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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): We'll call this meeting to order. This is the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, meeting number 22, Thursday, October 19.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we gather here to receive a briefing on the crisis in Darfur. In today's news we have reports that violence in Darfur is spreading again. There have been 100 people killed and 3,000 displaced in 10 villages, according to an article this morning. Sudanese Janjaweed militia and Chadian rebels have attacked at least 10 villages in southeast Chad in the past fortnight, killing more than 100 people and displacing more than 3,000 local and UN officials. That's the comment they gave.

The attacks are a spillover of violence from Sudan's western Darfur region, where violence has increased. As the seasonal river courses have dried up after the annual rains, these routes now become passable for rebel jeeps and others as they go throughout the country.

The estimates of death in the Darfur region by some have topped 200,000. Richard Gwyn, the well-known Canadian political affairs writer, points out in an article today that the government in Khartoum has successfully staved off the UN by declaring that it would refuse to accept UN peacekeepers. A lot of things keep going on. The killing goes on and on. Gwyn notes that Sudan's defiance is especially telling. He writes that it's exactly the kind of weak state where the new doctrine of responsibility to protect, which Canada played a lead role in developing, ought to be applied. Gwyn maintains that the outside world and the UN have looked the other way when it comes to Darfur.

For today's briefings on the crisis in Darfur we are very pleased to have with us, from the Canadian International Development Agency, Diane Jacovella, the director general, east, the Horn and southern Africa division; Leslie Norton, acting director general, humanitarian assistance, peace and security, multilateral programs branch; and, Laurent Charette, director of the Malawi program.

Also from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade we have Janet Graham, director of the Sudan task force; and, Wendy Gilmour, director of the peacekeeping and peace operations group.

We thank you for coming today to appear before us to provide to this foreign affairs and international development committee the latest facts and figures concerning the situation or the crisis in

Darfur. This committee will, even though it is a special meeting, wait to hear your presentations.

I'm uncertain as to how many of the five will present. Will all of you be giving a presentation, or how many will be?

Okay, there are two presentations. Usually we try to keep it within a ten-minute testimonial, and then we'll proceed into the first round of questioning, which gives every party seven minutes in the first round and five minutes in following rounds.

We're going to try to leave a little bit of time at the end of the meeting for committee business dealing specifically with a motion that has been on the books and that we talked about yesterday. My intentions for the committee are that we entertain a motion—it has to be by unanimous consent—as to whether or not we will accept that committee business dealing with Madam McDonough.

In the meantime, thank you for coming. We look forward to your testimonial.

Ms. Janet Graham (Director, Sudan Task Force, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for inviting officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency to provide further details on, first, the latest developments in Darfur, the current government and projected assistance to the African Union mission in Sudan, as well as any planned contributions to a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur.

Let me begin by saying that we are deeply concerned by the continuing violence and persistent culture of impunity in Darfur, particularly attacks on civilians by all parties to the conflict, and we heard what the chairman read out this morning about the latest attacks.

The Government of Sudan's worrisome military offensive continues with government forces directly engaged in conflict with the National Redemption Front, the NRF rebels, in the northwest vector of northern Darfur near the Chadian border and also in the mountainous region of Jebel Marra.

This statement I'm reading was drafted a few days ago and I said that we'd noticed a slower pace since the beginning of Ramadan in the violence. That's clearly been overtaken by events.

Most recently we have heard of clashes in that same sector, in Um Sidier before Ramadan and since then in Kariari, and interestingly, it's been Government of Sudan troops who have suffered setbacks from their clashes with the rebel groups.

•(1115)

[*Translation*]

However, Canada continues to urge the Government of Sudan and various warring factions in Darfur to bring about an immediate end to the hostilities and to stop the fighting as there can be no military solution for the crisis in Darfur. We have heard the Prime Minister express strong concern for the situation in Darfur in both his statements at the United Nations General Assembly and at the Francophonie Summit in Bucharest.

We must now work urgently to achieve “buy in ” from rebel groups who did not sign on to the DPA to get back to the critical need to move forward with implementation of this peace agreement. Implementation of the DPA and an early transition to a UN-led force are important steps forward towards ending the suffering of the people of Darfur.

[*English*]

Canada has provided important diplomatic, financial, and expert support to the African Union throughout the peace process in Abuja, Nigeria, that led to the signing of the Darfur peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the rebel group led by SLM leader, Mini Menawi. We worked closely with the African Union, the European Union, Britain, and the United States to broker an agreement during the final days of these negotiations. Canada was a signatory witness to the DPA.

Current reports of an increase in rape and other sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur is deeply disturbing. Canada was a leader in championing the inclusion of women in the peace talks, and we provided support to the AU to integrate gender concerns into the peace agreement.

As I noted, we need to secure an early and full implementation of the Darfur peace agreement. We are working with our international partners to find a way to bring non-signatories on board. There are a number of tracks in progress right now to do that. Canada stands ready to do our part, with resources earmarked from the global peace and security fund to support the DPA implementation team, as well as the Darfur-Darfur dialogue and consultation process, which I will speak to in a moment.

The pursuit of peace in Darfur and the whole of Sudan is a complex and challenging commitment. Canada makes a strong effort to address root causes, rather than symptoms, with the awareness that at the heart of most of Sudan's conflicts are the great disparities in wealth and power between Khartoum and the Sudan's vast regions to the south, east, and west. Much of Sudan's national wealth, and the power to control it, has a tendency to remain in Khartoum without being redistributed to the country's underdeveloped rural regions. This is why all the agreements, by the way, include wealth and power-sharing components.

The affect of this imbalance extends beyond Sudan's border to neighbouring countries, and it threatens the security of the region. Instability in Darfur spills into Chad, and it rebounds back and forth. Ongoing violence continues to destabilize the security situation, particularly along the Chadian border, as well as the border with the Central African Republic.

We see that the same dangers of almost twenty years of ongoing violence perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda has seriously affected the security situation in southern Sudan. There's a recent report in the media this morning about another one. Civil war in Sudan has provided a safe haven for the LRA, allowing conflict to drag on. The situation is improving despite the reports of violence since the beginning of the peace talks in Juba.

Canada has been strongly involved in the international effort to prevent the escalation and instability within the region and to improve the humanitarian situation in Sudan. The Minister of Foreign Affairs recently returned from the UN, where Darfur was discussed at length and where the minister personally sought out the Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol to advocate that the Government of Sudan allow a UN force into Darfur.

As you know, Canada is a significant donor in support of the African Union Mission in Sudan, having provided \$190 million since the mission's inception in 2004. The presence of the African Union Mission in Darfur has made a difference for the protection of civilians, and it has facilitated access for the delivery of central humanitarian assistance. I'll talk a little later about the critical support we are providing.

Support for peace operations in Darfur is only one part of Canada's efforts toward the stabilization and reconstruction of the region. In a complementary process, Canada also provides important funding for community-based peace-building initiatives. The Department of Foreign Affairs has established a global peace and security fund to plan and deliver effective conflict prevention, crisis response, civilian protection, and stabilization initiatives in fragile states. Through the Sudan peace-building envelope of this fund, we are supporting a variety of initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security throughout all of Sudan, including Darfur.

•(1120)

[*Translation*]

As the Prime Minister recently noted at the Francophonie Summit, Canada wants to promote the reform of the justice system, the rebuilding of a security system, a reduction in the traffic in arms and the reinforcement of the institutions of government and community life in Darfur and throughout the whole of Sudan.

Currently this fiscal year, we are committing approximately \$13 million focused principally in these areas.

For example, as part of our whole of Sudan strategy, DFAIT is currently providing one million dollars for a baseline assessment of the scale and distribution of small arms and the patterns and frequency of arms misuse and victimization in western, southern and eastern Sudan, including Darfur.

The widespread proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Sudan is a major contributor to human insecurity.

[English]

This is the second phase of an ongoing project whose goal is to support the implementation of both the CPA and the DPA, as they both include ceasefire arrangements and arms reduction measures.

It is through the same fund that DFAIT has been able to extend our deployment of Canadian civilian experts in support of the African Union Mission, AMIS. Currently six Canadian civilian police expert advisers assist AMIS in the Darfur region. These advisers provide important training in human rights and policing to the AU Mission, while also advising the police chain of command in all aspects of policing.

To get back to what we're doing in terms of other support to the African Union Mission, we are and continue to be one of the most significant donors to this mission. Since 2004, Canada has been providing essential airlift support to AMIS. We've increased this support. To date, Canada has provided AMIS with 25 leased helicopters, two fixed-wing aircraft, and fuel to fly them. This essential airlift, combined with the loan of 105 armoured personnel vehicles, forms the backbone of the African Union Mission in Darfur. Without the support, AMIS would be severely crippled.

The 105 armoured personnel carriers and the subsequent training of AU personnel by the Canadian Forces carried out at the CF training centre established in Dakar, Senegal, have enhanced the AU's capacity to monitor and control the situation on the ground. We have provided maps and personnel equipment, such as helmets and protective vests. Also, at the request of the African Union, Canada has provided 12 expert military advisers who are currently assisting the AU with planning and logistics. This is all part of a comprehensive support package to the African Union that is valued at \$190 million.

In the meantime, we welcome the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision to strengthen the AMIS and extend its mandate until the end of this year, in an effort to continue to provide important protection for civilians in Darfur and prevent a devastating security vacuum on the ground. Pending a UN mission, it is important that the international community continue to support an enhanced African Union mission during this period of transition.

We look forward to continuing to work with the African Union and to ensure the most robust and effective use of available resources. We welcome short- and long-term plans of the UN to strengthen AMIS in preparation for a transition to a UN force.

Canada welcomed the UN's recent announcement, following Security Council Resolution 1706, that it would work to support the enhancement of AMIS as a first step toward full transition. Moreover, we are strongly encouraged by the letter from Sudanese President Bashir to the UN Secretary General and the chairman of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konaré, accepting the UN's proposed assistance to the African Union Mission in Sudan.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Canadian and international efforts continue to focus on contacting key African and Arab leaders who may have influence upon the Government of Sudan to urge transition.

While at the UN, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade met with his counterparts—foreign ministers from Algeria, Egypt and Senegal as well as the Secretary General of the Arab League—to urge them to use their influence to press the Government of Sudan to accept transition to a UN-led mission in Darfur.

We are part of a wider international effort in this regard and are not alone in our lobbying. Our allies are very much of one mind on our objective.

[English]

There are significant efficiencies to be gained, including a broader pool of material and human resources, stable funding, and decades of experience with a UN force. The UN is already on the ground in the south of Sudan and is coordinating humanitarian efforts in Darfur. Transition in Darfur will provide benefits of economies of scale and a unified command and control structure.

The Secretary General has recently stated that the composition of the proposed UN force will inevitably be African in character. That is, the vast majority of troops will be rehatted from the AU Mission, with added support from Arab and Asian troop-contributing countries.

We will continue to work closely with both the African Union and the United Nations to provide the necessary support to succeed in the transition process, as well as to provide support for not only peace operations but peace-building, humanitarian, and long-term reconstruction efforts as well.

Planning has been under way for some time within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations—the UN's secretariat for UN peacekeeping operations—to deploy a force that will assume responsibility for the AMIS area of operation in Darfur. Canada, along with other donor nations and AU member states, has been a key partner in this process.

UNDPKO has issued initial requests to troop-contributing countries for forces, but as mentioned above, the bulk of the force is expected to be drawn from African countries, not countries like Canada. But this is not to say we will not be playing a key role. Canada stands ready to consider UN requests for the specialists who will be key to the UN forces' effectiveness. These could include key staff positions, logistical and technical specialists, and other expertise, whether they be military, police, or civilian personnel.

Canada will also be one of the principal financial supporters of this mission through our UN peacekeeping assessed contributions, providing approximately \$42 million toward the expanded UN mission in Sudan that would include the region of Darfur. The UN estimate for the total cost is \$1.5 billion.

As honourable members present realize, even if the UN were to call for a large-contingent deployment from western countries, Canada would not be in a position to do so given our current commitments in Afghanistan and the ongoing effort to train new recruits, a process that is critical to the long-term future of the Canadian Forces and Canada's ability to continue to play a leadership role in international affairs in years to come. However, what is most important right now is ensuring the effectiveness of the current AU mission on the ground and establishing the conditions necessary to ensure an effective transition to a UN mission.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Graham.

Now we'll go to Madame Jacovella.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Jacovella (Director General, East, the Horn and Southern Africa Division, Canadian International Development Agency): Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start by thanking the committee for inviting the Canadian International Development Agency and Foreign Affairs here today.

This is my first appearance before this committee. It is a privilege to be able to address you and to discuss the complexity of Sudan's development and humanitarian assistance challenges.

As you well know, Sudan's humanitarian situation remains an alarming one. Canada has adopted a whole-of-government approach to bring relief to the people of Sudan to ease human suffering, while working in cooperation with its Canadian and international partners. Darfur lies at the heart of this crisis. However, we execute projects, not only in Darfur, but throughout Sudan, to support the country's sustainable development.

The conflict in Darfur is still causing instability and thus resulting in more and more humanitarian needs. Despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement, security conditions keep deteriorating and Arab militias (the Janjaweed) and Sudanese Forces continue to fight, particularly in Northern Darfur, as Mr. Chairman so eloquently noted this morning.

From the humanitarian perspective, over 1.8 million people are internally displaced in Darfur, and currently 3 million require food assistance for survival. Even though the comprehensive peace agreement put an end to the hostilities between the North and South of Sudan, after a long civil war, the humanitarian situation throughout Sudan remains challenging. The population continues to need assistance to meet its basic needs and to be able to begin rebuilding homes and re-establishing communities.

More than one million internally displaced persons and refugee returnees have returned to communities with little or no infrastructure or basic services in place. We risk losing the progress made

in the peace process if we do not continue to support these vulnerable populations.

[English]

Since April 2005, Canada pledged a total of \$110 million for humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and rehabilitation in Sudan. Of that amount, \$60 million is specifically for humanitarian assistance.

These funds assist organizations, such as Canadian NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the United Nations, to provide support in the areas of civilian protection, health and basic services, water and sanitation, and food aid.

I would like to highlight the excellent work being done through our network of Canadian and international partners. They continue to apply their know-how and acute comprehension of the complex issues in Sudan in an effective manner, even within the unstable and hostile environments they face on a daily basis.

Security and access remain key impediments to delivering assistance. CIDA regularly conducts field missions to ensure our initiatives with the international community are well coordinated and performing as they should be.

Within the perils and instability that now define this country, positive results have emerged. For instance, the World Food Programme operations in Sudan are expected to feed an estimated 6.1 million people in 2006. Canada is providing support to those operations.

Of particular note, in April of this year, the World Food Programme announced that funding shortages had forced it to institute half rations in Darfur camps. The immediate response of Canada and the U.S. allowed it to reverse this decision. In early May, as you know, Canada provided \$10 million for this purpose.

CIDA supports Canadian NGOs, such as Oxfam Québec and World Vision Canada, and is contributing to provide access to clean water and proper hygiene facilities for an estimated 116,000 people in Darfur. Our ongoing support to a Canadian Red Cross Society project in Darfur is ensuring access to primary health care for up to 25,000 internally displaced persons and residents of the host community. Thus, even within the unstable environment, some basic human needs are being met.

In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the country as a whole, rehabilitation reconstruction efforts are being made throughout Sudan.

For instance, CIDA is supporting the 2005 comprehensive peace agreement between the north and the south of Sudan.

Canada and the international donor community have supported reconstruction rehabilitation results. For instance, in the health sector, 840 medical kits have been delivered to health facilities located mostly in the south of Sudan. In the educational sector, 20,000 educational kits were provided to teachers, while primary schools were provided with 950,000 textbooks. Over 150,000 kilometres of important roads in Sudan have been de-mined, thus allowing safer road transport.

These results illustrate how Canada, in collaboration with our partners, is making a difference in Sudan.

In conclusion, although some progress has been made, renewed fighting and impeded humanitarian access in Darfur underscore the challenges of working in a fragile context.

CIDA is contributing to Canada's whole-of-government approach in its efforts to reduce the vulnerability of crisis-affected populations and to restore the capacity of public institutions in civil society.

CIDA continues to balance support for the life-saving and early recovery needs of displaced populations with long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction activities that can promote the conditions for sustainable development in all of Sudan.

Thank you.

● (1135)

The Chair: Thank you to our presenters.

I know we have had motions before the House where we have debated this crisis in Sudan, which we all recognize.

I appreciate that you came to give us a little bit of an update on what we're actually doing on the ground. I know there are going to be lots more questions as we delve into what we're doing, how we can better do it, and what more we could do.

I'm going to start the first round by going to Mr. Martin, please, for seven minutes.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you very much, all of you, for being here. It's such a difficult file and I don't envy you, but we're all here struggling to try to alleviate the trauma that has been inflicted upon the Sudanese people.

Flying down the White Nile, all we see is the opportunity for there not to be real food program needs in the future, and I hope that comes to pass. I think we're at a fork in the road, whether we choose to pursue blind-ended negotiations that will go nowhere or whether we choose a course of action that is actually going to save lives.

In my experience in dealing with the Sudanese government, which I think is the longest-serving genocidal regime in the world, a group, quite frankly, of pathological liars, I believe that if you look at their experience and activities in the Nuba Mountains and in the south, all you will see is a political tack that they have pursued, which was to lead the international communities down a series of blind alleys that enabled them to continue the genocide that was occurring.

So I have one plea. There's a project in the United States called the Sudan Alien Project—which I'll share with you later—that will help

to limit the extension of the conflict into Chad and CAR. I can give that to you later.

My questions, though, are really these. If Jan Egeland is correct and the only way to stop the genocide is for a chapter 7 Security Council resolution to be implemented, where are the troops that you're speaking about coming from and how many have been stood up so far? Because time is running out, this will obviously have to be implemented in January.

My next question is, how are you going to get those troops in there if Khartoum has explicitly said it will not allow UN troops to get onto Sudan's soil? Are you willing to advocate—because I think we have to—and say we're going in with a group of other countries, we're going to implement that Security Council resolution, and we're going to stop the genocide and we're going to stop it now?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

Madam Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: Thank you.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1706, which we are working with now, requires the consent of the Government of Sudan. That's why the international community has been full court press on persuading the Government of Sudan to accept the UN mission as the only way to bring peace and stability back to Darfur.

The resolution requires their consent, and the UN is planning, as I said, a force of African character. DPKO has gone out and called on troop-contributing countries and has started the process of doing so. The numbers are roughly 17,000 in total for the UNMIS operation in Darfur, because Darfur will be an extension of the UN mission already in the south.

I think the Security Council would have to go back to do another resolution, if there were to be a change in wording, a change of process in terms of how the international community wanted to deal with Sudan. But for the moment, Resolution 1706 is on the table. We're trying to get the Sudanese government to accept it, and UN DPKO is planning accordingly.

● (1140)

Hon. Keith Martin: The problem, as you and I know in our hearts, is that Sudan has deliberately said, "Yes, of course we support the African Union force going in", because they know the African Union force has been unable to stop the carnage that is taking place. You've seen the Amnesty International reports that talk about pregnant women and little girls as young as eight being carved up in front of their families, and Jan Egeland's saying that unless the troops get in there now we'll be faced with 100,000 deaths per month for the foreseeable future.

So given the fact that Sudan has explicitly said it will not allow UN troops to go in, are you willing to advocate? Don't you think that either we fulfill the meaning of chapter 7 and fulfill the meaning of the right to protect or we go back to the Security Council and say that we must have a resolution that allows UN troops to go in, whether Khartoum agrees with it or not? Isn't that the only way to stop the murder?

The Chair: Madam Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: Internationally, the collective view is that this option would be so difficult to get through the Security Council that we need to take a step-by-step approach to try to get the Government of Sudan to accept a UN force and to work with the African Union to ensure that they're more effective.

If that fails, and I think the timeframe in terms of deciding whether that fails is relatively short.... Nobody is going to set deadlines they can't meet, but I expect we will all want to go back, or ask the Security Council to go back, and look at the kinds of measures they can put in place that would call for a stiffer resolution, if we cannot get the Government of Sudan to agree to this.

The Chair: You have another minute.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour (Director, Peacekeeping and Peace Operations Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): The only thing I would add quickly is that as you very well know—and it's important for us all to remember—there already is a UN force in the south of Sudan with 10,000 military members. The Government of Sudan has accepted international troops being on its territory so far. The African Union force is there with 7,700 people. So the Government of Sudan has a history of accepting international assistance.

Number two, the—

Hon. Keith Martin: They accepted that only after 2.2 million people were killed. I was down in the south when this happened, and that's the game they're playing. They let these negotiations go on until the people are devastated, genocide has occurred, and then they say, come on in. That's the problem we're facing with Darfur.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: The second issue that's important to remember is that as it stands right now, the African Union force is on the ground. It is making a difference. It's not perfect, it's not completely stopping the violence, but it is having an effect on the ground. There are areas of Darfur that are better off now for the force being there than they were before.

The United Nations has agreed with the Government of Sudan that there will be a first element of the new force, which has been approved, that will be going in to assist the African Union during the transitional phase. So there is progress there, and as Janet has said, there's going to be a process to bring additional pressure to bear on the Government of Sudan, so that it fully accepts 1706, as it's been written.

When 1706 has been implemented, there will be an additional 17,300 international forces, minus the 7,600 that are already there, plus additional police forces. There are going to be 16 police units formed that will also have an impact on the ground.

The last thing I would say is it's absolutely fundamental to remember that the security situation in Darfur, as in all of Sudan, rests with the responsibility of the Government of Sudan itself. They have signed the Darfur peace agreement. One rebel party has signed the Darfur peace agreement—

Hon. Keith Martin: It's in a coma, though.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: Our efforts have to try to ensure the implementation of that agreement and help the parties where we can.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Gilmour.

Madam Barbot.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for joining us.

Without question, the Darfur crisis affects us, not just when you provide fact-based answers about the number of troops involved, but even more still, when we're left with the feeling that we're witnessing a repeat of the tragedy in Rwanda, without being able to do anything about it. You're telling us that some progress has been made, but that it isn't apparent. We're continuing to hear that more and more people are dying. When we consider what level of humanitarian assistance CIDA can provide, we realize that it's a mere drop in the bucket compared with the real needs of the population. The country has not been secured. For years, the situation has been left in the hands of the African Union. It's well known that the African Union is ill-equipped to do the job, that the UN's presence in Sudan is not enough and that the President has no desire to welcome a stronger UN military presence which could address the problem once and for all. Therefore, there appears to be no end whatsoever to the current crisis.

Forces from other countries are present in Sudan. China and Russia have tremendous influence on the Khartoum government. Is Canada involved diplomatically in the area? Is it really applying the 3D approach in Darfur? We're seeing non-Canadian forces at work. A very different approach is being taken to Darfur, compared to what was done in Kosovo, and we can't understand the reason why.

Is the government guilty of a double standard? Why is Canada getting bogged down over the obligation to protect, with the stipulation that the government's approval is required? When that approval is not forthcoming, should we just drop everything and leave?

Will sanctions be applied? Will we be stepping up our efforts, as far as the other Khartoum allies are concerned? Putting it another way, what measures are being taken to correct this situation and end the crisis once and for all?

● (1145)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

Who wants to try to deal with that one?

Madam Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: Thank you.

You've touched on quite a number of points. I just want to say at the outset that it's a terrible situation. Everybody agrees with that. It's taking place in one of the most remote parts of the world in a country with a history of treating its own people terribly. The international community is struggling to deal with this issue through the multilateral process we've agreed to follow.

There is considerable diplomatic work. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been in touch with his counterparts in Russia and China to ask them to put pressure on the Government of Sudan as members of the Security Council. He has also made direct appeals to counterparts in North Africa and in Muslim countries to do the same.

At our ambassadorial level throughout Africa, the Middle East, China, and Russia, we have made those diplomatic *démarches* to request the kind of pressure from countries that could have an influence on the Government of Sudan so it might listen to them.

Not only Canada is doing that; Canada is a member of the contact group. Countries that are doing more than any others to assist the African Union Mission and provide assistance in Sudan, humanitarian and otherwise, are the United States, the U.K., the Netherlands, Norway, France, and the European Union. We work very closely together. I speak with my counterparts on a weekly basis to coordinate the kinds of diplomatic initiatives we can undertake to push this forward.

We are also working collectively to get the Darfur peace agreement back on track through bringing in non-signatories, because it is the only peace agreement we have. It's stalled because of the violence, but also because there are non-signatories. So it's absolutely essential that the Government of Sudan does not have another pretext to keep fighting. That's an important part of the aspect that we're trying to address.

There are sanctions, but they are targeted against individuals. If Canada and other countries do not see progress, we'll call on the Security Council to take measures that are within its purview, and sanctions are certainly part of that package. Whether it's targeted sanctions against the Government of Sudan or whether it includes no-fly zones, there's a whole range of sanctions or measures that can put pressure on the Government of Sudan to move forward on this.

It is also part of the process to call on the Government of Sudan to hold it accountable for what it's doing. The International Criminal Court, with financial support from Canada, has investigations on war crimes in Sudan, and that is also part of the process.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Jacovella: I would simply like to say that in addition to our ongoing diplomatic efforts, we are endeavouring to show the population that the peace process between the North and the South has some benefits. We are working hard with other donors to achieve results. The process takes time and the environment is harsh. Measures need to be put in place and the Sudanese government's ability to act needs to be reinforced. The process of establishing Sudanese institutions capable of delivering services is a slow one, but we are endeavouring to show that a peace process does result in a better quality of life.

From a humanitarian standpoint, I think we both agree that the need is tremendous. However, Canada has responded rather quickly. We are one of the leading donors this year from a humanitarian perspective. We responded immediately in May when a call went out for assistance under the WFP. We're working with other partners to obtain tangible results as quickly as possible.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Jacovella.

Mr. Goldring.

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

Thank you for coming here today.

Ms. Graham, in your presentation you mentioned that while at the UN, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met his counterparts from Algeria, Egypt, and Senegal, as well as the secretary general of the Arab League, to urge them to use influence. You were talking about other initiatives that have been taken as well.

What progress has been made with these initiatives? Are we any closer at all? Is there a timeframe for a direction or something to happen for it to come under the auspices of a United Nations-led mission? If that does happen, outside of the number of troops on the ground, or whatever, how could the United Nations' presence by leading this mission dramatically change the present circumstances there?

Ms. Janet Graham: We are, as I noted in my speech, very encouraged that President al-Bashir has accepted the UN offer to provide assistance directly to the African Union Mission. People aren't quite talking about the thin edge of the wedge, but it's a start. It's a start.

There is an operation of approximately 200 military and civilian personnel that will be ready to go. Some of them are there already. They have been accepted by the Government of Sudan, and I think that is quite a dramatic breakthrough. It may not make a big difference, but it will make a difference, I think, to the morale of the African Union Mission, to a certain extent, to have further material advisers in place who can assist them. And I think it's given a new impetus to the efforts throughout Africa.

There is going to be, shortly, a visit by senior African leaders. The President of Nigeria, the President of Senegal, the President of Libya, and one other that I can't remember, are going to be there this week to continue with that dialogue about accepting a UN mission. We believe the secretary-general is going to be making a visit. The Arab League is going to be meeting with the African Union to try to also put on pressure. So there are concerted collective efforts to keep the momentum going.

Mr. Peter Goldring: How would having the United Nations leading the mission impact it differently than the African Union's presence there now?

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: We have pushed very strongly in Canada for a transition to a UN mission for a number of reasons. There are simple economies of scale that will be brought about by consolidating all the international peace operations' efforts inside Sudan under one chain of command, one logistical supply chain, and one common set of equipment, training, and standards for conducting these types of operations.

The UN has a lot more experience than the African Union in managing the complexity, the size, and the integration of civilian, military, and police efforts in a mission of this scale. Simply with an increase in expertise, we are hoping, and I think quite justifiably, for an increase in the effectiveness and performance of the troops on the ground.

It's also a very large area. We use, in many of our briefing notes, the comparison that Darfur is the size of France, but without any of the infrastructure that you would have in France in terms of your ability to move around by road to access different areas. By increasing the total number of troops, which the UN resolution will allow us to do, we're going to get better coverage of the Darfurian territories.

We will also put the whole force on a more sound financial footing. UN peacekeeping operations are funded through the assessed scale of contributions that all UN members pay for. It means that there can be an effective planning, forward provisioning, and solidity to the force that is provided by a constant flow of financial resources. That's not the case when you're dealing with an African Union force, which is funded by voluntary contributions.

At the moment, because we know it doesn't have any longevity, there will be a transition. So it's increasingly more difficult to actually plan for the financial expenditures needed to keep the force on the ground.

So it will help in a number of different areas.

• (1155)

Mr. Peter Goldring: It's also mentioned in the notes that Canada stands ready to consider UN requests for the specialists who will be key to the UN forces' effectiveness, whether it's military, police, or otherwise.

There was a report on television last night that talked about the deployment to Afghanistan that was initiated under the previous government, how the resources for that are stretched thin, and how the actual fighting troops are now being drawn from other trades and other elements, although they're all basically trained in the military for it. The commentary was basically that it's really stretching the resources of the military now.

How do you think that would fit in with essentially committing more assistance to a future UN mission, and would we have the capabilities?

The second question was on the armoured personnel carriers that were committed to that. Were they armoured vehicles for the protection of our own troops that have left us short at all in Afghanistan, or were they truly excess to the needs of our troops in Afghanistan?

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: With respect to the specialists, you'll note in the speech that we've said explicitly civilian police and military. As it stands right now, the type of specialist expertise that the UN may be asking us for won't necessarily draw directly from the Canadian Forces.

We have an option of providing civilian experts, and in particular the expertise that's often looked for is logistical and technical, because we're going to be dealing with a number of troop-

contributing nations that have not previously been part of UN operations. Sometimes it's advisory expertise that we can provide through the use of retired specialists in Canada. So there are a variety of different ways we can respond to the UN request for assistance that take the burden off the serving members of the Canadian Forces who are needed in other operations.

It is important to note that there are serving Canadian Forces officers both currently in the UN mission, UNMIS, which stands right now at 32, and in support of the African Union Mission, as well as serving Canadian police officers, retired Canadian police officers, and a number of civilian experts.

With respect to the APCs, these were absolutely surplus to requirement. They were mothballed, effectively—in storage, because you never throw out pieces of equipment that actually are used—but they were not in current service in the Canadian Forces. They were resurrected. We had people in the forces who were still trained on these vehicles, who then provided training to the Senegalese, Rwandan, and Nigerian forces that are currently using them. A commercial contract has been put in place to maintain, equip, and provide spare parts, so it's not in any way detracting from ongoing Canadian Forces operations.

• (1200)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for appearing today on what has to be one of the most distressing and alarming tragedies unfolding before our very eyes. I'm sure you must feel this each and every day, all day long, and probably have nightmares about the sorts of genocide in slow motion that just continues to roll out.

That said, I'm very, very encouraged by several parts of your presentation today, not for a moment to indicate—and I don't think anybody would—that we should have anything but a desperate sense of urgency about the situation that's unfolding, but I'm glad to hear you stressing the importance of working through multilateral channels, through international bodies. I think when we sometimes depart from that, we get into misadventures, and we see what happens in Iraq and in Kandahar. There was also your emphasis on peace-building, creating the conditions that are capable of really leading to genuine human security and genuine enduring peace, because this is so often lost in the desperate sense that people have for military intervention.

Maybe it's not a welcome comment, but I have to say, I think we're not doing very well on the women, peace, and security front, either here in Canada or across the world, and it's very reassuring to see women in very senior roles working together—no insult intended whatsoever to the male member of the panel.

I'm thinking about people around this table on the committee and people who are here representing groups—STAND, SHOUT, Students For Darfur, the Canadian Jewish Congress, and various organizations—who have been desperately pleading for a more robust response from Canada.

I'd really like to ask two questions. First, could you be a bit more specific and a bit more explicit around the kind of comprehensive peace-building, confidence-building work that you see as being so important and that Canada has been engaged in?

Secondly, really following up—and I'm not coordinating my question with Mr. Goldring, but he raised questions about stretching the troops' resources to the limits and our military capabilities—I'd like to know whether we have sufficiently today within Foreign Affairs and within CIDA the robustness we need in the diplomatic forces, in the diplomatic strength, expertise, and confidence, both in terms of numbers and in terms of expertise that is desperately needed to be able to bring this to a peaceful resolution, which may or may not be possible without there being a more robust security element. Do we have enough of that human resource to play the kind of role that is perhaps even more promising for enduring peace?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: Well, we could always use more resources. I think that's always a plea.

The government did set up a task force on Sudan in recognition that it doesn't take one or two people to do this. The task force works closely, cooperatively, collegially with CIDA and with National Defence so that we can have a multi-dimensional, all-of-government approach to the problem, because it's certainly not a problem that one department or one individual or even a few individuals can make a difference in.

It's also one of the reasons why we jumped at the opportunity to work with a contact group. Canada has a huge investment in resources to the African Union, humanitarian assistance...perhaps fewer resources on the ground in terms of our mission, although we didn't even have an embassy there a few years ago. We've built up from a one-person mission to three Canada-based staff now, and growing. I'm trying to get more resources into—

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Can you just elaborate a little bit on what kinds of resources those would be? I think it often gets dismissed by the government, and some others, that this is important. But what would that look like? What kinds of additional resources do we need there?

• (1205)

Ms. Janet Graham: We're going to add some political officers to the staff, because Canada has been following very closely and is directly involved in the Darfur peace agreement negotiations. I think it's very important that we participate in the process of the implementation of that agreement, but it's going to need a great deal of diplomatic effort. First of all, we need to get the non-signatories back on board. There are challenges with the agreement that need to be addressed. There are problems with the ceasefire commission, compensation issues. But we need people on the ground to actually work with the other missions, other countries, to meet with both the signatories and the non-signatories to get that process reinvigorated.

I'm always optimistic—although I don't sleep very well at night. Once we have a process, it's going to be a sustained effort on the part of the international community, both on a developmental reconstruc-

tion level and a diplomatic level, to implement the peace agreement. That's going to be a real challenge.

I'll go back to the peace-building funds we have. We have set aside funds for the implementation of the DPA and for the eastern talks, which have recently concluded—and we have an agreement there that we're very pleased about. We don't know enough about it to say very much, but it looks on paper to be good. But we need efforts to help the communities. The Darfur dialogue is a big part of the process to get the communities in Darfur together to try to reconcile their differences. There will be a great deal of work, and I'm hoping we'll have a mission in place that will be able to facilitate that process. We'll have moneys to facilitate the process through peace-building. We've already identified areas that we want to help in—promulgating the agreement so that people know about it; working with the African Union Mission, giving them technical assistance, because they will have a large role in implementing the Darfur peace agreement when they have their resources. There are other areas that we will be working in with some of our colleagues.

But we're kind of frustrated. We have the money and we haven't been able to use it. In fact, we've had to divert some to the south because of the slowness in the implementation.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Graham.

We'll come back to the government side, and we'll go to Mr. Menzies, please. Second round is five minutes.

Mr. Ted Menzies (MacLeod, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I must apologize for not being here for some of the presentations. It is by no means any reflection of my lack of concern for this issue. We've debated it in the House. I think I share Madam McDonough's concerns for how slowly things are moving over there. I appreciate what you folks are doing, and I appreciate the challenge you're facing, both Foreign Affairs and CIDA.

We all recognize that countries need to work together. No one country is going to solve this problem, whether it's the United Nations or however we bring it together. I may have missed this in a presentation—and this will probably be directed mostly at CIDA, Diane—but is there any plan for any donor conference, so to speak, coming together? Is there going to be an opportunity, maybe not necessarily at the United Nations, but at some other level, to raise the level of discussion about this?

Ms. Diane Jacovella: As you know, there already is strong collaboration between many countries and international and multi-national agencies on the north-south process. That's going on and it's still working. People are looking at lessons learned and how to improve the process.

In terms of Darfur, as soon as the peace agreement was signed there was already work in motion to be able to look at what the needs are. There was an assessment mission. People met and discussed this.

Right now, because of the security situation, the donors conference is on hold. Donors are concerned about how they can invest if the security of even humanitarian workers is at risk right now. All of the diplomatic efforts are there to say that as soon as this takes place, donors will meet and look at what they can do in terms of recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. But right now, with the security situation, the focus is mostly in Darfur on humanitarian assistance.

Throughout the rest of Sudan, north-south, we are working really hard to show results. We want the people of Darfur to know that there can be some results if peace isn't prevented.

• (1210)

Mr. Ted Menzies: And the displaced refugees? We're doing as much as we possibly can for them?

Ms. Diane Jacovella: Yes. Some of them have returned. Some of our funding is for basic health services, such as access to clean water, repairing some of the infrastructure, and de-mining to make sure the roads are safe. This is taking place right now with the north-south.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Okay.

I think Mr. Obhrai has a question also.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Janet, I just heard you say that you've had sleepless nights.

I just want to take this opportunity to say, and to put on the record, that I was with Janet in Berlin for the donors conference, and she worked very hard.

This is a very tough situation, no question about it. You guys have done an excellent job in this tough situation that is in Sudan, and I want to put that on the record. Having been heavily involved in this myself, I know the challenges that are taking place there. Sometimes it is beyond our control, as was seen at the donors conference. Nevertheless, working together...and you have quite a challenging job.

So I'd just like to say, on the record, good job.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai had a few more minutes left. I would like to use that time, if I may, because it is part of the government side.

You have 2.2 million dead, 4 million displaced. We're happy that there's some evidence that maybe, as Madam McDonough said, there's...you know, we're peace-building. But the facts remain: it's always easy to build peace after you have 2.2 million dead. I mean, they just keep killing.

Canada isn't in charge of this. We talk about the importance of the multilateral groups that go out there. Canada can't invoke its wishes on Sudan. Canada can't say, "We're going to do this."

Do we have any frustrations where, because we're working through multilaterals, we're held back on the things that we would like to see accomplished? I know we have good discussions with the UN, and with all those agencies that are active, working there, and we have input to all of those. But are there some ways in which we're being frustrated here in Canada—you know, when you aren't in a bilateral relationship, or when you aren't in a bilateral response?

Not so?

Ms. Janet Graham: We would always like to be on the Security Council, but....

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: Mr. Chair, my answer actually would be no.

With respect to our engagement with the African Union, for example, when we approach the African Union as an organization bilaterally, we're only speaking on behalf of Canada, one portion of the donor effort. We're much more effective when we work as part of the contact group, as part of what we call the African Union partner nations, to go collectively and to say, "Look, our collective experience and our collective resources are going to be applied in a particular way, and this is how we would like to help you." Frankly, the AU is much more appreciative when we come forward as a group, as a block. It makes it easier for them to deal with the donor nations.

I honestly believe that in that particular instance, certainly through our efforts in the peacekeeping community of the United Nations, we're more effective when we do so as a collective organization.

Ms. Janet Graham: I would just add, in that same sense, that the Government of Sudan is paranoiac, frankly, about the west. That's why we're trying to work with African and Arab countries to put pressure on the Government of Sudan. It's not as effective one on one. It makes a difference if we can work together and be seen as part of a multi-country approach, not just western countries.

The Chair: I think we can take a great deal of pride, though we may feel like we aren't doing enough, in being one of the top donor countries. It may not apply to big projects like Sudan, but there's an old saying: the best committee is a committee of one. Sometimes we'd like to go in there and do what we think we should. Yet here we're told we can't. Years ago, we were told to send troops but to make sure they weren't white. They wanted us to be involved, but in their way.

I appreciate your honesty in coming out and saying there's nothing major. But I'm sure that, as in any other crisis, you wish you could do more. Even with \$190 million and some of the other things, it's just not enough.

Mr. Cotler.

• (1215)

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): I've had a concern with Sudan for some time. There is a sense of urgency about this that we may not be appreciating. I met with Jan Egeland at the UN General Assembly when I was with the foreign minister. He made the statement that we risk seeing 100,000 deaths a month unless we have an urgent intervention. He meant that we needed a UN multinational protection force on the ground.

I know reference has been made to the Sudanese president's acknowledgment of his cooperation with the African Union. That's not the issue. The real issue is the Sudanese president's refusal to allow a UN multinational protection force into the country. A transition from the African Union to that objective is mandated by a UN Security Council resolution.

So what do we do in the face of the refusal by the Sudanese president to permit a UN multinational protection force? Do we say we want his consent but are prepared to go in without it to protect a doctrine? What are your views on that?

It seems to me that unless we can ensure a prompt transition to multinational protection forces, we're going to see more dead, more displaced people, and more people on the humanitarian life support system. All the good work that's been done will come to naught if the disaster we're facing takes place.

Ms. Janet Graham: I agree with what you said. Time is precious, and we need to have movement on this sooner rather than later. We are working with the security resolution we have now, 1706, which requires the consent of the Government of Sudan. If this does not work, Canada will have to push the Security Council to go back to look at other measures. Clearly, we can't sustain this for long. I don't think Canada would hesitate to push for stronger measures at the UN. The political challenge would be to get something through the Security Council.

This resolution makes reference to the responsibility to protect. It is apparently the first resolution that has done so. It's not very clear—you have to find it in the top language. The responsibility to protect is a process. We hold the Government of Sudan accountable, but the Security Council would have to come back with stronger measures such as sanctions and no-fly zones. Whether the Security Council would be prepared to take chapter 7 action, which does not require the consent of the Government of Sudan, will be interesting to find out.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: The UN no-fly zone is already the subject of a UN Security Council resolution. It is being breached continually, as are the other UN Security Council resolutions. Are we going to hold the government to account for resolutions already breached? I suppose we hope that somehow they'll go along with this recent 1706 resolution, which itself requires a transition to a UN multinational protection force. If we're not enforcing other resolutions, then they're going to scoff at this resolution as well.

Ms. Janet Graham: The resolution makes reference to a previous resolution to the African Union Mission taking responsibility on the flights. There are sanctions in place against individuals, which Canada has—

• (1220)

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Which have also not been enforced.

Ms. Janet Graham: No, they have been enforced.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: One person has been named, that's it, and the reference with regard to those...there are several different resolutions. In fact, on the whole, those resolutions have not been enforced. I'm sorry to say that's the record. You can check the record on those.

The Chair: Those are resolutions from the UN, is that correct?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: UN Security Council resolutions.

The Chair: They passed, but have not been enforced, is what he's saying.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: There are many different Security Council resolutions, over time, that are not fully implemented. Frankly, returning to the earlier question from our chairman, the key is to try to work collectively with all of the countries that we can to bring

pressure on the Government of Sudan so that it lives up to its responsibilities and to make sure the international community is ready with the resources necessary to implement the resolution when it becomes effective. So if the key is that we are, for example, in 1590 or 1591, and I'm sorry I always forget the difference between the two, but one dealt with the original sanctions and the other one dealt with the original mandate of UNMIS.... One of those resolutions, for example, provides for an arms embargo into the specific region of Darfur. The African Union has been trying, within their means and capabilities, to implement that resolution. It requires a complete monitoring of the border with Chad. That's obviously an impossible task. Even with all of the resources available to the Government of Canada and the United States, we can't monitor completely our own border, so look at the difficulties inherent in an operation in a place like Darfur with the resources they have available.

It is incumbent upon us to do the very best job we can with the resources we have at our disposal and to work collectively with our partners to bring the pressure on the Government of Sudan and the other parties that they will adhere to. That's why we return to our efforts with the Arab League, with the other African states, that are the ones who have proven the most effective at getting the Government of Sudan to agree to what it needs to do.

The Chair: Thank you both.

We'll go to the government side, to Mr. Van Loan, please.

Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Thank you very much.

I want to pick up a little from the theme that Mr. Cotler was presenting, and that's the challenge of enforcing these UN resolutions. I think the world is suffering a bit from a lack of policemen to enforce UN resolutions, and the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations, in general, are at risk of looking powerless around the world by an inability to implement the resolutions. We have in Afghanistan a whole series of resolutions that are unanimous. All the countries, all of them, endorse the presence there, yet we know daily that there's not enough in terms of resources. In fact, only NATO has stepped up to the plate with a dozen other countries, notwithstanding the sheer unanimity of the world on the importance of that mission as expressed at the United Nations.

UNIFIL had trouble raising the forces they needed in Lebanon, getting the numbers they needed, and there's a lot of skepticism, both in Afghanistan and in Lebanon, about whether some of the folks there are going to be robust enough—they use this term—or willing to actually do what it takes to implement the wording of the resolution. So it was in that context, obviously, that one looked to Sudan and having the African Union there, and that was a very good thing, and they had significant numbers there. It's not that there weren't significant numbers, there were significant numbers, but what we're hearing clearly is that this effort has not succeeded.

I want your thoughts on what that says and why it is that the African Union, with their presence there, has been unsuccessful in implementing it, and whether we are again falling back into the same handful of countries carrying the heavy burden. If they don't step up, do you end up with ineffectiveness in enforcing these resolutions?

Ms. Janet Graham: The African Union, in fact, was established in 2001. It's a very new organization. They have never done anything like this before. I must say, I was struck the first time I went to their headquarters in Addis Ababa to meet with the peacekeeping section how few of them there were and how hard they were trying to put things together. They stepped up to the plate when nobody else would and they have done a remarkable job, but they lack a history, a background, and the resources to do much more than they already have done.

Wendy, did you want to...?

● (1225)

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: I think that's entirely right. UN peacekeeping is in its 50th year. We're in the anniversary year at the moment, and we and our other partners—the UN Secretariat, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and UN troop contributors—are still working to improve their operations. If they're at the fifth level, the African Union is still at the beginning of their experience in these types of things.

You could not ask for a more complicated situation than the one we have in Darfur right now where you have a significant humanitarian effort, the need for a significant diplomatic effort, and a development effort. You have a police mission working concurrently with a military mission, all requiring the types of command and control and coordination arrangements that the most sophisticated organizations have trouble with.

So when we say the African Union is doing a good job with the resources it's been given, given its experience with the types of troops and the equipment that's on the ground, it's doing as good a job as we can possibly hope it to do. We are constantly working to try to improve it and to set the groundwork for an efficient transition to a UN mission. But it's important that we don't think the transition to a UN mission is going to fix the situation overnight. It's not. It will continue to be an evolutionary process until the parties themselves live up to their own responsibility.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Do I understand it properly that your mission rolls into the UN mission, so a lot of the same troops would still be there, just under a different command?

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: That's the idea right now. There is a tradition already established in a number of different situations where a regional organization that has commanded a peace operation on the ground has transitioned into a UN-commanded mission. For example, the multinational interim force in Haiti that we deployed in 2004 transitioned into a UN mission after six months on the ground, and many of the same forces rehatted, literally took off their MIF hat one day and put on a blue one the next. The initial Canadian troops that were there did exactly that.

The ECOWAS force in Liberia, West Africa, transitioned into a UN force. So that's what we're planning to do in AMIS.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Do you hope that by merging the AU forces with the UN, with all that experience, that can become a training

ground to help the AU? Are they going to stay under the peacekeeping auspices of the African Union to learn and build?

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: The peace operations force—the military and the police and the diplomatic efforts—are commanded by the AU at the moment. The UN will have a unified system—chain of command, command and control systems—in place so that UN officials will be commanding the forces.

But Canada is developing another program at the moment, the global peace operations capacity-building program, where we're working with the African Union to develop its long-term capacity to manage these types of operations. We anticipate a number of the AU officers and experts currently working in AMIS will stay on with the UN, and then we'll put programs in place to try to capture that experience and build it up within the AU itself.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Gilmour.

Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I was listening with keen interest to your report before I subbed in for my colleague, Ms. McDonough. I share her sentiment that it's important to know and understand what is happening, because so many people are concerned that there isn't enough being done, and we can agree to that. But it's also important to understand what's being done if we're going to help and make a difference globally. So I want to start off by thanking you for letting us know what is going on and about some of the positive things that are happening.

You mention supporting AMIS, and that's critical. You also mentioned something...and for a second I want to talk about the regions within Sudan. There are eight regions in Sudan, but you also suggest there are nine, when you consider what's happening in Chad. If you look at the fact that this isn't just secluded, if I can say that, to Darfur or to Sudan, I would have concerns about spillover.

We've seen the same problems and concerns happening within the past couple of weeks in other places in Africa. I'm wondering if you want to comment on the concerns you might have with that phenomenon of spillover, the fact that this isn't contained within the neighbours...and many people don't understand that, perhaps. I've given Chad as an example. If you could just comment on what the effects are, not just on Darfur but on neighbours and in a specific instance, Chad, and the relationship Chad plays.

● (1230)

The Chair: Madam Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: Thank you. The situation on the border, in particular with Chad—but there are nine countries that bound Sudan—is particularly difficult. The border is not in the middle of nowhere, but it is in a very remote area, and Chad is not particularly stable either. There is rebel movement back and forth on both sides, and there are tribal issues that the border cuts through that impact on all of this conflict.

There is a Tripoli agreement that is supposed to set the conditions for reinforcing the border to build confidence-building measures between groups on both sides, but all of this has been left, I think, because the conflict in Darfur does not allow for the kind of work that needs to be done within the tribal groups that cross over on the border.

A positive development recently was that there was a kind of renewed dialogue—I don't know whether it was renewed, or how long they have been separated—between the Chad government and the Sudanese government. The presidents met; they have discussed these issues. It is a step in the right direction, but this is a conflict that will take a stronger force in there to work on the issues the Tripoli agreement has established, to build the confidence to monitor the border, so that the back-and-forth rebel groups can be at least held at bay.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Just following up on some of your comments about how we can best help the African Union, my understanding is—I brought this up in debate, and we certainly questioned the government on it—that presently they are threadbare, and that's not news, and that one of the things we can do in the transition period is provide more direct assistance to the African Union.

Is it correct that presently they are dependent upon the Sudanese government for dispensing pay and resources, or is it right now being flowed entirely through the international community? I am hearing—and there's lots that's happening—that presently, as far as you know and understand the African Union and the commitment made to them, they are receiving, if I can say it thus, their paycheques and their resources, and they aren't.... I know there are some problems in getting resources through, and that they are sometimes logjammed, but is there presently an ask from them for more resources, and is there something we can do about that very straightforwardly?

The Chair: There are two questions there: is there a logjam, and —

Mr. Paul Dewar: And have we been asked, or has the African Union asked, for more resources directly?

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: First of all, there is not a logjam in our provision of resources to the African Union, but the logistics and the structures that are in place that would ensure a free flow—a free pipeline, our development colleagues would call it—of resources into the field are not always straightforward.

Some of this is due to the situation on the ground and some of it is due to the bureaucratic inefficiencies that are inherent within AU structures themselves. We are working with them to fix that. In fact, maybe Laurent can provide some of the details of what we are doing to try to help on contracting, for example.

Mr. Laurent Charette (Director, Malawi Program, Canadian International Development Agency): CIDA is managing a lot of

the contracts for the helicopters and the fixed-wing aircraft and the fuel on behalf of the African Union and Foreign Affairs. We have constant communications with the African Union.

I would say that some of my colleagues also have developed personal relationships with some of the key people in the African Union to develop the advisers we need. The big problem frequently, when we work with this type of organization, is to develop credibility, so that when we are giving advice, this advice might be received positively.

We have developed, I would say, as much as possible a very good relationship. Some other countries are even looking at us to help them develop the same type of credibility we have developed with the African Union.

CIDA is not perfect, but we can say that each time the African Union has asked for something from Canada in terms of support, we have been there with the money, but we have also been there with the advice required to help them do their job.

• (1235)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dewar, your time is up.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you. How many minutes do I have?

The Chair: You have five—actually four and a half now.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you.

The Chair: Four.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I know; you are in the opposition.

Janet, I have two questions here. One is about the peace treaty that has been signed in East Sudan. We keep forgetting that there is low-level rebel intensity going on, on the east side of Sudan, and I think they have just signed a peace treaty. What is the current situation in reference to the situation in East Sudan?

Second, how much credence do we give to this gentleman who has made a refugee claim in the U.K. who is from the Janjaweed? He said the Government of Sudan was actually giving instructions to the militia over there. That's the claim he has made in the U.K., and of course the Government of Sudan has denied that and said it is wrong. So how much credence do we give to that statement?

What do you say on those two points?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: The agreement in the east was negotiated in Asmara under the auspices of the Eritrean government. There were very few international partners directly involved in its negotiation.

From what we can see, though, it looks like a very good comprehensive agreement that we will look to support. As to the willingness of the signatories to move forward beyond the agreement, the proof will be in the pudding, but as a text it looks like something we can support. Internationally, all of us are looking at ways we can support its implementation.

In terms of the refugee, I have read the media reports and I think what has been suggested is that the ICC, which is investigating war crimes in Darfur, should interview this man. The issue of the Janjaweed as proxy for the Government of Sudan has been around for a very long time; there have been lots of allegations that, yes, there is a direct link.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: There is a direct link, though.

Ms. Janet Graham: I think there's quite a bit of evidence to that effect, yes.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I just heard that the Ugandan president is going to go to southern Sudan to join the peace talks over the LRA that are taking place in southern Sudan. The LRA is quite a destabilizing force in southern Sudan. What is the current situation with the government in southern Sudan right now?

Ms. Janet Graham: Do you mean in terms of the peace talks?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes, I am asking in terms of the peace talks with Uganda, but also about achieving overall peace in Sudan as well. Is the government of southern Sudan progressing well? Are the governments of Sudan and southern Sudan meeting the peace agreement that was signed, the milestones? Is there a cause for concern there?

I mentioned Uganda because Uganda is a cause of concern, you see, because the LRA is there. Perhaps you could give us a good glimpse of the current situation in southern Sudan.

Ms. Janet Graham: On the peace talks, we're very encouraged that they're taking place and we hope they move forward.

In terms of the comprehensive peace agreement and the implementation of it, it's been moving forward, but it's been very slow. The situation is more or less stable from a security perspective, but the capacity of the southern government of Sudan to implement many of the agreements in collaboration with the north has not been ideal. The international community is there working with them on reconstruction as well, and maybe my CIDA colleagues would like to comment on that.

The security situation is stable, but we wish we had more progress on a number of the outstanding commission issues, including delineating the borders, the issue of compensation, and power sharing. There's still a great deal of work to do.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: In your view, is it moving slowly?

• (1240)

Ms. Janet Graham: Yes.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Will they meet the referendum deadline?

Ms. Janet Graham: I expect they will, but they are going to need our support.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

Madam Barbot is next.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I have to say how very important it is to have you here answering our questions. Our comments do not in any way mean that we're questioning your actions. I'm well aware that you're doing your best under truly difficult circumstances.

However, since we constantly hear what people in general are thinking, it's a little difficult to make the connections and to know what we should be doing in the area. In that regard, you are shedding some light on what this nation is doing and making it clear that often, we need to take small steps first in order to resolve much larger, complex problems.

Getting back to the border issue, someone drew an analogy between Sudan's border and the more familiar Canada-US border. I don't think a comparison can be made in this instance because Sudan shares a long border with several countries that are also unstable. The situation is therefore particularly complex.

However, regarding the arms embargo, I understand that two resolutions have been voted on and implemented. While efforts are being made to secure the country, arms continue to pour in. So, how can we be certain the embargo is working? Should we be considering sanctions against arms-producing countries that continue to send arms to Darfur, while the war still rages? Under the circumstances, how can we be certain the arms embargo is working? Is it even possible to control the movement of arms into Sudan?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Barbot.

Ms. Gilmour.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First and foremost, it's a very difficult problem. There's no getting around the fact that the presence of small arms on the ground in Darfur, and frankly all over Sudan, is huge and constitutes a problem, a threat to the security of the people there.

One of the things we're trying to do through Canada's peace-building program, one of the elements of our global peace and security fund, is to fund a base-line survey of small arms inside Darfur that would help in a number of different ways. It would help with the creation and subsequent implementation of a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program. It would help get a sense of exactly where these arms are coming from, the degree to which they are considered to be necessary for the security of individuals, or if they are contributing to the activities of rebel groups and so forth.

We believe it is a significant problem that we should be addressing, and it goes back to one of your colleagues who suggested that addressing the underlying causes of the conflict and putting in place peace-building efforts would help to lay the groundwork for a sustainable peace settlement.

The Chair: Did you have another question, Madam Barbot?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Amnesty International maintains that this isn't enough, that resolutions to control arms movements aren't worded strongly enough.

Should this matter be revisited and stronger controls brought in?
[English]

Ms. Janet Graham: The small arms reference in Resolution 1706?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: No, I'm talking about the resolutions calling for an arms embargo. Amnesty International has already said that these resolutions don't go far enough.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Barbot.

Ms. Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: I know the British are undertaking a study of this, to look at ways in which we can strengthen that resolution for I think arms through third parties. This is one of the problems that Amnesty International flagged in its report, that a country like Canada, or any other country, exports to a country where there are no embargoes and then that country re-exports, and it's very difficult to control.

We will be very interested in what the British are proposing to do to help us all put some kind of control on this.

•(1245)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Graham.

We'll go to Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Perhaps I could jump in. I'll have to be quite aggressive to get in here ahead of Mr. Obhrai, but I have one quick question, and it came to mind as you were mentioning this.

I know that at the United Nations our ambassador has been working hard, but we are one voice. I'm sure he's working behind the scenes, but we're only one voice at the United Nations—and I'm sure we're pushing quite hard.

What allies would we have or would the cause have in other African nations that may be supportive, that may help give us guidance on how to convince the government to change its viewpoint on letting the United Nations help? Do we have some allies in Africa?

Ms. Janet Graham: We certainly do. Starting with the African Union itself, it has called for a transition. Mr. Konare has been very proactive. Most recently, I think he's travelled to Sudan on a number of occasions to personally plead with Bashir to do something. The troop-contributing countries of Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa, and Nigeria have been very proactive at the leadership level, at the head-of-government level. As I said earlier, there is a plan collectively for those presidents to travel to Sudan in the next week or so, to keep that pressure up. We're in very good company in Africa, I think, and we look to them to really facilitate this transition.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Graham.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Just following on that question, Janet, on my trip down to the Great Lakes countries, at each and every stop I made I told the African leaders that they needed to put pressure on Sudan. The feedback I got from the African leaders was that, yes,

they need to put pressure on Sudan and they are going to put pressure on Sudan, but other issues that affect their own region take priority over this for them.

We have had delegations come here from Algeria and northern Africa, and the same issue was raised with them. The key point is that this is very much becoming an important African issue. It is true that we on the outside can provide the technical knowledge, but as my other colleague said, we cannot walk in there with our eyes closed by ourselves. Nobody has that capacity.

In answering your question, I believe the Africans need to take this issue up, with our assistance. We have had suggestions, using this act of responsibility, about going in there and doing things by ourselves. That is not a practical solution. But in my talks with them I have found that there is an appetite among the African leaders to address this. Diplomatically, that is the arena. What they are looking for from us, from Canada, is what they lack, and that is the technical expertise and the financial support for them to effectively do so in that situation.

If we really want to solve this issue, which you've just pointed out, we should go through the Security Council. I can tell you that when we go through the Security Council, that is the approach that even they're going to take, because other donors like us who want to bring peace to that region will want to use the African Union.

The President of Sudan has already stated that this could become another Iraq if white troops end up over there. This word "jihad" will start popping up and change the whole dynamic of the war. It will change the whole dynamic of the region and of the conflict, and then it will become a conflict moving in another direction.

So we need to maintain this focus that more African Union involvement is needed there, and that's where we should—

•(1250)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai. You didn't really leave much room for any response, so we won't take any.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: Just in closing, I want to echo the comments of Mr. Obhrai. You have a tough job to do. You're our public servants, and we have tremendous respect and gratitude for the work you do. It's very difficult.

There are a couple of things I would like to ask you, Madame Jacovella and Madame Norton. Could you table with the committee the specific investments that CIDA is using in western Sudan, in Darfur, and also in southern Sudan? As you said, we cannot forget about the trauma being inflicted on that part of the country.

I would also just like to ask you something, Madame Graham. As Professor Cotler said, there is a no-fly zone. I was in southern Sudan. I've seen Hind helicopter attack gunships on the ground with their bucket pods empty. We know Sudan uses Hind choppers to go down there and kill innocent civilians.

Will we advocate and are we pushing for the enforcement of the no-fly zone? Will we push for the prosecution, in the International Criminal Court, of the fifty people in the regime of President Bashir identified for crimes against humanity?

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm sorry to interrupt, but on a point of order, will we be able to deal with the committee business before we wrap up?

The Chair: My clock says it's 12:50. We will entertain, first of all, a motion to deal with that one motion by Madame McDonough. It will take unanimous consent. If we get that, then we will be proceeding into committee business.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I appreciate that. My apologies. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Graham.

Ms. Janet Graham: On the two points that you raised, the African Union cannot enforce the no-fly zone that exists. That's why, again, there's a need for a UN mission to put effect to the resolution. I think there's a "locally based hostile aircraft" reference in the resolution.

In terms of the ICC, we are very supportive of their efforts. In fact, Canada made the first contribution of \$500,000 for those very investigations in Darfur for the ICC.

The problem, of course, is that ICC access to the region is very limited, and obviously witnesses need to come forward. It's going to be a challenge, but I understand that they are recommitted to the task and are going to try to find ways to get into Darfur to do the kinds of investigations they need to do.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I just want to ask one quick question. It's more to Madame Jacovella. I listened to the summary of how big a crisis this is, so this is just to give me a little bit of an understanding of part of what we're doing with these donor communities.

You talked about a couple of different areas, and that's what I liked about your presentation. You talked about health care, you talked about education, you talked about transportation, and how it's a balanced approach.

On the 840 medical kits that you gave out, how big are these kits? What are they? Are they small kits that people can carry back to their families? Are they kits that help to resource hospitals? What's in them?

You also talked about educational kits, and then the 950,000 textbooks. What is in those educational kits?

Ms. Diane Jacovella: I can't give you a detailed list of what's in the kits, but the medical kits are meant for clinics. They're not for individuals. They would contain vaccines, swabs, or anything that is necessary to clean injuries. We're really talking at this point about basic health services. We're talking about vaccines for children or anything like that.

In terms of the educational kits, we often focus on textbooks, but those kids need things in addition to the textbooks. They need basic things like a pen, a pencil, an eraser, paper, and a ruler. Those are the kinds of kits that are put together so that the children can actually have something that we wouldn't even think about needing.

We're really talking about basic needs at this point. Our hope is that as we evolve and as the situation improves and the capacity improves, then we can provide more developed services.

• (1255)

The Chair: Would those be fairly universal kits? Would they be similar to what we use in Afghanistan in the educational kits? Are they the same?

Ms. Diane Jacovella: We work with some of the multilateral agencies to provide these services, so I would assume they're very similar, yes.

All of the services that are offered in terms of northern and southern Sudan have been based on an assessment by experts from different countries and the UN. They have looked at what it is they actually need and where they need it. Our funding has been allocated to a multi-donor trust fund to make sure we are pooling resources and meeting the basic needs of these people.

The Chair: Ms. Norton.

Ms. Leslie Norton (Acting Director General, Humanitarian Assistance, Peace and Security, Multilateral Programs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency): I would just add that UNICEF has a program called School in a Box. Essentially, you could be sitting under a shady tree and they will show up with School in a Box, which includes many of the elements that Diane just outlined. It's designed to let them be able to go anywhere and set up a school where there is a grouping of people brought together, if you don't have a classroom there.

The Chair: Do we have groups in Canada...? We're now coming into the Christmas season. We know Samaritan's Purse puts out the Christmas box, with a toothbrush and all those things. Are there efforts where we can raise funds and can know that money goes directly to educational kits or health kits or something like that? I know we can bring it out of CIDA funds, but there's nothing like that, is there?

Ms. Leslie Norton: Having been a trick-or-treater as a child, I remember UNICEF boxes were always a common piece. They are an example of how the UNICEF Canada committee is raising funds. As for whether it goes to Darfur or other places, they have a broad range of activities throughout the world, and Darfur would be definitely one place that funds would go to.

The Chair: Thank you.

We want to thank you folks for coming here today. I know this motion was appreciated, because we all recognize the importance of the work in Darfur. Canada is involved around the world. Sometimes we get too caught up in just one part, one exercise, or one theatre, and we don't realize where we are in other places. So thank you very much for being here.

At this point, I would entertain a motion to go to committee business. We need unanimous consent.

Mr. Martin, it's to deal with Madame McDonough's motion that's coming forward.

Do we have a motion?

Mr. Paul Dewar: We do have a motion. Members should have the motion. The notice of motion was sent out.

It is that the committee urges the Government of Canada—

Mr. Peter Van Loan: First we need a motion.

The Chair: We need a motion. It's not on the agenda.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm sorry, I thought it was on the agenda. I will put a motion forward to put this on the agenda and would indulge my colleagues to approve that.

The Chair: Today we're going to need unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent to put this motion on?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We have it.

Now, Mr. Dewar, we have unanimous consent. We should have a party.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We have unanimous consent.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I was supposed to get it on the agenda because Ms. McDonough is not here. I believe we needed unanimous consent for both those reasons.

The Chair: Yes, that's correct. If you would read her motion, that's all we would—

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes. It is:

That the committee urges the government of Canada to co-sponsor the draft resolution of the UN First Committee which calls on United Nations members to work towards "an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms", and support this resolution when it is brought before the UN General Assembly for a vote.

Mr. Chair, I would also ask that this be made as a report to Parliament as soon as possible, if it is passed as a motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Actually, you are changing the motion.

Mr. Paul Dewar: No, I'm simply asking in terms of direction, that's all.

The Chair: All right. So you've heard the motion.

Mr. Van Loan, very quickly, and then we'll take a vote.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Very quickly, we're quite comfortable supporting this because we do support the thrust. We just had a whole hearing on an area that's affected by this kind of small arms trade, and it's significant when you look at the kinds of countries that are likely to oppose it. There's a typical lineup of Iran, Russia, and China—those kinds of folks.

So we are happy to continue in the Canadian tradition of supporting arms control in these trouble-spot areas, in the hopes of advancing peace on a multilateral basis.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, very quickly.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: The intent of the motion is in the right direction. There's no question to the fact. I think we want to re-emphasize the fact that most of where this situation is really critical is in the conflict zones. If we can come up with a kind of resolution that's coming out of the UN to address the issue of the control of firearms in the conflict zones, you would find unanimous support all across the world in trying to do that. I just wanted to emphasize the conflict areas.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

Are we all in favour of this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much, folks.

We're adjourned.

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