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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. This is meeting number 38 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, on Tuesday, January 30, 2007.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back. I hope you all had a merry Christmas and enjoyed spending the holiday time with family and friends.

I want to say a special welcome back to Madame Lalonde, who has had a long—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: I can assure you our prayers and our best wishes have been with you, Madame. Madame Lalonde has served on this committee for a long time and is a very valuable member of this committee, so we do welcome her back.

As your chair, I also want to extend a welcome to the new members on the foreign affairs and international development committee. It's good to have new members coming in. I can say with a degree of pride that this committee has always had a very good working relationship with all members of all parties. We've tried in the past many years to work within a consensus, and I think our work has shown that.

We're continuing our study on democratic development. This is the committee's major study on Canada's role in international support for democratic development around the world. Next week our committee will travel to Washington and New York in furtherance of our study. We hope to dovetail on our trip last fall to Oslo and other European destinations. Our committee endures a fairly gruelling schedule when we come back in, yet I'm certain we all place a high value on what we see, learn, and experience on these travels and as we gather here as a committee.

In our first hour today we will hear from the Canadian Bar Association. We have with us Robin Sully, director of international development; John Hoyles, chief executive officer; and William Goodridge, member of the international development committee. We welcome you this morning.

As you know, this is the first meeting back since our break. Hopefully your testimony this morning will help us in our study as we learn more about the importance of the rule of law and the best practices in promoting the rule of law. We welcome you this morning and we look forward to your presentation.

Mr. Goodridge, I understand you have a presentation and that afterwards all members of your group will be open to questions from the committee.

Welcome.

Mr. William H. Goodridge (Member, International Development Committee, Canadian Bar Association): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, honourable members.

The Canadian Bar Association is happy to have this opportunity today to share our perspective on Canada's support for democratic development abroad. I came here today from St. John's, Newfoundland. I'm a member of the international development committee, but I came here specifically to make this presentation before the committee at the request of the Canadian Bar Association.

The Chair: Please continue.

Mr. William H. Goodridge: As most of you know, we're a national organization. We represent approximately 37,000 members. Our members are lawyers, judges, Quebec notaries, and legal academics across Canada. We have had considerable expertise in international development.

Since 1990, the Canadian Bar Association has delivered legal and justice reform and capacity-building projects in 29 countries, including across Asia, Africa, Central Europe, and the Caribbean. In all of these projects we bring our commitment of access to justice through the values of an independent legal profession, an impartial judiciary, the rule of law, and the dignity of the individual.

There are many reasons why Canada should have an interest in promoting democracy abroad: greater economic opportunities, strategic foreign policy interests, and even strengthened national security. But from our perspective, the most important reason for Canada to support democracy is to advance development—that is, reduce poverty and hunger, uphold basic human rights, improve health and safety, and protect the environment.

Of the many questions you've put forth, we are going to focus on three questions today: the appropriate nature of Canada's support for democratic development, lessons from experiences in supporting democratic development, and whether Canada can and should do more.

On the nature of Canada's support, our main message is that the best way to promote democracy abroad is to promote good governance. A critical component of that is the rule of law. Without rule of law, a democracy is simply not sustainable. The two concepts are inextricably linked, and a country cannot improve its fate over the long term without good governance.

So what is good governance? It has many characteristics. It has special values, rules, and, perhaps most importantly, institutions that make decisions and exercise power. Good governance is participatory, responsive to the citizens, transparent, accountable, fair, and efficient. There are many adjectives, but all are important to the concept.

The value of democracy is that it is the best form of government that embodies all of these characteristics, but on its own, democracy is not enough to create good governance. We can look at many examples around the world where they have had free and fair elections but lack good governance, and have not magically improved from an overall development point of view despite the free election.

A democracy can't be effective without rule of law. For example, how free or fair can an election be if electoral rules are not applied fairly, equally, and consistently; if the voting is not publicly available; or if electoral disputes are not resolved by independent courts and judges? So in its most basic form, the rule of law means that everyone is subject to the same law—government officials, legislators, judges, businesses, and private individuals. But it also means that the government is bound by the law. All government action must be authorized by that law. The rule of law means that the laws are clear, consistent, stable, and applied fairly and equally without cronyism, corruption, and patronage.

With this perspective in mind I'll move to the second question we'd like to address: lessons learned from experiences in supporting democratic development. In our written submission we have listed some of the lessons the Canadian Bar Association has learned in the field as an implementer of legal and judicial reform projects, so this morning I'll just discuss a few examples. The report has more details.

● (0910)

The first experience—Wherever we have worked we needed local engagement and ownership to be effective. Canada must support programs that are responsive to local needs and have local ownership. In our view, without these features the programs are likely to fail. Local stakeholders must be involved also in the planning, the implementation, and the monitoring of the programs. In our experience, the most successful approach is one where the local stakeholders are empowered to make choices. An important component of our assistance must therefore be directed at capacity building. Enabling citizens in their own country to voice their position is a far more effective and powerful force for change within that country than having outside foreign advocacy groups or a foreign government attempt the same.

A related point to the local ownership and local empowerment is the need for regional cooperation. I'll give you one example we've experienced through the Canadian Bar Association. In east Africa, the Canadian Bar Association has worked with the law societies of Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya since 1998. Part of the work there was

to build capacity of their law societies so that they could engage, among others things, in more effective advocacy for law reform.

The Canadian Bar Association's regional capacity development workshops drew together participants from east Africa and southern Africa partners. By bringing our partners together, they were able to share experiences, learning from each other as they learned from Canadians, and as we learned also from them. Through these workshops, the Canadian Bar Association has facilitated the development of relationships that have led to continued collaboration among these African law societies. The regional approach gives them a stronger voice than could be achieved individually.

In 2005 the law societies of east Africa and southern Africa joined together in this collaboration and supported the Law Society of Zimbabwe in making a complaint under the African Charter of Human and People's Rights. The complaint was against amendments to Zimbabwe's constitution that violated the right of equal protection of law and the right of freedom of movement. Specifically, in that case it was a law that allowed confiscation of passports by residents of Zimbabwe.

The second lesson the Canadian Bar Association has learned is that we cannot assume that one model will work best. There are many models of legal and justice systems, and different models may work in different places at different times. For example, in most countries, including Canada, the vast majority of people only ever use the formal justice system at the lower court level, the entry level. In fact, most people usually avoid courts completely and use other types of dispute resolution. Paradoxically, at present the majority of Canada's aid aimed at improving justice systems goes into the supreme courts, the law ministries, and other places that actually have little impact on the lives of the poorest and most disadvantaged.

The third lesson the Canadian Bar Association has learned is that the reform cannot be successful without champions in the country. In some cases, the best approach is from the top—that is, through strong political commitment and working with the government and the related government institutions. In other cases, civil society organizations or bottom-up organizations is the better starting point. But in the long term, neither strategy can be successful without engaging the whole range of actors. Activities such as training judges, improving management systems, and supplying computers to courts won't advance justice unless they are accompanied also by bottom-up approaches. The bottom-up approach could include public education about rights, and legal aid to enforce those rights.

● (0915)

As a result, we, the Canadian Bar, recommend that Canada provide more support for NGOs and for civil society development partners overseas.

Let me give you a concrete example of why building the capacity of civil society is so important. In China, the criminal justice system remains rife with incidents of torture, arbitrary detention, and denial of due process. Criminal defence lawyers are on the front line of the defence of basic human rights, and the Canadian Bar Association is currently working with the All China Lawyers Association to mobilize and engage their members in criminal advocacy and reform.

The All China Lawyers Association has used the knowledge of the Canadian justice system and the knowledge of international legal standards, which has been gained through the CBA project, to call on the Chinese government for significant reforms in the criminal justice system, reforms that will directly and positively impact on human rights. It has made proposals to the Chinese government to reform criminal procedure and enhance protection of criminal suspects and defendants. The association is also drafting a death penalty defence guideline that will create a role for defence lawyers in reviewing death penalty cases in higher courts.

So lawyers today in China are a new class of advocates that are using the country's legal system and are fighting for social justice. They are making a small but meaningful change and having meaningful victories that were unimaginable only a few years ago.

A fourth lesson we've learned is that we must keep a long-term outlook. Establishing the rule of law in Canada didn't happen overnight, and we shouldn't expect it to happen any more quickly in other countries, especially countries that have faced conflict or social, political, and economic challenges. Building values takes longer than transferring technocratic skills. The impact of donor supported activities may not be evident for 10 years or more, so we must adjust both the way we plan and design projects and our own expectations. We need to set realistic goals, and we need to ensure that performance measurements reflect that understanding.

The last lesson is that we must develop better evaluative techniques. It is easy to evaluate the impact of a new bridge or a new dam in a developing country, but it is hard to evaluate the impact of legal and justice reform projects. The art and science of performance measurement must be improved. A good first step here would be more sharing of experiences among organizations funding projects and organizations implementing them.

So from some of our experiences we've learned that local ownership and engagement are important, that we need both top-down and bottom-up approaches, and that we need strategic long-term plans and better evaluation.

I turn to the third question we'd like to address, and that's whether Canada can and should do more. And where should it concentrate its efforts?

Canada has a lot to offer. We're a parliamentary democracy with a federal system of parliamentary government and strong democratic traditions. Our constitution, including the charter, has been upheld as a model for other countries. Our legal system, with our mix of common law and civil law, is well regarded. Our lawyers and judges are well respected internationally. Canada has experience in issues such as participatory civil and criminal justice reform, land registry and aboriginal title issues, and restorative justice. These are all

examples of the expertise we can share with the world. Most importantly, Canadian organizations have demonstrated the ability to work successfully in a field that requires both political and cultural sensitivity, and it would be a shame to waste these assets and not use them to promote democracy and rule of law around the world.

In terms of how we can go about doing more, we believe that no one existing or new organization can or should do it all. Promoting democracy, building the rule of law, and supporting good governance requires doing a lot of different things in a lot of different areas.

- (0920)

A number of first-rate existing institutions excel in all of the areas we need to work on. Therefore, we recommend that the best approach is to increase the capacity of these existing Canadian organizations to take on a greater international role. This includes improving knowledge and expertise within the Canadian government to produce more effective programming.

Although Canada has the potential to do more in this area, Canadian institutions are significantly hampered by a lack of resources. While the need for resources and expertise continues to grow, funding for Canadian organizations has remained stagnant or fallen in recent years. This lack of resources makes it impossible to follow through with the best practices, which I discussed earlier, such as improving research and evaluation, sharing knowledge, and engaging strategically.

Thank you all for your time.

Our written submission is obviously more detailed, but we are here to answer any questions as best we can.

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

I want to thank you for your presentation, as well as your written submission, with very comprehensive recommendations laid out so that we can study them.

We'll begin the first round with the official opposition. Mr. Patry, you have seven minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Goodridge, Ms. Sully and Mr. Hoyles.

Mr. Goodridge, the CBA acknowledges in its submission that in terms of providing assistance by focussing on the rule of law, there are number of weak areas. The following is noted, and I quote:

Nevertheless, it seems that the majority of justice system aid goes into Supreme Courts, law ministries and other places which have little or no impact on the lives of the poor and disadvantaged.

In terms of the assistance Canada provides to activities in this area, what steps could be taken to rectify this problem?

[English]

Mr. William H. Goodridge: Mr. Patry, initially I would say that while that's not the court with the most impact on the poorest and most disadvantaged, it is still important that as one of the key institutions of the rule of law, the Supreme Court has adequate support and capacity to function.

If we were going to expand our funding, we would expect that the government would allow additional attention—not exclusive of the Supreme Court—to the lower courts and projects that involve more contact with the needy and most disadvantaged. This would include low-cost access mechanisms that already occur in some developing countries for alternate dispute resolution, which in other words are even outside of the entry-level courts.

• (0925)

Mr. John Hoyles (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Bar Association): May I add to that, Monsieur Patry?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, sure.

Mr. John Hoyles: Our experience tells us that this has to be a collective endeavour, working with law societies or bar associations, where the lawyers are engaged with the disadvantaged and have it all come together.

In Mr. Goodridge's example, we've seen our success in east Africa and China. It's been working with the bar association and seeing that things are throughout the system and not just at the top. As we've indicated, this allows for more success.

Ms. Robin L. Sully (Director, International Development, Canadian Bar Association): I have one last word to add to that. We've approached CIDA, and I guess DFID also. Our approach was to suggest that when we go into a country, we should identify all the actors. So it's not just the bar and the bench; it's also the police, corrections, and academia. We should be going in and looking at the situation to see where we can best interface in bringing all those partners together. This includes engaging the public, which is what we do in Canada—they have a voice.

At some point, we need to have a strategy. You might start at the bottom, you might start with the Supreme Court, but at some point in that vision, you have to see how to pull all the actors together, and we have to know this when we go in.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you.

You said that the CBA also argues that the best means for Canada to contribute to the overall international effort of democratic development is to enhance the capacity of Canadian organizations to take on a greater international role.

Now how can the Canadian government's knowledge and expertise be improved in supporting effective programming in the rule of law?

Ms. Robin L. Sully: One way is we need to do a lot more research about what works. There's no capacity now, no core funding for many of the organizations that are working in this area.

Some of them are government organizations, such as the RCMP and Corrections. Their mandate is domestic, yet they're being called upon to do international work, although they don't really have the resources—a very important part of which is research.

There's nobody looking into what works and what doesn't work, particularly regarding something that's so critical. The World Bank has done some work in this area, but there needs to be a lot more. So that would inform the government.

Also, the government needs to look to the resources here in Canada and take their experience, because certainly in our funding agency, those technical resources can't be found internally. There is a lot of capacity outside that we need to pull together and draw on in order to inform the government and those of us engaged in this work about how we can do this better.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patry.

Mr. Wilfert, you have about two minutes.

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

In terms of the east Africa project, as an example, or China, what measurements do you use in order to gauge success?

The Chair: Mr. Goodridge.

Mr. William H. Goodridge: It's a good question, and a question that I've asked. I see the results because I actually have been involved in the east Africa projects myself, and sometimes the results take a few years to develop. In particular, in east Africa what we have done is attempted to empower the law societies so they have independence from government. That will give them greater confidence and the ability to speak out and represent citizens particularly on civil rights issues or human rights issues.

How do we measure the success? In some cases it may be a small change in the legislation that's empowering the law society. In other cases it will be to observe the law society's stepping up and asserting independence that they didn't have before and taking challenges to government where they think that's appropriate. I guess we have seen some results in particular in Ethiopia, where the law societies of several east African nations challenged the Ministry of Justice in that area to recognize an independent bar in Ethiopia, which actually doesn't exist at the moment.

How do we measure results? I've personally observed some tangible results, some slow steps forward. As far as measuring them on an annual basis goes, it's difficult.

• (0930)

Mr. John Hoyles: If I could just add to that, Mr. Chair, I've been ten years as COO of the Canadian Bar Association. I went to China just when we were sort of getting started on our China project. For the All China Lawyers' Association in those first years to actually bring forward recommendations for change, as was outlined in Mr. Goodridge's comments, would not have been thought of. The All China Lawyers' Association was originally very much attached to the Ministry of Justice. It's detaching itself, and it is more independent. It's not something you can measure by numbers, but you can see it in the way that change is coming.

The only thing I would add is that we have over 800 volunteer lawyers from across the country helping us in this work. There is that enthusiasm and that level of engagement because they see that they can actually make a difference by volunteering their time in these projects.

Ms. Robin L. Sully: I guess I would add from a management point of view that we do follow results-based management. We do set goals for each of our projects. We do measure those goals. In fact, we've taken a lead in terms of implementing results-based management and managing our projects to obtain results, I think, within CIDA in terms of that reporting. It's a struggle, because these things are not easy to measure. They're not quantifiable. Another problem is, quite frankly, that there aren't resources within these projects to allocate to monitoring and measuring. That's a huge challenge for us. I think it's a huge challenge for anybody who is working in this area.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

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

Good morning everyone.

This is an extremely important topic of discussion. Our wish is to provide more assistance to certain countries. We will be in a better position to make recommendations to achieve that goal if you can help us. I would imagine that your guiding principle is that there must be no impunity within the societies of bankrupt countries. You are prepared to assist with the process of good governance.

In your opinion, what should be our top priorities? Clearly, we cannot accomplish everything all at once. Given the lessons learned, what do you feel our priorities should be?

[*English*]

Mr. William H. Goodridge: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

In different countries, there will be different priorities. When you select your priorities in a different country, you may see that some levels of change are not possible, or they're not possible in the short term. A small example might be if you're trying to create a democratic election in China. That may be unattainable in the short term, so you are going to dedicate your energies to the civil society organizations, as we are doing right now. So the answer is that it wouldn't be fair to assume that one fix will fit all. There will be a different model for a different country.

I would say that an ideal model would include working both from the top level, the government level, the state institutions down, and at the same time from the civil society organizations, to keep the checks and balances on the authorities, to keep them in line or to challenge them to ensure human rights. So if there were an ideal model, you would be focusing on both levels. Sometimes, for political or economic reasons, that is not possible. So it's a great question, but there's no one magic fix.

Mr. John Hoyles: If I could add, Mr. Chair, I think our experience has shown that if you want to have development be robust in developing countries, if you do not have that underlying good governance, of which the key portion is rule of law, so that when

you're doing the work, when you want things to actually function— You need to know that the rules are in place, that everybody plays by the same rules, that no matter whether you're very poor or moving towards middle class in any of these countries, you have the ability to know that the infrastructure is there.

We just take it for granted that when a policeman stops you and gives you a speeding ticket, there's a process if you don't agree. But in developing countries, those processes aren't there. You need to have those processes in place so that not only will you have the aid that countries are giving to developing countries, but you'll also encourage the private sector to go into those countries and invest because they'll know that the rules of the game are going to be the same and not changing on a whim.

● (0935)

Ms. Robin L. Sully: I guess I would add that if you were going to put a priority, I think it would be good to put it on rule of law, for the reasons that John has suggested. And if you go around and you're travelling and talking to your colleagues who are working in this, and talking to the World Bank, I think you're going to find that this is something new on the agenda that everybody is struggling with. And Canada has a leg up. We're good at it. We have a lot more experience than a lot of other countries in this area. It's an area that we seemingly can work well in. We have strong institutions.

So perhaps this is an area... Not to sound self-interested, but it's been proved that rule of law, good governance, is the biggest index for the reduction of poverty. We're experienced. We're talented in that area. Canada should be putting a focus on this. There are a lot of tools, and there are a lot of organizations out there that can help you, that are keen and want to be engaged. I think we should take advantage of this.

Justice is fundamental to empowerment, and people want it. We see the results of not investing in this.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Barbot, for two minutes.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Thank you for joining us. You stated that Canada seems to engage more at a higher level, that is with justice officials and the Supreme Court, and that more effort needs to be directed at civil society groups.

Bearing this in mind, to what extent do you encourage Canadian NGOs to engage in activities aimed at educating the public? You didn't mention this aspect of their work and I'm curious to hear your views on this subject.

[*English*]

Mr. William H. Goodridge: I am strongly supportive. When you ask what I think about it, we would certainly agree with that, if we could empower or develop some resources for NGOs to assist public education on access to the lower courts, and for the courts themselves on developing the capacity to process litigants before them.

Ms. Robin L. Sully: You know, there's a challenge because most of our money goes bilaterally, so it goes into governments. And often in the countries we're working in, governments are not necessarily open to the engagement of civil society, because those are the voices that are often critical of government. The bar happens to be one of those, but of course there are other NGOs also. By funnelling money through the government, it's unlikely that you're going to be able to empower NGOs or people who normally have a voice against the government. So we have to think of more imaginative vehicles in terms of funding and engaging a broad range of stakeholders.

I don't think we'd ever say that you shouldn't engage a supreme court. We should. But we should be engaging at every level, including civil society, including engaging the public, so they understand their rights and they know that those rights are enforceable. It's not enough to tell people they have rights. If those rights are not enforceable and they don't see that they're enforceable, then you have a much larger problem than you had when they didn't even understand they had rights.

Mr. John Hoyles: I would simply say, to add to that, what we find when we're working in these countries is that they want to engage with the bar association and other NGOs that are not connected to government because they feel more comfortable in that they're not being pushed into a position. And the All China Lawyers Association comes back as an example of where we've been able to develop that relationship because we are not government.

One of the funny little experiences we had was in Kenya. When we started, one of the things was that the judges weren't talking to the lawyers at all. How we got them together was that we got some used computers. It's a common law system in Kenya, and they had for a number of years not been writing down the decisions. So how do you argue on a precedent basis when you have no decision? You say to the judge, "Well, Your Honour, do you remember that case a few years ago that you decided that's not written down? You decided this." So using the computers, we were able to get them to start recording cases and decisions so there would be a record. We were told the judges would never meet and talk to the lawyers in an informal setting. But by bringing them in and training them on these computers, we did bring them together.

But then you talk about measurement. It's a very small example, but you have dialogue going on between the bench and the bar, which in western countries is automatic. But it wasn't there. It's that kind of thing. It's because it was the CBA. It wasn't the Canadian government or the Department of Justice—it was an NGO—and I think that had a particular impact.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to the government side. Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you. I'll share my time with my colleague Bill.

I have two questions here. You're right that Canadians do have excellent reputation and expertise overseas in this issue. At the same time, you talked about local engagement. The new area coming out is these tribunals that have been set up, like the Rwanda genocide tribunal and all these things. I was there in Arusha, looking at the tribunal. There is a huge amount of expertise sitting in the tribunal—local expertise, not outside expertise.

The Rwanda tribunal is coming to an end very soon—by this year, I think it is. There is a big potential of losing all of this expertise that was gained in the law. Is there any way in which your area is pushing to see, say, that you are engaged with the governments of east Africa? There's a best opportunity right there to see how you can move to retain their expertise before it is lost.

This is a new area coming up. You have been all concentrating on helping the bar society and everything out there, but United Nations tribunals sitting around the world are something new that has come out. I think they're an area that we should look at to see that the expertise is not lost.

I have another question related to this. You were talking about federal spending on the rule of law and everything that you request of this. The committee has just passed Bill C-293, which says that aid should be focused on poverty reduction. What would happen to this? This would not be classified as aid, so how would we then be able to transfer money over there? What are your thoughts on that?

• (0940)

The Chair: Madam Sully.

Ms. Robin L. Sully: Perhaps I can start with the tribunals.

On the tribunals, it's very interesting in Arusha, because there are millions and millions of dollars being spent on the tribunal, but if you go down to the local court in Arusha, you can't get decisions because there's no paper. The lawyers have to take in their own paper to get a decision.

The discrepancy between the resources available to international tribunals and their connection with the local environment is a huge question. Most of the people working in the international tribunals are coming from around the world, so there's not a huge focus. Of course, there are some people coming from the whole east African area, but they're coming from all over Africa and some of the defence lawyers are also coming from Canada, as a matter of fact.

So there are absolutely resources there, and there's training there. There are some library resources that I think could be very useful. We should certainly capture those if we can.

But we would say that what's more important is to focus. There has also been a problem with those courts and how they relate to the domestic jurisdictions. There are some problems in Arusha and its relationship to the domestic jurisdiction of Rwanda.

Having said that, I think what we're focusing on broadly is capacity-building, and not just with lawyers, but with judges and with every segment in the country itself. While there are certain lessons to be learned from that, the impact will be useful, but I think a better approach is to continue to work domestically and build those institutions and give them the necessary resources to develop internally. Rwanda is a good example. A justice system that works is probably going to have a much bigger impact in Rwanda than the Rwanda tribunal.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: What about my second question?

Mr. William H. Goodridge: I'll try to tackle the second question.

I'm strongly of the view that if you put dollars into the rule of law, you have the greatest prospect of reducing poverty. The idea is that unless you create a system in which the poor and the vulnerable in society are able to assert their rights, you don't have much chance of eliminating poverty. Elimination of poverty is a legal and political process, not a process where you throw food at a situation of poverty. You have to create a structure to allow people to stand up for their rights.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: So Bill C-293, in your view, would allow you to get aid money? Is that what you think?

Mr. William H. Goodridge: I don't know all the details. Right now, I know there's a focus on poverty reduction. I know that about 30% of CIDA funding actually goes to grass roots organizations or civil society organizations that are directed at poverty reduction and that the Canadian Bar Association has been the beneficiary of some of that money. I'm not exactly sure of the legislation of which you're speaking.

Ms. Robin L. Sully: I think the World Bank has said they've done an index on all the efforts that they've had over time. They've said that the one index that made the most impact on the reduction of poverty was improving good governance. That's the one they can measure, of all the things they've done.

If you're looking at the millennium goals, I think we're saying it's understood that if all those specific interventions that are geared toward reducing poverty and empowering people are not funded or founded on good governance, they're bound to fail. If they don't have rule of law—Rule of law gives the poor a voice. The rich can abort the rules because they don't care about the rules. It's the poor who can rely on the rules and have something to exercise so that they have a voice. That's why it's so important.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Sully.

Mr. Casey, you have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Thank you very much.

I find this really interesting. I wasn't aware of this effort that the Bar Association has, and I applaud you for it. I'm sorry we didn't have this presentation about two weeks ago, because some of us, Alexa McDonough and I and two others, just came back from Kenya. We were there for a week, and it was a very educational experience. But most of the focus there is on health care, governance, and education. I don't think we heard anything about the justice system. Now, after hearing your presentation, it was obviously an omission on our part not to spend some time on it. I do agree absolutely that one of the key parts of democracy is a justice system that works, and also a free press and an elected government.

We met with the World Bank representative there, Colin Bruce, and we had a long chat with him. But again, there was a lot of discussion about governance and a lot of discussion about corruption. There were cases where governments or donor countries have either withheld money for NGOs and for good work or delayed the money or found a way around the government. I find your presentation fascinating. I applaud what you're doing, and I hope that we can help you do it.

In the case of education, it was fascinating to me that Canada, Britain, and some other countries have created a bank account in 18,500 elementary schools into which we put money directly into the bank accounts of the schools. It is run by the trustees of the school, the parents of the students, not the school executive, not the government. We've actually found a way to go around everything and go directly to the schools to make sure they buy books and instruction materials. I don't know if you can follow that model or not, but it's an interesting model, a way to make sure you get good value for the money.

Mr. Wilfert asked you how you judge your accomplishments. I'd like to start at the beginning. Where do you start? If you're working in a country—and I'm not referring to Kenya—where there is a lot of corruption in the government, how do you start your process?

Ms. Robin L. Sully: I guess we try to look at everything, and we find champions. Bill had mentioned champions. We look for champions. We look for people who want to make change. Then we look at the institution they represent. That's where we start. We look at how they fit into the broader system, and what kind of impact that would make. We try to engage them in terms of building their capacity to work and open up areas, always looking at— For instance, if we start with the bar, we still want to know. We don't want to just focus on the bar, because by themselves they can do little.

At some point we have to engage the government. Even though you're going around, at some point the government has to change. You have to think of how do we engage them to change them. That may be a longer-term goal, but we always have to be looking at that. We have to decide where our point of intersection is, where the champions are, and then how we're going to stage our approach so we can bring all those actors together some way. Perhaps we have to be satisfied with small changes to begin with, and hope that they snowball.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Sully.

We'll go to Madam McDonough.

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

Just before I raise a couple questions I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome back Madame Lalonde, whose participation was very much missed over the last while. I'm sure all members share the same feeling.

Maybe I'm just suffering from such culture shock as a result of having spent the last two weeks in Kenya and Uganda that I'm having a really hard time relating to where you're coming from. I have to be very honest about that. I agree with you absolutely that the absence of infrastructure of many kinds in sub-Saharan Africa is just a mind-boggling obstacle to making real advances, whether it's with respect to millennium development goals or any number of other indices that you might want to adopt. But I guess that after the trip that some of us have just taken, when you're looking at the absolute total absence of infrastructure for safe drinking water and sanitation, where World Bank policies have resulted in the annihilation of such education and health programs that were in existence, it's a bit of a leap to try to really grasp the application and the relevance of what you're proposing, maybe because it just seems fairly abstract from what we've been seeing.

I have a couple of very specific questions. You've made references to there needing to be a higher priority on rule of law. It's absolutely clear that there need to be measures taken and progress towards elimination of corruption, no question. I guess the issue is how best to do that. You've indicated that advocacy groups from outside just aren't going to cut it. So what you're really talking about is capacity-building through strengthening the rule of law. It worries me a lot if we're talking here about either/or.

I'll ask a couple of quick questions, because I really want you to take the time to address them.

My first question is where you think Canada is now in terms of meeting its international obligations undertaken again and again and again as part of the millennium development goal process and meeting the minimum—not the maximum, but the minimum—that has long been seen as the international standard for 0.7% of national income to be devoted to official development assistance.

Secondly, you've spoken about how putting in place rule of law will empower the poor and be a very effective poverty reduction tool and ensure access of the poor to legal representation. But actually what we've seen in Canada over the last dozen or more years is a significant erosion of programs that would actually give people living in poverty the opportunity to assert their rights, serious erosion to the point where now we're looking pretty bad in the world among developed countries in that regard. So I'm wondering if you could comment. I don't know whether there's a legal counterpart to "Physician, heal thyself", but I would think the bar society would want to play a role in addressing that.

Thirdly, sometimes it's important to look at your neighbours as well as just within. One of the things this committee has been very aware of, and particularly the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, is that in Colombia, for example, we have people being outright murdered for engaging in any kind of political activism, labour leaders assassinated by the thousands. I'm wondering if what you see is the relevance of what you're proposing, for example, to the situation in Colombia today and whether you've had any involvement in Central or South America around some of these obviously very serious legal requirements, or whether you would see the kind of thing you're proposing as having a relationship to that.

● (0950)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Mr. Hoyles.

Mr. John Hoyles: I'll take the last two questions first, if that's okay with you, Mr. Chair.

On the issue of rule of law, you made a comment about legal aid and access to justice in this country and the funding being cut. You may be aware that the Canadian Bar Association is suing the federal government and the B.C. government with a legal aid test case about the constitutional right to legal aid. So we're very aware; it's one of our top priorities.

But our experience, in the work we've done, is that if you look at it—and I can appreciate your having just come back from Kenya and Uganda—you wonder where to start. Our experience is you have to use the old wisdom to take small bites, and you'll make progress.

The example I would give you is of Cambodia. To go back to Mr. Casey's point, our starting point there was with a very small bar of 50 lawyers. Pol Pot did literally kill all the lawyers. The fact is, we have now been working with them for a number of years. We set up the training program—it was a partnership, actually, with Japan and with the Barreau de Lyon in France—to get a whole training program for lawyers started. That's where you're building the infrastructure so that the people can have a system they can rely on.

Concerning the Colombia example, I'll have Robin Sully speak to our experience in the Caribbean. My only general comment is that we have many more projects that we would be like to be involved in, but now the resources don't seem to be there to get the funding. Responsive projects are one of the best types of projects to do, where you identify a thing and make a proposal to CIDA or the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank and you do these types of things. Sometimes there's just not enough money to go around.

Robin, you may want to comment further.

● (0955)

Mr. William H. Goodridge: I'll make a few comments.

I know you've just been there, but I think that while we have lots of problems in Canada that we can't ignore, and we can even say there may be some levels of corruption and cronyism here in Canada and weaknesses in our rule of law, it's not even in the same stratosphere, or on the same page, as what the situation is in some of these developing countries, including Kenya and Uganda. The differences are unimaginable.

The Chair: Your time is up, so let them finish.

Mr. William H. Goodridge: I agree with you that when you see the basic needs, you'll say, gee whiz, how can we dedicate resources to the higher-level needs—and I say "higher-level" for the rule of law—if we have needs of water and food at the ground level? But the fact of the matter is that you can't have one without the other.

If you turn on the tap and deliver free drinking water but don't have a system of the rule of law with good governance in place, it's not going to continue. In other words, maybe the water will be diverted to the bigger farm, to the commercial farm or the wealthy. You have to turn on the tap yet and find a way to provide aid there, but you also have to have a rule-of-law system such that it will allow the people who are supposed to be getting that water to continue to get it, that it be clean, that you have a labour force that's reliable to fix it and all that structure that supports the operation of a country.

As to whether Canada is meeting its international obligations, I don't think so. I think Canada is a great model internationally, and we shouldn't be smug about how great things are in Canada. The fact is they are great in Canada, but we should be doing more internationally. Just because we have our house in order and have prosperity, and most of Canada has prosperity, shouldn't we be thinking of our neighbours in the global community? I don't think we do enough. The commitment we made 25 years ago was to give 0.7% in foreign aid, and we give—I don't know, maybe half that now.

Ms. Robin L. Sully: Not even half, yes.

Mr. William H. Goodridge: So are we doing a lot? No, I think we're a bit smug and I think we should be doing an awful lot more in the global community.

As a good example about whether we are having an impact, take the example I gave earlier about the constitutional amendment in Zimbabwe that all the law societies were upset about. What really triggered it was a lawyer, a leader in the law society of Zimbabwe who was a human rights advocate, a gorilla of a man who had such a high profile in Zimbabwe that he was untouchable by the government. In other words, he wasn't going to be arrested because he was in the paper all the time.

He would take all these cases on a pro bono basis, advocating human rights, gender equality, women's rights, and he would go to court. What sparked this protest was that the government wanted to take his passport. They amended the constitution so that they could take his passport, to muzzle him. When you ask whether we shouldn't be focusing on the other issues, here's a good example, where a lawyer who was speaking up and trying to have the constitution enforced was going to be muzzled.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. It's good to be back at this committee when we have these kinds of presentations. We appreciate that you were with us today.

We will also be able to have a record of everything that was said today so that we can look back when it comes to the report we'll be drafting.

Again, thank you.

We're going to suspend for a couple of moments and give our next guests the opportunity to take their seats.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (1000)

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order.

This is our second hour, and we have the privilege of having three guests with us.

First of all, we welcome Kevin Deveaux. Mr. Deveaux is an MLA from Nova Scotia. He is also the house leader of the New Democratic Party. Mr. Deveaux has had extensive experience working within the National Democratic Institute and other institutes. He has spent a lot of time working with different groups and has had some involvement with United Nation groups. Mr. Deveaux is resigning his seat soon and will be taking a position, I believe, with some United Nations organization in Vietnam, working with the less fortunate and doing what he can to help promote democracy and other things there. We welcome Mr. Deveaux.

Also, our colleague John Williams, member of Parliament for Edmonton—St. Albert, is speaking on behalf of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption, commonly known as GOPAC. It has become very well known around the world, thanks, I would add, in large part to the efforts of Mr. Williams. Appearing with Mr. Williams is Martin Ulrich, the executive director of GOPAC. We welcome you both. Before Christmas, when we were working through other legislation, we bumped you, so thank you both for making your testimony available to us this morning.

We'll have opening remarks from both Mr. Williams and Mr. Deveaux and then we'll go into the first round.

Mr. Deveaux, we'll begin with you. Welcome.

• (1005)

Mr. Kevin Deveaux (Member of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee.

You were very kind in noting my career change that is coming up, but I wanted to briefly give people some understanding of my background. You noted that I've worked with the National Democratic Institute. I've done extensive work in Kosovo. I've also done work in the People's Republic of China, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, and Cambodia. As you noted, starting in March I'll be working with the UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme, on a full-time basis, in Hanoi in Vietnam.

My work has been mainly in the areas of governance. When I talk about governance, I mean parliamentary and executive. But I've also done work with political parties, with election monitoring, and with civil society. I wanted to start by saying that I come here not as an academic but as a practitioner. I'm someone who has done this work for a number of years, and obviously, with my change in career I'm committed to it.

So my perspective is one of someone who, on the ground, has been doing this work with governments and with civil society. I wanted to give you that perspective, and hopefully your questions will reflect it.

I want to talk particularly about what's wrong with the current approach of the Canadian government.

One of the things I want to say from being in the field is that Canada is not a serious player in the area of democratization development. When you look at countries such as the United Kingdom with its Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the Americans with NED, NDI, and IRI, the Germans with their *Stiftungs*, and others, most people would say that Canada has not even begun to present itself at an international level in the areas particularly of parliamentary and executive and political party development.

I say that, but I would also want to note that Canada does have—and I think I heard this from the last group as well—a lot of excellent individuals who are doing incredible work, wonderful work. I think that's something we need to appreciate. The other part of it is that there are a lot of organizations within Canada that are receiving money from CIDA and from the government and that are doing good work. I just think it's not being properly presented or sold, and that may be part of the issue as well. From hearing some of the testimony earlier and reading some of the testimony from your earlier hearings, I think those groups are doing good work, but I'm not sure it's being presented in a manner that is being respected.

Let me talk about what I see as a new approach and some of the benefits of a new approach. One is, if we truly invest in governance development, we would have access. As a part of a foreign policy, of foreign affairs, I don't think we can overestimate the importance of access. By providing funding for development in the areas of political party development, civil society development, parliamentary development, executive and judicial development, we would be creating programs that would directly impact the leaders within certain countries.

Of course, in return that creates access. That access would obviously bring leverage on issues of trade and human rights, if we have disputes on a bilateral or a multilateral basis. If for no other reason, consider democracy development as an ability to open doors when we are doing work in those countries, if we need their support in other areas.

I also want to say that it can be very cost-effective. I know from being in the field that for about \$2.5 million a year per country, Canada can be not only a major, but the most significant player in a country. That's based on my experiences in post-conflict societies, Kosovo to be specific. So \$2.5 million per year per country can give Canada a very good program, probably the best program in many countries. For \$25 million a year, for example, Canada could be a serious player in ten countries around the world. If we pick those countries appropriately, based on our history, based on our diversity, I think we can have a lot of impact in those countries.

And of course the obvious one that others have noted in the past is freedom and security. Any benefit, any investment in this area can result in better democracy and more security.

• (1010)

When I talk about this, what is it that I, with my short time, wanted to note? There are two things. The structure that I would recommend is twofold. First, I think Canada needs a funding agency that specifically deals with democratization, that would provide grants and funding to organizations, much as the National Endowment for Democracy in the United States, the NED, does. I

think that is a good way of doing it. You'd have an organization that is specifically focused on democratization development, and I think that could work.

Secondly, I'd like to see something like the Westminster Foundation in the UK. Whereas the Germans and the Americans have moved to partisan-based groups, I would recommend a multi-partisan group like the Westminster Foundation, one that would create a situation whereby all the parties could come together to do executive, judicial, and parliamentary development, and election monitoring and political party development. I think that would be good.

Also, I think, through the Canadian version of the NED, there could be smaller contractors or subcontractors as well who could be involved in the process. And I think that is also something that would create competition and would allow for smaller organizations to have an opportunity to provide their expertise as well.

In conclusion, I want to say that Canada needs a made-in-Canada approach to foreign policy. If we're going to do that, then we need democratization development. We need to be able to have the funding that gives us access to the higher levels within government, civil society, political parties, and the judiciary.

Finally, I would like to say that there are a lot of Canadians who are doing this work on a full-time basis. They're doing it for British organizations. They're doing it for American organizations. They're doing it for the UN. They're doing it for the Commonwealth. There is a vast array of Canadians who've built up a lot of experience in this area, and listening to them, talking to them, I know that they often say they wish they could do this for a Canadian organization, that they wish we could have a Canadian version of NDI or the Westminster Foundation.

In conclusion, I would ask you to consider the possibility of a Canadian version of the other organizations. I think it could have a great impact on the world and would allow Canadians to do the work they do so well, which they'd be proud to do for a Canadian organization.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Deveaux.

Mr. Williams, you have ten minutes.

Mr. John Williams (Chair, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I believe my remarks have been distributed in both official languages.

First, let me congratulate the committee on its timely study into a subject that is of the utmost importance today.

We are learning again from our experience in some parts of the world that democracy does not come out of the barrel of a gun, nor can we say that democracy has arrived when elections are held that do not produce a parliament and a government that enjoy the confidence of the nation.

You will note that I said “a parliament and a government”. They are two separate and distinct institutions, parliament being the very heart of democracy. Government is the executive, and the executive power is vested in a prime minister or a president with a cabinet chosen by him who serve at his pleasure. Tremendous power is invested in a prime minister or a president; however, in a democracy there is a constraint on his powers: he can only exercise his powers with the consent of parliament, which represents the people.

Parliament is an institution of accountability, not an institution of management. It does not run the government, but it has authority to approve government plans, oversee government actions, and hold government accountable for its performance. Parliaments need to be strong, because strong leaders can only be constrained by strong institutions.

I illustrate this relationship with my hourglass theory. We are all familiar with the standard triangle of an organizational structure. In sovereign nations the people at the bottom of the triangle are served by the public service. The public service in turn is accountable to and takes its direction from cabinet ministers, who serve at the pleasure of the prime minister. This is the standard organizational triangle, which I call the service triangle. There is one person at the top, and it gets wider and larger towards the bottom. But without democratic accountability or constraint that person is a dictator, and society serves the dictator.

To provide democratic accountability, parliaments have evolved as institutions with constitutional authority to hold the prime minister or president accountable for his or her actions. Therefore above the service triangle there is an inverted triangle, which I call the governance triangle. Government reports to parliament, which in turn is accountable through open and independent media to the people at the top.

Parliament, in a democracy, has four fundamental responsibilities: first, to approve on behalf of the people legislation proposed by the government; second, to approve on behalf of the people the budget proposed by the government for it to raise through taxation the revenues needed to run the country; third, to approve on behalf of the people the estimates, which are the line-by-line expenditures giving government the authority to spend specified amounts on specific programs; and fourth—and I think the most important, Mr. Chairman—government reports to and is accountable to parliament.

Given these four responsibilities of parliament, it is easy to see that parliament should be in the driver's seat. In fact, in a properly functioning democracy, ultimate political power is vested in the people. They delegate responsibility for oversight of government to parliament, but retain the right to discipline the members of parliament at election time.

In an open public forum, parliament approves legislation, budgets, and estimates requested by government and holds government accountable for its actions. Parliament also retains the right to withhold consent, to dismiss the government, or to impeach the president.

Government in turn uses the civil service to deliver services to the people and holds the bureaucracy accountable for its performance and delivery of services.

Mr. Chairman, that is the management model, the service triangle, and the accountability model—the governance triangle—of a democratic nation.

Ultimate political power is widely distributed to minimize the opportunity for improper abuse. However, in many countries that profess to be democratic, corruption and abuse of power are out of control. Why? It is because parliament fails in its obligation to be an independent overseer of government and instead becomes co-opted by government into accepting its agenda. The democratic accountability model of the governance triangle cannot work when parliament is shuffled off to the side or is subverted by government.

Too many parliamentarians in the world, if they cannot be won over by government through reasoned debate, can be bought. If they can't be bought, they can be intimidated. If they cannot be intimidated, they can be defeated at the next election through manipulation. If they cannot be defeated, they can be imprisoned, and for the obstinate few, Mr. Chairman, who steadfastly refuse to be co-opted into a corrupt regime, there is always assassination and elimination.

Strong leaders need to be constrained by strong institutions, and the strongest institution in any country should be its parliament, the voice of the people.

• (1015)

Only parliament has the constitutional authority to constrain leaders and governments, demand accountability from them, and dismiss them if they deem it appropriate to do so. No other organization in any country has that kind of power. But too often parliament is a parliament in name only, a puppet of the government, allowing its society to suffer.

It's a simple concept. When parliament fails in its responsibility to hold government accountable, government will fail in its responsibility to run the country. When government fails in its responsibilities, society fails. Therefore parliament is the bedrock. Make parliament work well and society will prosper.

But when parliament fails in its duty of oversight, government will lose its moral fibre, and corruption will set in. They will serve themselves by taxing the poor for their own benefit. They will steal the cash allocated to build schools and hospitals. They will demand bribes from their citizens. They will manipulate the courts and the regulatory agencies for their own benefit. They will suppress legitimate democratic dissent. They will intimidate the media. They will fix elections and thwart the democratic process. They will even change the constitution to keep themselves in power.

The lack of oversight by parliament allows corruption to flourish, and we all know that corruption kills economic prosperity. If you look at the Transparency International corruption perceptions index, you will quickly see an inverse relationship between corruption and prosperity. Economic development, respect for human rights, and the application of the rule of law are all responsibilities of government, but when Parliament fails to hold government accountable, government fails to serve its citizens. Therefore it is up to us as parliamentarians.

Parliamentary independence and democracy around the world are in dire need of some help, and I am pleased to tell you that help is on the way. In October 2002, 170 parliamentarians from around the world gathered in our own House of Commons to create the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption, GOPAC. They adopted a constitution and elected a board and executive. I was elected the chair of the organization.

GOPAC has one mission: to make parliaments more effective as democratic institutions of oversight of government. The organization has three pillars to support this mission statement. First is peer support for parliamentarians who are travelling the difficult and sometimes dangerous road of standing up against corruption. Second is education for parliamentarians. We send our young people to university to become lawyers, doctors, engineers, and accountants, but who trains the parliamentarians in the skills of oversight of government? Third is leadership for results. Talk is not sufficient. It is time that we as parliamentarians demanded accountability from our governments and took a leadership role in fighting corruption to ensure honesty and integrity in governance.

Last September, in Arusha, Tanzania, GOPAC held its second global conference, with approximately 250 parliamentarians from around the world in attendance. To provide substance to the organization and demonstrate that we want to provide leadership for results, the conference adopted eight resolutions. Each resolution called for a global task force of parliamentarians to animate debate and promote its adoption around the world. These resolutions range from the institution of parliament, to promoting anti-corruption legislation and international financial transparency.

If we want development, prosperity, peace, respect for human rights, and a serious reduction in corruption around the world, it will only come from internal development of democratic principles within a nation. That is why GOPAC is so important. GOPAC seeks out the reform-minded parliamentarians who are committed to honesty and integrity, to build their skills and political capacity to hold the government accountable.

Development agencies may offer assistance but cannot do the job for them. I am pleased to say that the development community is now seeing democratic development as fundamental to building prosperity. The Government of Canada is also recognizing the same, and I thank them and the Canadian International Development Agency for their support to GOPAC.

I therefore ask that you recognize in your report to Parliament the importance of parliamentary independence in a democracy; that democracy can only be built from within a country, albeit with the help from outside; and that GOPAC is perhaps the best vehicle to reach parliamentarians around the world who are committed to a democratic agenda of ethics, oversight, and probity.

Thank you very much.

•(1020)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Deveaux, we'll go into the first round of questioning. It will probably be a five-minute round because we'll have some committee business.

Mr. Wilfert, please.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming.

Mr. Deveaux, congratulations on your new assignment in Vietnam. It's an area I know quite well.

I'm interested in asking about this idea of a central structure, and you mentioned the national endowment in the U.S. What do you think have been the constraints in terms of us not establishing something of that nature?

Secondly, our approaches tended to be very scattered. For example, in Vietnam, through CIDA, we have obviously worked on judicial issues, as an example, human rights issues, but never a long enough consistent approach, often top down rather than bottom up.

We heard from the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, which indicated, through their international centre for local government, a proposal for \$15 million to CIDA to look at issues of governance at the local level, the development of laws at the local level. Maybe you could comment on that kind of approach rather than this top down.

•(1025)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilfert.

Mr. Deveaux.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: Thank you.

I'll take your second question first. Obviously, local governance and democratization development are the hot topics nowadays and very much tie into anti-corruption as well, the theory being that the more you can provide support and autonomy to some extent at a local level, the more you're able to ensure you can have some controls and therefore you can eliminate corruption. So I believe that anything we can do at a local level can pay off, and the ground level is much better.

As to your question of constraints, I must admit that my work has always been with American or international organizations, so my work is not directly with Canadian-funded organizations, but I will say that my observations anecdotally are that I don't think the system we have in Canada has a lot of respect for democratization as a form of funding. It's much more based on bricks and mortar. It's based on education. It's based on building schools. It's based on health care. Those are very admirable development goals, I agree, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of recognition or respect for the fact that there also needs to be some serious commitment to governance. I have not seen that. That's why I think you need a new organization with separate funding that does have that commitment, because I think the challenge of having to revamp current structures, current organizations, is too much of a challenge.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: I was asking as well what kind of mandate you think a new structure should have and what kinds of tools it would need to be effective.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: The tools are funding, obviously.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Besides the funding aspect.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: I like the concept of Canada focusing on a few countries but investing significant funds in them. Again, from places like Kosovo and others, I can say that \$2 million or \$2.5 million Canadian can get you to be the most significant funder and can develop an impressive role for Canada in those countries. So instead of a scattergun approach where you may have 30 or 40 countries, I would recommend that the mandate be on intensive support for ten countries or so, so you end up having a significant impact in those countries.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilfert.

Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Thank you.

Good day, gentlemen. You recommend the creation of an independent agency to handle issues that concern you. Yet, it seems the trend should be toward having a much more global vision of Canadian aid. You yourself said that maybe Canada should focus its efforts on doing more for one country in particular.

Still on the same subject, you establish a link between corruption and prosperity and it's clear that one is inversely proportional to the other. I'm surprised that you do not establish any kind of connection between corruption and poverty because quite often, even though the people with whom you do business, namely the parliamentarians, are not directly...Often, parliamentarians are themselves poor. Nevertheless, people can be lured by money and by all kinds of things, aside from the need to eat every day. However, because of global circumstances, people often have few options when it comes to escaping poverty.

How do you combine all of these elements?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Deveaux.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: I don't want to come here and sound like democratization development is the panacea, that it is the answer to all the questions. But what I can say is this: democratization allows Canada, at the senior official level, whether that be at a local government level or at a national level, the opportunity to provide a perspective that is Canadian. I think that is what's missing.

From my perspective and that of others in the field, Canadians are doing great work, and Canada has something to offer that no other country can. You'll be amazed at how many Canadians are doing this work, particularly for American organizations, because the Americans have a system that is very similar to maybe Latin America but isn't commonly used in Europe, or in Africa, or in Asia. Our system, our parliamentary system, is much more common, and Canadians have a much better opportunity, based on our experience politically, to provide input.

Is that going to solve poverty? Not directly. But what it can do, I would say, is that by creating a democracy—and I think this was said by someone who just presented in the last hour—governance and democracy are very strong indicators of prosperity eventually. This is planting the seed that will eventually lead to a much more prosperous society, a rule of law, and so on, but it starts by development that would work with the senior officials.

• (1030)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Barbot, you have two minutes left.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I see.

Are we to understand then that democratic development elsewhere is a function first and foremost of the level of development of Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: You talked about having Canadians who work abroad assigned to their area of expertise. Should one of Canada's main international aid goals be the development of Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: Well, of course. For Canadians within Canada—and I think Ms. McDonough raised this in the last hour as well—we have a lot of issues here at home that we need to deal with. But any time Canada as a national government is going to talk about democratization development, it needs to consider the whole process.

It isn't just about development. Obviously that's good in itself, but at the same time, we also have to recognize that it's part of our foreign policy. It has to fit into an integral component of our foreign policy, and as part of that I would suggest that things like access and cost-effectiveness need to be considered as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Deveaux.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you.

Very quickly, first of all to John Williams, of course I'm well aware of GOPAC and your contribution. Good job. I just want to say that. Carry on. We're very happy that you've taken on this task from this organization.

It's having an impact. In my talks with parliamentarians, both in east Africa and the rest of the world, they are recognizing the importance of the role of parliament as you have stated and their own responsibilities, which they have to do. Of course they are facing insurmountable odds at times, corruption and everything, but slowly and surely we'll climb the mountain. We have to take those steps, which your organization is doing. So I want to commend you, John, on that.

To Kevin, while I'll agree with you that some changes are required to some things, I will not agree with you at all in saying that Canada's policy and work by Canadians has not been done in the past. I have sat in this committee for almost seven years and I've seen a tremendous amount of work being done by Canadians, whether they are inside Canada or outside, on foreign policy. We came back, and contrary to that, because we don't have 0.07%—which Alexa will keep saying—I will tell you, we do have the respect of a lot of countries around the world and a lot of aid organizations for our expertise and the way we have been delivering it.

You mentioned something, and I agreed with you before, that there were 104 countries. CIDA is now focused on 25 countries to make sure that there is what you want to call this thing.

So I think we should pat ourselves on the back too. We should not constantly say that we haven't done it. We have done a great job, and it is recognized. But there's always room for improvement, so we'll carry on with this room for improvement and with the study of democratic development. There is room for improvement, so we'll move in that direction on this thing.

That said, I don't have much more to say.

The Chair: Mr. Casey, we'll go to you.

Mr. Bill Casey: Something that's puzzled me—and I've been fortunate enough to travel around a little—is that, especially in the African countries, they call themselves democracies, but they're not really democracies. In my view, they're dictatorships with a token parliament. The parliamentarians are paid a lot of money, but they have no staff, no authority, no access to information, and no accountability to the government. They're still called democracies, and they're still called parliaments. They use that to access international programs and international recognition.

Is it possible to have a grade of democracy or to recognize that some of these democracies aren't really democracies? Is that a possibility? It really strikes me when I go to these places that parliamentarians have no tools to work with. They have no access to information, no free press, nothing. It strikes me that it's a figment of their imagination that they're democracies. What's the answer?

• (1035)

The Chair: Mr. Williams.

Mr. John Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Casey is right: many countries that call themselves democracies are that in name only.

Democracy means that a government is held accountable. That's the fundamental concept. Here in Canada corruption is under control because governments are held accountable. All through the developed world there are parliaments that hold governments accountable. That is democracy. It's not the fact that you have a building where people meet and vote to give their president or prime minister what he wants. It's the fact that they're held accountable publicly before the people through an independent media. When that doesn't work, the whole system falls apart.

Therefore, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman—and I agree with much of what Kevin has said—we should be supporting the democratic development of the institution. Strong leaders can be constrained

only by strong institutions. We have to build the institution of parliament, which is the only institution that has the power to fire governments and so on.

Therefore, I think we should, as Canadians, be putting money into organizations such as GOPAC that identify the reform leaders in any parliament. No matter how much corruption there is, I believe there is somebody in every parliament that believes in honesty, integrity, ethics, and probity. We need to help them.

Some people are putting their lives on the line here. I think of the chair of the anti-corruption commission in Nigeria. When I talked to him, I asked whether he was a little apprehensive. He said that yes, he would be assassinated, but that it's better to die young for a good cause than to die old and have done nothing.

These people need support because they're trying to do something: build democratic accountability. That is why with GOPAC, which is reaching right into the parliaments and finding these people, bringing them together, and giving them tools, education, support, and so on, something can be done.

Mr. Bill Casey: Other than GOPAC, what organizations could work at this in the same direction?

Mr. John Williams: There's an organization like GOPAC that engages parliamentarians. There's UNDP and others that engage the support mechanisms, the training of parliamentary personnel, and so on in trying to provide the model legislation and the UN Convention against Corruption.

I'm not aware of any organization besides GOPAC that actually engages the parliamentarian and brings together the reform-minded parliamentarians who want to see something get better.

Mr. Bill Casey: Do you think organizations like the United Nations should recognize that some countries that pretend they're democracies aren't?

Mr. John Williams: The United Nations as an organization comprises governments. For them to go around with scorecards really isn't going to achieve very much. They need to be doing things. Because they're an organization of governments, they are never motivated to look at themselves. That's why we have to build parliaments. As I said, strong leaders can be constrained only by strong institutions, and that means parliaments. Corrupt governments are not that interested in fostering a healthy strong parliament that's going to hold them accountable. In fact, it's the opposite. Therefore, the UN is not the vehicle.

The UN supports GOPAC. Again, with the support of the UN, we held a conference in Jordan back in December. Mr. Ulrich was there. At the same time, they held a conference of state parties on the UN Convention against Corruption to engage parliamentarians to push for legislation on the UN Convention against Corruption. At the same time, the countries that had ratified the convention were trying to expand the number of countries that would ratify it.

They have to go hand-in-hand: governments and parliaments. Parliaments, in my opinion, have been far too weak; they've been ignored, underfunded, and dominated by their executives. That has to change if we want the world to change.

•(1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

We'll go to Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There are three questions I'd like to ask, and there's never enough time. But I really want to thank Kevin Deveaux for making it clear that we're talking here not about either/or but about both/and.

I think it's quite frightening, actually, if we would envision an allocation from the existing pathetically, woefully inadequate allocation to meet our ODA obligations redirected to the projects you're here talking about. Yet it would be absolutely ridiculous for any of us who have had the privilege, as elected members, to travel and see on the ground what's happening in many countries not to recognize that corruption is a very serious problem. There's no question about it.

To try to get at this a little bit, I'd like to take the example of Kenya, where we have just visited. The single biggest devastation to that country today is the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Bill Casey, help me here. There is a parliament of I think 314 members—it's roughly the same as ours—in which there is not a single member of parliament who will have the words “HIV/AIDS” come off their lips, let alone advocate on behalf of a devastated population, most of whom are dying of HIV/AIDS or are living positively with HIV/AIDS or are seriously affected because someone in their family is. Certainly many in their community are. Yet not a word is uttered. It is never mentioned in parliament.

Meanwhile, you have funds allocated on a constituency-by-constituency basis for constituency-related programs and services that are absolutely 100% at the discretion of parliamentarians. We heard accounts—and I met with people on several occasions who gave testimony—of how those funds are 100% controlled by the elected member, with no accountability. And in many cases it is not even made known to the constituents. Where the constituents have tried to get at the money and ask for transparency and accountability, they've clearly been shut out. In one case, I was told by a very reliable source whose testimony was confirmed by others, where the constituency funds were made available in some cases, the elected member asked for a cut of the money as a condition of getting the money.

I guess my question, in that scenario, is this: Where do you get started on the relationship-building to move forward with democratic development without a single, solitary person in Parliament who's prepared to speak about transparency and accountability or to speak about the single greatest devastation that's happening to people's lives in Kenya?

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Go ahead, Mr. Deveaux.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux: Thank you.

That's a challenge if they're not even willing to say the words. I guess part of it is that I believe in a holistic approach. So start with the political parties. Start with the youth within those political parties.

I've heard others in reading testimony to this committee, and I think I want to reiterate this point: democratization development can't be done in the short term; it has to be done in the long term. If nothing else, start with the younger members of political parties, where they are eager to learn, and work with them. Maybe it will take time, but in five years or ten years you're going to have a process by which you're going to have political parties that are ready to talk about these issues.

At the same time, I think there are political parties that aren't in power right now that will be eager to get to power. They would be prepared to work as they need to in order to win elections. Kenya does have elections, and therefore I think there's an opportunity to work with the parties in Parliament in that way.

Third is the civil society. If you have a robust civil society that is funded in a way that it's able to expose these kinds of things—MPs who have funding that is completely discretionary—I think you can begin to build a system that is much more accountable and will therefore require accountability in parliamentarians.

•(1045)

The Chair: Mr. Williams, do you want to comment on that?

Mr. John Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. McDonough is right that it's very difficult. In Kenya, for example, I believe members of parliament are paid \$165,000 U.S. a year. That's enough to get anybody along quite well in Kenya.

John Githongo, as you know, was the chair of the anti-corruption select committee. He had to flee for his life, and is now supported by IDRC here in Canada, and will be here later this year.

Where do you start? I believe that in every parliament there is always somebody who believes in honesty and integrity. They may have their head down, because it will get shot off if they put it up too high. I remember Musikari Kombo, who is going to be running for president in Kenya and is a member of GOPAC. He is trying to speak out for honesty and integrity. The previous president, Mr. Arap Moi, tried to discredit him by giving land to his son so that he could show that he was involved in corruption.

It's a very difficult situation. When there's one person wanting to stand up against a whole government, with all the powers that government has, it is a dangerous game, truly a dangerous game. That is why they need to know who their friends are, not only in the country, but around the world.

There's a big difference, as you know, between elected members and the support mechanisms that we have in a parliament. They both have to be improved. This is why GOPAC focuses on the elected members. There are many other programs, and perhaps there should be more, to support the technical support of parliamentarians so that we have the resources.

Musikari Kombo, when I first met him from Kenya, and he was a member of the opposition at the time, said his total resources were access to one of two telephones on the wall in the hall, and most of the time they don't work. That's it. You think about what we have so that we can hold the government accountable: we have access to information, the right to call witnesses, and so on and so forth, all in a public domain, reported when necessary. Contrast that with access to two telephones for the whole country—no stationery, no office, no staff, nothing.

Now we have a president who ran on an anti-corruption agenda, and it's falling back. But we cannot afford to not keep trying. We must keep trying.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

The thing I have appreciated about this is that we've heard from three separate groups this morning, from the Canadian Bar Association and from Mr. Deveaux, who is an individual but who has a long tenure in working with this, and it hasn't been just our group as the only one that can do it. Mr. Williams says that we need more groups, like Mr. Deveaux, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, those types of things that are laying the groundwork. It's so many different pieces of the puzzle.

We appreciate you coming and giving us a little snapshot of how you are involved in this kind of thing. I know that as we've looked at democratic development, all these little pieces somehow start to fit together. I hope that is what we see happening here. Thank you for being here.

We are going to suspend very briefly. We're going to move into committee business. We have two or three motions that we want to look at, and also another piece of business that we need to take care of very quickly. We would ask you to come back here very quickly, maybe not even to leave our seats. We can thank the witnesses at a later date. Don't leave and thank everyone, or we'll never get back here.

An hon. member: We're here for you.

The Chair: All right.

Committee, we want to move into committee business as quickly as possible. Before we come to the motions—I think there are two or three notices of motion that are here—we want to, just for way of planning—There is a conference on democracy that is sponsored by the Democracy Council in Ottawa on February 15. We need a motion from this committee if we are going to make application to go over to the Congress Centre, where I believe it's being held.

There are a number of different groups that are being brought in, including the speaker of Georgia, who will be making a presentation at noon hour, who would like to speak to us just of how they have watched democracy develop in Georgia. There are a number of different groups that will be there making representation. We have an opportunity as a committee to swing over there, at least for the two hours that our committee would normally meet. But we do need a motion in order to do that.

Madame Lalonde.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: When is the meeting scheduled to take place?

[*English*]

The Chair: February 15.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: On February 15th?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Angela Crandall): Yes. I believe all Members received an invitation Monday.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'm sorry, but I didn't see it. I read a great deal.

I don't have a problem with that. I can move—

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes. There were invitations that went out. I'm not certain if the new members of the committee got the invitations. But it is available on our meeting day, and the department and whatever else have all these different groups coming in. We're invited to stay even longer, but especially for those two hours. If the question is do we know which groups are presenting during our two hours, the answer is no. I don't have that schedule yet.

In order to facilitate our meeting at the Congress Centre, and there is no travel, we can just walk down there, but we do have to get permission to leave the Hill. That's what we're asking for, a motion so that basically if we decide to go we can then go down.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I so move.

[*English*]

The Chair: Merci.

Do we need a seconder on that?

The Clerk: No.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: All right. I would also say that we have another committee that meets at 11 o'clock, so we want to deal with these motions appropriately.

First listed on the agenda is a notice of motion by the Honourable Albina Guarnieri.

Madam, would you present your motion, please?

Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):

Two weeks ago I provided the committee notice of my intent to issue a cordial invitation to the newest member of this committee and our old colleague, Mr. Wajid Khan, an invitation to share the secrets of his Middle East mystery tour with the committee and with Canadians who have already received the bill for his voyage of discovery. I understand that Madame Lalonde shares the public's enthusiasm to learn whether Mr. Khan's journey was an epiphany that showed him the wisdom of the Prime Minister's policies on Israel. Or did his recommendations ask that the Prime Minister see the error of his ways and reverse course on key issues? As such, I understand Madame Lalonde will be offering a friendly amendment to the following motion.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: *C'est ça.*

Hon. Albina Guarnieri: I'll read my motion into the record:

That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development invite Mr. Wajid Khan, the Member of Parliament for Mississauga—Streetsville, and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Middle Eastern and South Asian Affairs, to appear before the committee in order to present and discuss his report, or reports, presented to the Prime Minister with respect to the Middle East.

Madame Lalonde has a friendly amendment.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: May I say right away what I would add, Mr. Chairman?

[English]

The Chair: Yes, Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: At the end of Ms. Guarnieri's text, I would add the following: "to share his observations and findings concerning his recent visit to the Middle East", so that we can ask him questions of a more general nature. Among other things, an article in the *Globe and Mail* caught my attention. Any aid we can secure for the Middle East is appreciated.

[English]

The Chair: Madam Guarnieri accepts that as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Obhrai, would you like to speak to the motion as amended?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On this motion brought by Madame Albina Guarnieri, while we understand that in the context of Afghanistan and all these things, and that Madame Lalonde has a motion, and while we want to do this, however, the precedent from your own government has been that when they had special advisers appointed, never once have they ever made public what they have said to the Prime Minister. I refer to Madame Mobina Jaffer, who was a special envoy to Sudan; we refer to Roméo Dallaire. So this has been a precedent from your own government, that never before has advice been shared that was going to the Prime Minister.

Secondly, the appointment of Mr. Wajid Khan was to advise the Prime Minister of Canada. His appointment was not to advise us, and neither was it approved by the committee or by anything out here to say that he would make a representation to the committee or anybody else. He has done what he was asked to do by the Prime Minister. He has given the report to the Prime Minister. It is with the

Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister can decide whatever course of action he wants to take based on the advice he has received.

So in light of these factors, I don't think it is an appropriate motion. I would probably say it has more to do with, as Madame Albina Guarnieri said in her presentation, that we had a wrong policy toward Israel, and this thing leads us to go toward a more political thing than what the committee should be doing. So I think, based on that, we will be opposing this motion.

• (1055)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

Maybe at this juncture I should also welcome Mr. Khan to this committee.

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

The Chair: Certainly we're going to hear from him one way or the other in our committee. It's good to have his input on the committee, but we will come back to Madam Guarnieri and the motion on appearing as a special witness.

Hon. Albina Guarnieri: This is just a very quick rebuttal. The motion is pretty straightforward, and regardless of his current status, he is free to turn down Canadians' right to know, but he did make public statements to the effect that he would make his findings public. We just heard from Mr. Williams a rather succinct and very pertinent account of accountability, and that is what this motion attempts to do. It's pure and simple.

The Chair: In other words, this motion, in your testimony, is more about accountability than about finding out exactly the information that was passed to the Prime Minister in regard to the issue he was asked to report on?

Hon. Albina Guarnieri: It is about the public's right to know. The public has paid the tab for this trip, and the fact that Mr. Khan made public statements that he would share his knowledge should be considered.

I understand from a clip I saw that even the foreign affairs minister wasn't privy to the findings. This committee always attempts to assist the minister in his work, and hopefully it will shed some light.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam

Next is Mr. Wilfert, and then Mr. Patry.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Did I not ask to be recognized?

[English]

The Chair: Okay, we have a whole list here, and I can tell you we have another committee meeting here in two minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, I was going to say what Bernard said, so he can go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Patry: I just want to point out to Mr. Obhrai that in the past there were special envoys from our previous government, the Liberal government. One of them was Mr. David Pratt. Mr. Pratt went to Sierra Leone. There was a public report, and this report was given to every member of Parliament.

That's just to let you know about this. All the special envoys have reported.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patry.

Next are Mr. Obhrai, Madam McDonough, and Madame Lalonde.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I just want to say this. Again we come back to this.

I have a very short question in rebuttal to Albina when she says that. The prerogative is the Prime Minister's. Your prime ministers had all these things over here, so suddenly you can't tie and close that chapter back and suddenly bring this, now that it is an accountability for us, but it wasn't accountability for you guys when you were in the government and everything.

No, no, let me just finish; it's my turn to say it.

You did mention that there was public funding. That applies to your advisers as well when they did it under public funding, for the simple reason that they were advising the Prime Minister, and it is the Prime Minister's prerogative. That is the same thing applying here. There are no double standards being applied here.

Our position is that the advice has been given to the Prime Minister, and that is why the Prime Minister appointed him.

Thank you.

The Chair: Madam McDonough is next.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't want to get embroiled in a battle between what the Liberals did and what the Conservatives think they don't have to do because the Liberals didn't do it, although I have to note that I remember very well Mobina Jaffer's reporting to this committee very capably and very thoroughly on her work as a special envoy to Sudan, and I don't know if anybody has spoken as many times publicly in detail around his involvement as Roméo Dallaire, so I'm a bit skeptical about the suggestion that both of them were gagged and didn't want to speak. I think they both were very forthcoming and actually very generous about sharing their observations.

I have one regret about the wording of the motions before us. Frankly, I would have felt more comfortable to support Francine Lalonde's motion in the first place, because I don't think the issue is so much the actual report to the Prime Minister if the Prime Minister is absolutely adamant that he will not allow the report to be shared. It may well be that Wajid Khan, who is a member of this committee, would favour sharing it, but the Prime Minister won't let him; I guess he'll have to speak to that.

I think the point is that at public expense and with a public mission, Mr. Khan went to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. This committee has been very much seized with these issues, and we would like to hear from him his observations, his conclusions, and his findings.

I don't know whether, in the spirit of trying to get what we want, which is to have an accounting and sharing of experiences, there could be a further friendly amendment, or whether Madam Guarnieri would agree that the point is not the sharing of the report per se to

the Prime Minister, but rather to ask for Mr. Khan to appear before the committee and to share his observations and conclusions.

• (1100)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Barbot and then Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I would just add that this is a unique opportunity for committee members to obtain first-hand information from a member who admittedly has played a key role. And, given the current situation, it's important to ask this question as a committee and to hear Mr. Khan's comments and views. I think this is entirely appropriate.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'll keep it short and make one additional comment. Mr. Khan is a Member of Parliament. If he were an expert, or someone who had been asked by the Prime Minister to go and observe the situation first-hand, I could understand him saying that he was acting for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Chairman, both motions say that the committee "invites" Mr. Wajid Khan. We're inviting him to appear. If he wishes to decline our invitation, then so be it, but it is our responsibility to invite him, given all of the efforts we have made and the importance we attach to resolving the Middle East problem. We're saying to the Prime Minister that we would like to get the report and that we are inviting Mr. Khan to appear before us. If the Prime Minister doesn't wish to share the report with us, then ultimately, I'd like Mr. Khan to come and talk to us about his experiences. He is an MP and if I was one of his constituents, I could impress upon him the importance of sharing his experiences in the Middle East with the committee.

Inviting him here in connection with the report is a matter of principle. I also believe the same holds true for—

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Are you calling for the question?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes.

The Chair: All right, we have a choice here. There is another committee waiting to convene in this room. On motions like this we have unlimited debate, so we have the opportunity to stand the motion to the next meeting or call for the question today. If I hear no more debate, then we'll call the question.

Hon. Albina Guarnieri: Question.

The Chair: This is a friendly amendment, so as I understand it we don't have to pass the amendment first. We will vote on the motion as amended.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Lalonde, we'll have to stand your motion over to the next meeting.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes, but I heard the government doesn't have a problem with this. Nor does anyone else for that matter. Therefore, we can start making arrangements.

Some hon. members: Oh! Oh!

[*English*]

The Chair: All right, we'll be dealing with that at a later date.

We are adjourned.

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