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Mr. Bernard Patry

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•(0840)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone. The orders of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), are the study of the international policy statement. Welcome to this hearing of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

As you know, last April the government released its first international policy statement. The committee has been holding hearings on this statement since then, both in Ottawa and now across the country. We have also opened an e-consultation on this subject that you can find on our website. Once we have finished our hearings and the e-consultation in December, we will prepare the report, with a recommendation for government policy, which we hope to table early in the new year.

As witnesses this morning we have, from the University of Manitoba, Mr. James Fergusson, director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, and Ms. Michelle Gallant, professor of international law; and we also have, from Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Mr. Martin M. Dolin, executive director. Welcome, all three of you.

The floor is yours, if you want to start. Mr. Fergusson.

Dr. James Fergusson (Director, Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba): Thank you.

I wanted to preface my remarks, before we get to the international policy statement, with a certain observation. Last November, the last time I spoke in front of this committee, I was surprised to see afterwards my name quoted in vain in *Hansard*, and I was deeply surprised to find that I had become someone greatly feared as an individual under the great influence of, or representing, the great military industrial complex destroying democracy. While I could not help but chuckle at the preposterous nature of this committee member's attack, I indeed wondered why I had become a target of such slander. The real danger was in the committee member's express view that government should only fund and support those in agreement with it. Such a comment I would have expected from a soviet or totalitarian dictatorship rather than a parliamentary democracy.

I waited in vain, without replying, for an apology from the member, who hid behind parliamentary immunity, or perhaps a response from members of this committee. No one, it seems, has bothered to consider the implications and messages to citizens when they come before a committee in good faith and then are treated in the manner in which I was in the House of Commons.

I have always believed that the committee process is to assist Parliament in understanding and evaluating complicated issues, because members of Parliament are generally not experts on the subject matter and face an enormous workload. Instead, I have found that no one seems, at times, to be truly interested except when information or individuals can be used to buttress pre-existing beliefs and prejudices or advance their own and party partisan interests. Indeed, after years of being involved in the policy end, sometimes I wonder—and I'm not speaking just alone, but my colleagues do as well—whether anyone has truly been listening.

Nonetheless, I continue to believe it's my duty and responsibility, and that is why I'm here today. I hope the committee members, present and absent, will take time to consider the arguments I lay out before them this morning.

To that end, I would bring the committee's attention to the concept of groupthink. It is a concept that speaks to the dysfunctional nature of a decision-making process in which members of the group, for a variety of different reasons, come to a rapid consensus without critically examining the underlying assumptions and exploring the alternative images of the issue at hand and examining a full range of options that should be laid before them. This, I would suggest, is the collective state of affairs in Canada today concerning Canada and its place in the world.

I am not naive enough to think that the International policy statement is an apolitical document. It has been fashioned for the political interests of the government and reflects not just government opinion but actually, I would suggest, a broad consensus among various political and social forces as they see Canadian foreign policy and Canada in the world today.

Indeed, the differences among all the political parties have become so marginal in the realm of international policy. This is witnessed not least of all by the silence that has attended the release of the international policy statement and its four component documents since April, but also, for example, by the all-party consensus surrounding the issue that's before us, concerning softwood lumber.

The immediacy of domestic politics rules, such that after more than a decade-long set of failures on the part of both Canada and the United States to resolve this issue, no one has seemed to realize that the approach is not working. Yet it seems to be the case that it's better to politicize than resolve.

Even more surprising is that the government took so long in the politics of the international policy statement and apparently agonized so much, if the professor is to believe, to create a statement that is simply the reiteration of the same set of myths and shibboleths that have been the stock-in-trade of successive Canadian politics and Canadian governments for the past four decades or more. Even the Mulroney government, which attempted to break from this failed path, failed to do so—all of this in the political environment where defence and foreign policy has little, if any, domestic political salience.

Regardless, the international policy statement represents no break from the past, just different words to describe the same old and recognized failed strategy. Indeed, with the express goal of the government to restore Canada to “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World”, the central assumptions are, first, that Canadian pride and influence have declined, and second, that decline is simply a function of cutbacks forced upon the government by the fiscal state of affairs in the 1990s.

Having repaired one pillar of Canadian foreign policy as laid out by the previous government in its 1995 statement to the House, putting its economic house in order, funds are now available to support the other two pillars: international security and the export of Canadian values. Fund both to the levels they deserve, so the IPS assumes—which, of course, can't be accurately defined, how much is enough—and Canadian pride and influence will be restored. In other words, Canadian decline has been a function of resources, and restoring resources will resolve the decline. Like traditional 1970s politics, all problems can be resolved by money—more money for diplomacy, more money for defence, more money for development.

I am not suggesting that all three do not need a dramatic infusion of capital. On the contrary, the armed forces are withering away and are in vital need of money right now just to hold the line, not just two years from now.

But simply pumping money into all three—diplomacy, development, and defence—under the same assumptions of the past many decades, assuming that the strategy that guided behaviour in the past remains correct and that this strategy, with resources to match, will, by definition, restore Canada's rightful place in the world, whatever that may be, simply makes little sense given the evidence we have in front of us today. Indeed, the very goal of pride and influence are not just misplaced but speak volumes to the “same old same old” in Canadian policy.

What is the purpose of pride, to feel good about oneself? The public should spend billions of dollars so we can feel good? That's hardly a foundation for national behaviour on the international stage. As long as we feel good, the actions governments take are legitimized, and if this includes sending the armed forces into harm's way in remote places of the world, then fine?

Failed, failing, or fragile states do not in and of themselves demand Canadian intervention, but in the absence of some clearly expressed criteria, sending troops in the name of pride is simply hubris. Foreign policy is about making choices in a difficult world with limited resources. That the government cannot differentiate between those failed, failing, or fragile states beyond the idea that they will pose a threat as breeding grounds for terrorism—which

ones and under what conditions?—or on humanitarian grounds, for the responsibility to protect, provides little or no guide to decision-making. Instead, pride is enough, which is a guarantee of the replication of the past.

Each occurrence or crisis that appears on the international agenda demands a Canadian response. As long, of course, as others in the international system, especially the strong, are on board—unless, of course, the United States is to be seen acting laterally—then Canada runs for cover, not based upon the merits of the case at hand but on the basis of domestic prejudices.

This is all explicable in a country whose policy is based upon pride. This alone speaks to the unreal nature of foreign policy and the debate in foreign policy in this country.

Influence, the other long-standing continuous goal in Canadian foreign policy, is perhaps a reasonable goal, yet it continues to be treated as an end in itself, like multilateralism, rather than a means to an end.

What is the end? To shape the world in Canada's image; to export its values to a Canadian social and pluralist model based upon multiculturalism; to assume with hubris that the rest of the world wants to be like us—rich and spoiled, no doubt, with little fear of the consequences of our behaviour—to make the world safe for democracy? All this rhetoric is great for Canadian consumption, but it simply amounts to a pile of words on the international stage, a long-standing Canadian disease.

The goal of Canadian foreign policy should be to advance and defend Canadian interests on this stage, and these interests are not necessarily synonymous with international peace and security, whatever those are and whoever defines them.

• (0845)

Moreover, Canada is not a superpower, a great power, or a regional power, and politicians and the media should stop listening to diplomatic niceties that other countries say about us. Canada does not have the resources or the will to act as such a power, even though the rhetoric of the international policy statement states that we may have both. Until policy is brought into line with reality, Canadian influence defined as a high probability that the decisions and actions of others can be shaped by us, then Canada will remain on the sidelines as a marginal actor on the international stage. We may be happy at home, but we will be irrelevant internationally.

Let me conclude with one last example. How can anyone on the international stage, any of our allies, friends or potential adversaries, truly take Canada seriously when the international policy statement states, “In no circumstances is violence an acceptable means for seeking to effect political change, either from within or without”.

What exactly does the government think has gone on in Afghanistan? Ask the Shiite and the Kurdish Iraqis if violence is unacceptable to effect change and instead leave them to their fate under a Saddam Hussein.

What are the armed forces doing in Afghanistan? Are we pretending they are there not employing violence to effect change? Why is the government committed to building larger and more capable interventional land forces and promising to intervene at the failed, failing, or fragile states and to prepare to fight a three-bloc war, which itself is a silly statement, if it believes that violence, armed force, is not a means for effecting change?

What do we think Canadians and the government think armed force is for? Social work? This is the heart of the dysfunctional nature of Canadian foreign policy today, and until the strategy underlining this is critically examined, Canadian influence, for whatever end, is not going to be restored regardless of what the government states, brags, or spends.

I would be pleased to address more fully my views here in the realm of defence and the role and function of armed force in general and the Canadian forces in particular over the next 15 minutes or so. I do not mean my testimony to be simply a wrecking job of the international policy statement, or any of its components.

Canada does find itself in a moment when it is able to look closely at the world and make critical choices for the future. Canadian securities policy, notwithstanding the issue of terrorism, is in a very favourable situation. There are no current primary threats to international peace and security, and Canadian choices on the international stage are by and large discretionary. Indeed, without ignoring current crises occasioned by failed, failing, or fragile states, Canada can truly prepare for the future, especially investing its armed forces instead of preparing for the past.

The international policy statement is about the past and preparing the armed forces to fight the last war. Ten to fifteen years from now, when current investment translates into rejuvenated armed force, one should hope that the world doesn't change. The government, Parliament and, perhaps, the Canadian people may find the rhetoric of the IPS consoling, touching, and feeling good. It is unlikely that it will translate into any restoration of Canada to some place of influence on the international stage.

Thank you.

• (0850)

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

Now we'll go to Ms. Gallant.

Do you have some remarks to make?

Professor Michelle Gallant (University of Manitoba): Yes.

The Chair: Okay, no problem. That's why we are here.

Prof. Michelle Gallant: Thank you for this opportunity and invitation to share thoughts on Canada's international policy statement.

[*Translation*]

[*English*]

If I have any insight to offer, it would be with respect to priority two, building a more secure society by countering terrorism, and priority four, building genuine development by sharing Canadian expertise.

As a researcher who is specifically concerned with the global circulation of criminal moneys, I would offer that we should place very little faith in an assault on terrorist financing as having any measurable impact on terrorist activities. As part of an academic institution, I think one of the best ways to use Canadian expertise to foster development is through federal scholarships for Canadian students to study abroad and for foreign students to study here.

As a matter of domestic and foreign policy, Canada is committed to ferreting out terrorists within Canada and assisting in the prosecution of those found elsewhere. As an element of diplomacy, we should press for the implementation of existing international instruments. We should monitor progress. We should encourage and offer expertise to ensure that these are effectively implemented and enforced.

But to focus on financing itself is somewhat misconceived; it is to search for the proverbial needle, and to place increased resources at the disposal of this counter-strategy is fiscally imprudent. Why is it so imprudent? It is because the entire financial monitoring system that currently exists was designed to tackle serious criminal activity. It was designed to tackle serious moneys, piles of cash, the money derived from international criminal activity. It was not designed, nor can it effectively manage, search out, and intercept terrorist financing dollars, because the amounts involved can be so modest.

Evidence indicates that terrorist acts, notably those of late involving terrorist bombs on public transit systems, involved relatively small amounts of money. In a financial system, both domestic and international, the process of millions of dollars of financial transactions, locating a few terrorist dollars is an act of futility. Rather than refine our own system and assist others in monitoring the financial system, what we should do to counter terrorism is to acknowledge the links amongst and between international criminal activities and press to foreclose avenues to serious crime rather than focusing specifically on terrorist financing as some kind of evil unto itself.

In forging an enhanced North American security partnership, Canada should remain skeptical of the policies pursued by our southern neighbours. American efforts to confront global crime have neither been particularly balanced nor particularly genuine, even before September 2001. For example, America long sought to suppress the illegal drug trades while failing to concern itself with its own domestic drug abuse problems. Since 2001 there is a tendency on behalf of the American presidency to focus on the money laundering evils of foreign jurisdictions without noting or paying sufficient attention to the work that its own financial institutions have done in fostering money laundering around the globe.

With equal vision—this is still in the same vein—Canada should be wary of the potential deleterious impact of increased scrutiny of the global financial system on the flow of funds to developing nations. Development requires funding, both public and private. Private sector actors, immigrants from foreign shores, usually send a significant portion of their Canadian earnings back to their home countries. To send those moneys back, they usually rely on informal, unregulated banking networks. Usually that reliance, which is unfamiliar to us as western individuals, is a product of fear of authority or simply the absence of a formal credible banking sector in their home countries. Yet, as is often the case, in seeking to close down these informal networks, we assume they are suspicious by virtue of that informal content. What we should do is recognize the private developmental function of these networks rather than assume that any informal network used to send remittances home to another country is, by its nature, a method, a conduit, for sending terrorist moneys to different destinations.

Finally, particularly as an academic working in an educational institution, I think there is no better way to export Canadian expertise than to cultivate international student exchanges. Canadian post-secondary institutions are second to none in the global education marketplace. Freeing access to foreign students is to play a role in shaping the next potential generation of leaders of developing countries and to expose them to Canada's admirable culture of collaborative problem solving.

We usually focus on offering those fellowships as assisting developing nations, but actually, when we bring students here, there is a very real benefit to Canada. One of the priorities is Canadian businesses, and there is a real benefit to Canadian businesses in having scholars come here and study, because when they return to those nations and they become leaders, or they simply engage in business in those foreign jurisdictions, that is when they think of Canadian destinations. If they are going to forge international relationships, they are reminded of Canada. If they are looking for investment opportunities, they are reminded of their very personal experience in being educated in Canada. The same is true in using fellowships to take Canadians to foreign jurisdictions.

● (0855)

If we want to infuse a hint of global citizenship, we need to have our citizens, as they're developing, actually experience life around the globe. One way to do that is at the student level, at the educational level.

In conclusion, when we think about the future of Canadian diplomacy, someone like Susie, the future prime minister, in 1998 might have been studying abroad. Through that study she might have had a very different experience of what it was like to be invaded—what the invasion of Kosovo was actually like. In hearing the venom with which Canadians were attacked, she might in the future have a very different perspective on what actions we should actually take in dealing with foreign nations.

Thank you.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Gallant.

I'll go to Mr. Dolin, please.

Mr. Martin Dolin (Executive Director, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (Welcome Place)): And now for something completely different.... I am a non-academic. On what you will hear from me, there are two issues I'm concerned about. One is Canada's treatment of refugees, and the other is the matter of the state versus the rights of the individual.

To give you some of my background, I am the executive director of the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council. We are the only agency in Manitoba that deals with government-sponsored refugees. We also have a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada. We are the largest sponsor in all of Canada. We now have 4,200 people in the queue waiting to come to Canada as refugees privately sponsored by us. This is approximately 1,000 more than were landed in all of Canada last year. This is just one agency.

One of the things I'd like to point out is that on page 7 of your document you refer to intercepting ships carrying illegal migrants. I've been in this business for 20-odd years and I've yet to hear the term "illegal migrant". I'd like to know what it means. Who defines the illegality of somebody interdicted at sea before they have had a proper hearing? Are they the Jews who were on the *S.S. St. Louis* in 1939 and were pushed away from our shores? Are they the Fujianese who landed in B.C.? Are they the South Asians who landed in Nova Scotia? Who is illegal? Who determines that until there is a hearing?

It seems that there are certain preconditions and prejudices built into this paper, and that somewhat concerns me. I do not necessarily believe it is intentional; I believe it is part of the perception that members of Parliament and the Canadian public have of people fleeing persecution, which is what we deal with all the time.

Now I'd like to get to the Canadian embassies and how they deal with it.

Since the cutbacks in the early nineties, the embassies are grossly understaffed in every part of the world as far as immigration offices go. There are now waiting periods of four years before somebody gets an interview, for example, in Nairobi or Accra. It also bothers me that one could perceive there is a certain element of racism in the fact that there are only four posts in all of Africa to deal with refugees, and they are in Accra, Cairo, Pretoria, and Nairobi, in the four corners of Africa, and once in a while, when there's no war going on, in Abidjan. The reality is that this is where most of the action in the world takes place.

The other concern I have is the inefficiencies of the immigration department, and they're setting foreign policy. For example—and this is where I want to get to nation states dealing with their own citizens—in Ethiopia the Oromo people are the majority of the population. They are being persecuted and tortured by the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopian government, as we're all aware, has been accused of rigging the last election.

The reality is that the Canadian government has determined that the OLF, which is the Oromo Liberation Front, is a terrorist organization. We've seen in a number of cases that somebody has been arrested and jailed by the Ethiopian government because they are Oromo and are suspected—not because there is any evidence—of being members of or sympathetic to the OLF. Then our embassy rejects their refugee claims because the Ethiopian government, which was acting with prejudice against the Oromo people, has determined that they are members of the OLF or associated with the OLF. I wonder about this.

• (0905)

You talk in your report about Canada's record—and Canada has a record of saving those who are fleeing persecution. You talk on page 14 about “leader” and “refugee” and.... Well, I've been in this business for approximately 20 years now. Let me give you an example.

In 1990 the Government of Canada sponsored 13,000 refugees. We now sponsor 7,300. In 1990 there was an assisted relative program that allowed people who were Canadians landed in Canada to sponsor their brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews. That went in 1992. The private sponsors during the boat people era sponsored privately, at no cost to the government—the churches of Canada and the people of Canada did. We won the Nansen Medal—the people of Canada, not the Government of Canada—in 1986. Basically, we were sponsoring 31,000 a year. In the last year we landed 3,200. So the doors, to me, are closing considerably.

Let me read you something I just received. It's a case that came to us where there was an egregious error, from my point of view, made by an immigration office. I wrote to the case management people, and here is the response I got:

Canadian visa offices abroad have complete authority and jurisdiction to receive, assess and render decisions on all immigrant applications, including any humanitarian or compassionate consideration presented, pursuant to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and Regulations*. In this case, the visa officer provided clear reasons for refusing Ms. T's application. This office has no legislative authority to overturn and otherwise intervene in a visa office's decision.

What you have here, basically, is the visa offices, and we are also interdicting people overseas and in airports, where you have a non-elected, non-supervised person making a life and death decision about somebody who is fleeing persecution. This is an outrage. In any democratic society, this is a complete outrage. You have a bureaucrat with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration telling us that nobody can question their decisions, nobody from within the department.

I have 37 staff people in my office, and if somebody screws up and somebody makes a complaint, I have the power to review and sanction that person. What I'm being told by the immigration department is that they have no such power, that every immigration officer is a little tinpot dictator god unto himself or herself. That's an outrage, and no democratic society should tolerate it.

The final thing I want to talk about that I had mentioned is what you discuss on page 20 of this document. You talk about how Canada's ultimate goal is to foster commitments on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, which places individual citizens at the heart of society and creates a state committed to protecting their welfare. And further down you say, “But the importance of national

autonomy cannot be overstated.” I think we have a dilemma here—and I hope it's a dilemma you, as our elected members, can figure out how to solve. The dilemma is over the rights of the individual to protect himself against torture by a nation state and the right of the nation state to make its own decisions and not to have intervention from an external body or another nation state.

I'd like to read you a letter I wrote to Mary Robinson. I get e-mails, a couple of thousand e-mails a year, from refugees around the world because we have a website. Also, one of the things is that a lot of the embassies refer people to our website because it gives them detailed information on how to make a refugee claim according to the rules of Canada. And since most of the embassies do not have any information on that, they refer people to our website.

In the letter I say that I've received 2,000 letters from refugee claimants and that :

I have attached a summary list of 476 cases of which 136 cases specifically relate incidents of torture. I suspect many of the others (primarily those of Eritrean or Oromo heritage) many also be victims of torture, but I have only included those where my files note “torture”.

Two problems I have here. One is that in writing to Mary Robinson, and now Louise Arbour—this was in 2002—in the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, the response I got back was a form letter from Geneva that I could give to the individuals—the 476 individuals involved. I could go find them on the streets of Nairobi and ask them to fill out this form. My response, not being a particularly polite person, was, what kind of bloody bureaucracy is this that you're running here? I got a response back from somebody named Jean-Louis, I believe, who said he was sorry and realized that it was a bureaucracy, but that he was the only staff person.

Now, when you think about this, this is the High Commission on Human Rights at the UN, for the entire world, that has a staff of one. Now, I think if Canada was going to pay some attention, perhaps we should be putting some more efforts into beefing up that office. What I did end up doing was getting Human Rights Watch out of Washington to go down and interview and write a report on this.

• (0910)

Two things bother me when you have nation states like this. One, is Canada making a determination because the state has made a determination that somebody they see as a threat is not a refugee? Are immigration offices going along and agreeing with the decision of these despots?

The other thing is, what is Canada's role in looking at the rights and protecting the individuals? One of the examples brought up was Kosovo. Why did we intervene in Kosovo? Why haven't we intervened in Darfour? Why did we not intervene in Sierra Leone or Liberia when the Brits did? Canada does have a role to play, and I think we have a great deal of respect around the world, particularly in Africa. From the people I see as refugees, they come here because they have a belief Canada is a fair and decent country.

I would also like to end by reminding you the immigration department has given away our sovereignty. We have signed a safe third country agreement with the United States, assuming that the United States has an equivalent degree of fairness and responsibility that we do.

Because I can't deal with the generalities and numbers the academics can, I will give you an example. In 2004, there were about 14,000 people heading north from the U.S. to make refugee claims in Canada. With our approval rate of about 50%, you assume that's about 7,000 people who would have stayed in Canada. Going south from Canada to the U.S., there were 250. Yet before 9/11, the bureaucracy was always pushing for this because it makes their work easier. They dump the work on the Americans, and the Americans do the processing.

To show the effect, I would like to give you an example. We had a man from Togo who was coming up from the U.S. to make a refugee claim. He landed at the border in Emerson, Manitoba. He said, I want to make a refugee claim. They said, fine, you need an interview. What language would you like to be interviewed in? Because French is his first language—but he spoke very fluent English, because my staff person, who doesn't speak French, was able to communicate—he said he would prefer to be interviewed in French. They said, we don't have anybody who speaks French at the border now, so you'll have to go back. He says, well, then fine, I'll do it in English. They said, no, you have to go back. He said, if I am sent back to the U.S., the Americans will throw me in jail. The Americans do not adhere to the UN idea of non-refoulement, so they will refole me, then send me back to my home country—as Mr. Arar will explain to the committee, if we have him. The border security people sent him back to the U.S. Lo and behold, to no one's surprise—except maybe to the border security people—he was thrown in jail. He was sent back to Togo. He has escaped again, and I think he is now in Benin. We have received an e-mail from him that the Canadian government is now willing to process him as a refugee. How do we get him back from Benin? Who's going to pay his airfare?

Basically, what we have done by signing a safe third country agreement is...and I am not too sure whether the Department of Foreign Affairs does this, and if it is the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to be blunt, where the hell do they get the nerve to set foreign policy for Canada, and to give away our right to decide who is a refugee and who is in need of protection according to our laws—not the American laws, according to our laws?

I don't know how you abrogate this treaty, but I tend to think that before we do this again, Canada should abrogate the treaty. We should let the Americans do their thing, and we'll do our thing. But how does your committee and how do members of Parliament deal with issues like this?

So I would really hope the committee would look at how we deal with nations abusing their own citizens, and how we keep our policies free and clear and Canadian, rather than succumbing to the American influence—as Jim has very clearly pointed out.

Thank you very much for your time.

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

I have one comment before going to questions and answers. I want to tell Mr. Dolin that this IPS is not our report. It's not the complete report. It's a government report, and this is the reason we're travelling around the country—to get comments from the population, as you did this morning.

Now, we'll start with questions and answers. It will be five minutes for 20 minutes. Usually we go Conservative, Bloc, Liberal and NDP. But when we're travelling, it's anyone who's ready; we go free for the first one who wants to ask questions.

Mrs. Smith.

• (0915)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the presenters. Your presentations were well researched and very compelling. Thank you. They were very informative.

I want to direct my first question to Jim Fergusson.

I'm interested in more than two things in your presentation, but I only have time to speak to two of them. You were saying you had presented in this committee, then you were quite upset with how it seemed you were attacked in the House of Commons. That should not be happening. This is an independent forum where people should be able to present in any way they see fit. That's why you're here.

Could you expand on that a little bit?

Dr. James Fergusson: Well, I don't want to go back over old ground. Very simply, after presenting on issues surrounding arms races, being in Ottawa, speaking on missile defence at a breakfast put on by the SSHRC people, I was basically named in the House—and you'll find it in *Hansard* towards the middle of November—as a skill for the military industrial complex.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you.

Dr. James Fergusson: I mean, I have thick skin. It doesn't bother me. I can live with that. People are concerned—and we are all concerned—about attitudes of the public towards politicians these days, which really are attitudes about the public and issues of the legitimacy of Parliament and the system of government. We should be concerned, I think, about these types of things when they occur.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Yes, I would agree with that, and we are concerned.

Second, on the international statement, you said basically, to summarize, that it is a statement of non-violence, and you also said it is a policy statement about the past. Clearly, we know that there are many problems with defence here in Canada. Could you expand a little bit more on that? I was very interested in what you had to say about this.

Dr. James Fergusson: Canadians and the government and parliamentarians—and I am not pointing my finger at any in particular, but rather at all—have been lulled into a certain set of beliefs about Canada and the world. And these beliefs are drawn from the stories we have told ourselves, by and large, since the end of World War II. They are related to things such as Canada as a middle power, Canada in all the roles and attributes we attributed to Canada during the 1950s and 1960s, the so-called golden age of internationalism and the Cold War: the value of multilateralism, of alliances, etc. I could go into great detail, and the academic literature is full of this detail.

When the Cold War came to an end and everyone sat down to reconsider their national security strategies—and in fact their foreign policy strategies, because the Soviet Union had disappeared and it was a new world—everyone agonized over what we could do or what we should do to adapt to the new world.

What happened over the next decade and a half, and still is happening to this day, is that for some reason there was an unconscious belief that somehow Canada's strategy, which might have been useful—and I won't argue one way or another—during the Cold War, which might have been valued during the Cold War, would in the end continue to be relevant in a new environment. So we didn't change. If we look at it in the context of defence, all the things we have done in the past 15 years—the armed forces deployed overseas at a high degree of operational tempo, centred on land forces—have occurred during a period in which everyone agrees, it seems, even the government, that Canadian influence and prestige have declined on the world stage.

We are now saying—the government is now saying—that we are going to continue to do that. Believing that, we will throw money at it. More troops, more effective troops—the money is not even sufficient to do that—are somehow going to fix this. Well, the answer is that they are not, because there were problems back then. And until we ask ourselves what went wrong, we won't know where we should be investing.

But instead, what are we doing now? The forces are madly investing to build an army to fight in Afghanistan, and the Canadian public doesn't even know we are at war in Afghanistan, which is dangerous.

• (0920)

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you. Mr. Fergusson, I would like a copy of your presentation, if we could get it.

Mr. Dolan, you had a very alarming presentation. We are talking about lack of accountability in the immigration department. You talk about immigration officers making life and death decisions about people who are fleeing for their lives, with absolutely no accountability for those decisions. I am alarmed. Could you expand on that?

Mr. Martin Dolin: I'd love to.

I have been before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration a number of times over the last fifteen to twenty years. Basically, the Government of Canada, in IRPA, which is the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, put in an appeal system that the government has refused.... I remember that Denis Coderre

and I became reasonably buddy-buddy, and Denis promised in Parliament that within a year they would implement the appeal procedure in order to allow people to look at the decisions being made by immigration officers and have some third-party review.

I was also at a conference that Heritage Canada sponsored on policing in a multicultural society. One of the things about this conference was that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration enforcement division—because the enforcement division is a police force, with the power to incarcerate and the power to exile—was the only police force in the country that was not there. The Mounties have external review. CSIS has external review. Every other police force in this country has external review except for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. There is no review whatsoever.

One of the things is that they have basically, from my perspective, defied the law of Canada by not implementing the appeal procedure as put in the act. Also, I think Coderre—as far as I know, he's still in the House—should maybe be called before rules and privileges for misleading the House by saying this would be done within a year.

The reality is that I'd like to see Mr. Volpe act on this, because that would be a step in the right direction. The other step in the right direction would be to have the Department of Citizenship and Immigration subject itself to some form of external review, through either a committee like SIRC or an ombudsman type of operation, because people's lives are at stake.

One of the things that bother me is that with interdictions, for example, the Canadian government is sending people to airports overseas to stop people from getting on planes because they're saying those people don't meet our requirements, or they're illegal migrants, whatever that means. Some bureaucrat is making a life and death decision on somebody, with no power whatsoever for anybody to oversee whether or not that bureaucrat is doing it because he's a racist, because he's just stupid, or because he had a fight with his wife this morning—or husband, depending on the gender of the bureaucrat—and is in a bad mood. That's the reality.

I agree with you. This is an appalling state of affairs, and we have been telling Citizenship and Immigration this. I hope your committee would understand how seriously this affects foreign policy in the view of the public around the world in terms of the way Canada functions. A democratic society should not function in this manner.

The Chair: We'll now go to Ms. Phinney.

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

And thank you for coming this morning, especially this early. It felt early to me anyway.

I just want to comment to Michelle that at our last foreign affairs meeting back in Ottawa, we had the AUCC in, and we were discussing the same things you were mentioning, about the value of foreign travel for students and the influence they can have on how the country is perceived and how they perceive the rest of the world.

My questions mainly are for you, Mr. Fergusson. I'd like you to comment on the basis on which Canada should cooperate with the United States on both continental and international security and defence matters.

And I have a couple more, so I'll put them all in together.

How do you feel about Canada not participating in the United States' missile defence program? I can probably guess some of the answers from your comments.

Should Canada increase its military contribution to United Nations operations?

I'll just leave it at that for now, and then see if I have more time.

Dr. James Fergusson: Very briefly, the issue of cooperation with the United States is perhaps the most important issue that faces Canadian decision-makers. It always has been and it always will be, not least of all because we share a continent with the United States, but because we are beneficiaries of an international system constructed by the United States. That system, which is maintained by and large by the United States, with the support of friends and allies and the self-interests of others where they coincide, was constructed at the end of World War II and is something that is in Canada's interest.

To what level should we cooperate? We should cooperate to the level where it reflects Canadian interests, to ensure that there is a seamless web between our continental cooperation and our international cooperation with the United States. We should offer the United States consistency and predictability in policy, as a friend and ally should always do.

This does not mean, as everyone thinks—and most people who come across me seem to think I'm an American rather than a Canadian—that we agree all the time with the United States. The United States doesn't expect us to agree with them. But it does mean we have an honesty and forthrightness in making it clear that our views are based upon a rational analysis of differing perceptions of the situation and differing options, rather than going from pillar to post based upon what appears to be the daily whim or report of public opinion polls, the media, and the exigencies of the government of the day. And again, I'm not directing this particularly just at this government, but previous governments.

This spills right over into the missile defence issue, and I think the missile defence question is a clear exemplar of what's wrong. I would suggest to you that five years from now in the academic world, when people look at the textbook case of how not to deal with an issue in foreign policy for Canada, they will point their fingers at missile defence, where we went from unsure to all in favour to a sudden about-face, with no explanation, no clear justification by the government, no reason why the government made its decision, nothing that our allies know for sure about why we did what we did. If you're sitting in Washington, you're going to say to yourself, what is it goes on up there, and can they be trusted? Are they credible? Are they reliable?

I'm on the record and I remain on the record. I was in favour of missile defence, but I've argued for over a decade on this issue. It was never a yes or no on missile defence that was at stake and was going to affect the relationship. It was how we did it. We stayed out of missile defence in ABMs and we sidestepped it in SDI. It was clearly communicated to the United States. There were no ramifications, and the United States understood how it was done.

We didn't do that this time, and that then starts to have implications. And I will tell you the implication.

As much as I think there are issues about our sovereignty and defence of our country and responsibility for it that missile defence is involved with, it's really in the fact of what happens to Canada. I've argued and I will continue to argue that in the missile defence file, the impact is going to be extremely negative, because we will lose. I could care less about the system and how the Americans are pumping into it and all the issues down there. That's not the issue. We will lose, and we're seeing ourselves lose right now.

In the upcoming NORAD renewal and the issue surrounding where we're going in continental defence cooperation with the United States, I will put up money right now that the United States has already put the brakes on any further bilateral relationships such as the NORAD relationship. They will be happy to do it by national memoranda of agreement to cooperate with us on these things, but the idea of a bilateral command, where Canadians get to command Americans and Canadians get access to all that American knowledge and information that is useful to us because we find out things we can't find out on our own, is all over for now. And it's going to take a long time to recover that. It's an example of how not to do these things.

The final question I wrote down was whether Canada should....

● (0925)

Ms. Beth Phinney: Increase its military contributions to the United Nations.

Dr. James Fergusson: Like all other international institutions, the United Nations is a tool, an instrument to reflect and advance Canadian interests. We should have efficient, effective military forces vitally focused upon the needs of national defence—not international peace and security, but the requirements of an effective national defence—in the changing world that's occurring in what academics call the revolution in military affairs. Those forces that we make available, that we develop, must be efficient and advanced, because we can't afford or governments won't afford across-the-board military forces. Those forces we focus upon the national and, by definition, the continental mission. Our forces can be made available through United Nations agencies and through NATO when we think it's in our interest to participate, but to have specific forces created for and devoted to the United Nations is simply a mistake in application of limited resources, in my view.

● (0930)

The Chair: We'll go for another 10 minutes with the witnesses. We'll go to Monsieur Clavet and Monsieur Blaikie.

Monsieur Clavet.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Thank you very much Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for their presentations. As a Bloc québécois critic, I have made some of the same observations that you have expressed today. I am pinch-hitting for my colleague who normally sits on this committee, but having said that, I am responsible for immigration and Asia-Pacific issues.

Mr. Dolin, you talked about the frustration you feel with regard to “tinpot dictators”. I share some of your frustration, although I would couch it in slightly less inflammatory terms, since there are immigration officials who do do an honest job.

Along much the same lines, Ms. Gallant mentioned the issue of immigrants’ money being funnelled abroad through banks, etc. It seems that there is a lot of frustration and a disconnect between immigration and its impact on Canadian security and foreign policy.

Could you tell us whether you think that foreign policy should indeed include an immigration component, not only as it relates to security but also to the issues raised by Mr. Dolin and Ms. Gallant. Do you agree that the Canadian International Policy Statement bears no relation to reality and that there should have been greater focus on immigration?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Dolin.

Mr. Martin Dolin: If I have the question right, the answer is yes, we most certainly should have.

I think to say “third country” is a good example of Canada's foreign policy. When Jim is talking about Canada's role with NORAD, defence, and what not, we're talking about our relationship with the elephant to the south. And to talk about a safe third country agreement, which is relevant to our decision-making power and to who gets refugee status within our country, is to basically abrogate our responsibility and turn it over to the Americans. It's certainly doing something that's relating to our foreign policy and our relationship with our “friends to the south”.

One thing is that I happen to come from the United States. I spent the first 26 years of my life in the United States. To educate Jim a little bit about one of the realities that I think maybe he's missing, what I have noticed culturally is that there is a difference in interpretation of one word, which to me signifies the difference between the U.S. and Canada. It's the word “compromise”.

Canadians, I think correctly, look at the dictionary definition of “compromise”. It means I give something, you give something, we submit it to an independent body—an arbitrator, usually—and we come out with a mutual win-win decision, where each of us gives up something.

As an American who comes from the South Bronx and who learned his politics with the Democratic Party in the streets of the South Bronx, basically I see “compromise” as my making you give up something; I force you to “compromise”. This is the American determination of that word.

When I see Canadians like Mickey Cohen come back from negotiations with the Americans and the Americans are saying “ We have reached a compromise”, my interpretation of that, as a former American, is that they ate our lunch.

The Chair: Thank you.

An hon. member: Could we have a comment from Dr. Fergusson?

The Chair: A very short one—thirty seconds.

Dr. James Fergusson: Very briefly, I am very pleased that a member of the Bloc is here today, because I was deeply concerned that there would not be a representative from the Bloc Québécois travelling the country. I'm very pleased you're here.

The point you're making, I think, if I can interpret Mr. Dolin's point as well—not his response, for we could debate that—is that one of the central issues is whether the current structure of government is still functional for the duties government now performs. We have inherited a structure of government, in the foreign policy realm at least, that is a 19th century model: foreign policy, foreign affairs, defence. Now we've seen in national security the blurring of these issues. Foreign policy—what diplomacy does today—is much different from what it did, and Mr. Dolin has pointed to that.

One of the things missing in the IPS, it seems to me—in this whole exercise—is a critical examination of the structural basis on which we make policy, and I think that is something that needs to be addressed.

• (0935)

Mr. Martin Dolin: May I?

On immigration officers, I was not suggesting—

The Chair: Thirty seconds, Mr. Dolin.

Mr. Martin Dolin: Yes, very quickly, I wasn't suggesting immigration officers are dishonest and are a little.... I think the rules allow them this kind of total independence without scrutiny, which puts them in an awkward position too, where they have no accountability and no responsibility. I don't think they're dishonest or evil people, by any stretch of the imagination.

The Chair: Mr. Dolin, I might just say that we know this with visas. All MPs know everything that's going on with visas in the immigration office.

Ms. Gallant.

Prof. Michelle Gallant: All I would note is that it's no surprise to me. We often talk about the mobility of trade, the mobility of investment, but we usually exclude from those dialogues any discussion of the mobility of people, so it's not surprising to me to see immigration as not forming an integral part of this document.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Blaikie.

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like, on a point of order before I begin my question time, to explain the circumstances of my being late, because it's kind of a humorous story.

The Chair: You already told this.

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): It's your time.

Hon. Bill Blaikie: No, I said it's on a point of order outside my time. If it's not outside my time, I'll do it later on a point of order. So if it's not the case, then I'll just proceed.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Hon. Bill Blaikie: I was just saying, people will know—people from Winnipeg, that is—that there's an underground parking lot next door, which I was going to use for the day. You go down a sort of tunnel. When I got to the bottom of the tunnel to get a ticket, there had been some kind of power failure, and there was no way...there was a bar in front of my car. There still were no cars behind me, so I backed all the way to see if there was some other kind of button I should press. There was no other button, so I went back down and tried again.

By this time, there were cars behind me and there was a big lineup, and the arm still wouldn't open. Then the crews came. They were trying to get the thing to work; then the guy had to take the arm off manually with tools; then he didn't have the right tools, and I had to get tools out of my car. Anyway, to make a long story short, that's the reason I was late. My apologies to....

I hope I get free parking out of it, at least, because I never did get a ticket to go in.

I just want to agree with a lot of what I heard, though of course I only heard Mr. Dolin's presentation. But some of the things that have been said, in response to questions, by Mr. Fergusson prompt a question or two.

Certainly, I agree that something needs to be done to deal with—and all MPs know this intimately—the authority people in the countries of origin have. We're constantly fighting it with faxes, with letters, and trying to get ministerial intervention. We know the story on this side.

The Chair: On both sides.

Hon. Bill Blaikie: On both sides, yes. There are many times we're as frustrated as you are. I'm not sure whether it's section 64 of the act that gives them that, but I know people have made representations to me recently about having it changed. I hope we can take that message back.

Of course, I agree also on.... I didn't know the human rights commission at the UN was so understaffed.

The safe third country thing is something we expressed concern about too, and also the appeal procedure is something we called for over and over again. So there's a lot of agreement there.

I wanted to ask Mr. Fergusson something. You've made two really good points, I think, one about missile defence. We're on opposite sides of the issue when it comes to missile defence, but I would agree with you that it was very poorly handled from the point of view of Parliament, the public, and the United States. I've had many conversations, or at least several, with Ambassador Cellucci about this, and I can appreciate their absolute bewilderment at how the Canadian political system works on this issue.

In the end, we still had received no explanation in Parliament as to why the government made the decision it did. We had a commitment that there would be a debate and a vote, no matter what the government did, and we never got it. If that commitment in the throne speech had happened, we might have had some light on this.

You mentioned Afghanistan and the fact that we're at war in Afghanistan and Canadians don't seem to realize it. I think it's true that the government has tried to portray what's happening in Afghanistan as if it's some kind of extension of our old peacekeeping roles, by talking about provincial reconstruction, etc.

Are you saying we shouldn't be doing that? You seemed to say that Afghanistan was an extension of this old model that you thought was part of the problem. So are you saying we shouldn't be there?

● (0940)

Dr. James Fergusson: I'm not necessarily saying we should be there. I think the issue of Afghanistan and our presence there from the beginning is an interesting one.

My concern is that if you put Afghanistan in light of what this document is, the international policy statement, and what it says, then we can interpret why we are in Afghanistan. As you pointed out about missile defence, we haven't had an explanation from the government. I remember years ago being a student, reading—translated into English—the party addresses of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and we all wondered what was the point of this propaganda. And the answer was, well, governments have to communicate their intentions to their people and others. It's an important task of all governments, no matter what their type.

So if I take the international policy statement and read what's in there and say, okay, this is supposed to explain why we are in Afghanistan, why we are sending 2,000 troops to Afghanistan...and the government's explanation is the old explanation, it's the peacekeeping model. It's what we do. We feel good about doing it.

There are a lot of alternative explanations of why we are really there, and if that's why we're there, then I expect the government, in its white paper, which is what this is, to clearly lay out to the Canadian public exactly why it is they are there, not to hide it from the Canadian public. I will give you a good example. Not only are we at war, we've been at war for almost 15 years now, in one way or another, from Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and I don't ever hear the government use the word "war". We've sent 2,000 troops to Afghanistan to do security for provincial reconstruction teams in the heart of the Taliban region. These troops are no different from the Soviet Red Army troops sent to facilitate and assist their provincial reconstruction teams as they spread out with their political commissars into the rural areas. It's exactly the same thing.

We can't change the world. We might think we're nicer than them. Fair enough. I like democracies more than totalitarian governments. Fair enough. But that's why we are there.

No one has had a debate about whether we should be sending 2,000 Canadian troops to do search and destroy missions, because that's what they are going to be doing in the mountains of southeastern Afghanistan to support provincial reconstruction. We haven't debated that.

It just shocks me that a mature Liberal democracy hasn't got the confidence in its public to sit in front of Parliament...and Parliament to have a reasoned discussion of whether we should be there, of why we should be there, beyond let's be good and let's do peacekeeping. If this goes bad, the defence minister has warned.... No one seems to be listening. The Chief of the Defence Staff has warned very clearly that people will be killed in this, but I don't think the public understands this at all.

Let me wrap up with one last point, if I may, about Afghanistan.

The Chair: Very quickly.

Dr. James Fergusson: Our policy is essentially to intervene in failed, failing, or fragile states. That's what the government says. I tracked that back to Afghanistan in 2001. I hate to tell everyone, but Afghanistan in 2001 was not a failed, failing, or fragile state. The Taliban controlled 80% to 90% of the territory. It was a de facto government and it was about to crush the remnants of the Northern Alliance. We went in and we supported fully the United States and the Northern Alliance to overthrow a government that wasn't failed, failing, or fragile. I have no compunction about why we did it, and I fully support that decision, but let's have some honesty, leadership, and trust in the Canadian public.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Guergis is next, and I also have a question.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Thank you.

After listening to everyone ask questions, there is so much I would want to follow up on. With respect to your last comment, not necessarily always sending troops off to war, but having a full debate in the House of Commons so that Canadians can know exactly what we are talking about and can have a vote before we deploy any troops, is something we have been talking about as a party for the longest time. That is something we support, so I appreciate your comments on that.

Thanks very much for being here. I share some of the concerns, Mr. Fergusson, that you raised at the beginning. Unfortunately, a lot of what you said is true. I wish it wasn't, but it is. I am the critic responsible for international cooperation, so most of my questions and my approach come from the idea of our foreign aid delivery. I hope you can help me out with a couple of the questions I have.

Recently—I'm the one—I asked the Prime Minister a question when they decided to deploy DART to Pakistan. In many of my releases and my questions, I have complimented the soldiers and those who make up DART. But it was turned around, and I was attacked in saying that I was attacking DART and the people who did the good work of DART.

My questions were focused and based on accessed information—13 pages—where the government had been told by DND staff and by CIDA staff that DART was ineffective in its current form. This is going back almost a year and a half. If they were to make the decision to deploy DART—I am going to read some statistics here—for 10 months, DART could see 10,000 patients for over 40 days and could provide 6,666 people with water for 40 days. But if we were to use OXFAM or any other non-governmental organization with the same expertise and quality, \$420,000 would have provided clean water to 20,000 people for six months.

That is what my questions were based on. I guess I was criticizing the Prime Minister for maybe opting for a photo opportunity, rather than working with the non-governmental organizations.

I am curious as to what you think DART's role should be in the future. Should we give it the resources that it requires to do the work so that it is more efficient, or should Canada perhaps look more toward the non-governmental organizations, which have a tried and proven record in delivering aid?

●(0945)

The Chair: Mr. Fergusson.

Dr. James Fergusson: I am not an expert on the issue of development and aid and these issues, but I would put to you that it is a misapplication of limited resources. To me, the purpose of the DART is to be able to have an emergency response, a first responder in the field that is well equipped very quickly to do the things that it does. Like in any emergency, here we have the first responders who take over to do the triage work—in the case of DART, to get water moving right away. Then as time extends, and we are a week or ten days down the road, we should be happily transitioning to the people who do this more effectively in the long term: OXFAM, CARE, the NGOs. That's when they should be sent. To my knowledge, they don't have the resources to do that immediate response.

Yet DART, as we've constructed it, doesn't have the capability to move quickly. It just can't do it. First of all, you have to phone up the Antonov owners and see when you can get lift. I mean, in the case of the tsunami and in the case of Pakistan, how long was it before we got there? The U.S. was there the day of. They have resources, which are deployed on aircraft carriers, so they can move things. We don't have those.

So what do we need? We want to do this effectively. We want to get them in quickly and get them out as soon as we have done the basics. I think this can transition to a more effective delivery. That requires us to invest in something this government doesn't want to invest in, and that is strategic lift capabilities.

The Chair: I have the last question. You have been very critical, Mr. Fergusson, and I think it is great. What do you think about the idea of an integrated international policy statement? Do you think the fact that there will be an annual update on this is a good idea?

Second, you talk about the three pillars: economics, Canadian values, and also defence. You say that we should go right back to the first principle in areas such as defence, instead of just sending people or more money. If we went back to the first principle, what do you think would be different about our policy?

Dr. James Fergusson: Is it good to have an annual statement? Is it good to copy the Americans, who release an annual national security strategy?

We now release an annual report of the Chief of the Defence Staff. It's supposed to add transparency and accountability. On those grounds, it is. But if all the government is going to release is a feel-good, pat yourself on the back statement, then I don't think there's much point to it. We're wasting valuable resources.

It can be a useful exercise, but until it's actually done as a useful exercise, I don't think it is.

If we went back to first principles, I think we would find a dramatic shift in what we do. I think we would start to examine and raise questions. For example, for most of the post-Cold War era, Canadian Forces have not been deployed under the auspices of the United Nations. They've been deployed under other auspices, mostly NATO, for a variety of different reasons.

Why did we choose NATO and not the UN? Is it simply because the UN couldn't act and we took whatever avenue we could find? Is that simply, then, a reflection of the principle that if there's an international crisis out there, Canada must go, because that's what we do? Why do we do it?

I think we would find, once we started—and I think all of us have to begin—with limited resources, given the nature of politics in this country, the first principle is that foreign defence is not going to be fully resourced to meet the ambitions we say we have on the international stage. Governments aren't going to do this. With all due respect to the Bloc, the NDP, and the Conservative Party, none of them are going to do it either. We know that. We've seen the evidence time and time again.

Limited resources means that we have to make difficult choices. First principles require us to say, what are the bases on which we're going to make those choices? What are the keys there?

I could give you a whole long list of answers if we had time, but since you ask that, I think we would become more discriminatory. We'd become more predictable and reliable on the international stage, and in becoming more predictable, reliable, and credible, we would start to see our voice being heard. People would be interested in what we have to say and what we want to do, rather than hodgepodge here, there, and everywhere.

Thank you very much.

● (0950)

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Fergusson, Madame Gallant, and Mr. Dolin. We'll recess for four or five minutes and come back.

Thank you.

● (0952)

_____ (Pause) _____

● (1001)

The Chair: Okay, we'll start again.

We have, from the University of Manitoba, Mr. George MacLean, professor of political science, and from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Mr. Jim Cornelius, executive director.

Welcome, both of you.

We will start with Mr. MacLean, please.

Professor George MacLean (Department of Political Science, University of Manitoba): Thank you very much.

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. I just have a few short comments to begin with, and I would rather have more time for questions and answers afterwards.

The first point I would make is that I believe Canadian foreign policy is marked by a turbulent international system and that there are a number of major issues that most governments in the western industrialized world have had to take into account, including new actors, such as non-state actors, and issues such as the questioning of sovereignty and matters of globalization. But as much as international politics are marked by change, I think we also need to focus on the issue of continuity.

I believe that the international policy statement is an incredibly important development. For many years, academics and interested observers have been arguing that Canada needs to focus more on integration in its foreign policy statement—and I think the issue of integration is absolutely essential here. In many ways I believe this is a bit of an answer to the call of several decades on government to try to bring together some coordinated policies, rather than simply trying to relate them in some ad hoc manner.

That said, I would say that a new statement doesn't necessarily mean it's a new policy; rather, I see it as a coordination of existing policies with some better language, some better titles, and a better idea of how integration exists. For instance, I don't believe the new threats outlined in the IPS are as new as they may be argued to be, but there are some developments, such as regional security and non-state actors, as well as the broadened focus on national interest issue, that have a different emphasis at the end of the Cold War.

I believe that the 3D approach—defence, diplomacy, development—is an important way of looking at how Canadian foreign policy ought to be seen in the modern era, although I do think that the 3D approach really ought to be called the 3D plus T approach. If we are going to focus on the importance of trade and commerce, I believe they must be far more in our lens.

The issue of foreign policy, I believe, is a broader framework than it's been positioned to be in the past. I believe that foreign policy needs to be focused on as the primary issue; other issues, such as defence, trade, and development have to be derivative.

Earlier I had the opportunity to hear some of the exchange in the previous discussion when the issue of Afghanistan came up. I think it is an important model. I've actually been in Afghanistan and I've seen some of the work being undertaken there. I have a different point of view with regard to Canada's involvement in Afghanistan: I don't think it is a function of a new policy, but is actually an activation of a policy that makes much more sense than what we've seen in the past.

I would also suggest that the idea of 3D is in the tradition of Canadian foreign policy and is not entirely new. It is best symbolized by what's referenced in the policy statement as "peace, order and good government", which of course is more than just governance in the international system, but an idea of a residual policy of where authority lies. I think that governance must remain a principle of Canadian foreign policy.

With regard to the idea of the national interest, it must reflect domestic impulses. I think it does reflect domestic impulses, and those impulses are not necessarily the impulses of our friends and allies.

There is, however, some peril in assuming that changing conditions in the international system mean that conventional Canadian foreign policy needs to be discarded; rather, what should be taken into account here are our basic priorities. The first, of course, is the relationship with the United States, which I believe could be better managed to our interests. The second is that of trade, which obviously is of primary interest in regard to our relationship with the United States. Then there is our security and, finally, the issue of institutional stability.

When I read the international policy statement I see a lot of things I like. I also believe there are some areas that need greater focus, such as the issue of balance and diversity in our foreign policy relations, or a revamped multilateralism, and issues such as the importance of human security, which should not be discarded but be maintained as a focus of Canadian foreign policy.

So with that, I would like to switch over.

Thank you.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cornelius.

Mr. Jim Cornelius (Executive Director, Canadian Foodgrains Bank): Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm presenting on behalf of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which is an association of 13 Canadian church agencies that work together to address hunger around the world.

The last year has been quite a year for many of us in the humanitarian and development community. We have faced enormous numbers of emergencies popping up all over the place. People are literally exhausted.

I was just in Rome this past week meeting with the World Food Programme, and they simply talk about the fact that the biggest problem they're having right now is, as they said, divorce. They have staff on constant rotation into non-family postings because of the nature of the postings and they're having huge problems just with staff and morale. It used to be they'd have one major emergency every two years, and now they're getting them back-to-back, on top of each other, and all of us in the community are facing that.

But at the same time, we're trying to say, what's going on underneath all of this? If we just sit there and we look at what's happening, it absorbs all our energy, but we have to be looking at the issues underneath, at what are the root causes. At the Foodgrains

Bank we're trying to wrestle with those issues and reflect on where does Canada fit in all of this and where do we go.

When we're looking at southern Africa and what's happened there with major food shortages—Darfur, Afghanistan, name the different places and were involved. So our comments regarding the international policy statement emerge out of this experience, out of our own research and thinking about these issues in the places we're working, whether it's Sierra Leone, Liberia, Bangladesh, India, and different places where there's hunger.

I would like to start by saying tremendous progress has been made in the last 40 years in reducing the proportion of the people who go to bed hungry in the world. We always seem to think the world is getting worse, but in fact huge progress has been made in the last 40 years. In the beginning of 1970, 35% of the world's population was considered hungry. Now, it's less than 17% of the world's population, despite massive population growth.

What that tells me, of course, is that ending poverty is quite possible. In the last 40 years alone, we have made tremendous progress, and we have set before ourselves now in the millennium development goals the target of further reducing hunger by half by the year 2015. And in our view, that's a very achievable, realistic goal. It can be done.

A big concern we have is that the last decade has been a lost decade. Progress has basically bottomed out. We were making huge progress, and now we're seeing it tailing off, which means that if the status quo carries on now, we're not going to get anywhere near those targets. It's going to require new efforts and new ways of working to get back on track to the progress that we were making.

We welcome Canada's commitment in the IPS to substantially increase its development assistance funding, and it even says in there to accelerate that funding, with that little catchphrase, "if the fiscal situation permits". In our view, it's vital that Canada develop a plan that will move us toward the provision of 0.7% of GNI by 2015.

We welcome the government's effort to treat its diplomatic, defence, trade, and development concerns as part of a whole, as an integrated part of a foreign policy, because any effort to address global hunger and poverty requires all aspects of the foreign policy. It cannot be reduced to development assistance, as though somehow development assistance by itself is going to deal with it. Trade issues are very important. Issues around conflict and multilateral institutions are all vital. The goal of reducing hunger will not be achieved by development assistance alone.

So we welcome this look at things on a more integrated basis and we have been calling for that for some time in the development community. We welcome Canada's commitment in the IPS to extending human rights and human security as a framework for looking at what we're doing. In our view, developing the capacity of governments to uphold their human rights obligations and ensuring they're held accountable for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling basic human rights is a key part of what we need to be doing.

We've been very involved over the last four years in the development of international guidelines around the implementation of the human right to adequate food, and we think Canada can and should play a role in answering the question of how we push forward with this human rights framework in real, practical ways, in terms not just of talk but what, practically, people can do. And it's critical that support be provided to civil society groups in developing countries where there's hunger, because in the end it's citizens who hold their governments to account, not external actors. We need to make sure they're strong.

• (1010)

When the IPS was announced, we had one very large concern, and this was that agriculture was not clearly named a priority in the document. Most hungry people live—this is an irony—in rural areas and depend on agriculture in some form or other for their livelihoods. There is much evidence to conclude that any plan to significantly reduce hunger and poverty must include agriculture.

CIDA recognized this in 2003 when it launched a policy statement on promoting sustainable rural development through agriculture. Canada, at that time, was regarded as a world leader in revitalizing support for agriculture, and a failure to explicitly refer to this initiative in the IPS is a significant concern for us. We subsequently welcomed a statement by the Minister for International Cooperation when she said that the 2003 policy statement was still in force, although it had never been named in the IPS, but that it had been subsumed under the other priorities there, particularly the priority for private sector development.

It's our concern that agriculture development, as a priority, can get lost. If it's not in the document, it can get lost. We would urge this committee, in any reports you might do, to reinforce that, that it's absolutely essential that agriculture be there. As I said, most hungry people live in rural areas. And without that investment, we're not going to see the types of reductions that we require.

We welcome in the statement Canada's recognition that trade talks are also crucial to reducing hunger and poverty, particularly agriculture trade negotiations. It's vital, in our view, that Canada's trade negotiators be given a mandate to address development considerations as a key objective. They have a mandate to take into account the views of developing countries, but they should have a mandate to actually say development is an objective, not just Canada's domestic interests alone.

We think there are a lot of ways in which Canada's interests and developing countries' interests converge, but they—if you're going to look at this 3D approach, or 4D approach, or what is a 3D plus T approach—must be given a mandate to take developing countries' interests into account. Otherwise, we believe this trade round will again marginalize poor people, as the last round did.

It's critical that developing countries be given the right to use border measures to protect key food security crops and livelihoods in an environment where subsidies will continue to be large and significant for many years, even if there is a successful trade round.

In our experience, many rural communities are more vulnerable and less reliant now to various types of shocks than they've been in many years. There's more vulnerability. The droughts in southern Africa and Nigeria illustrate how quickly these communities find themselves under considerable stress from crop failures and price increases.

We note in the IPS that there is a reference there about the notable absence of international safety nets, and we believe it's critical that we develop, at both national level and international level, basic safety net systems to help people cope with shock so we don't see some of these emergency management things that turn into humanitarian crises. They could be prevented much earlier with basic safety net systems. And one of the safety net systems we think is a convention around food aid. This needs to be substantially reformed, and we'll be talking to the government, urging them to participate in reforming that.

I think I would say, finally, the statement does say something about the engagement of the public around these development issues and hunger issues. This is something that the NGO community has been calling for for a long time, to say how we actually engage the public in these issues. As an organization, we've invested significantly more resources in trying to involve Canadians, not just in fundraising but in understanding the issues and participating, because they are the ones in the end you need as members of Parliament, to be able to make changes and to address these issues. We think it's vital that we work with CIDA and parliamentarians on how do we engage the public around this.

So that's another area for which we see something in the IPS, but it's something that has not happened very much. We would hope that there will be follow-up on that aspect of the IPS in terms of public engagement.

I'll leave my remarks there at this point.

• (1015)

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

We'll start with Mrs. Smith, please.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you.

And I thank you both for your presentations. They were very insightful.

In 2002-03, China was Canada's fourth largest aid recipient. And in light of China's dismal human rights record and the country's rapid economic development, do you feel Canada should provide development assistance to China? What are your thoughts on that?

The Chair: Mr. Cornelius.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: When we actually look at the statistics on hunger, we find one of the reasons the world has made as much progress as it has is actually because of China's progress on addressing poverty and hunger. If you look at China in strictly those terms, you see they've made a lot of progress, although you have deep concerns about the human rights record of their government.

I do think there is a place for engaging the Chinese government on development questions, but I don't think it is about transferring large development resources. I think there are other ways you engage in development questions, and one is working with them, particularly in rural areas, on how to ensure that people are able to participate in the economic progress that is being made so there is no exclusion. There are different ways it can be done that I don't think involve large aid dollars, but it still means engagement. You simply don't walk away on a development file and say it is just an economic file.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you.

What should be the most important objective, in your view, of Canada's development policy and programs in this regard?

The other evening I was at an event for Save the Children. Your first comment was about there being so many disasters right now, wars and so many kinds of things that are going on, and it is really hard to keep up, there are so many hungry people at this point in time. In light of that, the presentation for Save the Children was extremely compelling. I want to get on a plane and go there myself and start climbing those mountains.

In view of the world situation at this point, what do you think should be the most important objective of Canada's development policy and programs?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: The reduction of poverty.

Mrs. Joy Smith: No, I mean specifically. We all can say it's reduction of poverty, but what do you think should be in those policies that would ensure that these needs are met?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: Well, in the end, I think we have to avoid just running after humanitarian crises as the only way for our policy. That's my concern, that this becomes a high profile. We need to be working on the underlying vulnerabilities that in many ways contribute to some of these crises and exacerbate them.

Look at southern Africa right now; we've got a crop failure in southern Africa, a drought, but this level of drought 20 years ago would not have created the crisis it is creating today. People are in fact more vulnerable and less resilient today than they were 25 years ago. They are less able to cope, and it's critical that our aid program

be about building resiliency and coping mechanisms underneath so people can withstand and address shocks.

Part of that is just ensuring that basic safety net systems are in place, because what's happened with these shocks is that people get driven into poverty and can't get out. They get driven down, they lose their productive assets, they take their kids out of school, all those sorts of things, and that actually becomes part of the impoverishing process.

And it's not just development at the big, high levels; it's down in the very poorest communities, focusing on how you build the resilience and reduce their vulnerabilities at that level. That's what I see as vital to the aid program.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Can you talk a little bit more about what you think the safety net system should be?

• (1020)

Mr. Jim Cornelius: Let's use Niger right now. We've seen Niger on the news. The crop failure in Niger wasn't really enormously terrible, but what's really happened there is you've had a price spike. Food prices went up; they doubled in that country. People said they didn't have the assets.

What you'd have as a safety net system in that case is that when you start to see those triggers happening, then you put in place certain public works schemes, for instance, for a quick injection of cash. Get people employed so they have cash. You look at mechanisms to get food into that area to keep the prices down.

There are various basic ways this could be done; it could be done through food aid, but it could also be through cash transfers, actual transfers to households. Households need to have cash in their hands. They can cope quite well in many cases if they have cash in their hands, and there are lots of ways that can be done—through public work schemes, as I said. Sometimes you reach the most vulnerable through direct cash transfers or food transfers and through bringing food in and making sure the prices are affordable.

Those things are all quite doable and are a whole lot less expensive than when you get to the crisis situation and then have to have doctors and nurses in there dealing with high levels of malnutrition.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Guergis.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks very much to both of you for being here today.

When I look at the IPS here, it worries me to see that CIDA Inc. is somewhat discussed as a tool to fuel trade. CIDA funds of course should be used for development work. While the private sector has an enormous role to play in delivering aid, it appears to me that by putting CIDA Inc. into the business service section of the IPS—and it's confirming two things for me—the Liberal government will continue to use it as somewhat of a slush fund for their own purposes there. The other thing is that they will not follow through with the commitment to untie aid.

On September 22 there was an announcement by the ministers that 50% of aid would be untied, and I'm curious if Canadian Foodgrains has been able to purchase food untied.

Am I clear in my question?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: Yes.

You may know that we've lobbied for eight years for this change, and we're very pleased to see the change made in the last month and have welcomed that.

Yes, right now we have programs in southern Africa. That policy change has allowed us to substantially increase the numbers of hungry people we're able to support in southern Africa even now. Since then we have saved over \$1 million in our program in southern Africa alone as a result of that policy change. It's very significant and we welcome it.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Have you been provided a list of the countries you can purchase from?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: Yes, we have a list of the countries we can purchase from. In this case you have a situation where you don't want to be buying in the areas where the food shortages are because there are food shortages, but South Africa itself had a bumper maize harvest, one of the best maize harvests they've had ever. That's nearby, and you can supply food much more cost-effectively and in a more timely fashion, so that's been excellent.

I'll just say we did appreciate the support of the Conservatives, the Bloc, the NDP, and others on this file, because it is a way of making our aid more effective. That's what we found. In the end, when we talk to the Canadian public—and this is where I think it comes back to your CIDA Inc. questions—they say they want their aid dollars to be used as effectively as possible to address poverty and hunger.

Ms. Helena Guergis: That's right.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: And yes, if it provides some benefit to Canada, that's one level, but if it gets directed by the benefits to Canada such that it compromises how the aid addresses poverty and hunger, they actually take considerable exception to that.

The Chair: Thank you.

I just must add that in 2002 you talked about this on tape. You see...the policy of the government, and we had a unanimous resolution by the committee. I must say we discussed this issue with the minister, and 50% is not enough for us. We want to go higher for the untied aid, because that's the only solution for cost-effectiveness too.

Now we'll go to Mr. Clavet.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses.

I was rather taken aback by what you said Mr. Cornelius. To a certain extent, I grant you, poverty is retreating, but at a totally unacceptable pace. As you clearly explained, over the past ten years, we have seen progress on poverty tail off and bottom out.

You talked about being in favour of increasing development assistance if the fiscal situation permits. However, last year, the Canadian Government had a 9.1-billion Dollar surplus on its hands.

Do you think that the international policy statement manifests the generosity that was Canada's hallmark for so many years? Does the IPS reflect intention, action and pledge, or is it simply more lip service to eventually beefing up Canada's contribution?

As you mentioned Asia has been particularly hard hit this year by natural disasters and famine.

Do you not think that Canada has missed a golden opportunity to do more with its enormous fiscal surplus?

•(1025)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Cornelius.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: I want to be balanced in my response, in the sense that I think Canada has been significantly increasing its aid. So we need to recognize that. I don't want to make it sound like there haven't been significant increases, because there have, and those have been very welcomed.

However, we are still a long way from getting on target to be at 0.7%, and we do believe from our analysis that the fiscal situation of the government would permit developing a plan to that effect. I know the Prime Minister is feeling cautious about it, and I think there are other ways in the short term. We could even have some short-term plans that would get us...here's a detailed plan laid out over 15 years. But it can at least show us signs that we are in fact on track to getting there. I think it's vital.

When I look at the war on terror and how much is being spent on the war on terror in a day—and 656 people were killed worldwide by terrorist acts in 2004, and three million people died of HIV/AIDS that same year—I think we do need to reprioritize where we are investing our dollars. I think the dollars are there and there are clear plans to get us where we need to go in terms of eliminating poverty and hunger. It's quite doable.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet: You also alluded to the increasing pressure on NGOs and their staff. You referred to problem of divorce among staff because of the arduous nature of the postings.

Do you believe that the explosion, if you like, in the number of crises currently facing the world might undermine the work of NGOs? Do you think that organisations such as yours feel powerless to address the situation? Do you require additional assistance? Is there anything in the international policy statement designed to help non-governmental organisations tackle extreme situations, such as the tsunami and earthquakes, and the like, that we have seen this year? Are NGOs receiving enough support?

[English]

Mr. Jim Cornelius: I guess it depends how you determine health. Do we get enough marriage counselling? Probably not.

But I think there is a concern within the NGO community about what has happened with the aid increases. The government took a fairly major effort to rethink its bilateral aid and its aid with country to country. It was an important process. It's been doing a lot of work about trying to rethink its multilateral aid, but it has done very little to actually rethink what is the role of civil society and NGOs going forward. I would say that this policy statement does very little to articulate that role very effectively.

It does say, though, that they are going to appoint a panel to review and help them rethink this, so there is some hope. We've been pushing for this type of conversation for some time and basically as well...first, we are rethinking these things and then we'll get to that later. We are hoping that the later is now and that there will be some relooking at what is the legitimate role of NGOs and what is the support needed to make them as effective as possible.

A lot of this is about our own work. It's not about government. I mean, we have to be looking how we are structured, how we are organized. Many of us are not well set up right now to deal with these back-to-back-to-back emergencies and it's overwhelming our systems. We need to relook at how we are organized, and I think we are doing that in close consultation with government actors as well.

We are all struggling with this—UN agencies—to try to figure how to cope with what is a different world than it was 10 years ago.

•(1030)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Clavet: I would like to wrap up, Mr. Chair, by asking Mr. MacLean a question. You said that

[*English*]

our relationship with the U.S.A. could be better managed.

[*Translation*]

Could you perhaps elaborate a bit on how our relations with the U.S. could be improved?

[*English*]

Prof. George MacLean: Thank you for the question.

I think the example of Afghanistan is a good one. I was surprised at how quiet the Government of Canada was in responding to the criticism coming from the United States regarding the lack of support for the war in Iraq. Personally, I think there were lots of good reasons not to be involved, and I think the Canadian government could have done a much more effective job at describing why it couldn't be involved, but also saying, look, here's the primary concern you have, which is the war on terror. Let's remind you what we are actually involved in. As the months unfolded, I was surprised at the relative silence in Ottawa with regard to what Canada was actually doing.

I think one of the more effective ways of dealing with the United States is to recognize, first of all, that there is a mutually dependent relationship here. Obviously we're more dependent on the United States than the United States is on us. But if we go into this assuming somehow the United States has diversified to the point where they don't need us anymore, we're in a bad position to begin with. Now, it is true, especially with regards to trade, that the United States has

become far more diverse than it was when the original Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement was signed, for instance.

The point is that I believe there's a general sense in Washington that we are far less important than we once were. We're not doing enough in Canada at responding to that every time to remind Americans, not just the American government... For instance, when Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor was asked by a Canadian reporter why George Bush went to Mexico, and not to Canada, when he was first elected, her response was, Mexico is our most important partner. We didn't respond to that. There were eyebrows up all over the place, but no one actually said, let's remind you that's not the most important trade partner. In fact, it's not even the second largest trading partner, now that China has leapfrogged over Mexico.

I think we could be doing a lot more in terms of reminding the Americans what we actually bring to the table, especially with regard to the security relationship and the war on terror, but also regarding the benefits that come from trade. I don't think the way to manage the relationship is to fight back and say, well, okay, if it's over softwood lumber, then we're going to hit you back with natural gas. I think our vulnerability there would be far too great.

But I think a constant reminder with the Americans, for instance on the importance of the bilateral dependence, is an important first beginning. It would also do a lot for domestic constituents. It would do a lot for Canadians to be able to recognize what we're actually doing. There was some discussion before about the relative confusion or misunderstanding about what we're doing with the war on terror. I think the Canadian government could be doing a much more forceable job in terms of reminding Canadians what our international involvement is.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Phinney.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Thank you very much.

I think Mr. Cornelius mentioned this, and I think somebody else has mentioned this too.

It is proposed that we have an annual international policy update for Foreign Affairs and for our policy there. But some people are suggesting this should be just within the department. Some are suggesting it should be the public, and some are suggesting more cooperation, more feedback from NGOs. Mr. MacLean had mentioned we need continuity. I wonder if by having more public reaction to our policy, if we're doing this every year that might lead to more knee-jerk reactions, decision-making, and changing policy too quickly.

I'd like a comment on that, and I have a couple of others.

We've talked a bit about NAFTA, but how do you see our relationship with NAFTA? Should it be deepened? Should it include agreements on more than just trade? And should it include investment and things like that—dollars?

I have one more. This committee was recently at the United Nations and was talking about how successful or unsuccessful the attempt at revising the policies of the United Nations was. Could you please comment on that? How successful do you feel the session went with the United Nations and their policy changes?

•(1035)

Prof. George MacLean: First, with regard to a review of international policy, it's absolutely essential. Those things need to be integrated, which stands at odds with what the government is actually doing.

The split of Foreign Affairs and International Trade into Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada stymied a lot of people. I was surprised. I believe people who worked in the department were surprised that this suddenly became the focus. There was very little debate over splitting the department. I don't think there were solid reasons put forward to the public or to government or to other parties as to why this was being done.

It also stands at odds with this, because this is actually an integration of policy and it's a better recognition of what Canadian foreign relations actually are.

I don't believe foreign policy has traction in Canada. I don't believe anyone is going to win or lose a seat over foreign policy or, for that matter, overseas development assistance, unfortunately—although I'm not sure if Jim would agree with me.

I do believe reviewing foreign policy, first of all, reminds Canadians of the importance of foreign relations. We are a trade-dependent state, more so than most industrialized states. We cannot act independently. If we did, a good portion—two-thirds or so—of our gross domestic product would be at risk because we would lose it through trade.

We have to remind Canadians that trade is foreign policy. It's a derivative of foreign policy. We have to have better feedback from Canadians with regard to where our foreign policy ought to be. If it's going to be a serious consideration of raising overseas development assistance to 0.7%, then let's find out what Canadians have to say about that.

I think, though, that a review is absolutely essential. It has to be open and it needs to be integrated amongst all parties. I don't think it's going to create better traction for individual MPs with regard to election, or government, for that matter, but it will remind Canadians that, oddly enough—and there is some irony here—one of the least emphasized aspects of Canadian policy is one of the most important for Canadians.

On the second question that you had with regard to NAFTA, the ideas surrounding a common market are worth consideration. I don't think moving any further than that to, for instance, a customs union makes any sense. I don't think there would be any support in the United States, especially with regard to the current focus of a hub-and-spoke mentality in Washington.

Fifteen years ago, this was a great concern to Canadians, the hub-and-spoke focus, which is that free trade relationships would be set up with the hub being the United States. We were able to overcome that to some degree by asking that the talks with Mexico become

trilateralized, with those suddenly becoming NAFTA and with our interest in Mexico next to nothing except that we wanted to be at the table with the Americans when they were managing a free trade relationship with another partner. That was a very important decision.

We need to be aware of what's taking place with regard to trade policy in the United States, and proposing ideas like a common market would assist on issues such as labour and migration. There was some discussion in the previous panel about migration and labour. I don't believe it's going to move any further than that. The idea of dollarization, of monetary union is a non-starter. I don't think that's going to go anywhere and I don't think it's a good idea.

For instance, the cultural and political arguments in Europe that have led to a deeply integrated European Union simply won't begin here in North America, and I don't believe they should be the focus. I do believe, though, that the way to move forward is to start to ask where we go from here. If it's not new actors in the southern hemisphere and in Central America, then deepen what we have.

It can also be multi-speed. The idea that everyone has to be in at the same time in order to move forward was the great problem with the free trade agreement of the Americas: everyone has to be in, everything has to be agreed upon, otherwise we don't move forward. Well, we don't hear much about the FTAA right now because no one could come in at the same time. Even the United States was saying they didn't like the way this was moving forward.

Multi-speed approaches to a deepening integration within the Americas makes sense, and of all of the countries, it should be Canada in the lead, discussions of China notwithstanding. Such discussions are significant, but on our relationship with China, I saw some figures over the weekend. Our overall trade with China is less than what we spend on pharmaceuticals in the country here. It's very small. In fact, it's incredibly small compared to the potential benefits that we might be able to see with deepening integration in the Americas.

We have a strange relationship in Canada. We're an American country, but we don't recognize that the Americas actually are our home. I believe we actually should be at the forefront. If the Americas are going to become more integrated and deepened, we ought to be at the lead of all of that.

On the third issue with regard to the UN, I have some misgivings about what's taking place there, because I have personal opinions on the importance of broadened multilateralism. However, I don't believe the same mentality or culture that the Canadian government brings to issues such as relations across the Atlantic with NATO partners or with the United States can be pulled out and dropped into a multilateral relationship like we see in the United Nations.

•(1040)

We need to be more cognizant of the fact that multilateralism comes in different flavours. The kind of revamped multilateralism I was talking about in my opening comments is more along the lines of recognizing what the goals you can achieve through collective action actually may be.

Multilateralism is based on the premise that you will get things out of the relationship that you otherwise wouldn't be able to get on your own. You can get different things. You can get credibility. You can get a seat at the table. You can get greater input into institutional reform at the UN. But you can also get real-world effects that will affect your resources, your management, the priorities of your foreign policy, through other kinds of multilateral fora.

Over the last fifteen years, the kind of focus that we've seen on different categories of multilateralism recognizes the importance of that. It's not all UN-styled multilateralism, but I think we ought to focus on what those goals are and how they are very different from some of the goals we need to achieve through multilateral nations in the Americas and with our partners in the Pacific and Europe.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Blaikie.

Hon. Bill Blaikie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few questions, mostly for Professor MacLean, actually.

First of all, just responding to your observation that foreign policy doesn't have a lot of traction, I know what you mean. On the other hand, there's some evidence that certain issues have a lot of traction in some regions of the country. There has been a lot of, I think, speculation about the fact that Quebeckers were so opposed to the notion of the war in Iraq, were opposed to BMD. Because those issues did have traction in that particular province and because the government felt vulnerable in that particular province, those issues at least were significant factors in the decisions that were arrived at, whatever one may think of those decisions.

I wonder if I could just ask you a few questions about Afghanistan. You said it was an activation of an old policy, not a new policy. I wonder if you could expand on that a little bit.

Secondly, you said our first priority should be Canada-U.S. relations, yet it seems to me that both in the Afghanistan context and in the context of security here in North America, we are running the risk of having already compromised our values. We're turning combatants over to the United States in a context in which we have no real assurances that the Americans are adhering to the Geneva Convention in Guantanamo Bay or Abu Ghraib, or wherever. We're also turning Canadians over to the United States indirectly, of course, in cases like that of Maher Arar. How should we deal with things like those when we're in this relationship with a country that increasingly sees itself as above or an exception to various kinds of international law?

Prof. George MacLean: Thank you.

Maybe you find in your professional life that foreign policy does have greater traction in Winnipeg. I'm not sure. I suspect in some ways it probably does, because Winnipeg is an international city despite where it's located, I think. Certainly I've found this in the time that I've lived here.

I think you raise a good point with regard to issues relating to Iraq and ballistic missile defence. I'd like to come back at the end of my comments right here to make a comment about Iraq that will be somewhat controversial, but I'd like to throw it out anyway. On the issue of ballistic missile defence, I should say that I think it was the right thing to do. I do not believe that refusing to agree with ballistic

missile defence will affect the relationship with the United States in any real way. I just don't see that.

In fact, I believe that had we accepted ballistic missile defence, the implications for Canadian foreign policy would have been huge, especially with regard to non-proliferation arms control and disarmament.

The issue of non-proliferation arms control and disarmament, as far as I can read, as late as last week, is still the pillar of Canadian foreign policy. We don't look at it as much as perhaps we ought to be, but it is a premise. The non-proliferation and arms control issue has been one where we have always disagreed with the Americans. We've disagreed with the Americans on issues relating to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, on a number of different issues, and I believe that had we gone ahead with ballistic missile defence, we would have been compromising that fundamental pillar of Canadian foreign policy.

Also, our relationship with NORAD is not completely integrated. There are aspects of NORAD and space command, for instance, where we have very little involvement at all.

When I visited NORAD headquarters in 2000, I was told by several Americans that it really doesn't matter what Canada thinks about national missile defence. They didn't call it ballistic missile defence. As you know, it's a national policy.

•(1045)

Hon. Bill Blaikie: Yes.

Prof. George MacLean: As nice as it would be to have Canadians on side, they said it's rather like what's going on down the hall here. You can't go and visit there anyway, because this is a Canadian national initiative. So I don't believe it's affecting our American initiative. I don't believe this is directly affecting our relationship with the United States at all.

Now, on the issue of Afghanistan, good question. Where is it new policy and where is it old? I believe it's a continuation of a tradition in Canadian foreign policy of an interventionist strategy that is based on principles, based on culture and priorities. It's not simply blind humanitarianism; it's self-interest.

I believe that Canadians, for a very long period of time, whether it's been through peacekeeping or whether it's through the trade agreements, or a greater involvement and engagement with the People's Republic of China.... This is about self-interest. Why would you be involved in Afghanistan in the first place? Well, first of all, the issue of the war on terror is very different from, I think, the war in Iraq.

I agree with many things that you said. I don't agree that we've compromised values on being involved in Iraq. I do agree with you that there are certain issues that are troubling, especially with regard to the issue of Canadian citizens, how we actually integrate with the Americans in Afghanistan, which has been a difficult issue to deal with because there are several different missions taking place, as you're well aware. There's Operation ATHENA, there's Operation APOLLO, there's Operation Enduring Freedom, and when the JTF are involved in Enduring Freedom—

Hon. Bill Blaikie: And ISAF.

Prof. George MacLean: Yes, that's right, and ISAF is part of Operation ATHENA.

It is very different from ISAF, because when we were commanding in ISAF, we were commanding the Americans. This is an important issue to keep in mind. The Canadians are among the very few countries in the world that our American allies feel comfortable having command their troops. In fact, we're the only multinational ally they have that they permit to command their navy.

I think the issue of compromised values is not so much on the issue of Afghanistan itself but on some of the aspects related to it. Where I think it's a bit of a new policy—Afghanistan—it is a better integration of different aspects of our foreign policy in the past. Over 70% of Canadians say they don't know what's going on in Afghanistan, but roughly the same number say they like peacekeeping. Well, this is a problem, because the Canadian government hasn't been effectively telling Canadians how peacekeeping has evolved. Really, the term itself, "peacekeeping", is pretty much meaningless now, because now we talk more about issues like peace building, which 10 years ago got pooh-poohed in academic circles. People didn't talk about terms like that, but they do quite comfortably now.

What we are talking about in Afghanistan is not peacekeeping. You speak to Canadian soldiers there and they say, we're not peacekeepers; we may be from 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock in the afternoon, but around 3 o'clock when we're going out on recon missions, we're not considered peacekeepers, we're peace enforcers, or peace builders, or peacemakers.

I think that is a better example of an integrated foreign policy, which involves civil military aspects and non-governmental organizations, which I think are as uncomfortable in dealing with the military as the military are dealing with them. But in this case, it's actually an example that's working.

I close off with two points. One, I had a discussion with an American general who said, if you want to quote this as much as you can, you can; just don't say who it was. He had just come back from Iraq, spent some time in the United States, and then went to Afghanistan. He said, you know, if we had in Iraq half of what we have here, we'd be on a much better road. So what he saw in Afghanistan with the multilateral approach, he believed, on the ground was a far more effective approach towards a secure environment. Of course, the conditions are very dissimilar between the two.

But the last point I would like to make is that I believe it's worth considering now, at this point, for the Canadian government to look at ways that it might be involved in Iraq. I believe now is the time for Canadians to say, despite our misgivings about this, the potential for not being involved is ethically and morally far more of a concern to us than being involved at this point. I believe that at this point, 2005, Canadians would be capable of saying to their own domestic constituents and also to the international community that it is possible to be involved in the process that has to move forward from now on—and not just Canadians. I believe the western Europeans could be involved here, and here is a way for Canadians to liaise in a very serious way with the Americans and with our European allies to say this is not going to work and it is going to get worse in Iraq. If it

is going to continue to get worse in Iraq, we're ultimately going to look bad if we don't say.... How can we take the lessons learned and the application of what's working in ISAF, for instance, and try to apply aspects of it in Iraq, without saying, look, we supported the invasion in 2003?

So I believe it's worthwhile for Canadians to say, what limited resources do we have that we can apply here? We do have limited resources. We have to recognize that they're going to be diffuse. We don't have the ability to say it's all about continental security. That's just not what the Canadian tradition of foreign policy is about. It may be small and it may be insignificant for some, but that small and insignificant contribution that we have made in Afghanistan I don't believe is considered small or insignificant by our partners or by people living in Afghanistan.

• (1050)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Guergis.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MacLean, you suggested that we should be reminding Americans of what exactly it is we bring to the table in terms of security. I was hoping you could perhaps elaborate on that and maybe give us a list.

Prof. George MacLean: Sure. I don't think that American citizens or the American government by default will come out with a bullet-point list to tell their people or remind themselves what it is that we do. The longer we stay quiet about what we're doing with regard to security, the more damage we do to our relationship with the United States.

First and foremost, I think it's absolutely essential to remind the Americans that we were there at the beginning with regard to the war on terror. Our contribution in ISAF has been larger at times than that of any other nation, save the Germans. It has been larger than the Americans. We've been involved in more command and control in ISAF than the Americans.

I realize this is not Operation Enduring Freedom, but this is the model that's being applied now and hopefully within the PRTs in the rest of the country. We are taking it up with regard to a PRT, which is more dangerous and has more teeth involved, but it's not as though we haven't been doing this in the past. There should be a constant reminder that, with our limited resources, the ratio of our overall military personnel who are involved right now in Afghanistan greatly outstrips any of the other allied countries, except for the United States. It's important for us to point that out.

I think it's important for us to constantly remind the Americans that in some cases we're the only country they would permit to command their troops. Why is that? It's because we are more integrated with them militarily than anyone else, including the British. The British are talking about the special relationship. George Bush is talking about how it's their closest ally. We are more militarily integrated with them than any other country in the world.

It's often lost on our European allies that we are legally bound to protect more of the globe than any other country in the world, except for the United States, thanks to NORAD and NATO. The next time our friends in Belgium or in Holland ask what we are doing for NATO, we might tell them that we're actually legally bound to defend more of the globe than the rest of the international systems, aside from the United States. I think these are the kinds of things that we can be doing for public relations, quite frankly, because it's not going to be picked up by anyone in Washington on the American side.

I'll say one last thing. I believe there has been greater movement along these lines at the Canadian embassy in Washington. I notice there is more of a rapid reaction response at the Washington embassy on misgivings about Canadian foreign policy in relation to the United States. It's not going to be picked up by American media to the degree that we'd like, but I think it's essential for us to constantly remind them of that.

There were some misgivings over the last five years or more about what we were doing and general quiet in Ottawa about this. I believe that now is the time to make that more forceful and more forthcoming. I think the Canadian public would accept it, and I think the Americans would basically be more open to it as well.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have one comment and a question for Mr. Cornelius.

But first, I am very pleased to have Mr. MacLean here this morning. He has spent some time in Afghanistan. I think that having someone here who has been in Afghanistan was quite precious for us.

Mr. Cornelius, first of all, my comment is concerning Niger. There was not really a crop failure in Niger, as was mentioned. It was a failure by the government because they didn't really see it coming. They knew it was coming, but they didn't do anything that was supposed to be done by a government. They should have more prevention over there.

My question is concerning the 0.7%. We've had lots of discussions about the 0.7% now. If the Canadian government would like to maybe double it to get 0.5% for the year 2010, where should we spend the money? Should we double our aid to the United Nations? Should we double CIDA aid?

My question in a sense is this. Are we ready right now to give more money to CIDA to spend the money?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: Those are capacity questions. I have the same challenge as a manager of an organization. If I had twice as much money next year, could I effectively manage it?

•(1055)

The Chair: Exactly.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: The answer would be no for next year. But if you have a plan and you know that it's coming, you can build a capacity to in fact use it. I think the capacity questions can be addressed.

If CIDA knew that this was the plan and they were going to be getting these resources, you would then put in place a plan to effectively make sure you have the staff, the structures, and everything to effectively use it.

I don't really think these are either/or questions, as you say. You are going to be looking at what's best done through non-profit organizations. I'm not of the view that taking the total Canadian aid program and using it through people like us would be the best fit. There are things the United Nations does better than we could ever hope to do, and similarly there are bilateral relations that are very important. We need to ensure that we are providing support at the governmental levels.

To my friends on the Liberal side here, a balanced approach should really be taken, but it's more important to have some kind of notion of what's coming and what resources you are going to have. You can then build a capacity.

The Chair: Do you think the development sector...the IPS was a good one, concerning that sector, the view?

Mr. Jim Cornelius: No....

The Chair: I'm Liberal. You can go. Don't be worried.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: I'm not sure it really has the plan fully laid out there.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jim Cornelius: I think they've done a lot of work around bilateral relationships. That's where the thinking has gone over the last little while in terms of the aid program. In terms of the multilateral and, say, the civil society sectors, I would say the thinking in those areas is still somewhat weak.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cornelius. Thank you, Mr. MacLean.

We'll recess for a few minutes.

Thank you.

•(1056)

_____ (Pause) _____

•(1106)

The Chair: *Nous allons reprendre.* We'll start again.

We have the pleasure right now of having with us, from the Mennonite Central Committee, Mr. Don Peters, executive director, and Mr. Bill Janzen, director. And from B'nai Brith Canada, we have Mr. David Matas, senior legal counsel, and Mr. Alan Yusim, regional director.

Welcome, all of you.

We'll start with Mr. Peters.

Mr. Don Peters (Canada Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee): Thank you very much. Thank you for allowing us to make representations to you today.

The Mennonite Central Committee, as you may know, has been active as an international relief and development agency for over 80 years. We now work in over 50 countries worldwide, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Back in 1968 we were among the first Canadian NGOs to receive funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, and we now receive approximately \$2.5 million from CIDA in a block grant, which is applied to our international programming—and that's beyond the substantial disaster relief of this last year in response to the tsunami. In that case, I think MCC received matching funds from CIDA in the neighbourhood of \$6.75 million.

Our core support at MCC comes from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches across Canada, which include approximately 250,000 people, according to the last Canadian census. On any given Sunday across Canada, these people from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches worship in at least a dozen languages. These churches and the wider Canadian constituency will, in the course of the year, contribute approximately \$20 million to MCC in Canada. Of that amount, approximately \$14 million is applied to MCC's international work.

In addition to the international work we do, we have extensive programming in Canada relating to our aboriginal peoples, criminal justice needs, refugees, mental health—and the list goes on. So we work with people of many faiths; many of our local staff in developing countries belong to other religions.

We also connect closely with Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in some 60 countries, including the Congo, Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia, and Ethiopia. Some of those countries have larger numbers than we do in Canada and the United States.

Finally, as we listen to the various voices around this table, we're led to ask that our country's foreign policy be as strong and effective as possible, particularly in two areas, that of international relief and development, and in the area of preventing war and building peace.

I'd like to turn to Bill Janzen, the director of our Ottawa office.

Mr. Bill Janzen (Director, Mennonite Central Committee): Thank you.

I would like to begin with two stories. In 1998 some officials from the World Bank visited Tanzania. Before they left they met with the old man, Julius Nyerere, who had been the founding president. They looked at the very difficult situation of the country and asked him, "Where did you go wrong?"

Mr. Nyerere answered, and said, "In 1965, when Tanzania became independent from Britain, the illiteracy rate stood at 80%, and we had only two engineers and twelve doctors. Twenty years later, when my presidency came to an end in 1985, the illiteracy rate had fallen to below 10%, and we had thousands of engineers and doctors and every kind of professional. Now, 13 years later, a third of the children are no longer in school, our health system lies in ruins, and our infrastructure is in terrible condition. But during these 13 years the people who have ruled our country have heeded every demand from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund."

He turned the question around and said, "Where have you gone wrong?"

The international policy statement has a lot of good qualities in it, but it puts the problems over there. This story is to remind us that maybe there are some problems closer to home that we need to look at.

The second story I would like to tell relates to Rwanda. We have all heard enormous amounts about the enormous tragedy of 1994—800,000 people killed—and what the world should have done, and so on. What isn't often told is that in the 1980s, in the decade before this terrible tragedy, there were four developments that should be noted.

One is that in Rwanda, one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, the food production went down by 30% per capita, partly because the population went up and the soil became more depleted and so on.

Second, in the 1980s the international coffee agreement collapsed. Coffee was Rwanda's main export. It could now only get one-half of what it had earlier received for its coffee exports.

Third, because of these things its debts rose. At the beginning of the decade its debt was just over eighty million. At the end of the decade, its debt was over eight hundred million.

Fourth, in 1990 the World Bank imposed a structural adjustment program that included a devaluation of the currency by 80%.

Those are enormous economic blows to a society that is already fragile. I have no doubt the tensions and suspicions that were in the society were aggravated greatly by these economic blows and that they contributed to the outbreak of the genocide that erupted four years later.

One of the good things about this international policy statement is that there is a fair bit of discussion about failed states. That's good. When it comes to responding to failed states, there's a little too much emphasis on what we will do militarily, rather than on what we can do preventively, in terms of the economic issues that contribute to the failure of states and to these kinds of explosions.

Those are two stories. I would now like to say some things about aid, some things under international development, including aid, development and trade, and policy coherence, and some things about war and peace, along with a few miscellaneous points.

● (1110)

Am I going too long?

The Chair: No, it's okay. Go ahead, Mr. Janzen.

Mr. Bill Janzen: Maybe I'm going too long. I'm sorry.

The Chair: That's okay. Don't be sorry.

We'll go 15 minutes more, that's all.

Mr. Bill Janzen: On the question of aid, I cannot do better than the resolution that was passed unanimously by the House of Commons on June 28, introduced by the Honourable Alexa McDonough but supported unanimously by all parties. It called for a commitment and a plan to reach 0.7%. It called for greater involvement of civil society organizations in Canada and abroad, and it called for legislation that would make poverty reduction the primary objective of our aid and do it within a human rights context.

On debt and trade, these are crucial elements, and Canada has taken a number of positive steps over the years, even 20 years ago, on both of those issues—debt cancellation and other forms of relief, trying to open Canadian markets to third world products, and trying to preserve at least some policy space for third world countries. But more is needed. In total, most of the debt or most of the trade negotiations are done under multilateral fora, and there the record is not that good. Even in Gleneagles, where there was a great deal of talk about a debt cancellation package, it really covered only 18 countries. There are 20 more countries that are eligible, but they will have to meet very stringent conditions before they become eligible, and those conditions are really the heart of the problem.

There are some analysts who say that those conditions of trade liberalization, the privatization of essential services, and fiscal austerity contribute more to poverty than the debt cancellation will help them. One organization in Britain, called Christian Aid—it's a large organization there—has conducted a study and has concluded that premature trade liberalization has cost the least-developed countries in Africa \$13 billion dollars per year in the last 20 years. It's an enormous price to pay.

I'm sure you know that the analysts who look at these things say that the south was actually subsidizing the north to a considerable degree.

So given that reality, we welcome the point in the international policy statement about policy coherence. It's an important issue. But then we look at the paper on commerce, and it looks like the paper on commerce and trade is quite independent of anything relating to international development. So let's be serious about policy coherence and let's be serious about our words on development.

With regard to war and peace, we are very pleased that the international policy statement emphasizes the concept of human security. This came out of the document *An Agenda for Peace* that was, I think, published by Boutros Boutros-Ghali when he was UN Secretary-General in 1992, and Canada has done well in championing this concept. It doesn't replace the concept of state security, but it puts a primary focus on the security of people—you know, do they have food security, do they have health security, are they victims of internal violence? The focus is not only on the borders of a state.

Those points are very valuable. We suggest that the human security concept is a very good lens for looking at the concept of failed states, because it's usually because human security has broken down that we have what we call failed states.

Unfortunately, the IPS response, as I mentioned earlier, tends to look too quickly to an external military response. There may be a place for that, but the need for economic justice and the preventive measures should be emphasized more strongly.

On nuclear issues, it's not been a good year. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—the review conference—failed tragically last spring. It's an enormous setback. Canada in the 1960s, including foreign affairs minister Howard Green under the Diefenbaker government, made a major contribution to the negotiation of that agreement. All governments of Canada have tried to honour it, but it's in very bad condition and we can only hope the government will persevere on this issue.

●(1115)

Also, Canadian diplomats, even last week, were working at the United Nations General Assembly to try to break a deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament that has been deadlocked for a decade, but their efforts, their good efforts, failed. As you know, only a few months ago we were marking the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and one could be forgiven for thinking that if current trends continue there will be some more atomic explosions. We should surely value humanity and the human race enough to do everything we can to prevent that.

●(1120)

The third point relates to small weapons. The policy statement is quite right in noting that there are about 500,000 deaths per year that are attributed to small weapons. Again, Canada contributed significantly to a United Nations program in 2001 on working toward the eradication of the illicit trade in small arms, programs for marking the weapons so they could be controlled and their use could be monitored and their transfer could be monitored, and also programs to help with the demobilization of soldiers after a peace agreement.

One of the tragedies in the world is that there have been quite a few peace agreements, but in about half of them those societies have again erupted into violence because there wasn't sufficient attention paid to demobilization and reintegration of the soldiers into society.

Now, I have a few other points.

We believe strongly in diplomacy. Canadian diplomats have done a lot of good things in Africa in terms of getting conflicting parties to a table. Right now in Sudan, there's a enormous need. The sentiment in the south is very suspicious of the north. If this comprehensive peace agreement is to hold, there needs to be a lot of grassroots diplomatic work. Canada can support that, together with NGOs there, to build support for this agreement.

I was pleased earlier this morning...my colleague didn't hear it, but there was a strong presentation on refugee concerns. We have been very active on that and I think we would support many of them. We're pleased that the international policy statement does refer to the refugee situation.

We are also concerned about the whole question of religious freedom. It's one part of human rights. As my colleague mentioned, we have churches in many countries, and in some of them it's pretty rough going. But it's not only a question of religious freedom for Christians. There are other religious groups, and it's a very delicate question of how to work for religious freedom. However, there are international principles that can be pointed to, so we encourage that.

We're not asking for a kind of crusade on these issues, because sometimes that causes a backlash against the people you're trying to protect. So it is a delicate issue.

One other point I would mention is that the international policy statement is strong on sending Canadians abroad. Well, we're quite sympathetic to that. The reality, however, is that we have a great deal of difficulty getting people from the third world into Canada. We have church leaders we want to bring here to speak to our supporting communities. These are very good spokespeople to educate our communities here in Canada, but we find we can't get visas for them. We would really appreciate it if there could be some attention to that.

There are a number of other issues. I haven't said anything about the environment, about gender, about corporate social responsibility, about AIDS and so on, but we do have all of those concerns as well.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Janzen, two comments.

You talked about Christian Aid. We'd like to get more information about them, so the analysts could get their paper.

If you have anything else to say concerning any other issue—you mentioned the environment—please feel very free to send it to our committee in Ottawa. Thanks.

Mr. Yusim.

Mr. Alan Yusim (Regional Directory, Midwest, B'nai Brith Canada): My name is Alan Yusim. I'm the regional director of B'nai Brith Canada. It's a league for human rights and institute for international affairs.

I'd like to introduce David Matas. David is our refugee and human rights lawyer. He's senior counsel to B'nai Brith Canada and the author of several books, including *Bloody Words: Hate and Free Speech, No More: The Battle Against Human Rights Violations*, and the just-published *Aftershock: Anti-Zionism and the Rise of Contemporary Anti-Semitism*.

• (1125)

The Chair: Mr. Matas.

Mr. David Matas (Senior Legal Counsel, B'nai Brith Canada): Thank you. I will try to be brief.

Canadian foreign policy needs coherence. When two events are related, the Government of Canada needs to connect the dots. Canadian foreign policy has failed to date in connecting the dots between the development by Iran of nuclear weapons by stealth and its anti-Zionist hatred. The connection is that Iran is moving towards a nuclear genocidal attack against Israel. Canadian foreign policy must have as a priority thwarting the threat of that attack.

No state determined to launch a genocidal attack against Israel is likely to announce in advance the timing of the attack and the exact means of destruction to be used. We would have to look for signs. The only warning signs we are likely to get are the following: one, the development of weapons of mass destruction through stealth; two, a vicious anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic propaganda campaign; three, the depersonalization of Jews in deed as well as in word; four, complicity in mass killing, including mass killing of Jews; and five, threats against Israel of the most dire sort.

The state with all these signs in place is Iran. We have prepared a very detailed brief, which is still going through editing and will be filed with the committee, that goes through each of these elements in

turn and provides elaborate evidentiary foundations for each of them. But let me just mention a few things in the time I have here.

I remind you of a suicide bomber who drove a car bomb into the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March 1992, killing 29 people and injuring 100. A second suicide car bomber attacked the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in July 1994, killing 85 and wounding over 200. Iran used Hezbollah to perpetrate both these attacks, and in terms of the second one, that was the conclusion of Argentinian intelligence, in a published report. Iran has missiles with a range to reach Israel that have the slogan "We will wipe Israel from the face of the earth" visible in bold paint on the missiles. The religious leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, said, "The cancerous tumor called Israel must be uprooted..."

Just last week President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad labelled Israel as "...a 'disgraceful blot' that should be 'wiped off the face of the earth'."

Now, an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel would kill many non-Jews, many Muslims. Yet the current Iranian regime has shown itself in the past more than willing to do just that. Indeed, in 1988 this regime killed 30,000 innocent Muslims, including women and children. If the victims were not pious, the regime justified the killings as punishment. If the victims were pious, the regime justified the killings as martyrdom.

Yesterday's Nazis asserted self-defence for the killing of innocent Jews, claiming that they were protecting themselves in the world from a Jewish conspiracy and the threat of Jewish world domination. The fact that there was no such conspiracy, no such threat, did not save millions of innocent Jews from annihilation. Tomorrow, if Iran launches a nuclear attack against Israel, it will likely be justified by a claim of threat from Israel to the Islamic revolution in Iran. Iranian leaders today mouth these claims of threat regularly. Again, the fact that there is no such threat is not in itself an adequate answer to the danger Iran poses.

Canada, of course, must do everything possible to thwart Iranian nuclear development. More importantly, Iran must renounce its anti-Zionism. Canada must make the global combat against anti-Zionism a priority of its foreign policy. Now that is far from the case. Canada should be voting and speaking without hesitation against each and every anti-Zionist UN resolution. At the last General Assembly, Canada showed some recognition of the problem and some movement in its vote, but not enough. Canada should not be playing the game of the anti-Zionist by either voting for or even abstaining on any of these resolutions.

B'nai Brith has a publication, which came out in February of this year, that goes through the various UN resolutions against Israel for the General Assembly—nineteen of them—and analyzes them from the perspective of what is called the three D's: demonization, double standard, and delegitimization. Canada voted against two of those nineteen resolutions, abstained on four, and voted in favour of thirteen. In our view, Canada should be voting against all nineteen. Canada should be taking an active role by asserting its voice in condemning anti-Zionism whenever the opportunity occurs.

● (1130)

Opportunity occurs on almost a daily basis. Today, for instance, I received in my e-mail a call that was being circulated widely to ask the government to ban Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel, from Canada and prosecute him as a war criminal. Sharon is not a war criminal. If he were a war criminal, he would not be Prime Minister of Israel. There was an extensive investigation of allegations of war criminality against Ariel Sharon, headed by the President of the Supreme Court of Israel, and he was exonerated from all legal responsibility.

The report of that commission, the Kahan commission, has been perverted into an accusation against Sharon that I deal with in a great deal of detail in my book. The accusation that he is a war criminal is in fact just a form of attempted delegitimization of the State of Israel, and Canada should say so.

Secondly, Canada, should be calling for an emergency special session of the General Assembly devoted to Iran and the problems it poses. The United Nations General Assembly has had many special emergency sessions about Israel, including one that is still going on but is adjourned to this day, and which should end. Because of the Iranian torture and murder of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, Canada has a direct interest in bringing Iranian human rights violations to the UN.

Third, Canada must stop funding anti-Zionist propaganda fomented by international institutions and non-governmental organizations. For instance, right now anti-Zionists store ammunition in schools operated in the West Bank and Gaza by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees. These anti-Zionists smuggle arms and terrorists in agency ambulances. They use agency social clubs to host terrorist meetings. The schools financed by the agency are anti-Zionist indoctrination units glorifying suicide bombers. The agency turns a blind eye to the theft of food and medicine destined for refugees, for sale on the black market. The textbooks paid for by the agency are anti-Zionist propaganda pulp. The agency has Hamas members on its payroll, yet UNRWA receives about \$10 million a year from the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency. CIDA does not control the way UNRWA spends Canadian money, but it should or it should stop giving.

Canadian foreign minister Pierre Pettigrew has condemned the recent anti-Zionist diatribe by the President of Iran, and the Prime Minister of Canada has done so as well, and that is welcome. So is the link that the Minister of Foreign Affairs drew between the Iranian President's statements and anti-Semitism. But alone that condemnation is not enough.

The venom of the President of Iran is part and parcel of a long-standing policy of the Government of Iran that is interconnected to its nuclear weapons development. The Government of Canada must act on that connection. Otherwise, during the lifetime of the survivors of the Holocaust, Canada will remain ineffectual yet again in the face of yet another impending genocide of the Jewish people.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go on to questions and answers, and we will start with Mrs. Smith, please.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you.

The presentations we've heard this morning are extremely compelling and very moving, and I'm going to be asking questions of Bill Janzen, Don Peters, and David, in two different areas.

First of all, the Mennonite Central Committee has done amazing work across our globe, and the idea of that and the hard work that has gone into feeding people, making sure their human rights are intact, and making sure that the underlying effects of poverty are being addressed is of paramount importance. In fact, our own children going to WMES participated in that. From that point of view, sometimes the people who participate in these initiatives get more out of them than the recipients.

You had some very compelling views, understanding that sometimes conflict does occur—and David will attest to the fact, I'm sure, that sometimes preventative measures have to be taken to protect people.

Having said that, let me get to my first question. The other night I was at a presentation on Save the Children. When you look at Pakistan or when you look at Africa or any places across our globe, we have heard that poverty can be eliminated, but to me there are many children suffering right now.

I know we have a limited amount of time, so all I can say is that what you said this morning very much made an awful lot of sense. We need to support the Mennonite Central Committee in its initiatives, because as I said, you've done amazing work.

But if there are one or two things you could just say to government officials that you think would cause very positive things to happen very quickly, what would be those two things?

Because of the natural disasters, because of the wars, I'm very concerned about the suffering of people all across this globe at this point in time, so if there were two things governments could do that you think would have an effect immediately, either Mr. Janzen or Mr. Peters, if you could answer that, I'd really appreciate it.

● (1135)

Mr. Don Peters: Let me start with one that isn't going to be quick. And what I mean is that I'll make my comment quickly, but it isn't a quick solution.

A number of years ago, I was fortunate to be invited to sit at a round table with Kofi Annan when he visited Ottawa. The topic of discussion was millennium development goals and the role of the non-governmentals in meeting the goals, and each of us had a chance for an intervention.

I waited too long, almost to the end, when many people had spoken about what I would have said. Of the millennium development goals, it occurred to me to make a comment about, I think, the eighth goal, which deals with trade justice. It occurred to me to make a comment about that because each of the non-governmentals at that table can document. We can document places where we think we're making a difference as it relates to child mortality, to education, to basic health, and so on. We've got lots of stories about which we can say we're doing these things and that, yes, with more funding from government we can do even more, and so on. But then it comes to the matters of trade, trade justice, and creating a level playing field so that people in developing countries have access to markets that we take for granted.

If the Canadian government can take its position in a firm way to work toward trade justice, I know that's not something that's going to make a difference to the little girl I met in Bolivia just last week, but it may make a big difference to her when she becomes a junior high student.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I thank you for that. It makes an awful lot of sense to have long-term solutions that build on what we're trying to do right now.

David, I have to say that your presentation is more than worrisome; it's absolutely outrageous. Any nation who says they will wipe Israel from the face of the earth should be condemned very soundly for that kind of attitude. On this anti-Zionism issue, my father fought in World War II and taught us about what happened to the people of Israel. It is just deplorable that this kind of anti-Semitism is alive and well in this day and age.

Could you comment on, I guess, my feeling that we have to be much, much stronger in denouncing this. It's been to my consternation when political people step around these very important issues. In our world, we shouldn't be about violence and stamping out a nation, because we don't.... You know what I mean? We should be intolerant of that kind of thing.

What do you think we should do as the Canadian government? There are 308 people in the House of Commons right now who have input, and all of us on all sides of the House should be very strong on in this issue. What can we do?

• (1140)

Mr. David Matas: Clearly, what the President of Iran said last week is unacceptable, but one point I would make is that in the Iranian context it's far from unusual; he was repeating what has been the official policy of the Government of Iran since its inception, and he was repeating what the current religious leader has said on many occasions.

One has to remember as well, because I'm obviously concerned about the nuclear issue, that it's the mullahs who control the nuclear development in Iran, not the laypeople. As I indicated, they hold rallies and annual meetings about this stuff; they have it painted on their billboards, on their rockets, everywhere.

So I appreciate the reaction last week of the Government of Canada, but the notion that this is just something that happened last week and isn't a continuing and pervasive problem is something we have to avoid.

The problem is an ideological one, and the way we fight ideology is by standing up to it and arguing against it at every opportunity and at every manifestation of it. Frankly, I don't see that we are doing it. That's why I am saying we should change our votes on these UN resolutions, because these resolutions are anti-Zionist propaganda and fodder. We need to take every opportunity we can to counter that propaganda. That's why I say that when somebody says to the Government of Canada, prosecute Sharon, I assume the Government of Canada will not do that, but should take advantage of the request to say, no, we will not prosecute Sharon, and this is a libel.

We have to realize the seriousness of the problem to the global community, not just to Israel but to peace in the world, that the ideology of anti-Semitism poses, and to counter it in every possible way. We need to grapple with that.

What people in the Department of Foreign Affairs tend to say about all of this is, well, there are the Palestinians, and we've got to show balance and can't just be one-sided in favour of Israel. But I would say that anti-Zionism victimizes the Palestinians as much as the Israelis—and indeed, if you look at the relative situation, in some ways even more. The true victimizers of the Palestinians are Hamas and Hezbollah and Iran, and Iraq under Hussein. If you want peace in the Middle East, if you want to promote the rights of the Palestinians, you have to combat anti-Zionism.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Clavet.

Mr. Roger Clavet: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I noticed that both Mr. Matas and Mr. Janzen referred to inconsistency in their briefs. Both of you alluded to the fact that Canadian foreign policy suffers from varying degrees of inconsistency.

I was surprised to hear what Mr. Janzen said about Tanzania and Rwanda, for example. In the case of Rwanda, you mentioned the devastating impact of specific currency-devaluation policies. However, you are talking here about major organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Am I to understand that you are saying that Canadian foreign policy should have put greater emphasis on this country's role within these international bodies?

Do you think that the foreign policy statement manifests sufficient understanding of the way these major international organisations work? Do you think that there should have been greater emphasis in the international policy statement on getting to grips with the logistics of how these institutions function? If this understanding does indeed exist, then do you not think that the statement should attempt to challenge or correct any shortcomings that exist and put forward specific suggestions? Do you perceive inconsistency in Canadian foreign policy along those lines?

• (1145)

[English]

Mr. Bill Janzen: Thank you.

With all respect to the international policy statement, I would have to say it does not adequately take those dynamics into account. I think Canada should take a more critical attitude and at least undertake some independent studies as to the effects the policies of the World Bank, the IMF and the WPO are having on the development of third world countries. Britain has taken some steps in that direction. The most recent United Nations *Human Development Report* has some comments on that, plus there are many academic reports. But with all respect, I think that is a weakness of the international policy statement.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet: You also stated – again on the issue of consistency – that it is easier for Canada to send troops abroad than for it bring in experts, for example, from developing nations, to speak here. Organisations such as the Mennonite Central Committee are calling for greater consistency between immigration, visas, - that you are unable to obtain - and Canada's readiness to dispatch troops and peace-keeping forces. You, however, face difficulties in bringing people from those countries to Canada. That is also an area of inconsistency.

[English]

Mr. Bill Janzen: Thank you.

Yes. I was referring more to the Canada Corps, which is civilian-based. But the IPS does reflect the words indicating considerable eagerness to send the Canadians. Often that can be a good thing, if they're the right kind of Canadians, but certainly we should be open to receiving people from other parts of the world as well, yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Clavet: Mr. Matas, in your statement, you mentioned a publication, which reported that Canada supposedly voted against two recommendations and abstained on others.

Could you give us an idea of what these recommendations were? Did they relate to any one particular Canadian policy?

[English]

Mr. David Matas: All 19 resolutions at the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in some inappropriate way by demonizing it, delegitimizing it, or using double standards, singling out Israel over a wide range of issues about the environment, nuclear weapons—more or less about the whole range of the UN agenda.

There were two Canada voted against, meaning they found the attack against Israel was so outrageous they were prepared to vote against it. But with the other 17, they abstained from 4 and voted in favour of 13.

Take, for instance, nuclear weapons or nuclear proliferation, which I was talking about earlier. There's a resolution about the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. It mentions only Israel; it doesn't mention Iran. Obviously that's a double standard. Canada voted in favour. That's not appropriate, as far as we are concerned. That's the sort of thing we're talking about.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Phinney.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Thank you for appearing here today.

I have three rather unusual questions, I think. First, what did you think when you were asked to come here today? I don't want to put anything into your mind about what your answers to that question might be, but I know it takes time and energy, and I'm wondering what you thought the results of your coming here today would be.

The second question is on communication. In almost every discussion that comes up when people talk about what the government does, they always say, well, if they'd only communicated. Somebody was saying earlier that we should communicate more with the American people about what we stand for and what we're doing; we should communicate more with Canadians about what we're doing, etc. Have you had any feeling in that area about lack of communication from the government?

Third is a question we are all asked as politicians. Nobody wants to talk about it or bring it up, but I'm sure in all the other MPs' offices they've had phone calls and letters asking why we are spending all this money overseas every time a disaster happens, and why we aren't looking after things at home. I think knowing over the last couple of days that there are 100 communities in Canada where they don't have water they can drink—that's one of the issues that brings this up.

So I'd like you to comment on those three issues, please.

• (1150)

Mr. David Matas: Perhaps I'll simply break the pattern. The Mennonite Central Committee has gone first before, so perhaps I'll go first this time.

First of all, what was our reaction to being asked? I should say that as an organization we may have been asked but it was lost in the mist. I just heard about this and we invited ourselves, so to speak.

Ms. Beth Phinney: We didn't know ourselves until Thursday or at least late Wednesday or something that we would be able to leave Ottawa. That's the reason for the lateness of this meeting and the lack of communication about it.

Mr. David Matas: Fair enough, but I am glad you are here. On behalf of B'nai Brith and other organizations, I make many submissions to Parliament and I am constantly going to Ottawa, which I like very much, but I like Winnipeg even more.

I do appreciate the fact that you have come here and given this a regional flavour and shown you are interested in what people across the country think about foreign affairs. I have dealt over the years with the foreign affairs department and the foreign affairs committee a lot, and I find there is a tendency, at least among some people involved in foreign affairs, to get into a policy focus without really contacting Canadians about what foreign policy should be—yet obviously, as we are a parliamentary democracy, our foreign policies should reflect Canadians everywhere and shouldn't just be a theoretical exercise. Often I feel it is too much that, less so with parliamentarians and more so with civil servants; there is a tendency, particularly because it is foreign, to wander off into a pure policy theoretical abstract without necessarily reflecting the concerns of Canadians across Canada.

The reality is that Canadians across Canada have international concerns. Except for the aboriginals, we all have some kind of connection abroad from our ancestry, and even the aboriginals have a lot of interest in international affairs because of the international forums and standards in dealing with aboriginals. Almost everywhere in Canada you go and almost every Canadian you speak to is going to have some views on foreign affairs. I'm glad you are getting out and doing that.

Communication—well, of course, obviously in terms of this meeting, that was a bit of a problem in terms of a press release and so on. In terms of foreign affairs policy development, I think it's good that you have this electronic forum going.

Foreign policy development has been going through a long phase. I remember, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs was out here, actually speaking to Bill Graham—of course, he is no longer the minister and hasn't been for quite a while—and I think there is a tendency for foreign policy development, including the foreign policy statement, to be couched in such overarching generalities that people often don't really realize what is at stake, what the issues are, and what they can contribute. Although there is a lot of material out there and the government produces lots of material, perhaps it could be a little bit more pointed, so people know specifically that they can get involved and how they can get involved.

In terms of spending money overseas, the positions we are taking here are mostly policy positions that wouldn't involve any spending. In the alternative, we have asked for less spending, saying the government should not be spending money on international organizations that are anti-Zionist in word and deed—and, I would also say, non-governmental organizations that are anti-Zionist in word and deed.

For instance, last week in Toronto there was a rally organized or spoken to by a group called Sabeel from the United States, which is basically an anti-Zionist divestment campaign against Israel. Canada should not be putting any money into the organizations that promote this sort of event.

The issue is not just how much is spent, but whether the money is being spent in a way that furthers Canadian foreign policy ideals or just goes off, once it's given, into directions that are contrary to Canadian foreign policy ideals.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you.

Do you have any comments, Mr. Peters?

Mr. Don Peters: I have a few comments, first on expectations. I must say that I didn't have too many expectations of this. I actually was travelling last week internationally. I got back into Winnipeg on Wednesday and received a call from Bill Janzen saying that this committee was going to meet. From my perspective, I knew in May when I attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation that such a hearing was going to occur at some point. The cities hadn't been determined yet, the schedule hadn't been determined, the invitation list hadn't been developed, but we knew in May that it was going to happen.

To come back from a foreign trip on Wednesday to find out that the meeting is on Monday is, from my perspective, unacceptable. So

I actually want to put that on paper to whomever. I'm not sure who would listen to it, but if you're expecting a considered response to the committee, if you really want to get a hearing, give us some time to prepare. I mean, I'm happy this is happening; it's better for it to happen than not, but we could be in better shape before you if you'd given us more lead time. So that's the first thing.

The second is on communication with respect to the IPS. We ride fairly closely with the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, and we've seen the development of the international policy statement for some time. So I think communication, certainly to the non-governmental organizational community, has been there right from the outset. We've had some opportunities to make contributions to it along the way.

Third, on the question of the level of commitment overseas and whether funding should be spent here rather than there, our organization, MCC Canada, plays with this issue as well. We are organized with provincial chapters, and there's always a dynamic within our organization as to how we proportion the spending because there are needs here, and the example that you've noted is one that's just come out in this last little while.

So we debate among ourselves as to where the majority of our funding should go. In our organization now the majority certainly is going to international development. I think it needs to remain there. I hope the Canadian government will continue its strong support of international programming through the non-governmental community and augment it.

I heard Jim Cornelius' remarks earlier when one of the members of the committee said, if we threw some more money at you, could you use it? I think his response was prudent. If we received double the funding we have from the Canadian international development funding agency, I don't think we could use it in a prudent way this year; but give us a year of planning and we can use it—and incidentally, we're going for the next block grant, and I'm going to be writing people about an increase, because this funding has remained flat over the last number of years.

The Chair: Thank you.

I want to go to Mr. Blaikie, but I just want to tell you that even the parliamentarians are a little bit upset, because we had the authorization just this week, by Wednesday, and every time the committee is travelling we need to get the authorization of the leaders, and it needs to be unanimous. It's difficult even for us just to get our tickets, just to fly. It's very difficult. Just to let you know also, you are part of the CCIC and we have Gerry Barr appearing in front of the committee at the House of Commons in Ottawa. So we try to do our best, but I think it's important to get your opinions.

Mr. Blaikie.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I hope you realize that I wasn't referring, when I was talking about...what was my question?

The Chair: Expectations.

Ms. Beth Phinney: When I was talking about expectations, I wasn't thinking about this meeting. I was thinking about whether you thought that this was just going to go in the garbage and nobody was going to pay attention to it. That's the type of thing I was thinking, more than—

The Chair: No.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I wasn't trying to criticize the clerk or anything. I know the problems you go through.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Blaikie.

Hon. Bill Blaikie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There's so much I could agree with, but there's no point in citing all of that, particularly in the presentation from the Mennonite Central Committee. Generally I agree that structural adjustment, beginning way back when—I remember having an argument with Marcel Massé about this in the external affairs committee some time in the late eighties or early nineties, or whenever—has turned out to be a weapon of mass social and economic destruction in the south. That fact is often ignored in all the analysis we get. It's certainly not referred to in that way in this international policy statement.

But there are two things that are connected in the presentations, and they both have to do with nuclear. Bill said it's been a bad year on the nuclear file. David is concerned about—for obvious reasons—nuclear proliferation and the possibility of Iran having a nuclear weapon pointed at and willing to be used against Israel. So I have a couple of questions in that regard.

First, on the conference at the UN last week, our understanding—from the point of view of the NDP and Alexa McDonough—was that you referred to Canada playing its traditional role pushing for a solution. The way I heard it was that at the last minute Canada kind of caved in to American pressure and didn't play its usual role, unless you want to argue that Canada's usual role is to cave in to American pressure. If that's what you meant, then I understand.

Anyway, there seem to be two different stories there. Maybe you were trying to be nice to the country in your presentation, but we heard it differently. We heard that Canada was doing good things, but when push came to shove Canada went with the American position in the final analysis. I don't know if you know what I'm talking about, but some clarity on that would be useful, or some further comment from you.

To David on the nuclear question, it's not unrelated. I share the view that the idea of Iran having nuclear weapons, especially given the kinds of things they say about Israel, is the number one nightmare, not just for Israel but for the world. Yet if the very country that is taking the lead in wanting Iran to not have nuclear weapons is sabotaging nuclear nonproliferation talks at the UN and in other venues, do we not have a problem here?

I couldn't care less about the regime, but for the Iranian people, the Indian people, or others who want to have a nuclear capacity, at some point it just becomes untenable to be told by the international community—the United States or anybody else—“I'm sorry, there's a nuclear club and you don't belong to it. Those of us that are already

in the nuclear club don't have any intention of doing anything about actually abolishing nuclear weapons, so just get used to the fact that we've got them and you don't”. I think that's an untenable position that leads to proliferation.

There is a way to kind of separate out the Iranian question, because here you have a country that's actually threatening another country with nuclear weapons. We don't have the equivalent. We didn't even have the equivalent in the Cold War because it was only, “If you use them against us, we'll use them against you”. Here you've got a country that's actually just threatening to use them, unprovoked, for ideological reasons.

So I agree that there is an exception there, but on the other hand, how do you create that international momentum against nuclear weapons if every time you try to do something the United States is standing in the way?

• (1200)

The Chair: The brave person—Mr. Janzen.

Mr. David Matas: He was up first.

The Chair: Mr. Janzen.

Mr. Bill Janzen: You have articulated the problem very well. On that initiative at the United Nations last week, you're right that Canada withdrew. There were a number of sponsors—Canada, together with Mexico, Brazil, Kenya, Sweden, and New Zealand, I think—and when the Americans made their displeasure known emphatically, the motion was withdrawn.

I don't know what role Canada played in the decision to withdraw it—whether it led the way to withdrawal or what—but I think some people have said that maybe some other countries could have expressed more support, and maybe they wouldn't have withdrawn—European countries. But you're quite right that some criticism of Canada for not hanging in there is quite in order, because it's a crucial issue. I probably was a bit too nice in not pointing out that the Canadian government buckled.

• (1205)

The Chair: Mr. Matas.

Mr. David Matas: You raise an interesting question on the connection between U.S. nuclear policy and the acquisition and development of nuclear weapons by Iran. What's the linkage there? I'm well aware of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty saying that new states, outside of the nuclear five, don't get nuclear weapons. The nuclear states are supposed to reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear weapons and transfer nuclear technology to non-nuclear states. That was the deal. The Americans signed on and they haven't kept it. They haven't been reducing their nuclear arsenal particularly. The question is, what's the connection between that and the fact that other states have also not been keeping that deal?

I go into this a lot in my written paper, but Iran actually signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and they haven't been respecting it. The International Atomic Energy Agency has been very good at policing them, and indeed won the Nobel Peace Prize this year in large part because of their vigilance over Iran. They've been blowing the whistle in Iran and have shown they've been violating the treaty. We quote EIBaradei, their head, and his statements about Iran.

What's the connection between Iranian misbehaviour and American misbehaviour about nuclear weapons? There may well be some, which is the point you're making, and as far as I'm concerned—

Hon. Bill Blaikie: I guess it makes it hard to put pressure on—

Mr. David Matas: There may well be some. This is not an official B'nai Brith position, because we don't get into this issue, but I would of course like to see the Americans respect the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and I would like to see nuclear weapons abolished from all states. If the Americans didn't have nuclear weapons, that might help a bit.

But frankly, it's not a complete answer, for two different reasons. One is that repressive states develop weapons of mass destruction not just out of envy, emulation, or imitation; they do it as a form of repression and intimidation. We saw this, for instance, with chemical and biological weapons. Iraq under Hussein used and developed chemical weapons, which the American didn't have and weren't using. He wasn't doing it because the Americans had them; he was doing it because they were a means of repressing the people he wanted to repress.

My guess is—and I suppose this is part of the dynamic that keeps the Americans in their nuclear weapons training mode—there are these kinds of outlaw states that Bush perhaps over-exuberantly called the “axis of evil”. They are not respecting democratic and human rights values, and are going to—no matter what the international law regime ignores—develop weapons of mass destruction. We can't assume that just because some states are avoiding this weaponry others will. That's one point I would make.

On the second point I would make, the problem I'm addressing is not just a nuclear weapons problem. Iran could have no nuclear weapons tomorrow and would still pose a threat of mass destruction

to Israel through biological weapons, chemical weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction. If we really want to get at the Iranian problem, I would welcome wholeheartedly getting rid of the nuclear threat —

Hon. Bill Blaikie: I knew you'd get at the Iranian problem.

Mr. David Matas: But the way you get at it, in my view, is by combating anti-Zionism. Obviously, from B'nai Brith's perspective, that's the problem. The problem of Iran is more than just anti-Zionism.

The Chair: Will you close?

Mr. David Matas: I will close with this. From our perspective, you deal with the Iranian threat by combating anti-Zionism in every shape and form at every opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

In closing, I must say that disarmament and non-proliferation were not even mentioned in the UN summit document last September. Kofi Annan called this a real disgrace.

Thank you very much, Mr. Peters, Mr. Janzen, Mr. Matas, and Mr. Yusim, for being here. We'll come back at 1:30.

Mr. Blaikie, you have something to add?

• (1210)

Hon. Bill Blaikie: For the record, Mr. Chairman, when Canada resumed diplomatic relations with Iran—I forget exactly when it was—I was the NDP external affairs critic at the time, and we opposed it.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

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