



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

FAAE • NUMBER 034 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, April 19, 2005

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Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Tuesday, April 19, 2005

●(0915)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Good morning everyone.

This is the 34th meeting of the Committee. From 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.,

[English]

we will first be resuming debate on the motion of Ms. McDonough.

Ms. McDonough, the floor is yours.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): I'm sorry to hold you up for a few moments. I think you know, with respect to the motion before us, that it is absolutely our desire, our intention, our commitment to try to achieve a resolution that faithfully reflects what we're trying to do, having heard from Mr. Axworthy and then having really tried to put our heads together.

I'm wondering if the most helpful way to proceed would be for me to ask for unanimous consent to table the revised motion, which has been circulated after receiving constructive input from all parties. If there is unanimous consent for tabling the motion, then we can proceed with debate on that motion.

Is that okay, procedure not being my strong suit?

The Chair: You've heard Ms. McDonough. We need to get unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Fine.

Go ahead, Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I appreciate the spirit in which we've been trying to move this forward. It's now the revised motion before us for discussion.

I just want to say that I have not had the opportunity to hear directly from the foreign affairs critic of the Bloc, because she was absent during much of the discussion. I don't want to appear closed to any further input she may want to make, because it may improve upon what we have, but I want to say that I think at this point the motion before us reflects the closest thing to a consensus we can achieve.

I'm not totally happy with some of the things that were watered down somewhat, or on which I would have liked us to have been stronger, but it was a give-and-take process. I think it was a continued attempt to make this committee work and the minority

Parliament work, so we would have something at the end of the day to bring forward in the way of clear recommendations to the government, recognizing what a very, very dangerous situation is developing in Ethiopia and Eritrea, with the build-up of arms and troops at the borders, and recognizing the absolutely horrifying humanitarian situation that continues, and that can only get worse if there isn't a way to bring resolution.

I'd really like us to try to arrive at a satisfactory resolution today and to put it forward immediately to the government as a recommendation.

We know that it was extremely controversial for Lloyd Axworthy to have been appointed as the special envoy. He had a very difficult job to do, and unfortunately, I think some of the lack of responsiveness to his initiatives was perhaps related to some of the earlier history, which one can't undo; one can't go back now and begin to handle the aid to Ethiopia differently and one can't have understood at the time that Eritrea was desperate for Canada to be more responsive. I think we have to go on from where we are today.

I think everybody felt that his testimony before the committee was extremely helpful. The fact that the representatives of both the Eritrean and the Ethiopian diasporas, who have been talking with all of us, felt it was a step forward is something we need to build upon and acknowledge.

I move the motion before us, but we may want to have some further discussion.

●(0920)

The Chair: I have one initial comment after reading your motion, Ms. McDonough. In the fifth paragraph, you say, "Agrees with the April 13, 2002 decision", but in French it's "2003". Which year is it?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Excuse me, what was the question?

The Chair: It's in the fifth paragraph.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's a typo, sorry.

The Chair: That's okay. I just want to know whether it is 2002 or 2003.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It is meant to be 2002. In other words, the English is correct and the French is not. I'm sorry, I wasn't aware of that.

The Chair: Okay, fine. I just want to be sure.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): First of all, I'm delighted to be back. I followed Question Period daily, because that's about all I could do. Pierre and I spoke on a regular basis and I want to thank him very much. I owe him a lot, but I don't want him to get sick either.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): I consider it time well spent.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I read Lloyd Axworthy's statement only yesterday. I found it to be most interesting. I believe it will contribute to the foreign policy review process. Among other things, Mr. Axworthy observes that he cannot understand why CIDA shut down its peace-building unit when in his view, there is a link between Canadian investments in countries in need and our ability to be influential as a nation.

Quite frankly, what I find most disturbing at this time is the fact that Canada is providing aid to Ethiopia. It is even designated as one of the eight recipients of additional Canadian aid. Yet, Ethiopia is not complying with the Commission's decision. And I do mean decision, not recommendation. I don't know if the word has been changed. Ethiopia refers to the Commission's decision in its text. The fact of the matter is that Ethiopia is not complying with this decision.

Canada comes across then as a nation that is providing aid to Ethiopia, a country that is failing to comply with the decision, whereas Eritrea, a poorer nation, despite the fact that both countries were ravaged by war, receives nothing from Canada. That is the current situation. I can understand wanting to help, and it's important that we do so. However, we must bear these facts in mind. In response to a question, Mr. Axworthy stressed that while good governance was important, it was very difficult for a country lacking in resources to have good governance.

Again, I can appreciate that the revised motion is extremely well-intentioned. As a union activist, I've lived through numerous confrontations and experience has helped me to understand that when a conflict erupts and numerous lives are lost, it's critical to put in place conditions conducive to conflict resolution.

In my opinion, Mr. Axworthy's most timely recommendation was to call for Canada to work toward the establishment of a contact group. Such a group would endeavour to pursue the work already undertaken by lobbying both parties to engage in a dialogue. This has yet to happen. Mr. Axworthy himself has been unable to meet with Eritrean officials. I can understand that, given the situation and my previous experience.

Therefore, we must create the necessary conditions so that Canada's envoy does not turn away from the Commission's decision. That's what matters. We can help by making this position very clear. Hopefully, a contact group will create conditions conducive to the kind of broad-based dialogue that Ethiopia wants, without disregarding the Commission's decision. As I see it, Canada should threaten to reconsider its aid to Ethiopia, even if Mr. Axworthy disagrees with that approach.

● (0925)

I also feel that initially, Ethiopia should receive some indirect assistance to help break this impasse.

Another idea came to mind when I read Mr. Axworthy's statement and it could prove to be extremely effective. As part of the international aid process, we could think about initiating projects that have an impact on not one, but on two, countries.

That's all I wanted to say at this time. Realistically, I would have to try and propose some changes to the amended motion, or we could defer consideration of the motion until we've had the time to discuss it. The important thing is to work effectively, not to adopt a motion at any cost. Ultimately, we have to have a motion that is useful. That's my feeling.

The Chair: Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): I can understand Ms. Lalonde not wanting the committee to adopt just any motion. I think we need to debate it further, but I also want to point out that Ms. McDonough has worked very hard to ensure that the position adopted by the committee is effective and in keeping with what Mr. Axworthy was hoping for. Ms. McDonough was the one who suggested Mr. Axworthy appear before the committee to discuss this matter further.

I'm sorry, but I thought it was Ms. McDonough.

[*English*]

I would like to say, though, that I think what has been attempted here is to give.... Without putting Canada in a position where it has become effectively the only nation that walks away from its commitments to the food support effort...we do not want to be straying from the international community. I think what we have here are very comprehensive—some would probably even suggest exhaustive—but not contradictory proposals in the amendments and in the resolution.

[*Translation*]

Do you wish to further amend in some way the wording of Ms. McDonough's motion?

Paragraph five of the motion reads as follows:

Agrees with the April 13, 2002 decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission to grant the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea;

That is consistent with Parliament's position. Let's hope the committee unanimously agrees that this is one of the principles that we do embrace. I know that Mr. Axworthy underscored some of the problems. Eritrea has not yet agreed to a meeting, believing that this could lead to a change in the 2002 decision.

I'm all in favour of trying to strike a balance of some kind, but, like you, I want our efforts to be effective. I just don't know how to accomplish that.

● (0930)

[*English*]

The Chair: I'll go first to Mr. Paquette.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette: I simply wanted to mention that since Ms. Lalonde was absent last week, we were not able to do the work with Ms. McDonough. I even spoke to her assistant about this. It was not for lack of good will.

I think we can defer our consideration of the motion to give Ms. Lalonde time to propose some changes. If we can't agree on the amendments, then we can debate the matter. I think it would be a lengthy, time-consuming process to review each paragraph of the motion separately.

[English]

The Chair: I have one comment.

The last sentence reads:

Calls on the government of Canada to engage other countries in searching for a peaceful way to end the boundary dispute, including the witnesses of the Algiers Agreement.

If it could read:

[Translation]

“Calls on the government of Canada”,

[English]

and instead of “engage other countries”,

[Translation]

“to encourage”,

[English]

“to encourage the formation of a contact group”, as Madame Lalonde said, because I think that was one of the recommendations, certainly from Mr. Axworthy, I think this is very important.

At that time they say in English, “including the witnesses of the Algiers Agreement”, blah, blah, blah. I think we could reach what Madame Lalonde said by saying “encourage the formation of a contact group”, instead of just “engage some other countries”. I don't know, it's just a solution to try to finish it this morning.

I don't propose the amendment for the moment. I just want to have a discussion concerning this, because that's quite an important point that Mrs. Lalonde mentioned, according to Mr. Axworthy's testimony.

[Translation]

Yes, Ms. McDonough.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I would certainly see that as a friendly amendment, or a specific amendment, to strengthen and make a little more specific what we're trying to do here. One of the difficulties is we are now viewing this as an ongoing process, because some of what was stronger was frankly watered down because of pressures in trying to achieve a consensus. Personally, it more accurately reflects the position I put forward in the first place, and I would of course welcome that and would hope that others might as well.

The Chair: I'm not going to put the amendment. Madame Lalonde will probably put the amendment, if you agree on this.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I could, but that doesn't resolve the problem in its entirety. In any event, that shouldn't be at the end of the motion. It should be one of the main components of the new recommendation. Quite frankly, there's clearly nothing in this motion to compel Eritrea to engage in a dialogue.

[English]

The Chair: Do you want to postpone it?

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes.

The Chair: Ms. Lalonde requests that we defer consideration of the amendment.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: But not indefinitely. It's an important matter.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: We're scheduled to meet on Thursday. We could get to it then, if the work has been done.

The Chair: We could consider the motion at the end of Thursday's meeting. We're scheduled to hear from Mr. Heinbecker on Thursday.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We have to work together on this.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: I'd like to do a documentary on the subject.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): I'd like to get it done.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Chairman, at the risk of belabouring the point, I just think it would be an awful failure on our part not to move this to resolution by Thursday at the latest. So if we have an agreement about doing that—

The Chair: I agree on Thursday, at the end of the meeting, to do it.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: And the time will be set aside within the allotted committee time to do that.

The Chair: Ms. McDonough, it's just because I'd like to get a consensus. You didn't have the chance to work with Mrs. Lalonde because she was sick, but I agree with this coming on Thursday.

It's postponed until next Thursday, Mr. Clerk.

We'll go to the notice of motion by Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Hon. Dan McTeague: If Ms. Lalonde has an amendment ready tomorrow, she could come to an arrangement of some kind with us, with Ms. McDonough and with Mr. Sorenson. It would only take a few minutes. Then, as per Ms. McDonough's wishes, the matter would be concluded on Thursday.

● (0935)

The Chair: Ms. Lalonde, you wish to move the following motion:

That the Committee invite to appear as soon as possible the Minister of Foreign Affairs in order for him to report on his recent participation in the ministerial meeting concerning Haiti that was held in Cayenne, French Guyana, last March 18 and call to appear all important actors of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade departments, the Canadian International Development Agency and of non-governmental organizations in order to draw a portrait of the current situation in Haiti.

Ms. Lalonde.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you. The committee has already passed a resolution whereby the parties and the Prime Minister are committed to monitoring the situation in Haiti, in light of our unique responsibilities toward Haiti. Since the situation remains difficult — I regularly receive updates on the situation in that country — it seems to me that we have a responsibility to monitor developments. Since the minister received an invitation from France to attend this meeting in Cayenne, I would like him to report back to us, just as CIDA officials working in that region did last time. Canada's Ambassador to Haiti could also give us a report, if the opportunity to do so arises. Mr. Boucher is doing a very good job in Haiti. I would appreciate an update on the situation. I'd also like to have a panel discussion with NGOs working in that region. That would take all of one or two committee meetings.

Hon. Dan McTeague: If you have no objections, Ms. Lalonde, I'd like to share with you the government's view on the motion.

The government recognizes and appreciates the Foreign Affairs Committee's interest in Haiti.

Canada plays a key role in international efforts to restore security and stability in Haiti and to sustain rebuilding and reform efforts over the longer term.

Canada is currently making an important contribution to civilian law enforcement with the framework of MINUSTAH, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. A Canadian, David Beer, heads up the UN Civilian Police Force under MINUSTAH.

Canada has taken a firm stand on the need for a comprehensive, transparent process to develop and implement the two-year Interim Cooperation Framework and to push for a coordinated effort between all international stakeholders.

The main objectives associated with the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework are to give concrete expression to the financial commitments made at the Washington Conference and to put in place mechanisms for aid coordination. Canadian leadership on the latter issue is now widely recognized, by other financial backers as well as by Haiti's interim government.

On January 20, 2005, Minister Pettigrew appealed to financial backers in the international community to honour the commitments made in Washington. Canada is well-positioned to make an appeal of this nature, since it will have already disbursed \$90 million, or half of the funds committed, before the end of March 2005.

Lastly, in addition to giving Canada an opportunity to restate its support for initiating a national dialogue and for the restoration of the democratic process, the ministerial meeting held in Cayenne on March 18 last was also an opportunity to draw up a list of 380 projects that need to be carried out in 2005 in order to meet the pressing needs of Haiti's population as quickly as possible. The fact that 126 of these projects will be carried out with Canadian funds is a clear sign of the breadth of the government's commitment.

That is where the government stands on this issue. The recommendation is that the motion be rejected. Someone can simply be invited to report back to the committee.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'd like to clarify something. I believe you were here when we welcomed the Minister, his assistants and

CIDA officials. The witnesses all shared with us some very useful information about ongoing developments in Haiti.

● (0940)

Hon. Dan McTeague: That's correct.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: We then welcomed NGOs.

Summer is approaching. If we're not in the midst of an election, we can delegate some committee members. Canada has a unique responsibility, just as I feel the committee does. The Minister maintains that he is doing his job, but I think we're justified in being concerned about the situation. Haiti needs more than just \$80 million or \$120 million. The country is destitute.

Other matters of some concern are security and the elections. Laval residents are divided.

You said that you weren't prepared to support the motion. I don't see why not. I think you should support it.

Hon. Dan McTeague: For me, it's a matter of getting some answers and I totally agree with you. Despite what I said, I think the committee will support your motion.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Paquette.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: You may recall that we also asked the minister to come before the committee to discuss the Iran situation. We could address both subjects. I recall that he was unable to attend due to illness. The poor man had a bout of food poisoning.

The Chair: We could also ask the minister to come and discuss the estimates. He's scheduled to do that shortly. I agree with the resolution, but the final decision rests with committee members.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam McDonough, do you have a comment?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It seems to me we're dealing here with a two-stage motion, as well as a motion already adopted, which we haven't yet fulfilled, and that is to have the foreign affairs minister come before the committee with a real sense of urgency. We had concerns and questions that we wanted to pursue about the Kazemi situation and where we go from here.

Secondly, this motion proposes that we hear from the minister on the current situation in Haiti on the way to our then doing some further work on it. I would absolutely support the motion that is before us if it's on the understanding that we address both the Kazemi matter and Haiti when the minister comes before the committee.

I don't know whether people have been following the growing alarm that's being expressed internationally about the escalation of arms in Haiti, and the extent to which any possibility of there being any stability, when it comes to things as fundamental as people having basic health care or children being able to safely go to school, is becoming more and more remote. There is a flagrant disregard of the embargo on arms, and recently there has been such a huge infusion of arms from the U.S. into Haiti that I think we need to hear from some people about the work that's being done on that.

I don't know who the expert is from whom we should hear, but some people may have noticed a very interesting article, I think in *The Globe and Mail* a couple of weeks ago by Dr. Rob Muggah, who is a Canadian actually working out of Geneva on the Haiti small arms control and disarmament violations. Perhaps we could hear from him on this question, or if not from him, then perhaps we could inquire as to who else would be appropriate from that particular Geneva-based effort on Haiti.

I'd like to put that before the committee as something we could consider when we're deciding who else to hear from after we hear from the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: You agree, in so far as the NGOs are concerned.

[English]

The Chair: Now we have a motion by Madame Lalonde. Are we all agreed on this motion by Madame Lalonde?

(Motion agreed to)

• (0945)

The Chair: This morning, in about 15 minutes, the opposition members will be at a briefing concerning the RPP review. Perhaps I can get a commitment from this committee to meet jointly with their defence counterpart at the first feasible opportunity, with the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, to receive evidence from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence in relation to the government's international policy statement.

Can we add the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of CIDA? We're going to try to get as many ministers as possible. Do you agree that I put a meeting together in this fashion?

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: At the earliest opportunity.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, that's it.

Go ahead.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I think we've said in the past that we didn't want all four at the same time or even both at the same time. We want one minister and then the other minister. I don't want Minister Pettigrew to come for an hour or half an hour and Minister Carroll to come for half an hour. We want each minister....

The Chair: I think I disagree with you.

Let's say you pick up the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the committee on foreign affairs. Now, defence at that time might say that we're going to get their minister. The RPP is under our committee, under the jurisdiction of the foreign affairs committee and national defence. At least you get the two of them together. If you get one, one will get the focus of the media attention. After that, the other one.... It will be one week, two weeks after, and we're not going to get any input concerning them. I think it's better to get Foreign Affairs and Defence together, at a minimum. I want to get my colleagues' opinion on this.

Ms. McDonough, go ahead, please.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm certainly not opposed to having a joint meeting with the defence committee and having the Minister of National Defence and the foreign affairs minister. I think such a meeting could be useful, but I absolutely want to argue that it not be instead of or in lieu of our having the meeting with the foreign affairs minister that will allow us to pursue Haiti, Kazemi in Iran, and other issues of real concern.

Secondly, we should also have the CIDA minister and the international trade minister, unless the subcommittee is doing it separately. What we're now faced with, 16 months after the promise of the IPR...we are finally beginning to get at least a little bit of insight into the government's thinking. There has been an awful period of frustration while we wait and wait and wait for this to happen. But for us to say that just one joint meeting with Defence and Foreign Affairs is going to be fine and it will be taken care of is, in my view, not sufficiently responsive or responsible on the part of this committee to do our work.

I think even on the most superficial reading of the international policy review documentation this morning, it's clear that there's now going to be no public dialogue, no public consultation process, which is the basis on which all of the work had been proceeding. I can tell you, from the documentation this morning—

The Chair: You have documentation. You are the critic on this committee and you had a briefing. I didn't have any briefing and my colleagues didn't have any briefing. I'm just the chair.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Let me say—

The Chair: Just to let you know that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Which is in itself quite telling. I would think that wouldn't be a very comfortable position to be placed in. I wouldn't accept that if I were you.

Given the fact that there's not going to be a consultation process, which was long promised and long awaited, and we know that because of how many NGOs, experts, academics, and advisers have been trying to put their views before the committee and have asked for the opportunity to appear... We're not part of a government-sponsored consultation process. It's not happening. For that reason, it's all the more incumbent on us, it seems to me, to be meeting with those individual ministers to have a chance to pursue some of our concerns. Otherwise, all the work we do leads to a dead end. It never goes anywhere.

The Chair: I might disagree with you, in the sense that by asking the two ministers to appear in front of the committee, it would launch the consultation process in Canada.

I want to hear from Mr. Bevilacqua.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): What Kevin said and what you're saying is not mutually exclusive. I think the ministers need to be accessible. We can have a session with the two of them and then we can call them back.

I hope Mr. Sorenson will understand that it's not a one-shot deal and that in fact these ministers need to be present whenever the committee desires. This is a very important review, and it's really in their interest.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: It's not a review.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Whatever you want to call it, the reality is they have to be available. It's far too important for them to be absent.

The Chair: I just want to pinpoint what I was requesting. It's an additional, special meeting. I don't want to interfere with or substitute any meeting we have with individual ministers concerning their department—as you mentioned, Madame Lalonde, concerning Haiti and Iran with the Minister of Foreign Affairs' estimates. It's something different. It's for the launch of the IPR that will be done by the Minister of Foreign Affairs this morning at 10 o'clock.

Mr. McTeague.

• (0950)

Hon. Dan McTeague: Mr. Chair, I think the statement itself looks like a white paper that was done many times over and over again. I think it's incumbent on this committee to be able to call whoever it wants and to do a more thorough review of what is proposed in the statement.

There are really two options that we have in getting the Minister of Foreign Affairs here. You, of course, have the estimates, where you can treat all the other issues and areas of concern that Ms. McDonough, Monsieur Sorenson, and Madame Lalonde talked extensively about. I think that should happen.

Quite separate and apart from that, the committee could give consideration to doing its own exhaustive review. Given that we've been waiting for this for so long, I think we should do it anyway. I think we should turn it into a review. I don't think there's any difficulty. We can start off with the ministers and then do what we have to do as far as bringing in witnesses, experts and NGOs. We're obviously going to start with Mr. Heinbecker on Thursday, and I'm sure he's going to have an opportunity by then to have reviewed this. So the process is ongoing.

Let's be very clear here. As far as the minister appearing, I think it was very clearly understood.

[Translation]

Mr. Paquette was here the other day when we agreed to invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to make a two-hour appearance to discuss the budget.

[English]

I think there's an opportunity for us to deal with that, but at the same time, let's re-invite him to come back to then begin the process, whether we do it as a joint meeting between the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs—and I'm in total agreement with that. There is ample opportunity for us to take matters into our own hands, as it were. We are really masters of our own destiny here, as far as that review is concerned, and there is nothing preventing us from doing what we set out to do some months ago, notwithstanding the delay.

The Chair: Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I attended this morning's briefing and I glanced at the policy statement on diplomacy. It's not referred to as the foreign policy statement. What we have is an overview of international policy and I have to admit that what I saw worries me.

Without agreeing to the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee not continuing to coordinate Canada's foreign policy, I would go along with having all four at the same time.

The Chair: We could have at least two of them, because if we try to hear from all four at the same time, we...

Ms. Francine Lalonde: So then, at least two, which is not to say that we are moving away from the position taken in the House of Commons. That stand has become all the more important in light of the documents in front of me.

[English]

The Chair: I didn't have any briefing. The only thing I was told, as chair, was that I would receive a letter from the concerned minister. I don't know how many ministers, but at least Foreign Affairs, National Defence, International Trade, and CIDA.

But who's going to sign that letter? I haven't seen the letter yet asking the committee to look at and study this document. I haven't seen the document and I haven't seen the letter, but I was told I would receive such a letter.

Any other comments?

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I think you covered this in your comments, but I think on a superficial briefing the single most shocking thing in the paper is that CIDA, basically, remains an orphan, and 0.7% is nowhere on the radar screen, despite a Prime Minister who's supposed to be Mr. Targets and Timetables.

I think it's extremely important for us to make the commitment to hear from the CIDA minister, whether or not it's in combination with the foreign affairs minister or separately. It seems to me that the most consistent input to this committee that we've received from international experts, as well as domestic experts, has been the necessity, if Canada is going to hold its head up high and meet our international obligations at all, to move on setting the targets and timetables and developing the implementation plan for 0.7%. I would strenuously argue that this be very high on our priority list. It's been the highest priority, and it's been ignored by the government.

We are now being given a statement, not a review process, and we have to faithfully reflect how much it falls short of what the expert witnesses have urged again and again.

• (0955)

The Chair: Ms. Carroll and Mr. Peterson are both coming in front of the committee on May 10, just to let you know the schedule.

Mr. McTeague.

Hon. Dan McTeague: Prior to seeing this, Mr. Chair, I had an opportunity to look at several reviews from the past, white papers and green papers that have been published prior to 1995, the last time we had a review and an analysis. I think it would be fair to suggest that the honourable member, Ms. McDonough, talks about the millennium development goal and the 0.7%, but they do it in the context of the debt relief proposal that is contained in the IPS. I think it's important that those two be taken jointly. One is extremely important to achieving the other. I think we've had witnesses who have supported that to that effect.

The Chair: Do we agree to a joint meeting with the defence committee? [English]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Ms. Lalonde, I was asking if you agreed to our holding a joint meeting with the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Absolutely.

The Chair: Do we agree on the motion I read to you at the beginning?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Any other comments?

I have two other motions, but Mr. Day is not here, so we cannot deal with Mr. Day's motions.

The meeting is adjourned.

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