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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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● (0905)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good morning, colleagues.

[*English*]

I call the meeting to order. This is meeting number 42 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, February 28, 2007.

This morning, in our first hour, we will have a briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. We're delighted to have today two witnesses appear before our committee.

First of all, we have from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, James Appathurai, who is a spokesman on their behalf this morning. We welcome you.

Also we have from the United Nations Christopher Alexander, deputy special representative of the Secretary General for Afghanistan. Welcome to the foreign affairs committee.

Our committee has undertaken a number of different studies, some dealing more with international development, others dealing with perhaps the specifics of foreign affairs. I don't like really differentiating between those two. We have had a study of democratic development and how Canada's involved in democratic development. And now we undertake a bit of a briefing and a study on Afghanistan and Canada's role in Afghanistan, progress made in Afghanistan, and the situation of Afghanistan. To that end, we welcome you.

As you know, we will have opening comments—we usually give approximately 10 minutes to each person for opening comments—and then we'll proceed into the first round of questioning, 10-minute rounds for each party, and then into the second round if time permits. We have a guest coming in the second hour, so at about five minutes before 10 o'clock we will conclude.

Again, welcome here. We look forward to your comments.

Mr. Alexander, do you wish to begin?

Mr. Christopher Alexander (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Afghanistan, United Nations): With pleasure. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And thanks to all of you committee members for inviting us to appear before you today.

The mission in Afghanistan is one that has a high profile in Canada, that is dear to the hearts of Canadians because so many resources and so many principles are on the line. But it's also one in which the interests and the capabilities of some of the world's principal international organizations are heavily engaged.

It's a real pleasure to be able to appear before you with my colleague James Appathurai—another Canadian, representing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—and in my capacity representing the United Nations, which has a long and proud history in Afghanistan. It dates back to the late 1940s, when some of the very first United Nations programs, particularly for specialized agencies, were rolled out in Afghanistan.

I would argue—and I'll say more about the UN role in Afghanistan later—that the UN's role in the world and its effectiveness in the world as an agent of change, as a network supporting the project of nation building in Afghanistan, is very much being tested—being put to the test, and in many cases, I will argue on behalf of my United Nations colleagues, passing the test.

But obviously the United Nations is only as good as its constituent members. The same goes for NATO. Canada, with its long history of heavy involvement both in framing United Nations mandates and in helping to achieve results for the United Nations, has a very key role to play. The sorts of investments that were announced yesterday by the government in reconstruction, in development, and in capacity building are exactly the sorts of commitments that the United Nations needs from its key member states in order to deliver for Afghans and to deliver for the international community in Afghanistan today.

So I'd like to start by congratulating Canada, and here I mean not just the Canadian government but Canadian society, for its substantial and growing commitment to one of the great international causes of our time: the development and rebuilding of Afghanistan after a quarter-century of conflict.

I speak of Canada as a society because you are there in all of your guises. Canada's government agencies responsible for international policy are there obviously in a big way, but so are Canadian NGOs, so are Canadian experts, so are Canadian private sector companies, and so are Canadian families. So is Canadian civil society, which has strong connections, obviously, to Afghanistan, rebuilding shattered lives, helping to rebuild communities, helping to relaunch a process of development, peace building, and institutional renewal in Afghanistan today.

It's a very proud occasion for me as a Canadian to be able to report to all of you that this role within the United Nations family, for Canada and for Canadians, remains extremely prominent and extremely well appreciated at all levels in Afghanistan as a society.

This was never simply a mission to disrupt terrorist bases. It has become a key proving ground for the challenge of nation building, a test of the will of the international community both to support poverty reduction and to back the emergence of new institutions in a country that quite frankly, after 25 years of acute conflict, richly deserved both.

It's important to start out by observing that our achievements in Afghanistan to date are already substantial. In 2001, access to health care was negligible—in some parts of the country non-existent. Today, over 85% of the population has access to a basic package of health care services.

The economy of Afghanistan amounted in 2002 to approximately $3.4 billion U.S. That's the estimate from international financial institutions of the scale of the legitimate economy, the non-poppy economy, in 2002. In 2006 it was estimated at $7.9 billion U.S. In other words, the legitimate economy has more than doubled in size in only five years. That growth has actually outpaced the growth of the illegal economy, which is nevertheless very worrying and a question to which we should return during this discussion.

● (0910)

Per capita income in Afghanistan was only $150 U.S. per year in 2002. That's the best estimate. Today it stands well above $300 U.S. Trade with neighbouring Pakistan and Iran has burgeoned.

Let's take just the case of Pakistan. Under the Taliban, in the final year of record keeping, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan was $25 million. That's a paltry sum for countries that have a border of over 2,000 kilometres. Today the total trade between the two countries, for 2006, stands at over $1.5 billion, and probably in 2007 it will reach well over $2 billion, or even $2.5 billion.

The Afghan currency has been reformed and remains stable. Inflation is low. The Afghan budget is balanced, and revenues have grown by over 30% in each of the past three years. Thousands of schools have been built or reopened, placing 5.4 million children in education, which is a historic high for the country and, above all, a historic and internationally important record for the number of girls in school in Afghanistan today.

Afghanistan has experienced the most ambitious road building period of its history. New transmission lines are now under construction. They will bring power to Kabul in the necessary quantities by 2008 and to the main cities of southern Afghanistan, including Kandahar, by 2009.

The poverty that remains such an abject barrier to advancement for so many Afghans often blinds us to the scale of this progress. It is, to our mind, one of the minor tragedies of the Afghan story to date that this forward movement, these substantial achievements, improvements to the lives of Afghans, are under-recognized in the outside world and under-recognized, quite frankly, in the constituencies that deserve to know that their intervention has made a difference most of all.

That includes, obviously, Canadian public opinion, where, quite frankly, the story has not been told. The reports of your committee, of the government, helped to tell the story. Media, quite frankly, have not helped us as much as we would like. This is a continuing challenge that we could perhaps discuss in the course of today's session.

It's not everyone who chooses to celebrate the fact that they now have $30 per month rather than $10 per month to live on. But this is, for Afghans, a fact of life. They are poor, but they have two or three times the resources, in many cases, that they had four or five years ago, and for them it is a cause for celebration. This advancement, this improvement, after 25 years of deterioration is a sign that things are changing.

No one is satisfied. No one in Afghanistan will tell you they have received enough. No one will tell you that all of the assistance or even most of the assistance has been effective. We're still learning. But we have had an impact and we do have results to show.

[*Translation*]

For Afghan men and women these numbers count. They have created and maintained a level of hope within the Afghan population, and this is one of the essential ingredients in our involvement. They are proof that peace and a better life are truly possible for Afghans, and it is our hope that we will be able to continue improving their lives, in cooperation with the international community.

Nonetheless, there are still groups intent on proving that the end to this conflict is not yet in sight. In 2001, the Taliban regime was not dismantled; it was simply pushed back beyond Afghanistan's borders and somewhat forgotten until 2002-03.

● (0915)

[*English*]

In the intervening five years, the Taliban have recovered and to some extent reconstituted themselves. They have found new funding sources and reconnected with old allies.

Last year in southern Afghanistan, with a transition under way from U.S. to NATO leadership, the Taliban set out to challenge government authority in Kandahar. It set out to show that Afghanistan's clocks were once again turning back to 1999—or even to 1994, the first year the Taliban phenomenon really became known in Afghanistan—to a time when girls were barred from school; when summary justice was meted out across Afghanistan with blatant disregard for due process and human rights; when, quite frankly, terrorists took charge of this very important country and extended their influence over the region of South Asia and the whole world.

In September 2006, the response of the international community to this threat was Operation Medusa, a conventional military response to a stubborn enemy of peace. It was the first brigade-level combat in NATO history. It was a battle waged and won primarily by Canadians, with the strong support of allies and the sanction of the United Nations Security Council.

Medusa changed the insurgent landscape in southern Afghanistan. It restored hope. It rallied the tribes. It devastated Taliban morale. In the end, it brought roads, jobs, and rural development projects to Panjwai and Zherai districts, which at this time last year were starting to become sanctuaries for the Taliban and places from which they were able to operate in other parts of the country. In short, Medusa allowed the Government of Afghanistan to regain the advantage in its deadly contest of wills with the resurgent Taliban.

In the month of December in Kandahar province, President Karzai spent a total of five days, the longest period since he took office. His rural development minister visited battle-affected communities. In the intervening weeks, the Afghan national director of security made inroads against suicide bombing facilitation networks in Kandahar, Khowst, and Kabul. Also in December, Mullah Akhtar Usmani, the number three leader of the Taliban, was killed in a NATO-led operation.

So Medusa has been a pivotal moment in the recent history of security in Afghanistan and in the south. Those who stood behind Afghanistan in those operations, behind Afghan National Army soldiers and behind the Afghan government, deserve an enormous amount of credit for showing a tough enemy that NATO means business, that security will be brought to southern Afghanistan whatever the cost, and that our commitment across the board, from the United Nations to NATO to member states, remains extremely strong.

Security is not the whole story. The success of operations like Medusa has cleared the way for a development process that is very much on track. The Afghanistan Compact, which was agreed to in London during January and early February 2006, is a unique framework for organizing the effort of 60 nations, all the principal international financial institutions, all the principal organizations, in support of a nation building process. The benchmarks and the objectives outlined in that Afghanistan Compact have been shown over the past year to be the right ones, to be ones worthy of being pursued, to be emblematic of the nation building project that everyone is trying to achieve in Afghanistan.

It is no accident that many of those involved in post-conflict situations in other parts of the world have sought to emulate the Afghanistan Compact to bring together, to orchestrate, international efforts—in Haiti, in Iraq, in other parts of the world—on the same sorts of principles as we are now trying to observe and to implement in Afghanistan.

The United Nations remains at the heart of this effort. There are upwards of 5,000 UN personnel in Afghanistan. This is a fact that is little known in Canada and the outside world, where the focus tends to be on NATO, on the military mission. But these are civilians, and they are part of the largest political mission the United Nations has. It's also an integrated mission, where the expertise of over 20 UN agencies, programs, and funds is brought to bear on the challenges of Afghans, particularly in rural communities, where most Afghans live on a daily basis.

The United Nations has delivered up to one-fifth of all the assistance that has gone to Afghanistan in the past five years. We have overseen the holding of elections. We have implemented rural development projects. We have implemented, even in the conditions of insurgency this year, inoculation programs for the most devastating diseases that have affected children in Afghanistan, even in the war-affected south.

These achievements have not come without cost. Like all of those who work in Afghanistan today, United Nations staff face security risks. But those risks are judged by all of us to be worth taking, given the results we are able to achieve, given the presence across the country, including in Kandahar and neighbouring provinces, that the UN and other civilian agencies are able to maintain and indeed strengthen now, at the beginning of 2007, as a result of the military success in 2006 that we were all so pleased to observe.

● (0920)

There remain enormous challenges in Afghanistan today. Security is foremost among them, and we should spend the necessary time in this discussion literally going over the shape of that challenge and what the possible solutions are today.

The development challenge remains enormous. Despite a doubling of GDP, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It is really surpassed in the acuteness of its poverty only by a few countries in Africa.

Governance, however, above and beyond the security and development challenge, will be the key to unlocking success in the future. Institutions have been built in Kabul. Ministries are functioning effectively at central level, at least in one out of three government institutions, I would say by a rough reckoning, but they are not always functioning at sub-national level, at provincial level, or at district level. This must be a major focus of international engagement if we are to succeed in this great project.

Establishing the rule of law is another major overriding priority for 2007. This goes to the heart of the reform now taking place in the ministry of interior, but it also has to engage much larger, more substantial forms of support for the attorney general's office and for the court system in Afghanistan. We hope Canada and other nations, with the sorts of commitments announced yesterday, will be part of shaping that agenda. That agenda obviously is deeply related to the challenge of counter-narcotics. The drug industry is the greatest illustration there still is today of the weakness and fragility of the Afghanistan state, of the legacy of failed statehood in Afghanistan, and of the incompleteness of our achievement to date.

Mr. Chair, I will leave my opening remarks there and hand it over to my colleague, but I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Appathurai, for roughly ten minutes, please.

Mr. James Appathurai (Spokesman, NATO International Staff, North Atlantic Treaty Organization): I'll try to stick to the time. At NATO, we're more disciplined than they are at the UN.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

Allow me also to thank you for having us this morning. This is a great pleasure for me. This is the first time that I have visited your committee.

As Christopher, my friend and colleague, stated, this is a very important issue for Canada. It is also very important for NATO: it is our main priority. As an aside, I would say that this is proof of how much NATO has changed.

My notes, about 50% of them, contain the same statistics that Christopher quoted on education, and infrastructure that has been built. Every week we receive two pages on development progress. In my office I have plans and maps. Five years ago I only had the Balkans. All of a sudden I have all of Southern Asia.

We have a very intimate relationship with the UN. That is security in the 21st century.

[*English*]

Let me make four brief points, please. I think it'll be more fun to talk together than have you listen to me.

There are three or four questions that we have to answer. First, do we still have a national interest in being there? Is the national interest that we had in signing up to this as strong as it was? I think it is absolutely clear that it is.

I did a little research five years ago, before the Taliban was removed from power. Afghanistan had become the sanctuary for extremist groups from at least 24 countries, all training in well-manned, well-funded terrorist camps. We can't ignore this. There was al-Qaeda, of course, with its 3,000 fighters from 13 Arab countries. There were extremist groups from Russia, Pakistan, China, Burma, Iran, Central Asia, and several countries of the Far East. All of them fought for the Taliban while carrying out their political agendas at home. Afghanistan was the Grand Central Station of terrorism, with extremists arriving every day and leaving better trained and more extreme.

These are the same people we're fighting today, and that is a point that we cannot forget. They would love to be back in power. This is 20:20 hindsight, and it has only been five years. That's a point that I continually make, certainly as a NATO spokesman. It's easy to forget, but we can't forget it. As NATO, we took on the mandate from the UN to help prevent that from happening, and that is what we are doing.

The second question is whether this is winnable, and whether we are winning. I think that is a critical question for the populations in the 37 troop-contributing nations. Certainly I can speak for them, because that's the question the public has asked. Can we do it? I think Chris has quite clearly indicated that on the indicators that matter, there is traction. People's lives are getting better. They have more money in their pockets. The level of access to health care is higher than in every country of Africa except South Africa, and that is saying a lot when you consider where Afghanistan started from five years ago. It's at 83%. My wife runs an NGO, and she tells me this is unheard of. The progress the UN has made in rolling this out is absolutely dramatic.

You've heard the other statistics. To put it in clear terms as to where we are now, our information is that there are 17,000 reconstruction and development projects under way as we speak, 1,000 of which are being carried out by NATO. Billions and billions of dollars are being spent.

Focusing on security, we have built the Afghan National Army up from zero five years ago to 30,000 soldiers now, deployed and fighting all over the country. This is absolutely relevant for us because the Afghan national security forces are our exit strategy. There will be a long fight in Afghanistan. The Taliban will not be crushed to nothing in the next three years. There will be an insurgency issue for a long time to come, for all the reasons we've mentioned, like the narcotics issue and the border issue with Pakistan. But the Afghans need to be able to fight their own fight. When they can, we can step back. Until they can, we can't. That's the reality.

As NATO countries, we have now contributed tens of thousands of small arms, millions of rounds of ammunition, 110 armoured personnel carriers, and a dozen helicopters. We've put small teams into the deployed Afghan battalions to help them do their jobs. The U.S. has pledged, as you know, $8.6 billion to help develop the Afghan national security forces. This is our exit strategy. We are aiming for 70,000 in the Afghan National Army.

The Afghan National Police are a big weak point. Part of the attraction, if you want to call it that, of the Taliban is that they walk into ungoverned areas where there is no structure, no law and order, and no effective police. As a result, people say they don't much like the Taliban, but they like structure better than they like anarchy, so they'll take the Taliban because it's all they have.

So we need to help establish a local government presence, and that means police. The army moves to fight. That's not your community policing. This is something, of course, that the EU and the UN are working on, not NATO, but it definitely affects us as NATO.

So the first conclusion is that our efforts to help the Afghans build a better country and better future are paying off, but it will certainly take a sustained and well-coordinated long-term effort. That's what Chris is doing.

There is a high level of expectation among Afghans about seeing the benefits in a concrete way. They've heard of all the pledges of billions of dollars, and they want to see the results. We have to do our best to do that.

The second question is whether we have enough forces and whether the other allies are pulling their weight. I know this is a very sensitive subject here in Canada. Our answer at NATO is, in general, yes and yes. Taking into account the political realities in all of the 37 countries, yes and yes.

● (0925)

Do we have everything we want? No. You'll never hear a satisfied NATO official. But we have dramatically increased the combat power available to the commander of ISAF this year.

Since the Riga summit three months ago, we have added over 7,000 troops to the overall ISAF mission. Virtually all of these are what we would call uncaveated—in other words, they don't have geographic restrictions on their use. Most of them are devoted to the south.

Of course the U.S. has made the most substantial contribution, with the 10th Mountain Division, followed by the 183rd Airborne

The U.K. just announced another 1,500 troops on top of the extra 500 that they had added.

Those are the big-ticket items. You also have Norwegian special forces, and special forces from other countries that have not made this public, so I'm not at liberty to do so. The Danes will add more. The Germans will likely approve the deployment of six Tornados, with the 500 troops that go with them. We also have more UAVs coming online, and we have more transport aircraft and so on from different countries. The Australians are going to double their contribution to 1,000, with another 250 special forces and transport.

I list all of this to tell you that the yardsticks have moved dramatically in the last three months. The Canadian government has been a vocal, intense advocate behind closed doors with the allies to do more, and they have moved the yardsticks. Canada has earned a lot of credit in NATO for what it's doing on the ground. We have a bigger voice than we had when I joined the alliance. People listen when Canada talks, because we have paid where it counts. I think we are using that credit very intelligently to get what we want focused towards.

In terms of the reconstruction and development funding, as Chris said, the government's announcement yesterday is exactly what we need. Do we need more? Yes. We need more helicopters and more fixed-wing transport aircraft. We will keep pushing. But you heard Minister O'Connor and General Hillier both say that they're broadly satisfied with what is now on the ground. They have been pushing hard, so if they say it, it means something.

When I talk about removing caveats, restrictions, we got a commitment at the Riga summit. All 26 allies—in fact all 37—committed to the principle that if another ally is in danger anywhere in the country, if Commander ISAF calls, they will go. That is a critical demonstration of solidarity. I can tell you that the French deployed Mirage aircraft in close air support for Canadian troops just a few weeks ago. They killed a lot of Taliban to save our soldiers' lives outside of their area. So they have proven that they are willing to do it; that's good.

I'll skip all the things that Chris already said. Let me highlight three areas where we are obviously going to focus our efforts as an international community, or where we need to.

One is on governance, and as Chris said, it's absolutely critical.

Second is Pakistan. Until we deal with the issue of support coming across the border, we will be not getting enough traction. I know that the Canadian government, the American government, and many others are working very closely with the Pakistanis. They have to be part of the solution.

I think I saw that Minister MacKay offered the Pakistanis Canada's expertise in how to defend a long and dangerous border.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. James Appathurai: Finally, there's narcotics, which is a cancer in this country. They are fuelling the Taliban, because the Taliban, like any mafia, is protecting the industry and taking their cut. This is of direct security interest to us, and therefore we have an interest in helping tackle it. But it is doable, and I want to give one statistic.

In the 1980s Pakistan was the world's biggest producer of heroin, and 70% came from that country. They were producing 900 tonnes of poppy per year. In 1997 Pakistan was producing 24 tonnes of poppy. In 1999 it was 2 tonnes. This is right next door; it's doable.

So you certainly shouldn't come to the conclusion that we throw up our hands and say, let's just let them grow it and we'll buy it, because you don't think the narcotics issue can be tackled. It can be done, as it has been done in Turkey and Thailand.

One other point is the comprehensive approach, as we call it in NATO—the three Ds. In other words, the narcotics issue shows that you can't just go after the crop and expect to be successful. You need a justice system, a police system, and alternative livelihoods.

Getting all the different pieces to work together, like NATO and the UN—this is all new for us—is like legislating love: it's a good idea, but you can't just write it down. It's a nice goal, but it's hard to do.

So this Canadian approach of balancing all the different parts, but also integrating them, is absolutely essential. We're learning as we go in NATO. I think the UN is a bit more ahead on this, but we're getting there.

● (0930)

The final point is on poll numbers. There is a perception in the press—and I'm the spokesman, so I know how the press can get things wrong—that the Afghans don't want us, that they like the Taliban, or that the government is losing support. There have been three major polls taken in Afghanistan in the last five years, only three: Altai Consulting, the Asia Foundation, and the BBC. If you average them out, about 75% of the population still welcomes foreign forces, strongly. And I think Chris can certainly support this. About 80% support their elected government, and that is a big deal. They accept a democratic system now, after only five years, as being the way to go. And 3% want the Taliban back—3%. That is, in other words, statistically insignificant. Nobody wants the Taliban back in Afghanistan. Most people think their lives are getting better.

These are encouraging numbers. We have traction, and we can make it work.

I have other points to make, including on what this means for NATO. But let's open the floor for questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go into the first round. We're going to cut the first round to six-minute questions, and we will watch it very closely on the time clock.

We'll begin with Mr. Patry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you very much. I will share my time—

[*English*]

The Chair: That's question and answer, six minutes.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Oh. I hope I can use six minutes. But they used 10 minutes. It will be the same—

● (0935)

The Chair: I should also say that they are meeting next with the defence committee at 10 o'clock. So we have to legislate this fairly closely.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you very much for coming this morning.

[*English*]

You talk about development. I want to talk about diplomacy. You give us your appreciation, but we receive a different view from some other countries, like Germany. Two weeks ago, Italian Prime Minister Prodi admitted he was not too keen about the situation in Afghanistan.

I would like to address sustainability, because a couple of weeks ago we met Professor Barnett Rubin in Washington, and he said the haven and support the Taliban receive in Pakistan derived in part from the hostility that has characterized relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan for as long as both have existed. That hostility, in turn, is partly driven by a century-long grievance in Afghanistan, the trade that Pakistan receives from India, and the precarious nature of Pakistan national unity, especially the dissidence of the Pashtun and Baluchistan, which Afghanistan has often supported. I want to talk about this. I want to talk about diplomacy.

If we go back to 1937, 60 years ago, before Pakistan even existed, there was a non-aggression treaty between Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. I feel that right now the problem we're facing is a problem of non-aggression with all the neighbour countries, and the solution lies with the diplomacy, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran, China, Russia, and the EU, in a certain sense. I would like to know if the United Nations or NATO have ever.... I'm sure you think about it. Are you going to do anything to have a conference with all of these countries to try to find a vital and sustainable solution to the problems we're facing right now in Afghanistan?

That's my question. Maybe Mr. Ignatieff would like to ask his question right now, because we'll have no time if I let that guy....

The Chair: Mr. Ignatieff.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): I have a question for the NATO spokesman. There are conflicting judgments coming out of NATO as to the likelihood of a spring offensive. What is the current NATO thinking on that issue? What are NATO's plans to combat it?

For Mr. Alexander, what can the Karzai government do to increase its legitimacy and support in Kandahar province, since doing that is crucial to the success of the Canadian mission there?

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: Thank you very much for both questions.

Pakistan, I think both of us noted, remains the partner of Afghanistan with whom we all need to work most intensively to solve some very key outstanding problems. Key to the solution is a recognition that the Taliban represents a threat to the established order, to the constitutional order in both countries. I think there is a dawning recognition in Pakistan itself that this is the case. We have seen attacks by suicide bombers almost as numerous inside Pakistan over the last two months as inside Afghanistan itself. That speaks to a threat that is cross-border in nature, but is also directed against, literally, the constitutional order in both countries.

Now, you cite Barnett Rubin, who has been a long-time associate of the UNAMA mission, was one of the architects of the Bonn Agreement, and remains an extremely candid and competent observer of Pakistan-Afghan relations. It is not correct, however, to say that the countries have been at daggers-drawn throughout their history. There remains the issue of the Durand Line, which is an issue for some constituencies within the Pashtun population of Afghanistan, but which, quite frankly, is not an axe that Afghans generally, let alone the Afghan government, have to grind with Pakistan today.

Afghans want security. They recognize that the Taliban was not dismantled; they were pushed out. They found safe haven, they found allies, partly in Pakistan, although the network supporting them is truly international in nature. There hasn't been enough progress to shut down those safe havens, those leadership structures, to the extent that will be required to bring stability to Afghanistan.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: Everyone is working to make this a reality. Quite frankly, in the first four or five years of transition, the importance of this issue was under-recognized by all the relevant players. I like to think—if you read UN reports—that the UN was among the earliest sounding the tocsin on this issue. But we've needed to go further, and we are only now generating the critical mass of dialogue with Pakistan that we need on these issues.

● (0940)

The Chair: Mr. Appathurai, did you have something to add? We have about 40 seconds to answer both questions.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: On the question of governance in Kandahar, it's absolutely crucial to the success of the campaign today. I think a key observation is that those who have been involved in governance, to date, over the past four or five years, are not necessarily those who will serve the government best as its representatives in peacetime, as legitimate institutions start to roll out in Kandahar. There will need to be change. There has been some in both Kandahar and Helmand, but we need to see more. The figures associated with past strategies, some of which have failed, quite frankly, may need to move on before we have the right ingredients in place for success.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to the second questioner, Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

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

Because we are pressed for time I'll get straight to my point.

A Senlis report—that you are probably very familiar with—that was published in February stated that there is an imbalance in the instruments being used by the counter-insurgency. In other words, too much focus has been placed on military security, even though it was necessary, and too little has been placed on humanitarian work, economic development, and everything else that falls under that category.

Three hundred and fifty dollars per inhabitant was spent in Bosnia; in Afghanistan, the amount is approximately $60. Are you doing enough? Everything can't depend only on Canada, on $200 million more. This seems to be a much bigger case.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: Despite the scope of the measures undertaken in Afghanistan to support development and reconstruction, those measures have been insufficient to date.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Largely insufficient.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: That is clear to everyone.

One can't draw too many comparisons between Afghanistan and Bosnia. The situation is different. The international community took the responsibility for the administration of Bosnia, which entailed costs far beyond those related to our responsibilities in Afghanistan.

In my opinion, the process of identifying new resources for Afghanistan is currently accelerating. The United States have more or less doubled their resources for Afghanistan over the past few months. Canada, while adhering to its own principles, is doubling or tripling its efforts in the civilian sector to support development and create new institutions. That will put considerable pressure on our European, Asian and other partners to increase their involvement in Afghanistan.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Is there not, however, some urgency? You're describing a process that seems to be slow.

Take, for example, the poppy issue. You said that this has to be dealt with, and then you quoted numbers from 1999. However, from everything we have seen poppy production is not slowing down. On the contrary, it is feeding the Taliban on the one hand, but it is also feeding corruption everywhere, not to mention the effect it is having on all the surrounding "istan" countries.

Rather than attempting to destroy those crops and be unsuccessful in that, as my party proposed, based on what other people said, why not purchase those crops and use them to produce medical drugs?

Mr. Christopher Alexander: We tried that strategy in 2002. Producers gave us, with open arms, a crop that was double the size of the previous years, while asking twice the previous year's price. Therefore, buying crops does not work.

What has to be done is to implement the existing strategy for eliminating drugs from these Afghan lands. That strategy rests on eight inherent pillars. It's not just about eradication. In those provinces where eradication is being carried out without implementing the seven other pillars, our attempts are doomed to fail.

What have we seen in Afghanistan this year? We've seen a concentration of these crops in two or three Southern provinces, that is, the most insecure provinces.

On the other hand, our strategy has been successful in several provinces in Afghanistan. Nangahar, which, like Pakistan, was the main producer of poppies in Afghanistan, no longer grows them. In Northern and Western Afghanistan, where governance and the rule of law are being established, production is decreasing.

● (0945)

Ms. Francine Lalonde: But the Taliban in the South.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: In the South, where the Taliban is present, production continues. We therefore have to deal with the problem of security before implementing our eight-pillar strategy.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Appathurai, very, very quickly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. James Appathurai: I would just like to make one comment. The elected Government of Afghanistan wants nothing to do with this. It is their country, and the President has stated clearly that this is counter to Islam—

Ms. Francine Lalonde: But everyone knows that they also profit from this. I'm sorry, but—

Mr. James Appathurai: Yes, but obviously—

Ms. Francine Lalonde: They all profit from it.

Mr. James Appathurai: Theirs is an elected government, and we have to respect their right to decide how they are going to eradicate this.

Mr. Chairman, may I respond briefly to Mr. Ignatieff?

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Don't take any of my time away.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, continue. We'll hear the answer.

Mr. James Appathurai: I'll take 30 seconds.

I just got back from Afghanistan four days ago, where we had an extensive briefing from the commander of ISAF on the spring offensive. “Spring offensive” is probably not the right term, because it'll be more like the summer, and every year, of course, we have seen an uptick.

That being said, the Taliban spokespeople are notoriously unreliable, so I would take all of their statistics about how many suicide bombers there are, etc., with a grain of salt. These may be true or they may not be, but nobody knows. I think that's the basic point. But they have an endless supply, apparently, of people and of money, and these are hard to choke off.

NATO will be on the front foot—and it will not just be NATO. We have a very clear operational plan. It is called Operation New Year, or Operation Nowruz. Chris is very familiar with it as well, because it's being done, of course, in close conjunction not just with the Afghans—and the Afghans are fully part of this and, indeed, are leading it in many cases—but also with the rest of the international community. And it will be a two-pronged approach. One will be active but targeted military operations throughout the country, in particular to protect and widen development zones into which investment is being provided. It will, for example, include areas of the south like northern Helmand, as we had discussed, an area where a lot has to be done. But it will be part of an overall and integrated approach.

So it will be a spring offensive that is not just a military one. Development and reconstruction will be fully part of an integrated approach, and it will be ours—on offence, both civilian and military.

The Chair: Thank you very much. It's good to hear it's a balanced approach they're taking.

Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was going to pick up on the balanced approach, but you've already provided a segue into that.

Thank you to our witnesses for appearing here today.

First of all, I want to recognize the comments both of you have made about the fact that development is actually working there. And thank you for your support. We're getting a lot of criticism from opposition parties that we shouldn't be spending money on development, that we should walk away.

Some hon. members: What? No.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Comments have been made about that, and it's very important that we do this.

We realize security is an issue, but can you share some of your thoughts about the balance? We've been criticized that we don't have a proper balance between development and defence. Can you share that with us?

I'd also like to offer my colleague Wajid Khan an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Thank you very much.

I'll ask a very quick question for you to answer, and my question is in line with that of my colleague Mr. Ignatieff, who probably could ask it better.

I feel that the transnational non-state actors who have utilized the soil of Pakistan and Afghanistan to attack elsewhere are also attacking internally in Pakistan. Examples are the Islamabad Marriott Hotel and airport recently. Also, tremendous pressure has been put by the government, the military, and also the Americans on the Pashtun and local elements in the Taliban, and they have dispersed and joined other organizations. There is also some evidence from Iraq that they're reinvesting in Afghanistan, because the mainstream Sunnis and the Shias and the Americans and others are putting a lot of heat on these guys. They're not that welcome, so they cannot operate with impunity in Iraq.

Is there any evidence that they are now linking up with al-Qaeda and the Taliban and becoming one group?

Also, as evidenced by the bombing in India, it is believed that these groups have dispersed and joined others. How serious is this threat, and is there a plan to react to that also?

Very quickly, the Americans have a 2,400-kilometre border and they can't control the Mexicans from coming into the United States. India had 600,000 troops in Kashmir. They could not stop the local militants. Reasonably speaking, what do you think Pakistan can do, and how can we assist them to achieve their goal?

Thank you.

● (0950)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

There are two questions, Mr. Appathurai.

Mr. James Appathurai: Yes, in two sentences. NATO's view very much is, yes, no development without security—that's true—but also, no long-term security without development. For us this is absolutely primordial. We will not achieve mission success until the civilians manage to do what they have to do, which is why we are very much a team in a way that we never were before.

So the principle is clear. The challenge is getting it right. We have never done, as an international community, something like this. And the provincial reconstruction teams are an example—a unique creation of civilian and military working together. We have to find ways to work with the non-governmental organizations, which have a profound distrust of what we're doing and of us in the security world. It's really learning as we go, but we are miles ahead of where we used to be.

What we need to do is ensure that we do all three things: provide the security; provide immediate reconstruction.... As soon as you break it, fix it, because if you don't, you have made enemies. And that is a very delicate discussion about how much money you give the military or not. Some countries do it with quick impact funds. We have an immediate post-operation humanitarian fund created at NATO into which countries have paid, and the Commander ISAF has money to go in and fix it. Then there is long-term development, and I can say this because I think it's worth saying. I was just there, as I said, and what I heard from many development agencies—not Canadian development agencies—is that CIDA is the textbook example of how to do long-term development. If there are any CIDA people here, they got a lot of compliments from the international community when they were there. But it is very hard.

In terms of the border, you're quite right, the border is a bit of a red herring. It's command and control structure. It's refugee camps. It's getting solutions behind the border to help prevent it, as well as.... And just as a final point, NATO is supporting the Pakistanis and the Afghans in terms of border control in the most technical sense, in terms of observation and joint patrols.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Alexander, did you want to add to that?

Mr. Christopher Alexander: Very quickly, the balanced approach, three-D development in concert with security, is not really debated with regard to Afghanistan. It's the consensus view that we need both. And after 2006 and early 2007, which saw impressive increases in the military commitment, everyone came to the conclusion that development and reconstruction also needed to be reinforced, and we've started to see key partners do that.

It's important to understand how significant yesterday's commitment from Canada is. This will vault Canada into the very top ranks of donors to reconstruction development—again, showing leadership, setting an example that other partners will be expected to emulate if they are going to be seen to be the credible members of the team that so many of them have been up until now.

Are we on the right track? Yes. What do we need to do to ensure this development assistance succeeds? We need to continue Afghanizing the process. We need to civilianize the process, as James has mentioned, and we also need to ensure that we manage the regional dimension, recognizing that security is not only a challenge within Afghanistan's borders, but also a challenge for the whole region.

We also need to improve the delivery mechanisms. The constraint in Afghanistan hasn't necessarily been money going into the system; it has been the effectiveness and the number of delivery mechanisms available. I mentioned earlier there are maybe six or seven government ministries out of 25 that are effective, on which you and I would rely to channel $50 million through. That means two-thirds of the ministries are not. Similarly, for civil society, we need more NGOs that have what it takes to implement national programs, and national programs are where Canada, for many years now, has shown leadership. Similarly, the private sector in Afghanistan has an extremely important role to play, and we deserve to help them develop and emerge as an effective player in the country through local procurement.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Alexander.

We'll go to Madam McDonough, please.

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

There are so many questions one could ask. Thank you very much for being here. I'm going to try to ask three quick questions with what time is available.

I think a lot of us struggle with the notion of balance, because even with yesterday's announcement, I guess Canada goes from having about 10:1 or 9:1 in military expenditures versus diplomacy and development to now having 8:1 or 9:1. So I guess I'm curious about the notion of balance as it relates to Canada's contribution.

Second, while it's true that about 12,000 U.S. troops have now come in under ISAF, there remain, as I understand it, some equal number, 12,000 or 13,000 U.S. forces, who continue to be under Operation Enduring Freedom. That's without any agreement with the Afghan government—and you stressed the importance of the Afghan government in all of this—and without any authorization from the UN. I'm wondering if I could ask you to comment on that.

Second, we keep hearing that we're winning, we're winning, we're winning. But I just want to put forward statistics provided by the International Crisis Group that would indicate that in the first nine months of 2006 there were over 3,700 deaths—that includes militants, security personnel, and civilians—which is a fourfold increase. According to U.S. military estimates, there were 139 suicide attacks in that full year of 2006, up from 27 the year before. Roadside bombs doubled, and direct attacks by insurgents using small arms, grenades, and other weapons increased to 4,542, which is almost a fourfold increase.

So it's very difficult to grasp the notion that we're winning. I wonder if you could comment on the fact that when we see these statistics, when we hear these reports, it doesn't seem apparent to us that the military strategy in which Canada is primarily engaged is really a winning strategy.

The third thing is that it's very surprising to me that neither of you has mentioned anything about the very extensive amount of corruption. There was not a mention of warlords. This has been a huge concern for civilians with whom we've had contact, as well as for NGOs that have experienced the horrors of this.

With respect to poppy elimination—

● (0955)

The Chair: We have to give them some time to answer, Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Yes.

I think it was Rubin who said to us that at the moment, the poppy eradication approach simply enriches warlords and impoverishes farmers, families, and their local villages.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Go ahead, Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Christopher Alexander: I give one line to each, Chair.

On balance, you're absolutely right, the ratios are what they are. Everyone feels the paradox that this represents. But I have to emphasize that the sort of commitment that Canada has now made and that other countries are starting to make in development and reconstruction puts us at the very outer limit of Afghanistan's capacity to absorb assistance and reconstruction. You cannot spend $1 billion just on a whim. You have to put it through an institution, which has to be accountable. There has to be monitoring and evaluation. I think we are now challenging the system to work at the maximum of its potential.

Operation Enduring Freedom no longer exists. It was discontinued, essentially, when NATO took responsibility for the entire mission. Most of the troops outside of NATO command are training police and training the army. Only a small group are engaged in counterterrorism activities under pure U.S. command, but that is with Afghan government support, and it's governed by very specific arrangements with the Afghan government. It is also under a UN mandate in that the U.S. is still operating under its right of self-defence, which was recognized by all members of the Security Council in September 2001.

Are we winning? We are having military success and we are seeing development. But no, we have not set conditions to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. We have more work to do. As James said, leadership structures of the Taliban—the Hekmatyar group, the Jalaluddin Haqqani group—which are to some extent present in Pakistan, will need to be removed for victory, if we can call it that, to be achieved. This is a point that has been made by U.S. military commanders and many others.

On corruption and warlords, when we talk about governance, we really are talking about those issues. They are big problems. More needs to be done. The UN is championing an innovative disarmament program, called the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups, that will seek to collect many more weapons and much more ammunition in Afghanistan. I'm very proud that Canada is a supporter of that. We are also very committed to the action plan for peace, justice and reconciliation, which will seek to hold warlords and others accountable for the crimes of the past. It's very controversial in Afghanistan, but very popular in society itself.

● (1000)

The Chair: Mr. Appathurai.

Mr. James Appathurai: Chris has said most of it. I would say one thing. I think this number of 9:1 military spending to development is a red herring, because militaries cost a lot of money. It doesn't mean that you are necessarily disproportionate. Basically, to fly an Apache around and fire off weapons in support of our troops costs tens of thousands of dollars. That's the way it is.

So I'm a little bit wary of this comparison, that you spend a lot of money on the military and less on development. They're just different animals. To be frank, I don't think it's a relevant comparison.

The anti-terror mission that the U.S. is doing, the intelligence-led targeted operations against terrorist leadership—as Chris mentioned, it's not called OEF—has to be done. Someone has to do it, and the Afghan government fully supports it. They want this done, and so does the UN. So I think we can't shy away from the important work that the U.S. is doing. That is important,

That's all I'll say. Chris has said the rest.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Appathurai. Our time is up, but I do have one very quick question for you.

You talked about the indicators—are we winning, is it winnable? The indicators show that socially the people are much better off than they were then. There is a level of health care. Poverty is being fought. There are 17,000 reconstruction projects under way.

Can you give me a very precise answer as to the number of NATO troops that are involved in the mission? We keep hearing 30,000 or 35,000. You've indicated that there have been countries that have stepped up, largely because of Canada's lobbying for other countries to come on board.

What is the number?

Mr. James Appathurai: The number as of today would be around 37,000. I can tell you that the number in the south, where Canada is, has grown over the last 18 months from 1,000 to 12,500. There's been a 12-times increase in 18 months in the south, where Canada is deployed. They all support each other. So this idea that we're there by ourselves is not right. There are nine countries there, 12,500 troops, out of a total of about 37,000—that's just NATO ISAF—as well as 8,000 or so U.S. doing mostly training, as Chris points out. That's not counting the 30,000 Afghan National Army, growing towards 70,000.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your attendance. It has been great to have NATO and the United Nations with us today.

We will suspend for a moment or two to allow our guests the opportunity to leave. I think they're heading to another committee.

We'll invite the FCM to make their way to the table, please.

● _____ (Pause) _____

●

● (1005)

The Chair: We'll call this meeting back to order for our second hour.

We have the privilege of hearing witnesses in regard to our study on democratic development. This study is drawing to a close, and we have very few witnesses left to appear on this. We certainly look forward today to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Gord Steeves, the first vice-president; and to Brock Carlton, the director of the International Centre for Municipal Development.

We thank you for being here today. We look forward to your comments.

We'll take a first round of comments and then we'll go into the first round of questions. I noticed that you were here for the last round of questioning, with the witnesses who were here just prior to you, so you understand how this works. I govern with a fairly heavy hammer today because we also have a number of pieces of committee business that we have to discuss.

Welcome here. We look forward to what you have say.

Mr. Gord Steeves (First Vice-President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

As already introduced, my name is Gord Steeves. I'm actually the acting president now of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, just by virtue of the way things have worked out.

I'm joined by Brock Carlton, who's our director of international policy and development. Also in the room are our acting CEO, Jean-François Trepanier, and Richard Smith, our policy director.

As you may or may not be aware, members of the committee, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is an organization that represents about 1,500 municipal governments from coast to coast to coast in Canada. Our membership represents, by extension, around 90% of the Canadian population. The way our organization is structured, our primary purpose is policy advocacy and development on behalf of municipalities in Canada. We also have two other main arms of our organization, which are sustainable development and obviously international development, which is the purpose for our being here today.

The process I'd like to follow today, Mr. Chairman, is for me to make some comments and then pass the baton over to Brock Carlton to finish up, if that pleases.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to appear before your committee today.

Democratic development is an important concept that requires reflection and understanding. Democratic development in foreign countries requires diligence and commitment, as well as a focus on practical issues that can improve people's lives and give them an opportunity to see, in practical terms, why democracy improves quality of life.

[*English*]

As acting president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and as a councillor from Winnipeg, I am, as we all are at this table, an expression of the Canadian democratic experience. In the next short while, we'd like to share with you our views on democratic development. Particularly we want to share with you our belief that democratic development cannot be achieved without attention to local government and local governance.

In the next few minutes, we will talk about what local government does, the trends that affect our world view, and how Canada, though FCM, has responded and could respond better to the need to focus on local governments as a key factor in democratic development overseas.

Before turning to our presentation, I would like to leave you with one thought. As you may be aware, the very first expressions of democracy in Canada can be found in our municipalities. Saint John, New Brunswick, our first constituted city, was founded in 1785, and Montreal held its first local election in 1833. A Canadian expression of democracy, our values and principles have been built through the experiences of cities and towns across the land and throughout our history, and as you will see, a focus on local government and local governments is a practical and successful way of sharing our democratic values and our Canadian principles throughout this world.

When talking about international development, we need to first talk about local governments and local government as it relates to democratic development. UNESCO defines governance as the rules, processes, and behaviours by which interest, resource, and power are exercised by society. Our belief is that local governments have several features that are key in any democracy. As you may be aware, local government—and I'm sure we have some former members of local government representing even on this committee—does create a public space for citizens to engage in the decisions that affect their community.

We think that at its base it does a great job of promoting the inclusion of women, ethnic minorities. and other under-represented groups in the democratic process. We think because of the closeness, it helps build trust and confidence in its local institutions. It helps ensure the relevance and sustainability of local institutions to people's daily lives, and it creates an enabling environment for development. It also provides for stronger local partner and intergovernmental dialogue coordination and cooperation.

We also believe that effective local governments cannot be realized without a strong, transparent, and accountable local government to help create the rules and processes locally and to act as a facilitator amongst local groups in channelling resources and power for local governments.

Local government, as opposed to other levels of government, has the ability to engage local power holders, policy-makers, practitioners, community groups, and local governments. It has deeper roots into the social, political, and economic reality of these communities, big and small. We believe it's a little more accountable, transparent, and representative of the local communities. It helps to mobilize resources and assets from within the communities and delivers concrete services and results on-the-ground in areas that have the most direct impact on people's lives. It also has the ability to replicate successes for community-wide benefit and creates municipal networks for knowledge sharing to replicate those successes across other regions and other nations.

Having established that local government has a key role to play in local governance and therefore democratic development, we turn our attention to these issues within an international context, and what we are seeing is that rapid urbanization places tremendous pressure on local governments to deliver all sorts of different services. We find the capacity of local institutions to deliver services is critical to achieving a lot of the UN millennium development goals, and cities and towns are proving to be valuable assets and key drivers of national and international prosperity. Cities and towns, however, are aware that the greatest social challenges are situated. Effective local government is critical for the strong social and economic interdependence between rural and urban areas.

The environmental footprint of urban areas is expanding. In urban areas, which represent only 2% of the land mass, we're actually seeing that about 78% of the GHG emissions are coming from those small areas.

There are some key issues that characterize how the municipal government is responding to this context. I think it is important that the committee be aware of some trends that we've been noticing.

The first is in policy and program coordination. Local government networks are springing up to facilitate a lot of the global action. United Cities and Local Governments—or UCLG—Commonwealth Local Government Forum, and the Association of Francophone Mayors are just some examples of these organizations that are sprouting up to improve the networks amongst local governments.

We're seeing greater sub-national support for governance. Donors—the World Bank, InterAmerican Development Bank, UNDP, and DfID—are increasingly supporting sub-national levels of government, and I think we saw a pretty stark and graphic example of that in the tsunami-affected areas of the world, post that tragedy.

Municipal governments are proving to be international actors. Cities worldwide are acting by themselves and going global in terms of trade promotion, attracting investment, immigration, innovation, cultural and political exchanges as well as international cooperation. You've seen the examples of cities like London, and what they're doing in terms of becoming world leaders in transportation; and cities like New York, and some of the things they've done in terms of security without the assistance of state or federal governments. Even in our own country, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver are becoming entities unto themselves.

● (1010)

The Canadian response to this international context has been to work with our municipal governments through FCM for the past 20 years. We currently manage 10 programs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Our annual program budget is currently $12 million, employing 35 staff. In 20 years we've worked in 44 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and we are currently working in 18 countries as we sit here now. We are involved with more than 2,500 municipal volunteers and, currently, 15 volunteer municipal practitioners for each calendar day.

I can tell you anecdotally right now that in addition to municipal volunteers, our projects also bring in community resources. One example I would leave you with is Drayton Valley, Alberta, where they're working with the country of Tanzania. In addition to building capacity for municipal government, the community groups from Drayton Valley are supporting an AIDS orphanage and are helping to establish a community foundation so that others can channel money to the community with the security that it will be managed in a transparent and accountable manner.

This, Mr. Chairperson, is the model that's been replicated in city after city, town after town, community after community right across Canada. The federal government is using municipal resources to leverage all of the capacity those municipalities have to offer, communities that are teaming up with local Rotary Clubs, Jaycees, and Knights of Columbus and providing all of those types of resources to developing regions in a concentrated, accountable, and very real fashion.

With that, I would ask Brock to say some words as well.

● (1015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Steeves.

Mr. Carlton.

Mr. Brock Carlton (Director, International Centre for Municipal Development, Federation of Canadian Municipalities): Thank you. I'd just like to spend a few minutes talking a bit more about how we actually work, and offer a few comments about some lessons learned. Then, as requested, we have some recommendations that we think the committee should consider.

Gord was talking about some of the community-to-community relationships, but I'd like to stress that the work we do is more than just about communities and municipalities working together. We approach a country and we work with that country at a national level in terms of a strategy and then build the community-level and municipal-level initiatives within that strategy.

If I may, I will paint a bit of a picture of Ghana as an example of a country where we have a focus. FCM as a national association in Canada has worked with the national association in Ghana. Together we have developed a strategy for local development in Ghana. It's not our FCM strategy; it's the national association's strategy in Ghana. Then within that strategy we would work with our members, and the Ghanaians would work with their members, to identify specific municipalities that would work together in the kinds of municipal partnerships that Gord was just talking about a few minutes ago, where municipalities, within the context of the national strategy, would establish formal relationships on a two-year cycle. And they would work on very practical issues, such as financial management, solid waste management, any of the key issues that municipal governments do in their communities.

What's really important here is that we don't build stuff, we don't build roads, we don't build bridges or solid waste sites; we're really working on the governance elements. So we'd be working with the municipal government, with the council, on how to manage a municipal government more effectively, how to engage their community in more effective local democracy and local governance, so that what the municipality actually does is in concert with the objectives and interests of the society at large. It also is really an important element for creating some equity and engaging the impoverished and the marginalized groups in the discussions about how a municipal government works in those communities to serve their community interests.

All of this is done within the national framework, so if a country—for example, Ghana—has a poverty reduction strategy paper or a national development strategy, our work fits within that national context as well. As Gord said earlier, inevitably as municipal governments in Canada are engaged with partners overseas, the communities in Canada get involved and they work together with the communities in Ghana or in the other countries where we work.

We've done this for 20 years, as Gord said. We've learned a lot of lessons and there are some lessons we would like to point out to this group.

First of all, for effective democratic development, for effective governance, one has to work within the system that exists. So as I was describing a few minutes ago, we come in, we're working with national and local partners, we're working within the context of national government programs and strategies, so that it's inside the system. It's also working with the existing institutions, so that we as Canadians are not creating new institutions; we're supporting the strengthening of existing institutions and supporting their capacity to respond to the needs of their community.

We also believe this kind of work is not fast. It takes time. You have to build relationships, so there are long-term commitments required. When our municipalities get involved in their development work, as I mentioned earlier, it's a two-year cycle, but typically these cycles go several times over. So at the end of two years there's an evaluation process, there's a realigning of that partnership between the two partners, and then they continue. And some of them have continued for 10 or 15 years. It's very much a long-term approach to development.

What's really fundamental in this, however, is that we are talking about partnerships between practitioners, between sectors. So in some of the development language, one could call it communities of practice related to municipal government. We're bringing the sector of municipal government in Canada to work with the sector of municipal government in Ghana, or Guyana, or wherever it happens to be. It's not just about technical assistance of someone with a particular expertise coming like a consultant to do some work. It's about the municipal government and its community working with that municipal government in that community. These relationships are much more than technical exchanges. They're really about partnerships between Canadian practitioners and overseas practitioners to solve problems that are identified amongst themselves as priorities.

● (1020)

Another element of this is the peer-to-peer approach. When we are working overseas, we are not bringing development professionals who go to Uganda for two weeks, do a nice report, and then they're on an airplane to some other place for another report. We're bringing the folks who do the work here in Canada, and they're volunteering their time to go and sit down with the folks who do the work in Kampala, or in Nairobi, or anywhere else where we're working. They're the people who really do the work. They are bringing the real Canadian experience. They're not saying, we do it in Canada the way it should be done and you should follow what we do. What they're saying is, we have a certain experience and we in Canada have come to a certain place in our development because of that experience, and because it's so practical, we can work through and help solve your problems in your context in the way that makes sense in your community. It's very much a practitioner-based approach.

It also very much stimulates a collaborative learning experience. In the networks that Gord was referring to earlier, the United Cities and Local Governments and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, etc., there are a lot of venues for this global sharing of learning and exchange that creates the mutual benefits that are so important in this kind of partnership.

In closing, Mr. Chair, we're suggesting four recommendations for this committee to consider.

One, there needs to be recognition that sub-national groups, municipal governments in our particular case, are really important in democratic development. Democratic development isn't just about parliaments and legal frameworks at a national level; it's about the system and local governance, and municipal governments that are an important part of that system.

The second recommendation is that we think it's important that the programming done through the Government of Canada via CIDA empowers Canadians to be involved in this work, so that Canadian municipal governments or Canadian practitioners in democracy can be working with their colleagues overseas in very practical ways. This is really important.

The third thing we think is important is that not only is it necessary to engage Canadian organizations in what happens overseas, but we think CIDA and other departments of the Government of Canada that work internationally need to be ready to engage Canadian organizations like FCM in some of their thinking and strategies and policy development about Canadian positions on these issues with respect to overseas development and other Canadian interests. FCM and other organizations have something to contribute to the Canadian debate about Canadian positions on these issues.

The last recommendation I would like to bring to your attention is a document that has been circulated to the committee. We call it the global program for local governance. We're suggesting that this is an approach that would enable FCM and the Government of Canada to work together in a much more coherent collaboration around sharing Canadian municipal experience, local governance, and local democracy internationally, as opposed to the current arrangement, where we're working with CIDA on a variety of projects, but there's no continuity over the long term. Projects come, projects go, but there's no long-term strategy or long-term perspective on how to engage the municipal sector in Canadian interests overseas. We're suggesting that supporting this global program would facilitate a coherent approach to engaging Canadian municipal government and Canadian international interests overseas.

● (1025)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carlton and Mr. Steeves, for being here.

I find this quite fascinating, and you're to be commended for the work that FCM does. We knew there was something you were doing out there, but to hear how you're working with other global organizations and with municipal governments in some of the recipient countries—we applaud you for that.

It does say in your briefing that FCM and its partners, representing a global network of municipal governments and associations, are proposing the new unique program, the global program for local governance. Is the Canadian portion the $12 million that you received already? That's the Canadian portion? All right, thank you.

Madam Sgro.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Thank you very much. My colleague and I are going to share the time since it's so limited this morning.

First, I want to say that I think your recommendations are great. Too often we're all in different government levels, all off on our own with very little coordination happening. I agree with all of your comments about how we're going to be more successful with the resources we have.

When we're talking about the challenges, and you outline them here, what do you see as the biggest obstacle for you to enter into a long-term arrangement with the government?

I think my colleague wants to ask another question, and then you can answer them both within our five minutes.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Judy.

Thank you for coming. I didn't realize that municipalities were playing such a big role in these countries, but it's great to hear.

I have a couple of quick questions. A figure of $12 million was mentioned. Perhaps you could give us a quick breakdown. Could you tell us where that comes from?

How do you pick your projects? That would be my second question.

Also, are there other countries that have municipalities engaged like you are?

I guess my final question would be about youth. Do you see enough Canadian youth involved in the projects?

Mr. Gord Steeves: Maybe I'll take a stab at a couple of those issues. I'll talk about the picking of the projects, and I'll ask Brock to talk about the money and the technical—where everything is coming from.

From a municipal perspective—and maybe as politicians we can all appreciate that there's some inherent difficulty with the idea of a municipality and a federal government working outside of their own country—obviously, as a municipal government, there's tremendous pressure on our resources, as there is tremendous pressure on your resources. And oftentimes, in terms of picking the projects, it's an expression of interest within the community and it comes from a grassroots development within the community.

For example, in the city of Winnipeg, our twinning and our partnership with the city of Kampala, Uganda, had a component of a specific Ugandan community, which maybe wasn't as connected to local governments as it ought to have been, and that helped force it. There was also the issue of the HIV laboratory in Winnipeg, with which I'm sure you're all familiar. Those two synergies, I guess, provided the base on which Winnipeg could rationalize working with the federal government, through FCM and CIDA, for the funding to go to Kampala. That's an example of how some of the projects are built.

I'll turn it over to Brock to talk about the funding points.

Mr. Brock Carlton: Okay.

Perhaps I can pick up on that question and say that if one steps back from the local level and looks at the projects we end up doing or the different countries we end up working with, a lot of those decisions are made around the analysis of the context within the local countries. What does the democratic set-up look like? Do municipal governments have a sufficient mandate to do things, so if we're going to work with them they are able to take that capacity and then deliver effective services? There is an analysis. It's not unlike the analysis CIDA would go through in identifying the countries it works in.

As for the question about the biggest obstacle to achieving the global program for local governance, in a nutshell the biggest obstacle is CIDA, but I have to caveat that, because I can't leave that unexplained. Part of it is that CIDA isn't organized in a way that easily accommodates this kind of idea. We're suggesting we take all the different work we're doing for different countries and bring it together under one coherent umbrella. This is very difficult for CIDA to do, because it's so divided up into its regional desks and its country programs. Even right now we're trying to work a deal with CIDA that brings some Africa work into a broader framework, and it's a very difficult conversation with CIDA.

The second part of the response is that CIDA doesn't have this kind of money within the partnership branch for local government. CIDA is still very much a rural-based organization, and they're trying to make this shift, but it's very slow.

On the comment related to the $12 million, this global program for local governance is an attempt to rationalize some of the work we're doing into this coherent program, as I mentioned. The $12 million is built on an understanding of the existing budgets, where we're assessing the amount of activity required through travel, etc., but not covering volunteer time. It's built on our experience of how to knit together a global network and work locally in the municipalities, work nationally with the national associations in selected countries on each continent, and then bring these players together to a global level to help that sharing.

We're going to Europe in a week and a half for a meeting with other organizations like FCM that do this work—typically the Dutch, the British, a little bit of the folks from Belgium, the Norwegians, the Scandinavians, and to some extent the French. But there are really only two countries in the world that do this significantly, and that is Canada, through FCM, and the Dutch, through FCM's equivalent organization called VNG. When we get together anywhere, it is understood and recognized by all our peers and the World Bank and others that Canada and the Dutch lead in this field of engaging municipal government in international cooperation.

The last question was about youth. There is some work done with youth, particularly through the HIV/AIDS programs in Africa. We're working with some local programs that engage youth in soccer leagues or other kinds of sports activities that then could be used as venues for education on HIV/AIDS, in one particular case, but there is also some work done on other ways of integrating into the communities. As much as possible, we run an internship program where, through CIDA funding, we can get people in their mid-twenties who are aiming toward careers related to our work—urban planning, architecture, that kind of stuff—and engage them overseas as interns on six-month placements in the places where we work.

● (1030)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carlton.

We will go to Madame Lalonde et Madame Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Good morning and thank you for coming.

This is the first time I have heard an explanation of what it is you do. I would like to know how you distribute CIDA's money for this program amongst municipalities. I imagine that French-language municipalities are more involved in francophone countries and that other municipalities are more involved in English-language countries.

My second question is out of curiosity. One of your slides is called "Lessons Learned in Democratic Development". In it, you say:Focus on institutions and processes, not individuals, when developing capacity;

What exactly do you mean by that?

My third question is of another order. I notice that you focused more on the advantages that Canada would derive from your program rather than any possible disadvantages. Is it possible that you did so with a view to being able to better sell your involvement in under-developed countries?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

Monsieur Steeves.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gord Steeves: If you don't mind, I will answer in English. I apologize, but my French is not great.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We're used to it. At least, you can understand.

Mr. Gord Steeves: I want to answer the first question.

[*English*]

How do we distribute the money?

I'll ask Brock to back me up on this, but primarily I think the program is made available and the information distributed by FCM, which looks for the initiative to come from the municipality itself for specific reasons or initiatives or synergies existing in that given community, like the Winnipeg example I just laid out. Having Winnipeg working in Kampala on an AIDS-related project made a lot of sense because of the blood laboratory that existed. That was our experience.

Brock would have broader experience on that.

In terms of the focus on process, not on individuals, what that means is—

● (1035)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Have any municipalities in Quebec taken part in programs?

Mr. Gord Steeves: Yes, a number have. In Montreal and Quebec City, in particular, there are international programs. It plays a big role in their culture.

[*English*]

To continue with the process issue, or the focus on the process, not individuals, when we go to a place the interest is in developing processes, government frameworks, and actual written regulations. So as politicians like us come and go, the processes exist, the capacity is there, for them to simply continue; the networks have already been established.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brock Carlton: Within the framework of our program, we are working in francophone African countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso. We hope to work in Niger some day. Gord mentioned Montreal and Quebec City. There's also the Municipality of Sainte-Élisabeth. People in the City of Saguenay are working very hard and doing very interesting things in Vietnam.

We have quite significant programs involving municipalities in Quebec and developing francophone countries. Also, some municipalities in Quebec are taking part in programs in Latin America. In fact, some Quebeckers speak excellent Spanish.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes, a number of them do. We like Spanish.

Mr. Brock Carlton: You had asked a question about the section entitled "Lessons learned in democratic development", in which we stress institutions and the process, rather than individuals.

Obviously, we are working with individuals, but it's essential that this be in the context of an institution. Otherwise, an individual could receive training but then may want to find a job elsewhere.

It's important to focus on the capacity to apply techniques, but we must also strengthen the processes within institutions. For example, if we work on local tax collection, it's important to train individuals, but we must also ensure that the tax collection process is efficient and appropriate for that municipality. That is why we say it's important to focus on institutions rather than on individuals.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Are there as many benefits for Canada as hoped?

Mr. Brock Carlton: Yes. The advantages for Canada are...

[*English*]

Do you want me to continue?

The Chair: Very quickly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gord Steeves: There are advantages for Canada, particularly within municipalities. We believe this is a way to build a bridge between the local government, for example in Winnipeg, and a community that supports our campaign, our ideas and our issues.

This is an opportunity for us to connect with other groups in our society. I also want to mention that a number of our directors went to work in Kampala for several months and they returned with ideas and ways of working that have improved our administration in Winnipeg.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Chair, I just want to say...

The Chair: No, no.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I was saying that you were talking more about the advantages for Canada than the advantages for Africa or South America.

● (1040)

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you very much for appearing today.

It has certainly been well recognized that there's a great need for governance improvement in many countries at the local and municipal level. The work you've been doing at the local level is understandable, but there has also been a great need identified for interaction with the regional and national governments. Many times—and I think even in this room here—politicians graduate through different levels of government. It's a natural progression for future politicians.

But my question is about how much work you are devoting to ensuring that there is a liaison of the community needs with the federal government's needs. That's one question.

My second question is more informational. What percentage of that $12 million of budgeting from CIDA is devoted specifically to AIDS projects?

I think I'll be sharing with Bill.

The Chair: Mr. Steeves.

Mr. Gord Steeves: I'll take a stab at the first part, the liaison with regional governments. That's a great comment. From an FCM perspective, we're operating at a couple of different levels. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, as we've said, is involved in all of these projects, but at a different level, the municipalities themselves are involved.

We have a lead role in these 18 other countries that we're currently operating in. Because we are a national organization that obviously has strong ties to our federal government, we bring that specific expertise. We spend a lot of time working at the national and international conferences to develop that capacity for the regional organizations. And they all have them. In the existing developing countries there's often an FCM equivalent that we can work with to develop capacity and show examples of how to work with their federal government. At the same time, we have cities, small towns, and communities that are working at ground level with cities, small towns, and communities in those countries to develop the actual capacity building at a local level. So those things are happening.

With respect to the specifics on the funding, I might ask Brock to respond.

Mr. Brock Carlton: Your question is specifically related to AIDS?

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes, I see everything else that is detailed here seems to be on the governance level, but there seems to be a specific HIV/AIDS component.

Mr. Brock Carlton: Yes. The AIDS component, first of all, is focusing on the governance elements of AIDS in local communities. It isn't about medical issues or personal health; it's about how a municipality thinks of urban planning and working with a community that suddenly has tonnes of orphans and a lot of grandparents as parents, or single parents. It's that side of the AIDS problem.

In our programming, the AIDS budget is tiny—tiny, tiny, tiny. We have not been able to convince CIDA that there is a role of any significance for local government in the HIV/AIDS fight. As Gord was talking about in Kampala, and as Toronto is working in Botswana, through some of our budgets we have some freedom to manage the kinds of themes we're working on. But they're very small.

Let me just give you an example. At the end of March I'm going to a meeting in Vancouver, where over 100 municipal administrators have signed up to volunteer their time to work on municipal government and local governance projects in AIDS-afflicted areas in Africa. We're going to work with them, but we have no resources to mobilize that capacity. We're trying to figure out how we can fit this into our existing programs.

But there is no project about AIDS; there's no program that is specifically for AIDS. We've just managed some of our local partnerships to focus on that particular issue.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carlton.

Mr. Casey, did you have a point or question?

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): I have about six of them.

The Chair: You have about a minute and a half to do it, and that includes the answer.

Mr. Bill Casey: I'll try to get them in quickly.

In our notes, it says that you have a bilateral project with the Palestinian municipal management program. I'd like to know what the project is and who your Palestinian partner is.

The other question is this. Mr. Carlton said something about CIDA being a roadblock to more work that you could do. You should know that there's a long list of people who want to determine how CIDA spends its money. Just for the benefit of the parliamentary secretary, what simple and practical things could CIDA do to make it easier for you to do your work?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1045)

Mr. Ted Menzies: What did you pay him?

Mr. Brock Carlton: The Palestinian project has been in operation since 1997. We started off and have been working in the town of Rafah, which is right on the border of the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Canada has been in Rafah since 1948, when it started a refugee camp that is still called Canada Camp.

Our partners in that project were and are the local government of Rafah, the neighbouring local government of Khan Yunis, and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities. Prior to the recent election we were also working with the ministry of local government and the Palestinian Authority.

I have to say that if you talk to CIDA folks, they'll tell you this was probably the only ongoing successful project over the years in terms of what we were able to do on the ground, but because of the security issues, we haven't had a Canadian there in several years. In fact, the project is closing at the end of June because we can't find a way to continue doing what we're doing in a way that satisfies the issues of the existence of Hamas in the foreign affairs policy, etc.

So we're still in discussions with CIDA, because we're trying to find some way to continue this presence without compromising the laws of the country and the policy of the government. Right now we're doing nothing but winding it down, in fact.

Mr. Bill Casey: Is it the whole Canada Camp that's closing at the end of June?

Mr. Brock Carlton: No, it's just our project.

The Chair: That would probably be just a good spot to stop.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: That would open up another really interesting line of questioning.

I have one very specific question to finish off on that. Of what political stripe was the local government in Rafah?

Mr. Brock Carlton: Do you want me to answer that right now?

It has been Fatah all along. In the recent round of local elections, Hamas won the election, but the results were thrown out. So at this point there's an appointed administrator from the Fatah government who is running the town of Rafah.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you.

I always think that the FCM international development program is one of the best-kept secrets, so I'm really glad you're here.

You spoke about a $12 million budget. I'm not sure that I got the answer to the question of exactly where the $12 million comes from. I add to that a question about the 2,500 municipal volunteers,. Can you clarify? I think I was under a misunderstanding about that. What we're talking about are municipal employees who are practitioners now—

Mr. Brock Carlton: Or elected officials.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: On average, what percentage of their time, defined either in work years or in months or whatever, would be actually expended in the country, or is that a figure that represents 2,500 municipal work years? That's my second question.

I have a third question, and this is really a comment. I wish you'd appeared before we had the session on Afghanistan, because I think you've helped to underscore the critical importance of dealing at the local level and the difficulties of building from the national level on down. I think your presentations reinforce that.

Finally, some of us have just come back from a week in Kenya, and I had the added opportunity to spend a week in Uganda. One of the most overwhelming things for us was the magnitude of the challenge to put in place the most rudimentary infrastructure in terms of sanitation, in terms of energy, in terms of even crude transportation that would allow people to get to clinics in the context of HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

Finally, you've spoken about HIV/AIDS several times but haven't mentioned TB and malaria. A big revelation for us was seeing on the ground that 50% of AIDS patients actually die of TB. I'm just wondering if you're dealing with the pandemic trio of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, which is of course what makes the whole challenge so complex.

● (1050)

Mr. Gord Steeves: I'll take a try at the first part, in terms of the volunteer and the people-hours. The way it generally will work in a municipality is that, simply put, an initial group of people will go over for a pretty short period of time; then, over an extended time period that could involve years, there will be secondments of civic and municipal administration—people who will go to the actual place and spend time working with the people. That's how we come to the volunteers and the hours. We leverage it through people in the community, universities, private organizations, and individual donors who also want to get involved and travel to the countries.

The nice thing and the convenient thing about the set-up is that in municipalities, as you can probably appreciate, it's often a difficult political sell to be involved in other countries, but I think people in municipalities are more tolerant of this type of outreach if the funding is coming from the federal government and is supported by the municipalities from an in-kind perspective—i.e., when people are going and actually working, it has a better perception. I think it's a real win-win in that perception.

Someone had mentioned partisanship, and again the beautiful thing about local government is our ability to get in there in a non-partisan way. You can appreciate that partisanship means one thing in Canada, and it is what it is, I suppose, but regrettably it means quite another in other parts of the world—for example, if we talk about places like Palestine.

Maybe Brock can fill you in.

Mr. Brock Carlton: I can say a little more on the volunteer aspect. Typically someone who goes as a volunteer overseas is going for around two weeks, and then they're hosting people back here from time to time. It's not a huge percentage of their work life, but it is a significant element. When we talk about 2,500, we're talking about 2,500 individuals who have been involved in this kind of thing over the life of the work that we've been doing. As for the $12 million, I realized when you asked the question that I didn't answer the previous question the way I think it was intended.

The current $12 million budget is a composite of a whole bunch of projects. We have two tsunami projects, we have a project on migrant labour rights in China, and we have some work in Africa. These are all of different lengths and times. This year it's $12 million. Next year we have three major projects that could close, which means our budgets could shrink next year to $8 million or $9 million, and the year after that it could go up again. It's very unstable and very unpredictable.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: The source of the $12 million is all CIDA.

Mr. Brock Carlton: It's CIDA. That $12 million is the CIDA contribution. The actual value of the work we do on that $12 million is about $20 million.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: That's what I was wondering.

Thank you.

Mr. Brock Carlton: We include the contribution.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Do you have interns from the Foreign Affairs intern program?

Mr. Brock Carlton: CIDA runs an intern program, and I think we anticipate maybe six interns in the next fiscal year. We'd love to have lots more, because they do great stuff.

The HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria question has been raised by our African partners particularly, and as we go into our planning for the next three-year cycle, this will become more prevalent.

Again, I just want to stress that we're not working on the medical side of things. We're working on the community issues, the urban planning and governance stuff.

The Chair: Thank you.

We want to thank you for being with our committee today and for your comments, your written presentation, your recommendations, and certainly for the fact that you've been able to enlighten us about the work of FCM.

You mentioned Drayton Valley, Alberta. There on some on this committee who are from Alberta, as I am. I know Drayton Valley is not a large city; it's a fairly small little city, and very dependent on the oil and gas industry there. Are they just working through FCM? Are they themselves taking on a project, or do they financially support FCM in a broader way of carrying it out? How does that work?

Mr. Gord Steeves: Broadly based, this is an FCM CIDA-supported project. The funding to move the people back and forth, etc., and to fund whatever needs to be funded is coming form the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Drayton Valley is an excellent example. I'm not that familiar with Drayton Valley; from listening to your description, I think this is likely a small city that would ordinarily have no hope of participating in something like this, but these are good people who have something to offer Tanzania, and simply by virtue of this program and the way it's administered, they now have the opportunity to do so. There's enough community synergy and community energy that can be harnessed by virtue of this program and what it releases.

● (1055)

The Chair: Do you know offhand the cost to the local municipality there? What kind of resources are they putting into it?

Mr. Gord Steeves: If they're following the standard model, it would probably be very little in terms of out-of-pocket expense. It would be people's time in terms of going and trying to build capacity, and it might be leveraging some community money.

Do you have any more specifics?

Mr. Brock Carlton: To put this into an order of magnitude, on a typical partnership, such as what Drayton Valley is doing in Tanzania, it could be $30,000 to $40,000 a year in terms of CIDA dollars. We calculate that generally the contribution is about 50% of the CIDA dollars.

So all the phenomenal work that Drayton Valley is doing in Tanzania around local government capacity building, working with the AIDS orphanages, and building and setting up the community foundation, which Gord was talking about earlier, is done on a shoestring. From the Government of Canada's perspective, $30,000 or $40,000 is not a lot of money.

But they don't put any of their own cash in. They're not paying for air fares or hotels. They may be hosting a dinner and stuff like that when the Tanzanians are in Canada, but their only contribution is the time of their people.

The Chair: All right.

Thank you. We applaud Drayton Valley and other such communities that are involved through FCM, and obviously we applaud FCM on their good work abroad.

We will suspend for just a moment or two, and then deal with some committee business.

● _____ (Pause) _____

●

The Chair: Regarding committee business, let's do it very quickly. I don't think there is any need to go in camera on this.

You have before you the report from the subcommittee on agenda and procedure of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. If you've had a chance to look at that, I would entertain a motion to pass the report.

Mr. Patry.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Agreed.

The Chair: It is moved by Mr. Patry.

In this report, we're giving a budget to the other groups. It lays out that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is coming to the committee on the 20th, and there are a bunch of different decisions that we are bringing forward, including Mr. Rubin's invitation to appear before our committee. Are we in consensus on that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1100)

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Angela Crandall): Then there's the budget.

The Chair: We have the one budget that we want to pass. You also see it there. It's for the subcommittee as well, and it's the $22,900. Do we have consensus on that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're adjourned.

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