern of the extractive industry's review and the concern of the Blair commission on no investment in zones of conflict. We have to give ourselves and the companies very good guidelines so that companies don't go into those countries.

I am most concerned, as we speak this morning, because two days ago we received a Reuter's announcement that a company whose vice-president I've spoken with, who is a very nice person, Tenke, now thinks it is the time to go into Katanga with Phelps Dodge in a very big cobalt/copper exploitation, and this, the article from Reuter's continues to say, is in the region of Katanga. We heard earlier this morning of what's going on in the Congo. The article concludes, "...which is rich in gold and copper and threatened by armed groups". Why is a Canadian company, on September 2, going in? Does it not know about the guidelines? Are there no guidelines? This is the problem we're trying to raise. Of course, there is interest in getting returns.

I can now move on to another point. Corporate responsibility has to be radically redefined, we need transparency in bids, transparency in revenue flows, banks have to get back to the question of being more transparent. That's what corporate responsibility is about. It is not about doing schools, roads, health services, because when companies pull out, people have no water and health services.

What is happening in Africa, where states have been weakened, is that there is not the possibility to be able to ensure that the investment flows are going to reinforce long-term development strategies. Let me give you one final example of what's going on in western Africa.

The idea we are being told by our government is that foreign investment is going to produce growth and reduce poverty. I'm working for Oxfam right now, doing a big research study on what's going on in Burkina Faso and in Mali. These countries are cotton producers, but because of the situation in the cotton sector—and this bring us to the WTO—these countries have been going into gold production, and gold has now surpassed cotton in export value.

What has happened is that in Mali and Burkina Faso—and Burkina Faso is going the same route—there has been legislation brought in to attract foreign investment. Foreign investment in gold has come in. The result is the creation of 3,000 jobs. Cotton produced three million jobs. The results of this is also a dismantling of the cotton companies, because of the kinds of reforms that were introduced, the privatization of the cotton companies, which had been doing very well, and it was in the cotton zones where poverty was being reduced.

I won't give you much more, except to say that the MDGs are now the framework in which our PRSPs, the strategies of positive reduction, are being put forward. What's happening in these two countries? In Mali in 1999, the country was 153rd on the human development index. Mali is a good performer, according to all the indices, but in 2002 Mali slipped to become the 174th country on the human development index. Burkina Faso was 159th. Burkina is now 175th. Burkina Faso's cotton, parastatal, was extremely effective, cost-effective low production. It has been dismantled, and the country has been told to produce gold.

There is no control over the rate at which gold production is being exploited now in Mali. In fact, what is happening is called *écrémage* a skimming off, and companies are able to finish the exploitation and close in the period that is the period of tax exoneration, five years. Then they leave. And they leave, as in one place, Syama...there are no schools, there's no health services, there's no water when they leave. That's what social responsibility of corporations does. If it's misplaced, when they pull out there is nothing left.

We have to go back to basics. It is the responsibility of the states to look after the social welfare of the population, and this is the way they build legitimacy and they become transparent and have democratic systems. At present, the kinds of reforms we're bringing in, in the name of opening up for private investment, are not permitting these countries to build legitimacy and to achieve accountability vis-à-vis their populations.

● (1105)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I know I have very little time, and I want him to answer too, but building on what she mentioned, we only have a couple of Canadian companies in Mali, is that right?

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: We have several; I have the figures. I think there are now 20 sites where Canadian companies are extremely active.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Okay. I know in the energy sector we only have two.

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: A footnote: Mali's gold, according to our researchers.... We have figures saying that by 2013 there will not be very rich resources of gold, and there's now exploration in petroleum in Mali and in this area. Petroleum is not known for bringing poverty reduction.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: But I went with the Prime Minister to Libya, and we had 100 Canadian companies that were there bidding on work in Libya—I use the term "bidding"—and most of them lost their bid. I'm just sitting here listening and wondering if the fact that.... We have to sell ourselves to get into some of these countries. It's not just that we go in and buy the rights to mine it or to explore; we're bidding to try to win. It usually ends up that the country looks at the lowest bidder and gives it to them. Some of our hands are tied, then, on what they can do, because of—

A voice: I don't think you judge these things as a problem... [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: Mr. Sorenson, the countries we're speaking about in Africa do not have that capacity to regulate. This is why we're saying in response to the government, when it says it's the responsibility of host governments: no, that's too easy; that's an abdication of our political responsibility in certain situations.

I quite agree with you that in China and Libya there can be a bidding process. If it's an open bidding process, this is perfectly fine. What we're worried about is the developmental implications of foreign investment going into situations where the countries are not in a position, because they don't have the policy space—and don't have, as the World Bank has seen, the capacity—to apply their own regulations. Then it's a free-for-all, and therefore you have all sorts of situations, which there have been, that are extremely regrettable. When you're a researcher and travel around Africa, people come up to you and say at academic conferences, we have problems with this company or that company, in Mali, or in Ghana, and the horror stories are increasing.

The Chair: Ms. Phinney.

● (1110)

Ms. Beth Phinney: I'd just like you to know, Ms. Campbell, that I agree with you 100% in what you're saying. I think our government's responsible for setting up some standards for what these companies do overseas. I'd just like to mention to my colleague that if Canadian companies—and there are many now who are good corporate citizens, who are doing things within the communities, who are paying back, who are giving back to the communities, whether they're contributing to charities or encouraging their staff to contribute to work in charities.... These same principles can be used in other countries. I don't think there's any reason at all why we're not setting the standard here for what our companies do overseas. I just wanted to let you know that.

I have a couple of questions for Mr. Pahlavi.

First of all, you mentioned that we now have external shareholders in this area you were talking about. I'd like to know who some of those are, or what they are. You mentioned a couple of radio stations, I think; I'm not sure. I'd like you to answer that.

You say we are putting 8% of our budget into this area, Britain 25%, France 37%. How high is the United States' contribution?

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: It's about 10% now. It's not that high, but as compared with the United States, it depends: in military matters, it's still big. The share of the U.S. public diplomacy isn't that big, but given that the United States spends a lot in military matters, in absolute terms the U.S. public diplomacy is quite big.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Are you saying they might separate the public —

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: No, I'm just saying that it may appear to be a small part of U.S. foreign affairs, but it's still big in absolute terms.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Okay.

The purpose of this is to get the message out. Sometimes that works in a good way and sometimes it works in a bad way. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. Can you comment on that also?

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: I'll do it in French, if you will allow me.

[*Translation*]

That's absolutely true. From the moment you send a message outside the country, you don't know the impact it will have; you don't know its international impact. The same is true in the case of private firms: an advertising campaign can hurt a company's brand image. However, Joseph Nye, who is a soft power specialist, has pointed out that a negative image is much stronger where that message isn't controlled. For example, Coca-Cola has done a great deal to harm the international image of the United States, in certain countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia. From the moment that message is more controlled and coordinated, you're in a better position to control its impact. We're not talking about absolute government control, but simply about reorientation, redissemination in that sense.

As for Canada's international partners, there are an enormous number of Canadian and local NGOs. There are also media conglomerates, as you said. This can take many forms. There can even be the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. TV5 is an example of how Canada can project its image through a medium that does not officially belong to it. It's a forum that belongs to a number of countries and that can enable Canada to project its image. There's less control, of course, but greater credibility, in that it's not Canada's official message.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Pahlavi, you referred to mass diplomacy and public diplomacy. In practical terms, how could we correct the psychological gap between Canada and the United States?

Ms. Campbell, you talked about Mali and Burkina Faso, where they switched from growing cotton to exploring for gold. As a result of European and U.S. subsidies, there is now no cotton market. We're talking about a region with three million inhabitants. Since Mali and Burkina Faso switched from going cotton to mineral exploration, have you noticed an increase in violence, as is occurring in other countries and in the Great Lakes region, when mining companies were there.

● (1115)

Mr. Pierre Pahlavi: As regards the psychological gap between the United States and Canada, Canada has already put in place various programs, including conventional public diplomacy programs, that is to say education, cultural exchange, student exchange and researcher exchange programs. There are also telecommunications programs where it's possible to place an ad in order to make a massive appeal to the public. There are also more targeted actions, directed at opinion-makers and key decision-makers.

The Chair: All right, thank you.

Ms. Campbell.

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: To answer your question on violence, I'd say that, indirectly, the impact on the environment, society and health aren't under control. We receive a lot of information to the effect that the impact is very harmful. People have been displaced. In those cases, we don't have any information to the effect that they resisted, as often happens.

A week ago, someone coming back from Ghana told us that mining operations in certain regions of the country were increasingly being militarized because the older communities are resisting. The phenomenon is more recent in Mali.

As for the socio-environmental impact, information on the impact on public health is very disturbing. However, I can't talk about it because nothing has yet been proven.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Ms. Phinney, you had a question.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I'd just like to end on a positive note.

Do we have any companies from Canada that are good corporate citizens overseas?

A voice: We have hundreds of them.

The Chair: Yes, there are some.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I don't know about hundreds of them, but do we have some that we don't hear about?

Ms. Bonnie Campbell: Yes, of course we have some. The problem is the companies that are creating problems. We are convinced of ways of finding solutions for these if we don't hide from the problem. I think the government has a responsibility to make sure this tendency for things to not be in hand is taken under control.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I just want to make note of the fact there are some.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to stop for a few moments.

● (1120)

The Chair: We'll now resume the study of the International Policy Statement.

The following witnesses are the Director General of the Canadian Human Rights Foundation, Mr. Ian Hamilton, and Professor Sami Aoun, from the University of Sherbrooke.

Welcome. I turn the floor over to you, gentlemen.

Mr. Ian Hamilton (Executive Director, Canadian Human Rights Foundation): Thank you.

I'm going to speak in English.

[*English*]

Chairperson and honourable members, thank you for this opportunity to appear before your committee this morning.

I represent the Canadian Human Rights Foundation, and I'm pleased to be able to share with you some of our reflections on the international policy statement. In the short time available I'd like to do three things: provide a brief overview of our 38 years of experience in human rights education in Canada and overseas, share our vision of what Canada's role in the world should be, and make some specific recommendations regarding the international policy statement.

As you may know, the Canadian Human Rights Foundation was established as a non-profit, non-governmental organization in 1967 by a group of legal scholars and activists that included John Humphrey, a great Canadian and one of the original drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Throughout our long history our focus has been consistent: human rights education designed to build a global culture of human rights.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to announce that our board has recently approved a name change for our organization. Once we secure Industry Canada's approval to amend our letters patent, we'll become Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education. This new name will help us better communicate the true nature and scope of our work, human rights education in Canada and abroad based on the principles of equity, justice, democracy, and peace.

We are not a watchdog group like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. Rather, with our staff in Montreal and our partners around the world, we develop and deliver training programs that enhance the capacity of other human rights organizations to become more effective monitors, advocates, and educators. Our international human rights training program, now going into its 27th year, brings over 120 participants to Montreal each year from over 60 countries. In addition to our Canadian programming, we also deliver specialized training programs in Africa, Asia, and central and eastern Europe, and later this month we'll be launching a new program focusing on Iraq and the Middle East.

Our regular evaluations and travel overseas have shown us that these programs are achieving important results. The organizations we work with have become more confident and more effective. In a number of countries our partners have played leading roles in securing important policy and legislative change.

Here are three short examples. In Thailand our partners played an active role in the creation of a new national human rights commission. In Kenya our partners were involved in a successful campaign to get the government to adopt legislation to ensure universal access to primary education. More recently, in Indonesia our partners successfully advocated for the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

In addition to this, we have become the hub of a global network of alumni numbering in the thousands that are actively collaborating in the delivery of human rights education initiatives around the world.

It should be understood that this kind of work, building the capacity of others to find their own solutions, requires a long-term commitment. The challenges are enormous, but Canada has both the resources and the expertise to make a real difference.

As you know, the promotion of human rights and democratic governance has been a pillar of our foreign policy for decades. This is clearly a field where Canada has something to offer the world. Canada has rightly earned a reputation for its work in the promotion of human rights, democratic values, and peace, and Canadians are justifiably proud of these achievements.

Vigorous promotion and defence of human rights principles ensure that Canadian foreign policy reflects Canadian values, and this builds our international prestige and influence. In today's world the promotion of human rights must be viewed as an essential strategy for eliminating poverty and conflict as well as establishing global prosperity, peace, security, and not just good governance but democratic governance.

One year ago we submitted a letter to the Prime Minister—copies of which are in the kits that have been distributed to you—that was co-signed by Amnesty International, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, and Rights and Democracy. It argued that human rights must remain a top priority in Canada's foreign relations, a priority integrated into all aspects of Canada's international relationships, including international trade, foreign investment, and finance policies.

● (1125)

Turning now to the international policy statement, I must say with regret that while the protection of human rights remains a concern in the new statement, it has not retained the same priority that was articulated in previous policy statements, most notably *Canada in the World*.

I should also mention that this downgrade is reflected in some of our most recent experiences working with the Canadian International Development Agency.

CIDA's sustainable development strategy, adopted in 2004, recognizes the relationship between human rights and development, but this strategy has not yet been translated into the agency's programming. We are particularly concerned that for some countries that have a tragic history of human rights abuses, such as Indonesia and Rwanda, human rights have disappeared from CIDA's country development programming frameworks altogether. The decision to engage in human rights programming should not be left to the discretion of individual programs. Given the central importance of human rights in the development process, human rights should be a cross-cutting theme in all of CIDA's assistance to developing countries and countries in transition, and budget allocations should be made accordingly.

Another important issue in the policy statement refers to greater country concentration. While we recognize the rationale for prioritizing certain countries and understand the need to work and invest in failed or failing states, we feel that what's missing in the policy statement are mechanisms and a clear strategy for how Canada will engage in countries not covered by those priorities. In particular, it's important to develop mechanisms to support programs that reinforce human rights and democratic governments in non-priority countries and to also look at regional initiatives that cover these countries.

I'd like to note that often this programming does not require large-scale financial investments. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

This is particularly true in Central Asia. In our presentation to this committee on April 13, 2000, we articulated the case for Canadian support for human rights in Central Asia. Given the current volatility of this region and its strategic importance, Canadian engagement is now more important than ever.

My last point regarding the policy statement refers to the importance of partnerships and responsive mechanisms. Canadian and local civil society organizations have a wealth of experience and expertise to ensure the effectiveness of the government's investments in the promotion of human rights. Their important role should be reinforced through the international policy statement.

Many Canadian organizations that are engaged in the promotion of human rights, including us, receive support from CIDA's Canadian partnership branch. In establishing new mechanisms such as Canada Corps, it is also important to strengthen the existing mechanisms that have proven effective.

There is also a need for Canada's overseas development assistance to retain a responsive capacity. In recent years, there have been fewer mechanisms available in CIDA for responsive programming. In the process, the government is stifling opportunities for innovation coming from civil society. Whatever mechanisms CIDA does decide to establish, it is important that there are mechanisms able to respond in a timely manner to innovative programming ideas coming from civil society.

In conclusion, if Canada is to build upon its tradition and experience in the field of human rights and democratic governance, and not just rest on its laurels, Canada's international policy should explicitly identify human rights as a cross-cutting priority. An appropriate mechanism must be put in place and strengthened to mobilize the expertise and innovation of civil society in Canada and partner countries.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to continuing this discussion during the question and answer period.

Thank you very much.

● (1130)

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Hamilton.

We'll now go to *Monsieur Sami Aoun, s'il vous plaît*

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sami Aoun (Professor of Political Science, Université de Sherbrooke): Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to be here with you. It's a privilege for me to testify before you, honourable committee members.

I'm going to divide my remarks into three parts. First, I'll emphasize a few strong points, then a few points that should be clarified and, lastly, a few points that remain unclear or that have been obscured.

As regards the strong points, let's say that we're pleased to see that the statement contains a number of very interesting reference points. It's a good compass or, as the journalists and radio people say, a good road map. It gives us an idea of what Canada intends to do, at least over the next few years. I noticed another strong point, and that is that the statement was a good reading grid. By that, I don't mean that all the elements are there, but the document enables us to analyze the state of the world in the twenty-first century.

The integration and cohesion effort that characterizes this statement is the second strong point that I noted. An effort is being made to do away with the somewhat unfortunate compartmentalization that has dominated all our policies. Here we're talking about another vision of the world. This desire for coherence, I think, is a praiseworthy effort and an improvement in terms of quality.

The third and equally important strong point that I noted is this good match between the identity ideal and Canada's foreign policy. At least this time we see a certain improvement in the way Canada asserts its identity. That assertion is based on the right to difference, freedom, equality in citizenship and the promotion of Canada's values internationally. This definitely makes Canada a soft power, that is to say both a moral and a non-interventionist authority, that is neither imperialistic nor tempted by colonialism. Fortunately, this moral authority tends more to be proposed than imposed. I believe that's a very interesting point.

I also noticed that, in the wake of the events of September 11, despite some hesitation, the government has managed to reconcile John Manley's approach of giving priority to security with that of Mr. Axworthy's human security. That's all the more praiseworthy since the threat, without dramatizing it, is real, not fictitious. In my view, this new match will make Canadian diplomacy more effective.

I include among the strong points the fact that diplomats have been rehabilitated. In recent years, diplomats were unfortunately considered more as ushers or commissionaires than as people who articulately express Canada's vision, soul and interests. Fortunately, diplomats have returned to a central role, which is interesting. I hope this directive will really be taken into consideration.

Among the few points that should be clarified, I would say there is always reason to take a critical look at global militarization, which is part of international relations. In the context of those relations, it must be determined whether the militarization of states will take place in a Westphalian world or in a context that goes beyond that stage. In this respect, I believe that the statement should rework a few ideas on Canadian interventionism. In my view, the approach should give priority to democracy, human rights, negotiation, mediation and, especially, the rehabilitation of diplomacy. On this point, I know some points needed emphasizing, but they weren't central to the concerns addressed in the statement.

● (1135)

With your permission, I'm now going to talk about a few obscured areas. I don't know whether this problem is attributable to the expert in this field, but I see that the Islamic world has been obscured. I entirely understand why the emphasis has been placed on India, China and Brazil. I find that appropriate and prudent. However, let's not forget that, despite these domestic and international problems, the Islamic world has a population of some 1.3 billion persons. In addition, the members of the Muslim and Arab diaspora who have settled in Canada are quite active, which is no doubt a benefit. It is true that the Muslim world is under trusteeship, that it's a battlefield and a place for settling old scores. However, it is also true that it could become one of the best possible partners for North America in general and for Canada in particular. That's why I suggest we take a different look at the situation. We're talking about states [*Inaudible - Editor*], but we should also put the emphasis on executioner states, dictatorial states and oppressive states.

It would be good to put the emphasis on a role that Canadian diplomacy could play with regard to the liberal, democratic, rationalist and modernist forces in Muslim societies, to support them without necessarily putting pressure on them. I hope I won't offend anyone by saying that these leaders and thinkers feel like orphans. They feel caught between the vice of their oppressor states and the aggressive U.S. hegemony. In the circumstances, no one is helping them speak out or contribute to decisions. Many of them are in this situation. In the Muslim world, the effort made to promote democracy and the reasons of state is nevertheless praiseworthy, but they need a hand from Canadian democracy.

In my view, another phenomenon is also obscured. How could Canada do all this without doing it alone? Among other things, it should appeal to UN authorities and to human rights leagues and associations. Over there, some regional political authorities are not carrying out their mandate to close the gap between the rich and the poor. It seems these people are abandoning their management responsibilities. So we're seeing both a shameful degree of wealth and abject misery.

Although my reading was a bit brief, I'd like to address another point, which I think has also been obscured, and that is the role of diaspora communities in general and that of the Muslim and Arab diaspora communities here in Canada. We must help them switch from consultation to participation. I believe the statement is silent on this point. It would be very interesting to see how these members of the diaspora communities could proceed with a considered and voluntary form of integration. In addition, in the context of Canada's foreign policy, they could become an important cog in the decision-making machine.

I'm seated here before politicians, who are also decision-makers. So, in conclusion, I would say to you that everything depends on the balance between Canada's willingness and actual power. I believe that balance is possible. The fundamental question is not Canada's image, but the effectiveness of its diplomacy.

Thank you very much.

● (1140)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now move on to questions.

Mr. Sorenson.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Thank you for being here.

I don't have a lot of questions, but first of all, I would like to make mention of the fact that our committee, perhaps two years ago, did write quite a lengthy study of Canada and the Muslim world and our relationships within it. I think we may even have had some input from Mr. Aoun. The report is an excellent one, certainly recognizing the role of Islam around the world and how it is a factor in policy and deciding Canada's role.

I have a quick question for Mr. Hamilton. Do you believe CIDA should be giving money to China, with its very strong economy? We always hear about China every time the Prime Minister or anyone else goes. In the opposition, we question the Prime Minister as to whether or not he has the opportunity to raise human rights issues with the leadership in China. Pretty well on a monthly basis we can be guaranteed that Falun Gong practitioners will bring their major concerns to Parliament and to the Hill, as well as different people who bring forward the issue of Tibet and some of those.

Do you believe CIDA's money should be given to China, given their strong economy now? How much does your organization receive from CIDA?

● (1145)

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Thank you for those questions.

Maybe I'll just begin with the last question. Our funding is completely on a project basis, so we submit proposals and receive funding. Our largest funder continues to be CIDA. We receive approximately $1.2 million to $1.4 million a year from CIDA.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: How small a project would constitute a project?

You have a general plan of what you're going to accomplish in the next year. How many projects?

Mr. Ian Hamilton: The most significant contribution that's coming from CIDA right now is for the international human rights training program. That's roughly $1 million a year to bring approximately 120 human rights activists to Montreal for three weeks of training, and then a series of follow-up activities so that we accompany them once they return home, to be able to ensure that the learning is put into practice.

The program we're about to launch in the Middle East will be a three-year program of approximately $2 million. We're just waiting for the contribution agreement. I think that's a good example of how Canada can engage in the Islamic world.

One of my concerns that I mentioned earlier was Indonesia, another Islamic country where we had CIDA funding, but under the new policy and CIDA's new country development programming framework, human rights has disappeared.

In terms of your first question around China, we have been receiving participants from China to our training program in Montreal since 1995. We've noticed a change over those years. Certainly there's a much greater openness. In the early years, people were really resistant to what were talking about. Now there is a real openness and willingness to embrace what's happening during our training program.

I believe it's important to continue to engage China on human rights. In fact, just this week we hosted a visit by the delegation of the Canada-China Joint Committee on Human Rights and met with some officials from government and academia.

I think Canada has a role and has something to offer to promote a democratic transition. Given the economic power of China, I don't think this should necessarily be huge investments of resources, and I don't think it would require huge investments of resources, but supporting exchanges of experience and supporting some fledgling human rights organizations in China I believe is still very important.

The Chair: Ms. Phinney.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I don't have any questions.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Can I go back, then, to Mr. Aoun very quickly?

The Chair: Yes, sure.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Do you believe Islam is doing enough to promote some of the human rights? We always talk about what Canada can do. We know much of the Muslim world took a real hit after September 11. A lot of them felt they were being stereotyped as being pro-terrorism, if that's possible, and we know that isn't true. We know Islam is a peaceful religion; however, there are certain segments of it that perhaps aren't. Do you think Islam is doing enough?

Mr. Sami Aoun: No, not at all.

[*Translation*]

I don't think the Muslim world engages in enough self-criticism. There's still an attitude of denial. The religion and its principles are used in an unfortunate way, which causes abuses. But, and this may be positive, it's also triggering a debate on major ideologies among Muslims and thinkers. That debate turns on the question: have we done enough? Have Muslim societies, Muslim states and Muslim powers done enough to improve not necessarily the image, but interpretations of their basic principles and values, and to reconcile modern values with the threats and hopes conveyed by globalization?

There's a serious debate on what's called releasing Islam from its own hostage-taking. Islam has been taken hostage by at least two players: the states or governments in place and groups and splinter groups, Al-Qaeda in particular. With regard to this releasing of Islam, we should take part in it. As I said about domestic responsibility, we must support them in this debate in order to find an interpretation of their religion that is consistent with the values of humanism, modernity and the new vision of the world based on human rights, multiculturalism and the right to difference.

Unfortunately, no, the efforts are not adequate; they're limited. One interpretation dominates. For example, in the case of Iraq, the people must free themselves of the occupier. When priority is given to occupation and hegemony, violence against the occupier is then justified in the name of religion. When a tyrant, a dictator or a government in power uses religion to legitimize its power, you see people in opposition who use religion to intimidate or overthrow it. This is the case in many Arab countries, such as Yemen, Algeria and perhaps modern-day Syria as well. I believe that the Muslim world in general is under the responsibility threshold. It still prefers to view itself as a victim rather than try to be more responsible. That's it in brief.

● (1150)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Thank you.

The Chair: I have one request for Mr. Hamilton. It's the first time this committee has heard some Chinese students are coming to Canada concerning human rights. Talking about human rights in China, I must say that on a daily basis when the committee is sitting they ask questions regarding this. I'd like to have more information, if you can provide it: how many students came two years ago, three years ago, something focusing on this. I think it was last week, or this week, that there were some people from China coming and meeting in Ottawa concerning human rights. For us, it may be a little development, but it is a positive development. We'd like to get more information about this.

My other question concerns the splitting of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The idea of the IPS right now is to attempt more coordination between defence, development, and trade. You have suggested that human rights aren't as prominent in the IPS as they were earlier. We're a little bit upset with this, because parliamentarians were against this split, and Parliament voted against it, but it's there right now. We're looking at, I don't know if you call it a *décret*, but a decision made. If you want to sell small arms, it's no longer under the jurisdiction of Foreign Affairs; it's International Trade's jurisdiction. In our opinion, we're losing with this. I just want to get your comments on this.

I will ask my question to Mr. Aoun after.

Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In response to your question on China, I think the delegation you'll be meeting may be the one that we met on Wednesday of this week.

The Chair: Okay.

● (1155)

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Since 1995, 20 participants have come from China. Initially, it was one or two a year, and in the last two or three years, it has averaged between four and five participants a year.

They were initially more related to government institutions, like the All-China Women's Federation. More and more, they're now coming from academic institutions and human rights centres. This year we had a number who were working on issues around HIV/AIDS and human rights from different parts of China.

In addition to bringing people to Montreal, we're planning a meeting in China next year, where we'll bring together the alumni and explore with them how we might continue to support their efforts to undertake human rights education programs in China.

Concerning the issues on how Foreign Affairs and International Trade are managed, I'm concerned to learn about this most recent development. It doesn't sound like a positive development. I don't think it's necessarily our role to comment on how government organizes the various departments, but our concern is really around policy coherence.

I think what we see, particularly in the area of human rights, is a lot of rhetoric about Canada's role in promoting human rights, but when it comes down to implementation, the action falls very far short of the words. I think it's important that for whatever institutional arrangements are made, there is coherence and human rights become a concern of all the departments involved. If International Trade is to become separate, they should have human rights on their radar screen.

I think that we heard earlier about this from Professor Campbell, particularly around issues of trade.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Professor Aoun, you referred to the role of the various diaspora communities, which are in a consultation or integration phase. Is it your impression that the various diaspora groups, coming from whatever country, at times try to find solutions for their native countries, but hurt rather than help? I think solutions must also come from the native countries, but the diaspora groups are very much involved, while living in Canada or the United States, for example.

Mr. Sami Aoun: You refer to Canada and the United States. Are you asking me whether the diaspora groups living in Canada are giving their assistance to their native countries?

The Chair: Are they really helping their native countries...

Mr. Sami Aoun: I understand.

The Chair: ...by taking action in Canada? They try to take action in the Canadian way, but perhaps not in a manner of their native country.

Mr. Sami Aoun: Yes.

The Chair: What do you think?

Mr. Sami Aoun: There are different aspects to this phenomenon. First, you have to consider how representative or legitimate those who speak on behalf of their diaspora communities are. There's no clear democratic mechanism for ensuring that those people really represent Canadian interests or the interests of Canadian communities because the democratic process — their election isn't really consensual.

Furthermore, a number of representatives of diaspora groups are more antennae of the regimes, of the opposition forces or of the civil society of their native countries, which confuses matters. You don't really know whether they're promoting their own regime or whether they're promoting other groups or splinter groups that they represent.

The third aspect is this. This may answer your question directly. Do their actions have a more negative than positive effect over there? That depends. Sometimes these people have an idealized notion of their native country. They've been here for a long time, they're a little out of touch, they're no longer social stakeholders over there. They've become marginalized. They're consulted a little and they're asked for a little money and aid, but they aren't necessarily active players. Sometimes, and you see this more and more often, they get more feedback from their native country than from people who may be involved there in a very effective way, which is unfortunate.

As regards their inclusion in Canadian foreign policy, I believe that, thus far, they haven't had the opportunity and haven't put in place mechanisms enabling them to become stakeholders in developing the agenda or foreign policy. However, they have a very significant influence on elected officials, though a little less so on the cultural environment. In particular, they have virtually no influence on the bureaucracy or the Senate.

● (1200)

The Chair: Thank you.

In closing, I'd like to address the issue of the deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces in certain countries. Some are in favour of that; others are opposed to it. Could Canada do more than what it's currently doing in Iraq? Can you briefly give us your opinion, Mr. Aoun?

Mr. Sami Aoun: After Mr. Pettigrew's statements and congratulations following the referendum on the constitution, I believe that Canadian forums, for example, should have been opened to introduce people to voting and elections. We must start a debate on democratic culture and not be content with a veneer of democracy. We must inform people that voting is only a minor aspect of democratic culture, not the most reductive aspect of democratic culture. Personally, I wonder why Ottawa didn't play Oslo's role. Why hasn't Ottawa managed thus far to become an incubator of peace accords like the Geneva Covenant, the Oslo II Agreement, the Alexandria Declaration or something similar?

The Chair: Mr. Hamilton, over to you.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Let me just add something on the question of Iraq—

The Chair: Yes, sure.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: —because we've also, over the last two years, been receiving participants coming to Montreal from Iraq, and our new program on the Middle East will have a specific focus on Iraq.

In terms of Canada's role in that country, I think we need to look beyond elections and constitutions and look at building a culture of human rights. If Canada's looking for a role where it can establish a niche, it can be in working with civil society in developing programs of education, in spreading awareness about international human rights standards, and working with the people of Iraq to build appropriate mechanisms at the national level to promote and protect human rights. I think that's where Canada has a role to play. I think it's beginning to play that role, but there's much more that can be done.

The Chair: In closing, you just mentioned that you have a new program on the Middle East. If you have any information concerning this, it would be very nice if you could provide it to our researcher or our clerk, please.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: We'll be happy to. We're expecting to sign a contribution agreement by the end of this month and we'd be happy to share all that information.

The Chair: We're very interested in everything, as you can see.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Okay. I'll make sure we send that off early next week.

[*Translation*]

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

The meeting is adjourned.

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