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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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● (1550)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Committee, we'll call this meeting to order.

This is the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. We are continuing in our study of democratic development today. This committee, over the past ten or eleven months, has undertaken a study, first of all, on how we deliver our developmental aid, our humanitarian aid, around the world, and this fall we moved into more of a comprehensive study on democratic development and Canada's role in support of democratic development.

We're very pleased to have with us today, from the University of Montreal, Ms. Diane Éthier, a full professor in the department of political science. We welcome you here.

We want to apologize for being late today. Every once in a while in the House of Commons we have what we call votes. Sometimes we know they're coming, and sometimes when we invite our witnesses we're unaware that there will be a vote that day. The good news is that the votes are completed, the committee is here, and we're looking forward to what you have to say, Madame Éthier.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier (Full professor, Department of Political Science, University of Montreal): I would like to thank the committee for having invited me to speak about democratic development. However, I must say that Ms. Crandall did not give me much information about the subject I am to address. I looked at the questions which the committee studied on this issue. Of course, I cannot answer every question. I will therefore give a brief presentation on the main subject of my research over the last six years, namely the effectiveness of strategies to promote democracy. As you will see, democracy assistance programs, or democracy promotion strategies, only represent one aspect of the issue, but it might be interesting to compare this approach to others.

Since the end of the Second World War, three strategies were used to either help countries complete the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, or to consolidate their democratic system by various means, such as improving the governance of public administrations, strengthening the rule of law, decentralizing the powers of the central government, developing a civil society, extending rights to minorities, fighting corruption, and so on.

The first of these strategies is control, that is, the imposition of democracy on a country by foreign authorities, which is achieved unilaterally or with the help of certain domestic political actors following the country's military occupation of its territory.

The second strategy is conditionality. In its positive form, conditionality means that a country is obliged to implement a democratic system, or to consolidate such a system, before receiving help such as economic assistance, debt reduction or renegotiation, admission to an international organization, and so on. In its negative form, this approach might impose sanctions on a country such as an embargo, suspending its membership to an international organization, and so on, and to see these sanctions lifted, it must adopt democratic change.

The third strategy is the one based on incentives. Under this strategy, a country might freely receive different forms of assistance or other types of advantages to encourage it to implement or consolidate a democratic system.

Let's look at the effectiveness of each of these strategies. The control approach has been applied fairly frequently in recent history. After the Second World War, this strategy was used by the Americans and their allies in Japan, South Korea, Germany, Italy and Austria, and by the British, when many of their former colonies, in the Caribbean and in Southeast Asia, gained independence. Since the end of the 1980s, this strategy was used by the United States in Panama; by the European Union, NATO and the UN in Bosnia and Kosovo, and by the Americans and their allies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Until now, no study has attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of imposing democracy on these countries. However, we personally conducted a preliminary investigation of some of these situations over the last few months in order to prepare a research project which we have submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. We have drawn three lessons, or teachings, from this preliminary evaluation.

First, democracy imposed by foreign authorities only developed or flourished in countries which had already achieved an advanced level of social and economic modernization when the foreign powers intervened. This was the case of Germany, Austria and Italy. This approach also worked in countries which modernized rapidly through massive investment and social and economic reform imposed by the occupying forces. This happened in Japan.

Second lesson. In situations where foreign powers occupied an underdeveloped country over a long period of time, which created a culture of compromise and cooperation with the country's political elites, the control approach allowed for the creation of a minimal but sustainable democracy. For instance, this was the case in the former British colonies in the West Indies, or in hybrid but stable regimes such as Singapore or Malaysia.

● (1555)

Third lesson: in traditional societies marked by a culture of clans and ethnic, religious and political conflict, and where the imposition of democracy by foreign powers is fairly recent, and where development investment by the international community is also recent and insufficient—we need look no further than Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq—the control approach has failed. Not only do the rules of minimal democracy not exist, namely the possibility for all adult citizens to choose their leaders in free, fair and open elections in which political parties can freely compete for votes because basic civil and political liberties are respected, but there is no rule of law of any kind in those countries.

Let us now look at conditionality. Political conditionality, in its positive form, has only been applied by the European Union/Community in situations relating specifically to the admission of less developed European countries, such as Greece, Spain and Portugal; countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and Turkey; and western Balkan countries, which have been become more stable by virtue of their association with the European Union/Community. In fact, when true conditionality is applied, a country knows it will lose out on promised advantages if it refuses to submit to prescribed obligations. But membership in the European Union/Community is the only situation in which the member countries of an international organization are unanimous in the application of sanctions because of these countries' high degree of integration. It is in everyone's interest to avoid the high cost of admitting new members who are unable to respect the democratic rules of the game.

As for association or cooperation agreements with third countries not eligible for EU membership, the EU has been unable to apply true political conditionality because of the divergent interests of member countries. Although most of these agreements now include democratic provisions calling for sanctions, these provisions are not implemented or are applied partially or unevenly.

Studies assessing the effectiveness of political conditionality as it applies to membership in the European Union are unanimous. Conditionality was the decisive factor which led to the fall of dictatorships in Greece, Spain and Portugal. It was also the determining factor which led to the consolidation of new democracies in countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The effectiveness of conditionality in the European Union has also been demonstrated in the case of Turkey, which implemented significant democratic reforms after it was given official candidate status for membership in 1999, and in the case of Croatia, which, between 2003 and 2005, brought about the required political change under the stabilization and association process leading to negotiations for full membership.

There are two theories which explain why conditionality works well in the European Union situation. The first one is the theory of realism. Candidate countries meet the requirements set by Brussels because the promised benefits are crucial; these countries have no alternative but to submit, and they are aware that EU members are determined to withhold any benefits in cases of non-compliance. There are also other reasons why countries want to engage in pre-membership reforms. There are, first of all, generous assistance incentive programs, such as PHARE, TAIEX and Twinning. Also, reforms are closely monitored by the commission, and there are institutional partnerships to help candidate countries with the planning and implementation of reforms.

Under the second theory, the constructivist theory, the political elites of candidate countries engage in pre-membership reforms not because it is in their interest to do so, but because they share the same democratic values and standards which lie at the heart of the legal and institutional reforms required by the European Union. However, the mixed success of the EU's stabilization and association process in the Balkans indicates that the prospect of membership, the assistance programs, the monitoring and institutional partnerships, are not enough to convince the political elites of some countries to proceed with democratic reform.

● (1600)

Since 2000, neither Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, nor Albania have managed to bring about the reforms which will lead to negotiations on membership. These conclusions tend to corroborate the relevancy of the constructivist theory and the modernization theory. When the dominant political party culture is based on undemocratic values, such as clan mentality, ultra-nationalism, authoritarianism, clientelism, due, but not exclusively, to that country's backward economic and social situation, conditionality does not really work.

I will conclude with the third strategy. Assistance incentive programs promoting democratic development are nothing new, but their number has increased exponentially since the end of the cold war. Many international organizations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the EBRD, the Organization of American States, the African Union, the European Union, the UN, the aid agencies of the 14 main OECD donor countries, and thousands of NGOs largely founded by western governments, have invested money, time and people in these programs.

However, it remains difficult to measure the effectiveness of these programs, since very few of these organizations actually assessed them. Only the United States Agency of International Development has been conducting evaluations since 1994 because it was forced to do so by Congress. But researchers from some universities and private foundations, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, have evaluated the effectiveness of some of the programs implemented by the European Council, the OSCE, the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and American NGOs. Their conclusions were unanimous: on the whole, the outcomes of the programs were very modest, even nil, for the following reasons.

First, the aid given to beneficiary countries was only relatively important to them because it is limited and has in fact been decreasing since 1990. Also, it can easily be replaced by other sources of revenue.

Second, the threat of suspending, reducing and cancelling assistance is not credible in the eyes of beneficiary countries, since the threat of sanctions is rarely carried out because of the conflict of interests and ideological differences which exist between the various donor countries, and, within some donor countries, between different government departments, aid agencies and NGOs.

I know what I am talking about. Between 1992 and 1995, I gave training to CIDA employees on the World Bank's conditional aid policy. I became aware of the high degree of conflict within CIDA, and between CIDA and the Department of Foreign Affairs, as far as this very policy was concerned. There is no consensus. Indeed, this situation is not unique to Canada, as it exists in many donor countries. I have done some research about this situation in Sweden, Denmark, France and the Netherlands.

I might add that professor Stephen Brown, from the University of Ottawa, did his doctorate on aid to African countries, and he concluded that sanctions were actually imposed on only two countries, mainly Kenya and Malawi, because they had not applied the democratic reforms required by aid agencies. In his view, no sanctions have ever been imposed on any other African countries.

Thomas Carothers, who is one of the most important practitioners and evaluators of American democratic development programs, and who works for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, agrees with these conclusions, but does make a few distinctions. In his most recent book on the subject, entitled *Critical Mission*, which was published in 2004, he stigmatizes development assistance programs in civil societies, but recognizes that the monitoring of elections and strengthening the rule of law can make a big different on the condition that the programs be redirected.

● (1605)

Since I don't have much time, I'm going to do a brief summary of his main findings regarding these three types of democratic assistance programs.

Programs that seek to develop an organized civil society, according to Carothers, don't contribute to the establishment or consolidation of democracy, for one thing because civil society is made up of all kinds of people, including criminal and delinquent networks, so there's no guarantee of democratization. In other words, the importance of civil society as an agent for democratic development should not be overestimated.

He then says that in a number of countries, NGOs working on the development of civil society are in most cases western NGOs with no links to local NGOs. They are very often concentrated in the capital of the country and develop links with other western NGOs. They are largely funded by their own government, so that very often, the policy they promote in the host country is the policy of their own government. So it's not unbiased democratic development. In some cases, this situation leads to conflict with the government of the host country, which sees NGOs as organizations doing propaganda and advocacy on behalf of their own country of origin.

Surely you've heard that Freedom House released a report this year on the increasingly critical situation for American NGOs in a number of countries. They are considered undesirable since becoming actively involved in, for example, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the revolution in Kirghizistan. It's a very delicate and very complex situation.

The third reason Carothers gives for criticizing civil society development programs is that in the case of dictatorships, NGOs often promote calls for democracy that jeopardize the safety of citizens and that actually lead to crackdowns by the regimes in power. So it's often a counterproductive exercise.

According to Carothers and many other writers, election observing is a more effective way of defending democracy, if it reveals fraud before or during the election and reinforces the process in countries in transition toward democracy. However, only governments or international organizations that send competent and experienced observers out into the field well before the election and keep them there until the official results are published — which takes a long time in some countries — are in a position to influence the process.

Carothers is critical of the fact that there are more and more amateurs observing elections in the field. He names the organizations he feels are best equipped to observe elections effectively. They are: Carter Center; International Foundation for Election Systems; Democracy Promotion Unit of the OAS; United Nations Electoral Assistance Unit; Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Unfortunately, Elections Canada is not on the list.

The last type of program I wanted to talk to you about is promotion of the rule of law. This is considered positive in itself, but its effectiveness is diminished by the clear lack of understanding among external actors.

● (1610)

People often think, wrongly, that an attempt to pattern the operation of the court system in target countries on that of western countries will improve the rule of law. However, a law-abiding public depends less on the competence and effectiveness of judges — which can actually lead to overly expeditious justice that hurts the public but helps an authoritarian government — than on the public perception of the legitimacy of legislation, which is largely tied to their perception of the operation of political institutions.

This finding means that it might be better to work on expanding the representativeness of political systems, to increase the legitimacy of democracy from the standpoint of the public and cause them to become more law-abiding, than to invest a lot of money in improvements to the operation of the court system.

That is ultimately the message of Carothers and other writers.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me, Madame. Can you give me a little bit of an idea of how much of the presentation you have left?

● (1615)

Ms. Diane Éthier: Two seconds.

The Chair: I'll grant you two seconds.

Go ahead. We're at 21 minutes, and I just wanted to make sure. I don't want to cut you short.

Ms. Diane Éthier: I can stop here if you want.

The Chair: No, you continue and finish. It's just so we have a little bit of an idea.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: To conclude, the results of democracy promotion strategies tend to confirm the basic point of democratization theory for over 50 years.

[*English*]

Democracy is a domestic affair par excellence.

[*Translation*]

Although the more forcible strategies, like control and conditionality, are more effective than incentives, their success depends either on favourable economic, social, political and cultural conditions in the target countries or on the creation of those conditions through massive investment and judicious and targeted intervention over a long or very long period of time.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Éthier.

We'll go into the first round of questions, beginning with Mr. Patry.

You have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Éthier, thank you very much. That was very interesting. It is like being back in school. Your presentation was fascinating.

You told us about the controlled experience, about "successes" in some countries, where democracy was imposed or had already reached an economic and social level. You also talked about underdeveloped countries that were under foreign occupation for a long time, which enabled them to develop a political elite. That did work in some places, like the Caribbean. Then you talked about traditional societies such as those we are seeing now, clan-based societies like in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries.

You also talked about political conditionality in terms of two theories: realistic and constructive. You also discussed the role of NGOs and were a bit critical, in a way, of their role. You talked about observing elections and training judges. At the end, you said:

[*English*]

Democracy is a domestic affair par excellence.

[*Translation*]

What can be done in the case of a country like Haiti, which is a case we have studied? I have been to Haiti a number of times. It is clear that everything has to be started over, rebuilt from scratch.

You talked about training judges. Haiti is governed by the Napoleonic Code of 1821, which has never been amended. In rape cases and some other cases, DNA evidence is inadmissible in court because the code has not been amended. In addition, 90% of newly elected parliamentarians have no political experience.

In a country like Haiti, where Canada wants to play an active role in improving things, how can we get involved without having to go back to square one, in two, three or four years, with a new president?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patry.

Madame Éthier.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: I am not very familiar with Haiti. I remember when I was a CIDA consultant from 1992 to 1995, people were already asking what we could do in Haiti. Back then, I was already quite familiar with the democratization process, so I told people at CIDA that whatever type of intervention Canada made in Haiti, I would not be too confident about the results. Unfortunately, over 10 years later, the facts have borne out my pessimism. What can I say?

Canada cannot be stopped from trying to improve the situation, perhaps for political reasons: the Haitian community in Canada is large. That does not concern me, but as an expert on democracy, I have to tell it like it is. Domestic conditions—economic, social, cultural and political conditions—in Haiti are hostile to democratic development, and even if the international community intervenes, it will not be able to change those conditions, unless it invests very heavily for a very long period of time.

The examples I give in my text are the former British colonies. Great Britain—its qualities versus other colonial powers must be recognized—managed to create conditions in a number of its colonies that were favourable to the establishment of democratic regimes; that lasted for decades and decades. Take India, for example. In 1880, England started teaching the Indian elite about local democracy, and in 1949, when India gained its independence, the Indian elite knew the rules of democracy, agreed with them and wanted them put in place. But it took 70 years.

● (1620)

Mr. Bernard Patry: In practical terms, where do we start in Haiti? Do we start with good governance, with the Parliament? We, parliamentarians, want to help the Parliament in order to help the parliamentarians. However, if we don't want to be pessimistic and if you were a consultant to our committee—because you are a consultant today—what recommendations would you suggest we make to our government?

Ms. Diane Éthier: I would study the situation in Haiti before. For the time being, I don't have a good understanding of Haiti, so I don't want to—

Mr. Bernard Patry: I understand.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Wilfert for two minutes.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a quick question. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has proposed a global program for local governance with CIDA. Essentially, we often talk about democratic development where we see a top-down approach, where we elect the president, we have a parliament or a congress, but we really don't try to nurture at the local level the roots to have a successful democratic development. Canada was involved in the commune elections in Cambodia, as an example, in the early 1990s. But this program, the global program for local governance, is to really have a systematic approach to work with local NGOs, local individuals, to make sure that in fact it is nurtured, that the resources are applied, etc.

You may not be familiar with the proposal, but just in terms of the general approach to democratic governance, I wondered if you could give us your comments.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: You're asking for my opinion on local governance and local democracy programs. In an article I published in 2003 in *Democratization* magazine, I examined CIDA's programs in Southeast Asia and the Philippines, where local democracy programs had been established on a few occasions.

The problem is that CIDA doesn't evaluate the impact of those programs. There was no document at CIDA to indicate whether that had produced any results or whether the situation was better than before. The only indicator I had was Freedom House, which tracks the progress of civil and political liberties in countries. I have to say that unfortunately, the score given by Freedom House was no better than before in the case of the Philippines and other countries that had been targeted for CIDA's local governance programs.

So, obviously, we can't draw any conclusions based just on the Freedom House reports, but that's all we have to go on. So, it's very difficult for experts to answer, because there has been no evaluation of those programs. As I said, there is just the United States Agency for International Development that has done evaluations because the US Congress required it to do so in 1994. There too, their work was criticized. I have published articles on that. There are limits to the USAID evaluations because there aren't enough experts going into the field, and they only stay for three weeks, which isn't long enough, and they don't meet with enough local stakeholders. So, the USAID evaluations could be better, but at least they are better than what CIDA is doing, which is no evaluation.

● (1625)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Éthier.

I'll go to the Bloc.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Barbot and Ms. Bourgeois, you have seven minutes.

[*English*]

And they will split.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to be very brief because Mr. Patry asked the question I wanted to ask.

Thank you for coming to meet with us, Ms. Ethier, even though your comments are rather alarming, although they do echo some ideas we've heard discussed for a very long time. If international aid worked, countries would have moved beyond underdevelopment a long time ago. However, underdevelopment is being mass-produced.

I was in Rwanda in 1980 when all of the international organizations were there, and the only thing growing was the number of employees of international organizations. So, even if what you have to say is hard to listen to, I think that basically, we have to admit that as it is currently designed, aid doesn't work very well.

I suppose it's no coincidence that the model you presented as a model that might be successful under certain circumstances is conditionality, which worked in some European countries.

That said, what has to be done? I know the question is a broad one.

Ms. Diane Éthier: As I said, conditionality is virtually exclusively used by the European Union, as, for two reasons, it is the only entity that can use it.

The first reason for this is that the European Union offers candidate countries an incredible reward—accession to the EU—in return. Such a reward is of crucial, unrivalled importance to candidate countries—they could wish for no better outcome than EU membership.

The second reason is that all EU member states are committed to denying membership to candidate countries that do not comply with the requisite democratic reforms. It is easy to understand why: were the EU to grant membership to a country that did not respect the rules of democracy, all member states would be penalized and would suffer the consequences—and the candidate countries know it. Nevertheless, the European Union is not the only entity that can use conditionality.

As I said earlier, negative conditionality can also be used. Take the example of the Commonwealth. Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney played an instrumental role in convincing the Commonwealth to impose an embargo on South Africa so that it would end apartheid and embrace democracy. I remember that it took months for Prime Minister Mulroney to convince the other Commonwealth countries to impose the embargo. It was in the interest of some Commonwealth countries not to sanction South Africa. Negotiations were long, but when a unanimous position was reached, the embargo proved effective.

It can prove very effective when a group of countries are able to agree on offering a coveted reward or imposing a very harsh punishment. However, diverging interests make it very difficult to reach unanimous agreement amongst countries.

The European Union is, of course, a unique entity. It has adopted economic, monetary and even policy integration and, as such, is unique. Some argue that it is comparable with NAFTA, but I disagree. NAFTA and the European Union are not comparable—they are completely different.

In conclusion, conditionality is an effective tool, but one which we cannot use.

● (1630)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame.

Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Éthier, I found your presentation extremely interesting, but, unfortunately, we do not have a written copy.

Would it be possible for the clerk to send us your speaking notes?

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame, we do have the document in French, and it will be translated and circulated to all our members.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Excellent.

Aside from that, we do not have much information on your background. I have just found out that you used to work for CIDA.

That is of great interest to me because we went to Scandinavia and Great Britain in October. This gave us the opportunity to speak with people such as yourself who are carrying out research into the ways and means of introducing democracy.

Looking through my notes, I see that you are the fifth person today who has told us that democracy cannot be imposed.

I am going to ask you the same question that I always ask our witnesses. To your mind, what are the steps involved in a best-practice model for introducing democracy?

Ms. Diane Éthier: As I've already said, we should learn from what the British did in a number of their colonies. It is really very interesting to see how they managed to create conditions favourable to democracy before these countries became independent.

It is not by chance that democracies that were once British colonies have proved stable and lasting—indeed a number have made considerable progress—while it is altogether another kettle of fish for former French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies.

It might seem odd that I am saying that, as a French Canadian, but you cannot hide from the truth. That is how it is.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Yet you also spoke about Kenya. It is a known fact that Great Britain left 97% of Kenyans in the red—only 3% of the population had enough money to live.

Ms. Diane Éthier: That is a very interesting question. Great Britain did not treat all of its colonies in the same manner. At that time—not to put too fine a point on it—Great Britain was extremely racist towards Africa and Central Asia. As a result, British policy in Southeast Asia was different to that in Africa or Central Asia. You are absolutely right in what you say. You have to keep in mind the context of the period.

Nevertheless, in most cases where they did try to create conditions conducive to lasting democracy, it did prove fairly successful. Obviously, one of the conditions is education. It starts with educating the elite, then a move to local democracy, which is progressively broadened and generalized.

The British tended not to use the same model in all countries. Credit where credit is due, unlike the Americans, they undertook an in-depth study of a country's history and idiosyncrasies in order to develop a strategy adapted to the reality of each different country. It was not a case of one size fits all.

I know one thing for certain—although it is said that no US soldiers in Iraq speak Arabic, British soldiers in India spoke several of the colony's languages. When you think about the language departments that they had at Cambridge and Oxford, it is really quite remarkable. Furthermore, anyone being sent to the colonies had to learn the local languages, and therefore, when the time came to leave, they had an understanding of the country's history, culture and languages. That is something which is very important.

Economic development is also, obviously, another important factor. I recall that former prime Minister Chrétien said that supporting economic development in China was more important than criticizing its failings in terms of democracy. To my mind, he was absolutely right.

It is the desire to become a market economy that will bring a country such as China into the democratic fold—this is what we are seeing at the moment. The third wave of democratization since 1975 has given rise to some 40 new democracies. They are all newly industrialized countries that underwent rapid economic and social development in the 60s and 70s. The exceptions to the rule are a handful of African countries that became democracies in the 90s. Unfortunately, however, the most recent reports on democracy in Africa are not very encouraging.

● (1635)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Goldring, please, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Welcome, Madame Éthier. I'm pleased that you're here today.

Your initial comments certainly sound very discouraging, and I agree with you; the policies that we have been trying to institute have not been bearing the democratic fruit, I guess you could say, that was expected of them.

Haiti in particular was one country. Yes, they had a peaceful election, but there doesn't seem to be very much substance underneath the election.

You talked about some of the British countries. I was in Guyana this summer, where they held their elections. This is one country that hasn't benefited from independence. They seem to have been stuck in a political time warp since their independence in 1962.

Another country that's in the news today is, of course, Fiji. I think this is the tenth overthrow of government they've had in approximately ten years.

So there seem to be many exceptions. That very level of difference is why what I think we're trying to do in this committee is to analyze what can be done—not one system to do all, but a system that would allow an approach to each individual country on its individual peculiarities and merits.

One of the things I read for this meeting today is a brochure by Rights and Democracy. This is an article by Hau Sing Tse, from the Asia branch of the Canadian International Development Agency. I'd like your comments. I'll just read a paragraph from this:

> At CIDA, we believe firmly that good governance – meaning freedom, democracy, rule of law and human rights – is necessary to foster equitable economic growth—

The Chair: Mr. Goldring, you'll have to read a little slower. I'll give you an extra ten seconds at the end.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Okay.

It reads:

> ...necessary to foster equitable economic growth and sustainable development.... Bad governance produces bad outcomes, such as corruption, poor service delivery —
>
> ...A discussion about whether security or economic development or democratic development should come first could help raise important issues. But it is not particularly helpful to local communities who seek a better life and reduced vulnerability to poverty. Progress in all of these areas must happen simultaneously, if we hope to help them build a better future for their children.

What I would like to do is have your comments on a statement like that, given the consideration that we as a committee are looking at having new initiatives and new ways to approach this democratic development. Given a commonality of the committee, we're beginning to realize that, yes, the democratic development has to be included with the poverty reduction efforts and good governance efforts—all of these combined. Is it your feeling that we cannot look at this again as a way to hopefully take new strides in development in these areas and regions in the future, rather then being pessimistic and trying to go way off base into another area that may or may not be included, although it may well be? Should we not try again with this combined approach effort?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: That was the tied aid policy the World Bank introduced in the early 90s, in 1992, if memory serves me well. The idea was to do everything simultaneously: promote economic development, fight poverty, promote environmental protection, improve good governance and develop democracy.

The World Bank's tied aid policy comprised almost 10 streams, and it did not work. It could not have worked. I remember that many CIDA officers were critical of the policy, and they were by and large right.

In fact, for more than 50 years now, all theories on democracy have supported the view that democracy cannot flourish in a poor and underdeveloped country. This means that socio-economic development and democratization cannot be achieved simultaneously, as democratization is born of socio-economic development.

It is wishful thinking to believe that lasting democracy can be established in a country such as Haiti, which is one of the world's poorest. Indeed, not only is Haiti poor, but there is no rule of law. The state does not have control over all of its citizens and territory. Democracy is still a long way away, the country is only at the state of establishing rule of law. We cannot talk about democracy. It is all fine and well to organize elections, but the problems will resurface as soon as they are over. There is something highly artificial about stubbornly insisting on organizing democratic elections in a country that does not, and cannot, share any other traits of a democracy as its socio-economic infrastructure is too weak.

I believe that experts would say that if you want to help countries become democracies, first help them achieve economic and social development, and later you will be able to focus on establishing democratic political institutions.

● (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Goldring: When we're looking at a country like Iraq, I think it's an example of a place where all three things are happening simultaneously. You have security issues and concerns, and of course your democratic development will be difficult to proceed with unless you do have your security and all things. Just as this article says, you really have to use what is unique to that country's needs. Some will need high security. Guyana, for example, is a country that needs democratic institutions, working with political parties to refine the system better, whereas Haiti is really a failed state. It needs to work from security on up, working within the villages and the towns to start that embryonic democratic effort. It needs so much, it's pretty hard to describe in one issue. Each country would have varying needs, and I would dare say that Fiji is another one requiring another modified approach to it.

Are you saying there's nothing you can do, that there's only a tied aid to try to force the Government of Haiti to do certain initiatives? Or would that in itself fail too because the government in Haiti may reject that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: I do not understand why Canada or other countries absolutely insist that every country on the planet be democratic in 2006.

I gave the example of Malaysia and Singapore, which are not, strictly speaking, democracies: they are hybrid regimes. In other words, they are countries whose political system has many democratic features, but also some authoritarian features as well. However, these regimes are stable and peaceful. They are countries that now have economic and social conditions that are the envy of many other countries.

I would just like to mention one point: 85% of the housing in Singapore is subsidized. People have such good living conditions that the fact that freedom of the press is incomplete, and the PAP must always be re-elected does not cause huge problems for people, particularly since over 76% of the population is Chinese and the culture is Confucianist. As you know, it is a culture in which citizens must respect authority. Consequently, the people of Singapore do not want a lot of individual freedom.

I have to tell you quite honestly that I do not lose sleep over this. I prefer a regime such as the one in Singapore or Malaysia to an extremely weak democracy where there is corruption and where part of the country is controlled by bands of drug traffickers, and so on. In such a case, democracy is meaningless.

There was a time when aid was focused on economic and social development. The question of democracy became a priority after the end of the cold war. There was a desire to extend the democratic model quickly to every country in the world. However, I repeat that this is wishful thinking and will not work. It cannot work. I repeat, democracy cannot work in a very poor country. There is a great deal of documentation that proves this. One of the greatest American sociologists, Seymour Martin Lipset, explained that very well in a number of things he has written.

Economic and social development changes people's culture. It creates middle classes. Thus it changes the structure of society, and the middle classes are able to negotiate political compromises with the elites and these will in part also meet the demands of the poor. This is how democracy can be established and can last. These cultural changes, these changes in political behaviour, are the result of industrialization, urbanization, education and so on.

● (1645)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring, Madame Éthier.

Madam McDonough.

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

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Ms. Éthier, for being here today.

[*English*]

I want to ask a couple of questions to clarify, and then maybe one broader question.

I think I understood you to say that CIDA does no real assessment, no real evaluation, of the effectiveness of some of their programs. Were you referring specifically to the evaluation of democracy development initiative outcomes, or were you referring more generally to CIDA when you spoke about the lack of rigorous evaluation?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: I was referring to the lack of evaluation of CIDA's democratic development programs. I looked at the democratic development programs in the 90s: from 1992 to 2002. I got in touch with senior officials at CIDA and asked if there were public evaluations of all these programs. The answer was no.

CIDA is not the only agency that does not evaluate its programs. I looked into it and found that the same is true in Denmark, Sweden and Japan. Nevertheless, this is a problem. How can we determine whether the programs should be continued or changed if we have no evaluations of them? USAID has a number of them, but as I said, there are weaknesses in their program evaluation methods. However, in my opinion, the situation is quite a bit better there than at CIDA, where there are no such programs.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I was just interested in asking whether you would see an appropriate role for the International Development Research Council, which is at arm's length and exists under separate legislation from CIDA. Would you see it as an appropriate agency to be doing some of that research and evaluation of CIDA, precisely because they're at arm's length, as opposed to its being done in-house, where there may not be the same degree of objectivity or independence?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: You are right. I think it would be preferable for CIDA not to evaluate its own programs. What does USAID do? The American legislation requires that it hire outside experts, people who do not work for USAID. The evaluations are done by academics, members of various foundations, but they are nevertheless paid by USAID. They are sent off for three weeks to do an evaluation, and the fact that they are paid by USAID may be a type of conflict of interest. It could change their findings to some extent. Therefore, it would be preferable to have this done by an independent body.

● (1650)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I think you're aware that we've been looking specifically at failed and fragile states. If I'm understanding your conclusions, they are pretty discouraging. I think—and I want to make sure I'm understanding you—your position is that really, economic and social development are a precondition to being able to successfully engage in democratic development.

That being the case, although I understand the point you're making about the EU, where conditionality can be introduced, it seems to me that's just about the antithesis of the kind of work we're trying to do. In other words, there's almost a reciprocity between the EU and states that want to gain admission. There's an incentive that applies to something that is very concrete and very real.

Let's go to Afghanistan as an example. There is a great deal of concern I think about the cart being before the horse in the instance of Afghanistan, particularly in Kandahar. I'm wondering whether, as part of your research, you've also looked at the whole question of the increasing militarization of aid as the method for that supposed economic and social development, which are preconditions to democracy.

The Chair: The militarization of aid? Is that the question?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes.

The Chair: The militarization of aid....

Good luck, Madame Éthier.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: That is an interesting and important question, but I cannot answer it, because that is a project I have just begun working on. It deals with experiences of democracy building under foreign control. There have been a number of such instances throughout history. I want to compare past cases of democracy building, in such underdeveloped countries as Afghanistan, and see whether they were successful or not.

At present, Afghanistan is somewhat of a failure. It is a relative failure, but at the moment, Bosnia is also a failure, and Kosovo is not doing very well either. Even so, there is the conditionality of the European Union, which is investing considerable amounts of money in Bosnia and Kosovo to improve economic and social development. And then there is the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. Some 40 countries and international organizations are members of the pact and are engaged in economic and social development is Bosnia to create the conditions for political democracy. The pact was created in 1995, 11 years ago, and the latest report by the European Union on Bosnia indicates that the country is still not functional. NATO and European Union forces have to remain stationed there, or else ethnic conflicts will reignite between the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians.

We can draw comparisons between Bosnia and Afghanistan. There is proportionally more assistance and intervention in Bosnia than in Afghanistan. I realize that what I am saying is not encouraging, but unfortunately, I am not very optimistic about Afghanistan. Quite frankly, I think that the war against the Taliban will be a failure, unless NATO decides to send 100,000 or 200,000 soldiers, but NATO will never do that. It will therefore be a failure. I am 100% certain of that.

● (1655)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Do I have time for one more?

The Chair: You're at eight minutes. Go ahead, very quickly.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm just interested in whether you have done any analysis that you might share with the committee. I know there isn't a lot of time here, but along the lines of your work that you've already identified, have you done any analysis of the policy adopted by the previous Liberal government and embraced by the Conservative government that followed, establishing the three pillars of development, diplomacy, and defence as the underpinnings or the foundation for the approach being taken, supposedly, in Afghanistan?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Éthier: I did not study Canada's foreign policy. I examined democracy-building processes in general and made a general comparison of several strategies to promote democracy: control, conditionality and incentive. My only Canadian experience was the work I did with CIDA, but that was a long time ago, between 1992 and 1995. I therefore cannot answer your question.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Éthier.

Madame Barbot, I think we're going to leave it at that.

We want to thank you for coming in today. We look forward to getting the blues and going through your testimony again. We appreciate your research and you being willing to share that with this committee.

We are going to suspend for two minutes, to allow the witnesses to leave. We will then go in camera on our draft report from Haiti, after which we will also very quickly go to committee business.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

● _____ (Pause) _____

●

[*Public proceedings resume*]

● (1740)

The Chair: Madam McDonough wants to deal with her motion, and we can do that in committee business.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: We've had this for some time. It arose out of my original proposal. I'm trying to remember the exact timing. It was suggested in an earlier discussion that I bring this in as a separate motion. It reads that:

> That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the Committee's on-going study of democratic development, the Committee reports to the House its recommendation that the government present the draft whole-of-government strategy for failed states, to the Committee; that all relevant departments appear before the Committee to discuss the report; and that witnesses be invited to appear before the Committee to testify on the human rights and humanitarian implications of the draft strategy.

The Chair: What Madam McDonough has done is read out her motion that we're dealing with today.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's been so long, I had forgotten, but we had a fairly open discussion about the absurdity of our engaging in a major study on democratic development, it being widely acknowledged that there is in fact a whole of government strategy for failed states, a policy paper, in circulation. So why wouldn't we ask to have the chance to be informed of it and have an opportunity to consider it? Otherwise, it's like two wings not being coordinated in any way.

The Chair: All right, on the motion, Mr. Obhrai, are you going to respond?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): I am. I'm just reading my notes.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's so long ago now. It was when we were first doing revisions to the Haiti report, and I proposed the inclusion of a recommendation that this report on democratic development be shared with the committee. I think there was a consensus on the committee that a better way of dealing with that, rather than making it a recommendation to be included in the Haiti report—because it doesn't pertain to just Haiti alone—would be to put it in a separate motion and bring it forward to the committee; that we ask the government to share that report with us and that we consider it by inviting them to come and talk to us about it.

So that's where this came from. As I recall, there was a consensus on the committee that we proceed in that way, instead of making it a recommendation to the Haiti report.

An hon. member: This is Standing Order 108(2)?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes, it was in accordance with that Standing Order that we were making this request about the report to the House. We're asking for it to be shared with the committee and that we examine it.

● (1745)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chair, we do not see any difficulty with this motion put forward by Ms. McDonough on Standing Order 108 (2) on the ongoing study of democratic development. We would see that DFAIT and CIDA officials were prepared to report back to the committee during the first half of 2007 concerning programming commitments, principles, and objectives for investigating fragile states. It's not something that we would be opposed to, because it would shed light also on what the Government of Canada has been doing in reference to fragile states.

So we wouldn't have any problems with supporting that motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I have a little problem with the third line, "that the government present the draft whole-of-government....". I've never seen any government presenting a draft. You present something, but not a draft, because there could be five, ten, fifteen, twenty drafts for any report.

First, do they have the report? I have no clue. I was told that it was a report, but I'm not even sure if they have a report. Do we have a report on just "failed states"? What's the definition of a "failed state", first of all? I have no clue. We tried to find this out with Haiti, but I have no idea what a failed state is.

I cannot accept the word "draft". They could withdraw it, delete it, it doesn't matter. But for me to discuss the report.... We can ask the government to appear in front of us to discuss anything, but the way it's drafted....

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I understand what you're saying. Do you want to propose a friendly amendment? I'll accept that as a—

Mr. Bernard Patry: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...my motion.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I understand exactly the point you're making. Can I suggest two changes to deal with that? The first is, "that the government present its whole-of-government strategy for failed states", and the second is that, in the final line, it read, "implications of the proposed strategy".

I think it's assumed that we mean whatever the final version is that's now in hand, but it gets rid of that problem. Bernard is right to suggest this. Why are we talking about a draft?

The Chair: I don't understand the whole concept of "whole-of-government strategy". Does that mean the whole strategy of—?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's commonly referred to as "the whole-of-government strategy" in the House again and again. Your ministers stand up and use it. If you want it just to be "strategy", that's fine.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Frankly, for a failed state in Haiti or a failed state in Afghanistan, in Iraq, or South America, or Asia, we don't have the same strategy. That's what I mean. They might have more than the—

The Chair: Are we all right?

Madam McDonough, where are we on that?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: What I'm saying is that I accept totally Bernard's point about forgetting the draft part. I'm agreeing that we change it.

An hon. member: You're saying the government's strategy is... [*Inaudible—Editor*].

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Except that "whole of government" is the term used again and again by your ministers and your Prime Minister every time this comes up. That's why I think we should call it what it is. I didn't make up this name. This is the government's name for its strategy document.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Let's say we agree with this. There are many departments that are going to need to appear. That's why you say "the whole-of-government" and "all relevant departments".

Now, when do you want us to do this? You might have six, seven, eight, nine departments concerned in this.

We're doing democratic development. Is it within this study that we're doing right now or outside of what we're doing right now? I'm asking you. I'm not against it.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: The point of raising it in the first place —and we had this discussion before—is that we're doing this study on democratic development as it relates to failing fragile states. Why would we not want to take the opportunity to hear from government about the strategy that is already in existence in a "whole-of-government strategy for failed states" document?

● (1750)

The Chair: I don't know if you want the vote on this or not.

Are we going to have committee business tomorrow? Are we dealing with that motion by Mr. Martin sometime at the end of the day?

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: All Keith's says is to deal with Bill C-293 on Tuesday.

The Chair: That's what we're willing to do. Basically, what I actually contacted the clerk about and what the government has suggested—

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: This was actually for tomorrow. I was amending it to Tuesday of next week.

The Chair: What I've been working on is trying to get rid of the witnesses for next week and going with clause-by-clause Tuesday and Wednesday. Some suggestions are that we are going to recess early. I've heard that in each of the six years I've been here and it never happens. But if it does happen, it may happen Wednesday night. Even from our side, I've never heard anything earlier than Wednesday night, which would give us Tuesday and Wednesday. So I think we're all right with that one.

We can deal with this now, or do you want to keep going?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm up for us to deal with it. Originally, the suggestion was that it was better dealt with at this time.

The Chair: That's good.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Could I just respond briefly to Bernard? One other suggestion that's an improvement is that we strike "all", where it says "that all relevant departments", because I think it's up to us to decide. We always set our own agenda. We decide who we want to hear from. Just in case that causes alarm bells that we're going to bring in—

The Chair: Let's just keep going here. Madam McDonough has the floor. She has asked that "all" be struck. As I understand it, "relevant departments" would be Foreign Affairs and CIDA.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It would be up to us to decide that.

The Chair: All right, but you know what could happen. All of a sudden, someone could say they want to hear from the defence department or they want to hear from Finance. Then, all of a sudden, we're into this whole thing. It doesn't clearly define who is expected to come, and that's the problem I have with the motion.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Alexa, when you say that you will delete "that all relevant departments appear before the Committee to discuss the report", I think we should discuss the strategy. They're going to pitch us a report and that's it. I don't know if there is a report. To me, you need to discuss the strategy if you want to improve it.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Alexa, could you read the whole thing again with all these things, so everybody is on the same wavelength as you? Could you start from the beginning?

The Chair: Alexa, I'll be honest with you, because I'm new in the chair. We're getting feverishly close to so many changes that it's almost changing the intent, because now we're going from explaining or discussing the report to discussing this overall strategy.

That's what we are trying to do here. We're talking about democratic development in the motion. We've had all kinds of departments appear already, discussing the overall strategy. So that's going. That's why the government I think can accept this. But now you've taken out the report. This is whose report? This is our report. Isn't that what we wanted—a response?

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, it's the report of the government. That was the strategy. It's always the strategy with us. We talk about strategy; we don't necessarily talk about reports.

The Chair: It's understood. Thank you.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Go ahead, Alexa.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: All right.

> That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the committee's ongoing study on democratic development, the committee report to the House its recommendation that the government present its whole-of-government strategy for failed states to the committee, and that relevant departments appear before the committee to discuss the strategy, witnesses be invited to appear to testify on the human rights and humanitarian implications of the proposed strategy.

And if I could just say so, I don't think it changes the meaning at all. I actually just think every suggestion made was an improvement, and surely that's why we had the discussion.

● (1755)

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, do you want to comment on behalf of the government?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: As I said, we don't see any difficulties. The government will be very happy to come forward and present its strategy on failed states and what it's been doing. This calls for it, and I think this is an improvement, so we have no problem in supporting this.

The Chair: All right. Can we have the question?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Folks, it's been a real treat being here with you today.

We're adjourned.

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